
STATES OF JERSEY



FAMILY FRIENDLY LEGISLATION REVIEW (S.R.2/2026): RESPONSE OF THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL SECURITY

**Presented to the States on 9th March 2026
by the Minister for Social Security**

STATES GREFFE

**FAMILY FRIENDLY LEGISLATION REVIEW (S.R.2/2026): RESPONSE OF
THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL SECURITY**

Ministerial Response to:	S.R.2/2026
Ministerial Response required by:	10th March 2026
Review title:	Family Friendly Legislation Review
Scrutiny Panel:	Health and Social Security Scrutiny Panel

INTRODUCTION

Family friendly legislation is one of the first matters that was discussed with the Scrutiny Panel when I took on the role of Minister for Social Security. I suggested to the Panel that it may be a good subject for them to review more thoroughly. As such, I welcome the Panel's report and the in-depth engagement with the subject. We all share the desire for parents to spend time with their babies and young children, support breastfeeding, and ensure that families can access good quality childcare.

As the outgoing Minister I do not have the ability to take forward the recommendations directly, however, I encourage the incoming Minister to review the recommendations carefully and continue the work we are doing to improve communications about parental rights, make sure that employers know their obligations, and support parents in having the choice to spend time with their child during this important time.

I have asked my team to take forward wherever possible, the recommendations in relation to improved communications as this subject is administrative in nature, therefore this work can continue during the election period.

FINDINGS

	Findings	Comments
1	Despite the intended Ministerial action stemming from the 2024 Family Friendly post-implementation review, there remains a lack of a coordinated Government communications strategy to support understanding of the Family Friendly legislation.	The Minister for Social Security acknowledges that effective communications are important and that employers, and business and trade union organisations also have an important part to play. A comprehensive information leaflet for expecting and new parents has been developed since the 2024 review. A digital version is available on the gov.je website, printed copies are given via the antenatal unit and a digital version has been shared with our community stakeholders via email. J0217 - Starting Your Parental Journey Flyer (A5 Leaflet) AW.indd
2	Studies have found that around 12 weeks of paid maternity leave is linked	Noted.

	Findings	Comments
	to decreased psychological distress among mothers, reduced intimate partner violence, lower infant mortality, better attachment between parents and the baby, and increased breastfeeding duration (Van Niel et al., 2020; Heshmati et al., 2023).	
3	Employers broadly support the intent and cultural value of Jersey's family friendly legislation, recognising its positive impact on workplace inclusivity and staff wellbeing. However, many report that the complexity of leave blocks, flexible working processes and administrative offsets has created significant HR strain, with disproportionate financial and operational pressures falling on SMEs and charities who lack the capacity to absorb these demands. While the legislation is viewed as socially beneficial, employer evidence highlights widespread administrative fatigue and indicates that the current framework's complexity, cost implications and implementation challenges now warrant careful review.	The employer perspective is noted.
4	Cultural acceptance is growing and despite challenges, a gradual shift toward normalising flexible working and parental leave is evident.	Agreed.
5	Employer representatives suggest any future review of the legislation should consider a tiered or supported model, acknowledging the impact of new businesses and SMEs, combining fairness for families with sustainability for employers.	Noted
6	IoD members view Jersey's family friendly legislation as a net positive for workplace culture, staff retention and gender equality, reporting that the reforms have supported more flexible and inclusive practices, strengthened employer branding, and enhanced Jersey's reputation as a fair and	Agreed.

	Findings	Comments
	progressive place to work, aligning the Island more closely with international standards of social responsibility.	
7	Many Jersey employers already voluntarily exceed statutory requirements, offering enhanced parental leave, hybrid working, and wellbeing support, described as strategic investments, improving satisfaction, productivity, and retention rather than as regulatory burdens.	Agreed.
8	Smaller organisations and those with specialist teams face particular difficulties in finding suitable cover, leading to pressure on remaining staff.	The Law requires a significant amount of notice of intention to take parental leave – at least 15 weeks (Article 55F). The Minister for Social Security considers this represents sufficient time to make arrangements for absent colleagues
9	The IoD identified several gaps in the current family friendly legislative framework, noting that it does not fully reflect modern family formation or provide sufficient practical guidance for employers. In particular, the legislation does not adequately support foster-to-adopt placements, does not recognise the emotional and practical impacts of fertility treatment, and offers limited guidance to employers on managing parental leave cycles in a way that balances employee rights with operational continuity.	These issues can be considered in any future review, however it is noted that this contradicts the employer perspective above.
10	HR Now contends that the law's complexity, flexibility, and lack of procedural safeguards, has created confusion and difficulties in managing leave, staffing, and workplace morale, occasionally leading to misuse or misinterpretation of entitlements.	It is noted that this finding is from one submission to the Panel. More generally, employers have a responsibility to understand employment legislation. JACS is a free service that helps with advice and guidance
11	HR Now suggests limiting leave to two blocks or reviewing whether three blocks provide any tangible benefit to parents.	It is noted that this finding is from one submission to the Panel. More generally, the Minister for Social Security considers that the present framework is working well, providing maximum flexibility. The Minister notes that it is for employers and employees to agree on the disposition of parental leave.

