

Union Street | St Helier
Jersey | JE2 3DN

Deputy Catherine Curtis
Chair – Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel

Sent by email only

23 January 2026

Dear Chair,

Follow-up matters from the Lifelong Learning Public Hearing on 8th January 2026.

Thank you for your letter of 16th January asking for further details following our public hearing last week. Please see the below answers to your questions and please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information.

Effectiveness, Accessibility, and Inclusivity

1) Minister, what measures are in place to assess the effectiveness of lifelong vocational learning programmes, and what do recent evaluations show?

The effectiveness of lifelong vocational learning programmes is assessed through a combination of internal and external quality assurance measures. These include internal and external quality review, annual self-assessment processes, external validation panels and programmes are benchmarked against UK outcomes, with Highlands often exceeding UK Key Performance Indicators.

Recent evaluations show strong performance across the vocational and lifelong learning programmes. Apprenticeship completion rates averaged above 90% during the academic years 2020 and 2024. Apprenticeship overall outcomes show pass rates remaining consistently high at 96–97%, with attendance around 90%. Progression into employment or further learning range from 93–98%, indicating a robust support system. Students with additional needs now perform at or above the level of their peers, this reflects the effectiveness of inclusive practices.

a) How do current opportunities ensure inclusivity and accessibility across different demographics, including disadvantaged groups?

Inclusivity is embedded across Highlands College through its Inclusive Practice framework, whole-college approach which includes staff training, curriculum design, and support systems. Targeted support is provided for learners with additional needs, with 289 students receiving this support last year, this is an increase of 72 learners from the previous year. Student feedback is strong, with 92% reporting improved independent study skills and 95% with increased confidence in their skills and knowledge.

Courses for 16–19-year-olds are designed for diverse learner needs. A dedicated Student Entitlement, Support and Inclusivity framework guides inclusive practice, audited annually through self-assessment and peer review.

The College also offers a wide range of support services, including wellbeing and safeguarding, financial support, careers guidance, transition guidance, and personal development opportunities.

b) Are there identified gaps in provision, and what strategies are being considered to address them?

A gap in the current provision relates to adult learners aged 20 and over, who do not have an entitlement to additional learning support unless they are enrolled in full-time University College Jersey provision.

Other gaps have been identified and detailed in the [Apprenticeship Funding summary report](#) which I published earlier this month.

2) Minister, the Apprenticeship Funding Review emphasised that the priority should be removing access barriers and ensuring the scheme is clear and user friendly. What steps are you taking to simplify the system, reduce bureaucracy, and make apprenticeship funding more accessible to both learners and employers?

Steps have already been taken to simplify access and reduce barriers. Small and Medium Size Enterprises have an apprenticeship subsidy for Level 2–3 fees, this has recently increased from £1,600 to £1,852. Better Business Start Package is available through the Economy Department and Jersey Business. Access to a Skills Mentor to support the employer and employee is also provided.

a) How will you improve communication about financial support for higher level apprenticeships, and when can clearer guidance be expected?

The Skills Jersey webpage outlines funding routes for apprenticeships, including the Level 2–3 subsidy. Clearer and more comprehensive guidance will be developed as part of the next phase of policy work in 2026.

b) What timeframe has been set for the next steps following the publication of the Apprenticeship Funding report?

Officers will now develop options for a new policy. An increase in funding to support a more generous scheme will require approval of budget under the next government. This means earliest implementation date is in 2027, subject to approval.

Apprenticeship Programmes

3) What specific support is available to small and medium sized enterprises to help them provide structured learning opportunities and continuing professional development for apprentices and trainees?

Skills Jersey Mentors support employers and well as apprentices. Mentors work with apprentices and their employers throughout training, helping apprentices stay motivated, make progress, and achieve their qualification by ensuring that both the workplace and the college clearly understand and support the apprentice's learning needs.

Better Business Support Package provides financial support of £2,000 grant per eligible apprentice

a) Minister, what assessment has been made of the resource implications for small and medium enterprises when taking on apprentices or trainees, particularly in terms of staff time, supervision, and administrative requirements?

