

Good morning

I have spent quite a bit of time looking at the information on the website and the provision of a solid apprenticeship scheme and I have compiled the attached looking at it from my side of things. The first stumbling block for small business owners and sole traders is very apparent when Gov.je do not allow them to even register on the Trident scheme. Why? There is no option for these businesses to apply for any support or grants, which to me, as a sole trader for over forty years, can offer experience and expertise in my particular field of electro-mechanical engineering. This is very short sighted of Gov.je!

Kind regards

Nigel

Recommendations for engaging small business owners and sole traders in Jersey's lifelong vocational learning review

Small business owners and sole traders carry lived experience of skills needs, training barriers, and workable solutions. Here's how to make them central to identifying provision, shaping policy, strengthening apprenticeships, and benchmarking Jersey against good practice.

Identifying current lifelong vocational learning provision in Jersey

- **Map grassroots provision:** Build a live register of micro-learning offers (in-house upskilling, mentoring circles, sector meetups, supplier-led training) by surveying sole traders and SMEs by sector, size, and location. Use the States Assembly review call for evidence as the focal channel to capture submissions and invite employer-hosted training data.
- **Use sector “listening labs”:** Convene short, themed roundtables (construction, hospitality, digital, finance ops, care) with micro- and small firms to document what exists outside formal FE—e.g., on-the-job learning, product vendor certifications, and professional body CPD. Cross-reference with Skills Jersey pathways and internship/work experience routes to reveal entry ramps.
- **Surface informal-to-formal bridges:** Ask SMEs what informal learning should be credit-bearing, feeding a catalog of bite-sized modules at Highlands/partners that convert workplace learning into micro-credentials visible in the FE agenda.

Assessing legislation, regulation, and policy that strengthen lifelong vocational learning

- **Run a policy impact clinic:** Invite small firms to stress-test the Education (Jersey) Law 1999 and current public service learning policy against their realities (release time, flexible delivery, recognition of prior learning), capturing friction points and quick fixes.
- **Codify employer voice:** Establish an SME advisory reference group feeding into the Scrutiny Panel's evidence cycle, ensuring the policy refresh aligns with flexible, demand-led provision and the island's skills priorities.
- **Clarify compliance and incentives:** Publish simplified guidance for micro-employers on how training time, fees, and assessment are treated (e.g., tax, grants, wage subsidies), linked to the FE and Skills Actionable Agenda's delivery gaps.

Reviewing apprenticeship structure, funding, and effectiveness

- **Co-design a demand-led model:** Use employer cohorts to test the proposed single Jersey Apprenticeship Programme funding model (merging Highlands and Trackers), focusing on cost-sharing, tuition grants, and progression routes in high-need trades and tech roles.
- **Pilot micro-apprenticeships:** Create 6–12 month modular apprenticeships for small firms, with shared training blocks and pooled assessment to reduce administrative overhead; validate effectiveness through the government’s planned review cycle and publish key findings for transparency.
- **Reduce barriers for sole traders:** Offer “apprentice host networks” where micro-employers can jointly host one apprentice rotating across businesses, backed by streamlined paperwork and central pastoral support.

Understanding lifelong vocational learning’s role in closing skills gaps and supporting economic development

- **Sector-led skills dashboards:** Ask small firms to report quarterly skill pressures (vacancies, time-to-competence, upskill priorities), building a simple dashboard that informs FE/CPD commissioning and investment decisions highlighted by ministers.
- **Future skills alignment sprints:** Partner SMEs with Highlands tutors to update curricula and create short, stackable units in areas like green construction, digital ops, and care pathways—reinforcing industry collaboration already recognized locally.
- **Rapid response training funds:** Create a micro-grant for SMEs to run high-impact, short training responding to immediate skills gaps, with outcomes fed back into the island-wide plan.

Benchmarking against good practice from other jurisdictions

- **Adopt progression-friendly modularity:** Align local vocational modules and apprenticeships to international best practice on level clarity, progression pathways from lower to higher levels, and employability skills embedded across programs.
- **Scale continuing vocational training models:** Borrow Europe’s continuing vocational training (CVT) approaches—co-financing, learning accounts, and recognition of prior learning—to make upskilling accessible to micro-employers and adult learners.
- **Blend classroom and workplace learning:** Formalize mixed delivery (block release, on-the-job projects, vendor certifications) with clear credit transfer, mirroring international TVET standards that enhance progression and employer relevance.

Practical engagement methods tailored to small businesses and sole traders

- **Simple, fast input channels:**
 - **One-page evidence forms:** Focus on key pain points, costs, time constraints, and suggested fixes.
 - **15-minute phone clinics:** Target traders who prefer voice over email; capture structured notes into the evidence base.

- **Low-lift participation:**
 - **Evening pop-up roundtables:** Rotate across parishes; provide summaries and immediate action logs tied to the FE agenda.
 - **Trade association relays:** Use chambers, guilds, and sector groups to disseminate surveys and collect stories that reveal actual training flows.
- **Feedback that matters:**
 - **Publish “you said, we did” updates:** Track changes to apprenticeship funding, flexible delivery, and recognition mechanisms so small firms see their input reflected.
 - **Pilot-first policy:** Test adjustments with small cohorts, measure costs and outcomes, then scale—avoiding stalled implementation flagged in previous strategies.

1. Current provision of lifelong vocational learning in Jersey

- **Grassroots mapping:** Capture informal training, mentoring, and sector meetups run by SMEs.
- **Sector listening labs:** Host short roundtables by industry (construction, hospitality, digital, care) to document existing provision.
- **Informal-to-formal bridges:** Identify workplace learning that could be converted into micro-credentials.

2. Legislation, regulation, and policy

- **Policy impact clinics:** Stress-test current laws and policies against SME realities (time, cost, flexibility).
- **SME advisory group:** Formalize employer voice in shaping vocational learning policy.
- **Simplified compliance guidance:** Provide clear information on tax, grants, and wage subsidies for training.

3. Apprenticeship schemes

- **Demand-led apprenticeship model:** Co-design funding and structure with small firms.
- **Micro-apprenticeships:** Short, modular apprenticeships tailored to SMEs.
- **Apprentice host networks:** Allow sole traders to jointly host apprentices with shared support.

4. Addressing skills gaps and economic development

- **Skills dashboards:** SMEs report quarterly skill pressures to inform training priorities.
- **Curriculum sprints:** Partner SMEs with educators to update vocational modules.
- **Rapid response training funds:** Micro-grants for SMEs to deliver short, targeted training.

5. Benchmarking against good practice

- **Progression-friendly modularity:** Align vocational modules with international standards for clear career pathways.
- **Continuing vocational training models:** Adopt co-financing and learning accounts from European practice.
- **Blended learning structures:** Combine classroom, workplace projects, and vendor certifications with credit transfer.

Engagement methods

- **One-page evidence forms:** Simple surveys for SMEs to share pain points and solutions.
- **Pop-up roundtables:** Evening sessions across parishes for accessible participation.
- **Trade association relays:** Use chambers and guilds to collect sector-specific input.
- **You said, we did updates:** Show SMEs how their feedback influenced policy.
- **Pilot-first policy:** Test changes with small cohorts before scaling.

Would you like me to **draft a sample one-page evidence form** that Jersey's small businesses could use to feed into this review, or would you prefer a **model agenda for a sector listening lab** to kickstart engagement?