	Findings	Comments
12	Virtual HR cautioned that any future extension of family friendly rights should be accompanied by targeted support, or differentiation for smaller employers to maintain business sustainability.	Noted. This finding is from one submission to the panel.
13	Virtual HR, alongside Liberate, recommend a review of the language used in legislation and guidance, urging a shift toward fully gender-neutral and inclusive terminology to reflect modern family structures and promote equality.	The Scrutiny report includes findings from different witnesses that both suggest a gender neutral approach to communications, and also to encourage fathers to be supported. Some specific communication to fathers is required to ensure they understand their rights. It was the intention of the legislation and guidance to be as gender neutral as possible. This finding is noted.
14	Family friendly legislation has had a positive impact on new parents employed within the education sector. Extended parental leave has strengthened bonding opportunities between parents and their babies, improved infant wellbeing, and contributed to a more caring and supportive employment environment.	Agreed.
15	Schools, particularly secondary schools, face serious difficulties attracting suitably qualified replacement staff, especially subject specialists. Existing teachers and school leaders often absorb substantial additional workload when a colleague goes on leave. This places considerable pressure on remaining staff, who may have to take on extra teaching, pastoral duties or leadership responsibilities.	Funding is provided to enable recruitment of the appropriate teaching and support staff. This includes the option of funded Subject Knowledge Enhancement (SKE) qualifications for new or existing teaching colleagues who wish to adapt their area of specialism beyond their degree. Recruitment is supported to identify and secure quality candidates. In extreme circumstances, UK supply teachers are recruited with the cost differential being absorbed centrally so as not to impact school budgets. Funded increase in PPA for teachers (from 10% to 14% of contact teaching hours) should provide some mitigation to these pressures.
16	Small businesses, specialist providers and childcare settings, reported struggles in securing temporary staff, often resulting in reduced services or increased pressure on existing teams. The current framework can be disruptive to small operations; the	See comment 8.

	Findings	Comments
	administrative and staffing pressures associated with parental leave make it increasingly difficult for small firms to take on new employees or apprentices.	
17	Many parents described childcare fees as equivalent to, or greater than, a mortgage payment, leaving households with no disposable income or forcing one parent, most often the mother, to exit the workforce entirely.	Extending nursery and childcare provision was identified as a priority for Government in the Common Strategic Policy (CSP) 2024-2026 and supported by the Government Budget 2025-2028. Additional investment was also secured in the Government Budget 2026-2029. In total, £4 million has been allocated to a new childcare funding scheme for 2 to 3 year olds launched in 2026.
18	Several parents noted that the cost of childcare alone determines family size, with many explicitly stating that they cannot afford to have a second child, and that the economics of family life in Jersey are unsustainable.	Jersey offers a range of benefits for families. Child allowances and childcare tax relief are available to parents and carers who pay Income Tax. A universal subsidy is offered to parents of families with children aged 3 to 4 years via the Nursery Education Fund (NEF). New funding for 2 to 3 year olds opened for applications in February 2026. Low-income families receiving Income Support receive support for childcare costs as part of their overall benefit payment. Good quality childcare is expensive. Government subsidies are funded from tax revenue raised. Countries that provide the most generous subsidies for childcare costs generally have higher tax rates.
19	Many parents describe the return to work as one of the most difficult periods of their lives, feeling forced back earlier than they wanted due to financial necessity.	Noted.
20	For shift workers, nurses, teachers and single parents, rigid workplace expectations often made family life unmanageable.	The Minister for Social Security would encourage employers to take a more flexible approach and work with employee representatives to identify how their workplace can better accommodate family life.
21	There is strong and repeated theme of lack of clear information and guidance about parental rights, benefits, social security contributions, and available support. Many parents only learned about key entitlements (such as Home	Information on all parental rights and benefits is now provided in a leaflet available in antenatal clinics and online: Parental financial support J0217 - Starting Your Parental Journey Flyer (A5 Leaflet) AW.indd

	Findings	Comments
	Responsibility Protection or parental grants) through friends, charities or by chance.	
22	Most CAJ enquiries relating to the family friendly legislation come from working parents or parents-to-be, not employers.	Noted.
23	Evidence from CAJ shows repeated cases of parents in construction, hospitality and agriculture facing dismissal, bullying or other detriment after requesting parental leave. Because most do not pursue tribunal claims, this non-compliance remains largely hidden, suggesting significant under-reporting in contrast to JACS' view that disputes are minimal.	The Panel's position is noted.
24	Wilful misinformation reflects gaps in employer awareness, weak compliance with the legislation, and lack of accountability in certain sectors.	The Panel's position is noted
25	Access to family friendly rights varies widely across Jersey, with the greatest problems in construction, hospitality and agriculture, where some employers discourage or penalise parents for using their entitlements. Despite universal statutory rights, compliance is inconsistent, and vulnerable workers often lack the confidence or means to challenge mistreatment, echoing patterns seen across survey and engagement feedback.	The Panel's position is noted. JACS provides free and confidential advice to support employees. Trade unions also provide advice and support to members, along with supporting employees during negotiations on pay, terms and conditions within workplaces in which they are recognised.
26	When employers fail to uphold family friendly rights, the consequences extend beyond work and can significantly affect family stability and wellbeing.	Noted.
27	Nurseries are experiencing greater pressure on staffing and resources, often requiring one-to-one support even where children do not have formally identified additional needs,	Funding secured in the Government Budget 2026-2029 has enabled a fully commissioned programme of inclusion support for children with emerging developmental and SEND needs, facilitated by the JCCT. Capacity within CYPES has been prioritised to provide more support to