No formal assessment has yet been undertaken to understand the resource implications for small and medium-sized enterprises when taking on apprentices or trainees. However, feedback gathered through the consultation that informed the Apprenticeship Report published in December 2025 highlighted that employers often find the process costly, particularly due to the time required for supervision, training, and supporting new staff. While this sits largely within MSED's remit, there is value in continuing to work collaboratively to ensure any future policy interventions are aligned, complementary, and geared towards achieving shared outcomes for employers, apprentices, and the wider skills system.

4) What mechanisms are in place to forecast future skills needs, and how will these inform policy and funding decisions?

Skills Jersey uses a multi-layered evidence-based approach, these include labour market analysis, employer engagement, collaboration with education and training providers, community and individual feedback and comparison with external benchmarks such as alignment with the UK national skills gap list.

These mechanisms will inform policy and funding decisions to ensure that skills programmes and apprenticeship support remain targeted and aligned with the islands future needs.

5) How is the Government planning to equip young people and adult learners with the digital and analytical skills needed to adapt to a labour market where entry-level roles may diminish?

CYPES is taking a strategic and long-term approach to ensure that young people and adult learners are equipped with the digital and analytical skills needed for a labour market where traditional entry-level roles may diminish. Central to this effort is the Digital Education Strategy, which commits to embedding digital capability across the entire education system. The strategy emphasises the need for all learners to access “dynamic, relevant, and innovative learning experiences” that enable them to build the digital skills required for future employment. It also sets out the ambition that every child and young person in Jersey should benefit from consistent digital provision and modern learning tools, ensuring that digital literacy is developed from the earliest stages of education.

The strategy also recognises the growing importance of data in every sector and emphasises the development of stronger analytical skills across the curriculum. It highlights the need for learners and educators to work in ways that make intelligent use of information and data, encouraging critical thinking and interpretation. This includes supporting teachers to use data more effectively in their own practice and ensuring that digital problem-solving is embedded across subject areas, not treated as a standalone discipline. These principles reflect CYPES's commitment to preparing young people for a data-driven economy in which interpreting, questioning, and applying information will be fundamental to employability.

a) What assessment has been made of the potential impact of artificial intelligence on entry level and administrative roles in Jersey?

Feedback from industry is AI is currently viewed as another tool that supports workers to do their job rather than replacing them entirely. Competence is being developed through use on the job, specific training in AI was not viewed as a priority training need at this time.

As with previous technological developments, such as cloud services and remote working tools introduced during Covid, the job market will continue to adapt. Some roles may evolve as AI automates components of entry level and administrative roles, and workers may need to upskill or retrain over time. Government programmes, including the apprenticeship funding review and the Skills Development Scheme, aim to support this by enabling broader access to retraining and developing the technical skills needed for a sustainable economy.

b) What support will be available for those currently employed in entry level positions to retrain or upskill?

Employees in entry-level roles can access a wide range of support to retrain or upskill, including:

- Free career guidance
- Skills Mentoring and personalised development support
- Apprenticeships course fee subsidy if relevant to the role
- Skills Development Scheme funded/subsidised short courses if relevant to the role

6) What steps is the Government taking to identify the technical skills required to support Jersey's transition to green technologies and a sustainable economy?

The Government is taking several coordinated steps to understand which technical skills Jersey will need as it moves towards green technologies and a sustainable future:

1. Analysing local vacancy data
Officers in Skills Jersey and the Economy Department review Jersey's job advertisements to understand the types of roles available and the qualifications and skill levels employers are seeking.
2. Conducting wider labour-market modelling
They assess broader labour-market trends and model future scenarios, considering factors such as:
 - a. Population growth
 - b. Potential migration patterns
 - c. Expected growth in key sectorsThis helps forecast where technical skill shortages may arise in a transitioning economy.
3. Assessing demand factors
The analysis also includes examining the effects of:
 - a. An ageing population, especially on health and care roles
 - b. Historic employment trends across age groupsThese insights help identify future pressures on the workforce.

4. Gathering input from government subject and sector specialists

Officers work with teams involved in:

- a. The Carbon Neutral Roadmap
- b. The Future Economy Programme
- c. Broader local economic planning

This ensures skills planning aligns with Jersey's environmental and economic strategies.

