

STATES OF JERSEY



COMMON STRATEGIC POLICY 2026 – 2030 (P.75/2026): FOURTH AMENDMENT

DEVELOP A STRATEGY FOR YOUNG ISLANDERS WISHING TO RETURN TO JERSEY

**Lodged au Greffe on 22nd October 2026
by Deputy L.D. Carpenter of St. Helier Central
Earliest date for debate: 10th November 2026**

STATES GREFFE

COMMON STRATEGIC POLICY 2026 – 2030 (P.75/2026): FOURTH
AMENDMENT

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After the words “report accompanying this Proposition” insert the words –

“, except that, on page 11 of the report, after action 5.2, there should be inserted the following –

“5.3 Develop a strategy for young Islanders wishing to return to Jersey, to include maintaining communication with students during their studies, access to affordable housing and graduate career opportunities upon returning to the Island””.

DEPUTY L.D. CARPENTER OF ST. HELIER CENTRAL

Note: After this amendment, the proposition would read as follows –

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –

in accordance with Article 18(2)(e) of the States of Jersey Law 2005, to approve the statement of the Common Strategic Policy of the Council of Ministers as set out in the report accompanying this Proposition, except that, on page 11 of the report, after action 5.2 there should be inserted the following –

“5.3 Develop a strategy for young Islanders wishing to return to Jersey, to include maintaining communication with students during their studies, access to affordable housing and graduate career opportunities upon returning to the Island”.

REPORT

The purpose of this amendment is to ensure that Government commits to developing a strategy to encourage and assist young people to return to the island after attending university. The Policy Centre Jersey (2024) found that during the 2021/22 academic year participation in higher education was just over 53%, with a split of 61% female and 46% male engagement in the UK. Of those that study in the UK, nearly 60% would not return to the island upon graduation.

There are many factors that contribute to this. Jersey has a high cost of living, approximately 20% higher than the UK. Jersey's housing market is also seen as one of the most expensive in the world. In real terms, the Q2 2026 UK house price index shows the national average house price across the UK was £272,000. This is less than the average price of a one bedroom flat in Jersey (£326,000). (Statistics Jersey Q2 2026 House Price Index).

These challenges sit against a wider population picture that we cannot ignore. In the ten years to 2021 the proportion of the Jersey population aged 65 and over increased from 14.8% to 18.1%, and the dependency ratio increased from 46% to 52%. That ratio, which compares the number of people outside working age to those of working age, is projected to increase to 76% in 2042. Statistics Jersey's latest projections go further, suggesting that with no net migration the dependency ratio could reach 94 by 2080, meaning almost one dependent person for every working-age adult. Statistics Jersey has also found that if the population remains the same over the next 20 years, the working age population will decline by over 10% by 2040, and that net migration of approximately +325 people each year is needed to maintain the working age population at its current size.

The consequences of this are significant. A larger older population will require greater spending on health and social care, while a smaller proportion of the population will be working and contributing to the taxes that fund it. A higher dependency ratio places additional burden on healthcare, social security and educational systems. Jersey will therefore need to maintain or grow its working age population, whether through inward migration, a larger resident workforce, or both.

It makes sense, therefore, that Government should do all it reasonably can to entice young Islanders back to Jersey. They have a connection to the Island, they are likely to be at the start of their working lives and, unlike many other new arrivals, they are returning to a community they already know. It is not realistic to expect all graduates to return, and this amendment does not suggest otherwise. However, if we can encourage even a small proportion of those who would otherwise not come back, the cumulative benefit to our workforce, our economy, our public finances and our island would be meaningful. At present, Government does very little to support this group. Looking at the situation purely in financial terms, as an island we pay for our children's education, we encourage and prepare them for university, and then we do nothing to encourage them to return. This amendment seeks to change that by committing to the development of a strategy that seeks to keep young Islanders engaged during their studies, and provides them with assistance in seeking affordable housing and graduate career opportunities when they return.

Financial and staffing implications

The financial and staffing implications will depend on the measures brought forward by Ministers. Policy development will require officer time, and changes to financial support or services may require additional funding. These requirements should be identified within the relevant proposals and considered through the Budget process.

Children's Rights Impact Assessment

I consider that this amendment has no direct or indirect impact on children and that the duty to have due regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child does not arise. Accordingly, a Children's Rights Impact Assessment is not required under the Children (Convention Rights) (Jersey) Law 2022.