	Findings	Comments												
	potentially impacting ability to operate a full service.	nurseries, their staff and the children and families.												
28	Evidence from support services indicates that many low-income families cannot afford to take parental leave beyond the initial six weeks of full pay. As a result, the extended parental leave entitlement exists largely “on paper rather than in practice” for a significant proportion of parents. Rather than reducing inequality, the current family friendly framework can inadvertently expose and reinforce existing cost-of-living pressures, with those on lower incomes least able to benefit from the rights available to them.	In addition to the paid parental leave period of 6 weeks per parent, the Social Security Fund provides up to 32 weeks of parental allowance which can be shared across both parents, and a parental grant per child. The Government provides support for childcare costs for children aged 2 and above; with additional support for living and childcare costs available to low-income families. The Employment, Social Security and Housing Department (ESSH) monitor all births in the Island to ensure that parents are receiving the support they need. Where additional support is required for a vulnerable parent, safety net mechanisms are in place to protect the family. A single parent receives an extra allowance on top of the normal adult component and the first child in the household also receives a higher rate than subsequent children. A parent receiving Income Support is not required to start looking for work until the youngest child has reached nursery age. For example, the 2026 income support rates will provide a single parent with 2 children with a minimum weekly income of £453.53 after housing costs <table><tr><td>Adult component</td><td>£130.83</td></tr><tr><td>Single parent component</td><td>£51.10</td></tr><tr><td>First child component</td><td>£107.80</td></tr><tr><td>Second child component</td><td>£90.79</td></tr><tr><td>Household component</td><td>£73.01</td></tr><tr><td>Disposable income after rent is paid</td><td>£453.53</td></tr></table> Additional support is provided for childcare costs if the parent has returned to work. The Minister for Social Security has also recognised that current Income Support rules mean that a family who has a mortgage is not subject to the same income thresholds for income support as a family renting a home. The Minister has initiated a pilot, that commenced on the 1st	Adult component	£130.83	Single parent component	£51.10	First child component	£107.80	Second child component	£90.79	Household component	£73.01	Disposable income after rent is paid	£453.53
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	Findings	Comments
		February to test the effect of making the thresholds more equitable with the aim of resolving this issue.
29	Parents are “playing tag team”, working alternating shifts to avoid unaffordable childcare costs, with this pressure contributing to exhaustion and emotional strain within households.	See finding 28.
30	There is a structural ‘early years gap’ between the end of parental leave and the start of nursery education funding, leaving families with little support during a crucial developmental period.	See Finding 28. Examples of wider Government support for families in Jersey includes the parental grant, parental allowance, home responsibility protection (HRP) credits and the childcare component of Income Support which are delivered by Employment, Social Security and Housing (ESSH). The Jersey Child Care Trust’s ‘Every Step Funding Programme’ complements the Government’s childcare funding offer. The child component of Income Support provides consistent financial support to parents from birth onwards up to school leaving age. Support with childcare costs for 0-11 year olds is also provided through the Income Support benefit.
31	The Jersey Child Care Trust caution against any policy shift towards shared-leave models that might inadvertently reduce fathers’ direct entitlement, stressing the importance of maintaining a system that encourages equitable caregiving roles.	The basis of the parental leave policy approach is that both parents enjoy exactly the same employment rights.
32	There are encouraging signs of positive cultural change, with more fathers attending antenatal education, participating actively in early caregiving and sharing responsibilities that historically fell solely to mothers.	Agreed.
33	According to FNHC, there has been a significant increase in breastfeeding rates - a 4% rise in just six months that is “unprecedented” and strongly linked to growing parental confidence and supportive workplace attitudes.	Agreed.

	Findings	Comments
34	20% of young families supported by FNHC are struggling with essential expenses such as food and accommodation.	See Finding 28. There is financial support available to young families with a low income. The Minister for Social Security would encourage any families struggling with essential expenses to liaise with ESSH to see if they would be eligible for any financial support. ESSH will also follow up with FNHC to ensure that staff supporting families have access to up to date information and signpost families to the Department.
35	52 weeks of leave for each parent is not realistically accessible for families on low incomes, who simply cannot afford prolonged periods of reduced or no pay.	See finding 28 - Income Support is available to low-income families and includes extra support for each child in the family and for childcare costs.
36	New parents often return to work exhausted and overwhelmed, with limited adjustment or phased-return options.	The Panel's position is noted.
37	There is a need for better communication and accessibility, especially for minority ethnic families, more multilingual, culturally sensitive information is needed to ensure all parents understand their rights and support pathways.	The Panel's position is noted.
38	There is widespread lack of awareness among parents about their rights and allowances, with many families relying entirely on charity workers to understand even basic entitlements.	A leaflet setting out all parental rights and benefits is provided to every family as part of the antenatal process. J0217 - Starting Your Parental Journey Flyer (A5 Leaflet) AW.indd ESSH will contact the charities that made submissions to ensure that they have up to date information, copies of the leaflet, and can signpost effectively.
39	Parents consider leaving the Island, or even ending a pregnancy, because they cannot afford another child. They cite the combined impacts of childcare costs, the general cost of living, and unaffordable housing.	Noted
40	Many fathers lack awareness of their entitlements and feel stigma about taking leave, but there are encouraging cultural shifts, with more fathers taking	Agreed.