5. Engaging employers and industry professionals

Knowledge gathering from relevant employers and professionals helps identify emerging green skills needs, ensuring the skills priorities reflect real-world industry requirements.

6. Regularly updating the Skills Priorities list

The entire analysis process is scheduled to be repeated in 2026, ensuring the skills priorities list remains current, forward-looking, and aligned with Jersey's evolving green-economy goals.

7) Minister, how will apprenticeship programmes and lifelong vocational learning be adapted to prepare the workforce for emerging roles in renewable energy, sustainable construction, and other green sectors?

The first wave of funding from the Skills Development Scheme will create a pipeline for a future workforce that will support a sustainable economy:

Solar and roofing training supports installation and maintenance of renewable energy systems.

Low-carbon heating design and installation builds capacity for heat pumps and other efficient systems.

Data analysis and data science underpin effective energy monitoring, optimisation and resource efficiency.

Historic property management supports sustainable approaches to maintaining older buildings, including energy-efficient retrofit work.

Together, these courses will help ensure the workforce has the technical capability needed for a sustainable, future-ready economy.

Legislation, Regulation, and Policy Frameworks

8) Minister, could you outline the current legislative, regulatory, and policy frameworks that underpin lifelong vocational learning in Jersey?

The Education (Jersey) Law 1999 provides the statutory basis for education including continuing education for adults, which underpins lifelong learning. Part 8 outlines the duties of the Minister which include:

- Suitable education and training opportunities are available
- Review demand for vocational education
- Consulting employers on current future education requirements
- Promoting continuing education
- The power to provide education or financial assistance to enable access to education

Children, Young People, Education and Skills Department: describes responsibility for further education, apprenticeships and wider skills policy, forming the structural governance framework for lifelong learning:

- Provides and monitors the curriculum and teaching for 3 to 19 year olds.
- Oversees delivery of the Jersey youth service (up to age 25 years)
- Oversees school admission policies including access to publicly funded further and higher education.¹
 - Access to free post-16 education:
 - CYPES funded establishment
 - Resident for 1 year before course start
 - Living with parent/guardian
 - Access to free post-19 education:
 - Resident for 1 year before course start
 - Does not include adult education courses

Skills Jersey provides government-supported career guidance:

- Career guidance to school age students and adults
- Mentoring support
- Help to secure apprenticeship and general work experience placements
- Administers the apprenticeships subsidy
- Skills gap analysis and consultation with employers, industry representatives and education providers
 - Link future skills needs with current provision
 - Administers the Skills Development Scheme

Funding for individual students

Apprenticeships: The designated Skills Jersey webpage for apprenticeship funding outlines eligibility criteria and application link to access £1,852 grant, typically for one day per week of provision in College.

Vocational and arts-related qualifications: Grant entitlement is outlined in Education (Grants and Allowances) (Jersey) Order for:

- Level 2 & 3 qualifications undertaken off island (skills bursary £6,675 per year for 2 years)
- Level 3 qualification in an arts-related subject (anywhere in the British Islands, including in Jersey) one-year, full time. Grant capped at fee charged by Highlands College for an equivalent course

Funding the courses

All Higher and Further education courses are funded primarily by the taxpayer either directly or via grant schemes. Government funding is supplemented by fees and other expenses borne by individuals or employers.

Employers may be eligible for a further subsidy from the apprenticeship subsidy scheme, or from the Student Finance budget for Higher Education fees for any approved course whether on or off-island.

¹ [Microsoft Word - P Access to Publicly Funded Education web](#)

The Highlands College core budget, the apprentice subsidy scheme and student grants are all funded by the taxpayer and are subject to approval of a suitable budget through government's annual Budget process.

9) Are there plans to update or expand these frameworks during the 2026 - 2029 budget period, and how will such changes ensure coherence between policy objectives, funding allocations, and delivery mechanisms?