	Findings	Comments
	short periods of leave or seeking more time at home to support their partners and bond with their children.	
41	Single parents are one of the most disadvantaged groups as entitlement to leave is granted per parent, single parents have half the available leave of two-parent households and bear the full financial burden alone.	Figures show that for each of the years 2024 and 2025, only around 3% of children born in Jersey have only one parent named on the birth certificate. The panel finding does not correlate with the parental benefit legislation. Where only one parent is named on a birth certificate the full 32 weeks of parental allowance is available to that parent. See also finding 28 - Income Support benefit provides additional support for single parent families.
42	Extended family, especially grandparents, often provide a lifeline, stepping in to offer childcare in the absence of affordable options, sometimes retiring early to provide support. Witnesses argued that the system should better reflect the reality of caregiving in these families and allow leave or support to be shared with the adults who actually provide care.	Noted.
43	Childcare expenses often exceed or are equal to one parent's salary - many families feel forced to reduce working hours, delay returning to work, or leave the workforce entirely.	Noted – see comments on 17 and 18 and 28 re support with childcare costs and additional help available through Income Support.
44	Some grandparents would like school catchment rules to allow grandparents' Parish to be considered, particularly where the grandparent provides daily childcare or school pick-ups, easing logistical pressures, reduce travel for working parents, and support stability for children.	Noted – see comments on recommendation 16.
45	Parents of twins and triplets highlighted additional financial pressures associated with multiple births and suggested that enhanced	The Panel's position is noted.

	Findings	Comments
	parental leave or increased financial support during the early months would make a meaningful difference.	
46	The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends breastfeeding until age two, yet current protections in Jersey legislation fall short of supporting this.	Breastfeeding rights in the Employment Law do not contain “deadline” provisions. Employers are expected to provide appropriate facilities for the length of time the mother is breastfeeding (Article 15K) Remedy of complaint to the JEDT.
47	Parents report an extended period at home has been invaluable in supporting their emotional, physical, and financial wellbeing, as well as in building a strong foundation for their child’s early development, bonding with their baby, managing pre and post-natal anxiety, and recovering from birth complications such as emergency caesarean sections, with many stating that an earlier return to work would have been extremely difficult both physically and mentally.	Agreed.
48	Evidence shows that Jersey’s immigration framework does not recognise postnatal caregiving by close female relatives as a legitimate or necessary form of family support. As a result, many migrant women give birth and recover without the culturally embedded maternal care that is known to improve mental health, breastfeeding outcomes and infant wellbeing, creating avoidable isolation and public health risk.	There are existing immigration routes that include a stay in Jersey of up to 6 months for a family member.
49	Current visa eligibility criteria reflect Western assumptions about individual financial independence and nuclear families, disadvantaging migrant households from collectivist cultures where caregiving and resources are shared across generations. There is no evidence that maternal carers overstay visas, indicating that existing restrictions are based on misperception rather than risk and unintentionally	See comment 48.

	Findings	Comments
	undermine Jersey's family-friendly objectives.	
50	Evidence from Brighter Futures indicates that the current eligibility rules for the Parental Grant exclude some of the families most in need, particularly recent migrants, young parents who have not yet entered employment, and mothers unable to work due to health or personal circumstances. These gaps create avoidable hardship at the point of birth and contradict the policy aim of ensuring all children receive a strong start in life.	A parental grant worth £887.25 in 2026 is available in respect of each baby born / child adopted. Almost all parents qualify for a parental grant. The contribution condition is that 3 months of contributions have been paid by either parent at any time up to 6 months before the birth or adoption. ESSH monitor all births in the island to ensure that parents are receiving the support they need. Where additional support is required for a vulnerable parent, safety net mechanisms are in place to protect the family. ESSH will contact Brighter Futures to understand more about the cases being referred to and ensure that support workers have access to relevant information and can signpost families appropriately.
51	Fathers often learn more from peers regarding their parental entitlements than from official sources and community-led father engagement is currently filling a gap in formal communication.	A leaflet is widely available setting out the rights of all parents: J0217 - Starting Your Parental Journey Flyer (A5 Leaflet) AW.indd
52	Stigma varies by industry and workplace type, male-dominated sectors appear to have stronger barriers and fewer role models of fathers taking leave, indicating that legal entitlements alone are insufficient unless workplace culture shifts to normalise fathers taking leave. Hospitality and retail are highlighted repeatedly as challenging sectors with poor communication and rigid conditions.	The Panel's position is noted. Industry associations also have an important role in ensuring that their members understand their obligations.
53	Fathers in self-employment face the most significant constraints, often being unable to take leave at all because of immediate financial pressure.	Self-employed individuals are not covered by the Employment law. However, they have the same access to parental benefits as employed people. Self-employed people can also receive Income Support if they have a low household income.
54	The system around caregiving is not always enabling or encouraging fathers to engage with it, despite the intention of Jersey's law.	The Panel's position is noted.

	Findings	Comments
55	JACS is highly valued for its independent advice, but evidence shows that some of its public guidance on family friendly rights is unclear, or not effectively targeted, leading to inconsistencies in the information available to parents and employers.	The JACS website has recently been completely re-designed to provide clear and accessible information across all employment areas. All JACS materials can be translated from the website.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As Minister for Social Security, I have taken a significant interest in this policy area and I am pleased to have made progress in a number of areas. I am grateful to the Panel for their very detailed report, and I urge the next Minister to continue to improve the rights and support available to parents.

Given the timing of the publication of the Scrutiny report, I have less than 6 weeks to act on the Panel's recommendations before the election period begins, at which point Ministerial activity must be limited to maintaining core services and dealing with emergency situations. Within this timescale it is not realistic to set in train the actions recommended by the Panel.

However, as outgoing Minister I can provide information and suggestions to my successor for them to consider as they see fit. As such, the detailed comments below indicate areas where I would support action being considered by my successor in line with the recommendations of the Panel.

As mentioned during my introduction, in terms of accepting or rejecting the recommendations, it is very difficult for me as outgoing Minister to commit a future Minister to any recommendations. As such, I have responded 'N/A' to the recommendations, as the alternative would be to reject the recommendations, and that is not in line with how I would want to respond. In general, any funding or legal changes fall properly to the next Minister. In terms of the recommendations that address communication issues, the ESSH Department already has plans to continue its work in improving information and guidance materials and, where possible, the Panel's recommendations will be taken into account in designing the detailed work to be undertaken this year. The JACS website has also recently been relaunched, with clear and simple information now readily available to employees and employers.

I would encourage the new Panel to revisit the recommendations in this report with the incoming Minister.

Where relevant, recommendations directed to other Ministers have been responded to by the relevant Minister and these are incorporated into my reply below.

	Recommendations	To	Accept/Reject	Comments	Target date of action/ completion
1	The Minister for Social Security must introduce a clear, centralised communications strategy to improve public understanding of family friendly legislation and address the gaps in knowledge and avoid reliance on ad hoc leaflets. This should include accessible, up-to-date tailored guidance for parents and employers, consistent messaging across all agencies and proactive dissemination through healthcare settings, workplaces, schools, Parishes, digital platforms and community organisations.	Minister for Social Security	N/A	This general comment relates to recommendations 1,3,4,6,8,10,12,13,21 and 22 which consider aspects of communications. A specific comment on recommendation 1 is provided below. General comment: The provision of clear information and guidance is an important aspect of any Employment legislation. I strongly support actions to improve the quality and quantity of information available to employers and employees. I encourage employers and representative organisations to support their members in the dissemination of employment and benefit information. There is a communications plan, planned for this year with the aim to raise awareness of benefits available. As part of this work a wider plan will be considered to include information to employers and key stakeholders. It is important that this work progresses and isn't delayed by creating an additional communication strategy when an overall plan is already being worked on with the aim to deliver this, this year. A parent leaflet that sets out full information on employment rights, benefits and services for new parents is now available to new parents via antenatal services, ESSH and the GoJ website.	

	Recommendations	To	Accept/Reject	Comments	Target date of action/completion
				Where recommendations relate to JACS, it is important to respect the independence of JACS and their statutory role, the Jersey Advisory and Conciliation Service is a statutory body with its own enabling legislation. The Jersey Advisory and Conciliation (Jersey) Law 2003 sets out the general duty of JACS <i>a) to promote the improvement of employment relations;</i> <i>(b) to assist in the resolution of individual and collective employment disputes; and</i> <i>(c) to assist in the building of harmonious relationships between employers and employees, collectively and individually, and thereby improve the performance and effectiveness of organisations.</i> JACS is a wholly nonpolitical body. The law states that <i>“The functions of JACS, and those of its employees, shall be performed on behalf of the States, but not so as to make it subject to directions of any kind from any Minister or Member of the States as to the manner in which it is to exercise its functions under any enactment.</i> JACS receives an annual grant to provide these services. It is important to maintain the independence of JACS and, as such, it would not be appropriate for a minister to direct their work in any way. Specific comment on recommendation 1:	

	Recommendations	To	Accept/Reject	Comments	Target date of action/ completion
				Whilst the Panel's recommendation requests a strategy, there is already planned proactive communications work across Government for 2026 which includes the delivery of a broad benefits plan, and parents will be one of the core target audiences, bringing together key information from newborn to older children. The overall aim is to have information that is accessible and easy to understand in a range of formats taking account of the needs of different target audiences.	
2	The Minister for Social Security should amend legislation and bring forward funding proposals in the next budget, to implement the outstanding 2017 Employment Forum recommendation to introduce a total of 12 weeks paid maternity leave, comprising six weeks' employer-funded and six weeks' State-funded leave, with a view to transitioning this entitlement into a universal parental leave framework	Minister for Social Security	N/A	Recommendations 2, 5,14,17 and 20 relate to the provision of extra funding to support family friendly policies. A general comment is provided with a specific comment on rec 2 below. General comments: The overall cost of current family friendly policies is met in a number of ways: The employer bears the cost of six weeks of paid leave at the employee's normal wage rate per parent. The employer also bears the cost of paid antenatal appointments and providing breastfeeding facilities etc. The Social Security Fund provides up to 32 weeks of parental allowance which can be shared across both parents and a parental grant per child. Parents are also supported through the Home Responsibility Protection (HRP) scheme which maintains the pension record for a parent while they are at home with a young child.	

	Recommendations	To	Accept/Reject	Comments	Target date of action/ completion
				The Government provides support for childcare costs for children aged 2 and above; with additional support for living and childcare costs available to low-income families. The cost of any additional financial support to parents will need to be met either by the employer or by the contributor/taxpayer. The Scrutiny Panel does not provide any details as to how any extra funding should be raised. Any proposal for additional Government funding will need to be set out by the incoming Minister in a future budget document. Specific comment on recommendation 2: There has been a major change in maternity allowance since 2017, approved by the Assembly in 2020 (P.124/2020). As part of the overall family friendly policy, maternity allowance was replaced by parental allowance providing a contributory benefit to both parents for the first time. In line with employment legislation, the allowance is available to parents regardless of gender and includes adoptive and surrogate parents. The parental allowance is payable for 32 weeks, compared to 18 weeks for the previous maternity allowance. To meet that the additional cost associated with the expansion, the contribution paid by employers and Class 2 individuals above the standard earnings limit was increased from 2% to 2.5% with the upper earnings limit increased to £250,000.	

	Recommendations	To	Accept/Reject	Comments	Target date of action/completion
				As part of the actuarial review of the Social Security Fund that will be starting in the next few months and will report in early 2027, the actuary will be asked to model the impact of the cost of expanding an existing benefit and the impact on the Fund. For example, this could be an expansion of the existing parental allowance. In summary, Government has previously raised additional contributions in order to fund an additional 14 weeks of parental support, compared to the position in 2017, when the Forum wrote its report. Any further expansion of support will need to be accompanied by further additional funding from employers or contributors/taxpayers.	
3	The Minister for Social Security should explore increased support for small businesses, including bespoke guidance, and seek feedback from this group on the impact of the legislation.	Minister for Social Security	N/A	See response to recommendation 1. Specific comment on recommendation 3: Communication materials to support small businesses will be included in the overall communications plan	
4	JACS and Jersey Business should develop clearer, targeted guidance and training to support employers and employees, tailored to recurring areas of misunderstanding and sector-specific issues, to ensure that the right information reaches the right audiences.	Minister for Social Security	N/A	See response to recommendation 1. Specific comment on recommendation 4: Communication materials to support employers and employees will be included in the overall communications plan.	

	Recommendations	To	Accept/Reject	Comments	Target date of action/ completion
5	The Minister for Social Security should review and address these identified gaps by exploring amendments and supporting guidance that: extend paid leave to cover foster-to-adopt placements from the start of fostering; introduce compassionate leave provisions for fertility treatment; and issue clear best-practice guidance to help employers plan and manage parental leave in a fair, predictable and operationally sustainable manner.	Minister for Social Security	N/A	See response to recommendation 2. Specific response to recommendation 5: The following statement in the Panel's report is not correct: <i>"Under current rules statutory paid parental leave starts only at the point of legal adoption excluding the critical bonding period that begins when a child is first placed with respective prospective adopters."</i> page 48 Parents who are moving towards the legal adoption of a child can start to claim parental allowance as soon as the Department receive confirmation from the CYPES adoption team that the Agency Decision Makers decision has been confirmed in writing. "adoption date" means the date on which a child is placed with an adopter or, in the case of overseas adoption, the date on which a child who is to be adopted by a person in Jersey enters Jersey; Both Social Security and Employment Law are aligned on this point. The placement date is not the same as the date of legal adoption. The placement date occurs following an Agency Decision Makers decision following the adoption Matching Panel. This results in a formal letter being prepared, confirming the placement. This part of the process precedes the 13-week period prior to the issue of the adoption certificate itself i.e. much earlier in the process.	

	Recommendations	To	Accept/Reject	Comments	Target date of action/completion
				Established process in ESSH allows for commencement of parental benefits payments once the Agency Decision Makers Decision has been confirmed in writing. The Panel includes a recommendation on additional support for prospective parents undergoing fertility treatment and this is an area that an incoming minister may wish to investigate in more detail. Any additional provision will require additional funding from employers or taxpayers.	
6	All official guidance should be reviewed in the Q1 and Q2 2026 to ensure the law is being communicated as effectively as possible.	Minister for Social Security	N/A	See response to recommendation 1. Specific response to recommendation 6: Work is planned for 2026 to improve communications to different target groups. The JACS website has recently being completely redesigned to provide clear and simple information on employment matters.	
7	The Minister for Social Security should instruct JACS to undertake a consultation to understand the value of the block leave system and the benefits and/or disadvantages of current leave structure and assess how remaining leave can be transferred when employees move employers.	Minister for Social Security	N/A	Recommendations 7, 11, 15 and 18 relate to possible changes to legislation. A general comment on these recommendations is provided with a specific note in respect to recommendation 7 below. General comment: Under the Employment Law, the Employment Forum can be requested to review aspects of employment legislation and provide a report to the Minister. The incoming Minister may wish to request the Forum to investigate one or more of the areas identified in the Panel's recommendations.	

	Recommendations	To	Accept/Reject	Comments	Target date of action/completion
				The current parental rights guarantee each parent (mother, father, adoptive, surrogate) the individual, non-transferable right to 6 weeks paid leave and 46 weeks of unpaid leave. Subject to their contribution record, each parent can also claim at least 6 weeks of parental allowance. A further 20 weeks of parental allowance is available to be shared between the eligible parents. Where only one parent is recorded on the birth certificate, the full 32 weeks of parental allowance is available to that parent. Specific comment on Recommendation 7: This relates to the right for a parent to choose when to take periods of parental leave. At present a parent can split the leave into a maximum of 3 blocks. Any consultation on this will need to be undertaken by the Employment Forum. JACS role is to provide advice to employers and employees, not to undertake reviews on behalf of the Minister.	
8	The Minister for Social Security should revise the language and terminology used in the current legislation and associated guidance to ensure gender-neutrality and inclusive terminology and ensure the language reflects the breadth of familial relationships in Jersey.	Minister for Social Security	N/A	See response to recommendation 1. Specific comment on Recommendation 8: Both Employment Law and parental benefits provide gender neutral support for all parents. Existing communications use gender neutral language whenever possible. Other scrutiny recommendations relate to providing additional encouragement to fathers and these different approaches will need to be balanced by the incoming Minister.	
9	The Minister for Education and Lifelong	Minister for	Reject	Providing children with the best possible start to life is a critical	

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	Learning should undertake consultation to assess the effectiveness of the proposed 15-hour extension to nursery provision to consider the benefit of extending this in line with standard part time contracts to support transition back into the workplace.	Education & Lifelong Learning		priority for families and is essential for the Island's future, this requires an increased investment in early childhood education and care (ECEC). This policy has been developed in line with international evidence which shows that the greatest benefit of ECEC is associated with an early start and low- to medium use (up to 20 hours). Making direct payments to parents is a new scheme and as such it will be subject to an annual review.	
10	The Minister for Social Security should work with support agencies to develop a targeted programme to improve compliance with family friendly legislation in sectors where under-reporting appears most significant, namely construction, hospitality and agriculture. This should include proactive engagement with employers, clearer guidance, and confidential channels for workers to raise concerns without fear of reprisal. Strengthening monitoring and support in these sectors would help address hidden non-compliance and ensure that parents can safely exercise their rights.	Minister for Social Security	N/A	See response to recommendation 1. Specific comment on recommendation 10: Employers and employer organisations have a key role to play in communicating employment rights to their employees. The communications work scheduled for 2026 will include providing information to employers and employer organisations to help them in this respect. The International Cultural Centre was relaunched in July 2025 and is providing support to migrant workers who have employment or other issues.	
11	The Minister for Social Security should ensure that any future reforms to parental or shared leave	Minister for Social Security	N/A	See response to recommendation 7.	

	Recommendations	To	Accept/Reject	Comments	Target date of action/completion
	arrangements protect and strengthen fathers' individual, non-transferable entitlements. In line with the Jersey Child Care Trust's evidence, policy development should avoid models that dilute fathers' direct access to leave and instead reinforce equitable caregiving and shared responsibility in the early years.			Specific response to recommendation 11: The current parental rights guarantee each parent (mother, father, adoptive, surrogate) the individual, non-transferable right to 6 weeks paid leave and 46 weeks of unpaid leave. Subject to their contribution record, each parent can claim at least 6 weeks of parental allowance. A further 20 weeks of parental allowance is available to be shared between the eligible parents. The incoming Minister will need to assess whether this combination of employment rights and parental benefits should be changed or extended in any way to protect the rights of fathers (recommendation 11) and to weigh up this recommendation against recommendation 15 which proposes increased transferability of rights to other family members.	
12	The Minister for Social Security should introduce a clearer system for monitoring employer compliance with family friendly legislation and establish defined expectations and accountability measures for the handling of flexible working requests. This should include sector-specific guidance, improved reporting mechanisms, and proportionate oversight to ensure that employers apply the law consistently and transparently.	Minister for Social Security	N/A	See response to recommendation 1. Specific response to recommendation 12: Employers and employer organisations have a key role to play in communicating employment rights to their employees. The communications work scheduled for 2026 will include providing information to employers and employer organisations to help them in this respect. The acceptance of this recommendation would require the introduction of additional compliance that doesn't exist within current legislation. This would therefore require additional staffing	

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				resources, funding and legislative changes.	
13	JACS should provide translated guidance and make efforts to ensure that minority ethnic families understand their rights and support pathways.	Minister for Social Security	N/A	See response to recommendation 1. Specific response to recommendation 13: The new JACS website is designed to support automatic translation into other languages. The International Cultural Centre was relaunched in July 2025 and is providing support to migrant workers who have employment issues.	
14	The Minister for Social Security should amend the parental leave framework to ensure that single-parent families are not structurally disadvantaged and present an action plan by Q2 2027. This should include exploring additional paid leave, enhanced financial support, or supplementary benefits for sole carers so that a child in a single-parent household does not receive half the parental time and support available to children in two-parent families, so that parity of opportunity for single parents reflects modern family structures and promote fairness within the legislation.	Minister for Social Security	N/A	See response to recommendation 2. Specific response to recommendation 14: Information from the Superintendent Registrar confirms that 97% of babies born in 2025 have two parents recorded on their birth certificate. Where only one parent is recorded on the birth certificate, the full 32 weeks of parental allowance is available to that parent. ESSH monitor all births in the island to ensure that parents are receiving the support they need. Where additional support is required for a vulnerable parent, safety net mechanisms are in place to protect the family. Statistics Jersey record a disproportionate level of relative low-income amongst single parent families¹ and the Income Support	

¹ The [2025 JOLS survey](#) identified 30% of all households found it difficult to cope financially; with 69% of single parent families in this group.

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				system provides additional support to those families. A single parent receives an extra allowance on top of the normal adult component and the first child in the household also receives a higher rate than subsequent children. The 2026 Income Support rates will provide a single parent with 2 children with a minimum weekly income of £453.53 after housing costs Adult component £130.83 Single parent component £51.10 First child component £107.80 Second child component £90.79 Household component £73.01 Disposable income after rent is paid £453.53 Any additional funding in these areas will require a growth bid in a future budget.	
15	The Minister for Social Security should explore a progressive approach to the law by extending (using the Swedish model as a best practice example) existing leave entitlements to Grandparents, extended family members and trusted carers.	Minister for Social Security	N/A	See response to recommendation 7. Specific response to recommendation 15: The current parental rights guarantee each parent (mother, father, adoptive, surrogate) the individual, non-transferable right to 6 weeks paid leave and 46 weeks of unpaid leave. Subject to their contribution record, each parent can claim at least 6 weeks of parental allowance. A further 20 weeks of parental allowance is available to be shared between the eligible parents.	

	Recommendations	To	Accept/Reject	Comments	Target date of action/ completion
				The incoming Minister will need to assess whether this combination of employment rights and parental benefits should be changed or extended in any way to protect the rights of fathers (recommendation 11) and to weigh up this recommendation against recommendation 15 which proposes increased transferability of rights to other family members.	
16	The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning should explore extending primary school catchment criteria to allow consideration of a grandparent's residential address, where this would support family stability and childcare arrangements.	Minister for Education & Lifelong Learning	Reject	Allocation of school places follows a clear process to ensure fairness and transparency based on parental responsibility and residence address. Adding in consideration of Grandparent's residential addresses would create significant complexity. An appeals process is in place and wider family support can sometimes be considered as a factor at this stage should a school be undersubscribed.	
17	The Minister for Social Security should explore extending financial and practical support for parents of multiple births and ensure clearer, more effective signposting to relevant support services.	Minister for Social Security	N/A	See response to recommendation 2. Specific response to recommendation 17: A parental grant worth £887.25 in 2026 is available in respect of each baby born / child adopted. A parent with twins will receive £1,774.50. Almost all parents qualify for a parental grant. The contribution condition is that 3 months of contributions have been paid by either parent at any time up to 6 months before the birth or adoption. ESSH monitor all births in the Island to ensure that parents are receiving the support they need. Where additional support is required for a vulnerable parent, safety net	

	Recommendations	To	Accept/Reject	Comments	Target date of action/completion
				mechanisms are in place to protect the family.	
18	The Minister for Social Security should extend the protections for breastfeeding and expressing under the current legislation to two years in line with WHO recommendations to further support and encourage breastfeeding and align with established best practice policy.	Minister for Social Security	N/A	See response to recommendation 7. Specific response to recommendation 18: The 2024 report on births and breastfeeding demonstrates the success of improved education on breastfeeding and the inclusion of breastfeeding rights into employment law, 52% of babies received breastmilk 6 to 8 weeks after birth in 2011 and the proportion has increased to 67% in 2024. At 12 months, 25% of babies were still receiving breastmilk. The Minister is strongly supportive of enabling mothers and their children to continue to breastfeed for as long as they both wish. The Minister would strongly support the incoming Minister to extend the length of the current protection for breastfeeding.	
19	The Minister for Home Affairs, in collaboration with the Minister for Social Security and the Minister for Health and Social Services, should explore the introduction of a time-limited perinatal family carer visa to recognise postnatal caregiving as a legitimate reason for family visitation.	Minister for Home Affairs, Minister for Social Security & Minister for Health & Social Services.	N/A	Options already exist for family members to visit Jersey with or without a visa, depending on their nationality. A visitor may be granted permission to enter Jersey for up to 6 months. No paid or unpaid employment is permitted, and the visitor must be able to maintain and accommodate themselves without recourse to public funds. • Appendix Visitor (Page 300) of the Jersey Immigration Rules sets out the activities that a visitor is allowed to undertake.	

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				Where a family member is coming to look after a child in Jersey, this is permitted provided it is for less than 6 months as a visitor and does not amount to the relative being employed as a child-minder. The relative should be a genuine visitor and must not live in Jersey for extended periods through frequent or successive visits. Whilst certain countries provide a specific perinatal visa route, no such route exists in the United Kingdom. For operational, and technical reasons the creation of a new and separate visa category in Jersey, which does not exist in the United Kingdom, is resisted.	
20	The Minister for Social Security should review the eligibility criteria for the Parental Grant to ensure that vulnerable new parents, regardless of contribution history, can access essential financial support at the birth of a child. This review should include options for a needs-based safety-net payment and clear, proactive communication so families do not fall through gaps in the system.	Minister for Social Security	N/A	See response to recommendation 2. Specific response to recommendation 20: A parental grant worth £887.25 in 2026 is available in respect of each baby born / child adopted. Almost all parents qualify for a parental grant. The contribution condition is that 3 months of contributions have been paid by either parent at any time up to 6 months before the birth or adoption ESSH monitor all births in the Island to ensure that parents are receiving the support they need. Where additional support is required for a vulnerable parent, safety net mechanisms are in place to protect the family.	
21	The Minister for Social Security should develop, as part of the centralised communications	Minister for Social Security	N/A	See response to recommendation 1.	

	Recommendations	To	Accept/ Reject	Comments	Target date of action/ completion
	campaign messaging focused on fathers, ensuring that their parental entitlements are clearly explained and widely understood, and that employers are aware of, and consistently uphold, their obligations under family friendly legislation.			Specific response to recommendation 21: Parental rights and benefits are available on a gender neutral basis and other recommendations propose a gender neutral approach to communications. The incoming Minister will need to consider how to balance these recommendations,	
22	The Minister for Social Security should consider and reassess the remit of JACS, their capacity, and communications function, with a view to refocusing the organisation on its core strengths, ensuring clear accountability structures are put in place.	Minister for Social Security	N/A	See response to recommendation 1. Specific response to recommendation 22: The JACS website has recently been completely redesigned, to provide clear and simple information on all employment matters. I encourage the next Minister to continue to support the valuable work undertaken by JACS, acknowledging that JACS is an independent organisation that cannot accept direct political direction.	