Officers will continue to develop a new and improved funding scheme for apprenticeships, informed by the findings of the recently published report 'Apprenticeship Funding: Stakeholder Perspectives.' More wide-ranging changes to the frameworks that support lifelong vocational learning, including any additional funding, will be a matter for the next government. With the pre-election period fast approaching, it would not be appropriate to commit to long-term policy or funding changes at this time. These decisions should be taken by the incoming minister, who should have the opportunity to consider priorities and form their own views.

Funding and Strategic Planning

10) The Budget 2025 - 2028 identified "investing in lifelong learning and future skills provision" as one of twelve strategic priorities. Could you provide detail on how this investment has been operationalised to date?

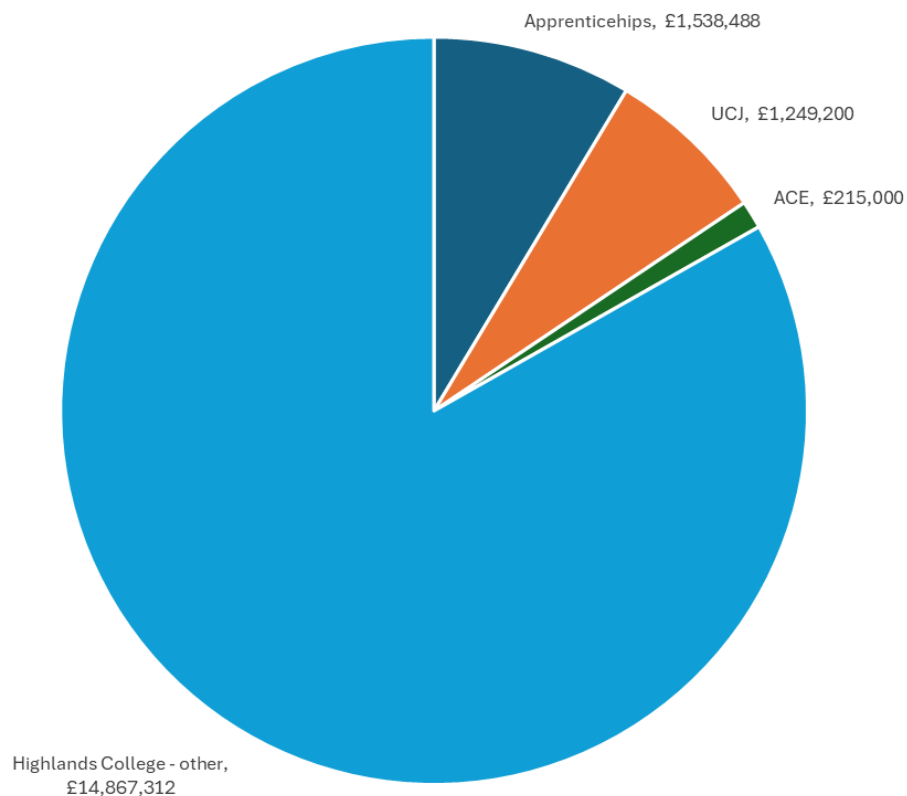
Measures introduced under CSP commitment

Skills Development Scheme: List of sectors for priority funding identified and tender process in progress to develop new training pathways on island.

Distance learning: Enhancements to financial support for this mode supports adults to access flexible education. This includes level 4+ vocational courses that are bolstered through work-based learning. For example, Teesside University offer electrical and mechanical engineering courses through distance learning.² Accessing these types of courses supports lifelong learning enabling individuals to undertake professional development and progress their technical knowledge to a higher level.

² [100% Online learning courses | Online learning | Teesside University](#) offers lots of courses linked to engineering and construction. Teesside is rated Gold (highest grade) by the regulator [TEF 2023 outcomes](#)

a) Could you outline the proportion of funding earmarked for apprenticeships versus other forms of lifelong learning?



The above chart represents the total expenditure budget at Highlands College (excluding income) of £17.8 million split by the direct cost of apprenticeships (£1.5 million) as previously reported and compared against other lifelong learning activity such as Adult and Community Education (£215 thousand), and University College Jersey (£1.25 million). The 'other' section includes further education, 6th form and equivalent, SEN support, and the indirect costs of running the College.

Yours sincerely,

Deputy Rob Ward
Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning