Good afternoon,

Thank you for considering us on this matter please see below our collective ideas.

Does the increase in subsidised nursery provision for 2–3-year-olds, including the expansion from 15 to 20 funded hours and the inclusion of Nannies, adequately address current affordability and accessibility challenges for families, and what impact

might this have on demand for childminding services?

- The increase in subsidised nursery provision for 2–3-year-olds will not necessarily make childcare more affordable, as parents may simply receive a rebate rather than a genuine reduction in their overall childcare costs, particularly if they cannot also benefit from tax allowances. While the additional funded hours may encourage some families to access childcare who would otherwise be unable to afford it, the lack of available places remains a significant barrier. This is particularly true for childminders, where availability is limited. Families who already have a childminder's place may benefit, but those seeking a place solely for the funded hours may struggle to find a provider able to accommodate them. Our under-school age ratio is capped to 3 children so this means we are very limited as minders would ideally be filling these spaces with full-time children, as part timers mean its harder to find families wanting the exact offering available.

What impact do you anticipate the proposed childcare measures will have on demand for childminding services, and does the sector currently have sufficient capacity to meet that demand?

- It is likely that the proposed increase in funded childcare hours will lead to greater demand for childminder spaces, particularly from families who do not currently use registered childcare. However, an increase in demand does not automatically mean that childminders will have the capacity to accommodate it. I feel confident in saying that, under the current circumstances, we simply do not have the capacity to meet this additional demand.

Childminder spaces are often filled up to a year in advance, meaning that many of us will already have our places allocated for September 2027. This leaves very little flexibility to accommodate additional hours for children who are already registered with us.

For example, a child currently attending for 15 funded hours may become eligible for an increased allocation. However, their childminder may not have the availability to offer those extra hours. This is particularly challenging because of the restrictions imposed by

our ratios, including the limit of three children under school age. Even where a childminder is willing to offer additional hours, they may simply not have the capacity to do so without exceeding these restrictions.

Furthermore, applying to CEYS for an extension to our registered numbers is unlikely to provide a realistic solution, as approval is far from guaranteed.

Therefore, while the proposed increase in funded hours may be welcomed by families, I do not believe that the current childminding sector has sufficient capacity to make a significant impact in meeting this additional need. Unless there is a realistic plan to address the existing limitations on childminder capacity, there is a risk that families will be entitled to more funded hours on paper but will struggle to find a provider able to offer them in practice.

What recruitment, retention and professional development challenges does the childminding sector currently face, and does the Proposed Budget provide sufficient support to address them?

-We do not believe that childminding is a role that can simply be recruited for in the traditional sense. Childminding is a self-employed profession, where individuals are running their own businesses, and it is a role that a person must genuinely want to undertake. It requires commitment, passion, resilience and a real understanding of the responsibility involved in caring for and educating young children.

Understanding why people choose to become childminders is also important. For many, the initial motivation is to work alongside their own children while providing a service to other families. However, the reality of the profession can quickly become very different from what they originally imagined.

We also need to challenge the stigma that childminders are simply babysitters. Childminding is a profession that provides far more than supervision. Jersey childminders create meaningful learning experiences, plan engaging activities and support children's development through play, exploration and everyday experiences. Many are highly qualified practitioners who continually develop their knowledge and skills through continuing professional development (CPD), ensuring they provide the highest possible standard of childcare.

This is not a case of children sitting in front of a television while a childminder gets on with household chores. It is a profession centred on children's learning, development, wellbeing and individual needs.

Yet, despite the level of responsibility and professionalism required, there are very few tangible benefits to undertaking this work. For many, childminding is more of a vocation than a career with clear rewards or progression opportunities.

As self-employed professionals, childminders often have very limited support. We do not have access to an HR department, workplace benefits or the usual employment structures that other childcare practitioners may rely upon. Much of our support comes from fellow childminders and JACC members, who understand the realities of the role because they experience them first-hand.

We must also meet the changing needs of the families who depend on our services. This requires flexibility in our working arrangements, often with little flexibility in return. Childminders can work from 7 am until 5 pm, and sometimes beyond, while managing the demands of running a business, caring for children, meeting regulatory requirements and maintaining professional standards.

It can be a thankless profession, with limited recognition, few opportunities for progression and very little incentive for people to remain in the role long term.

Professional development presents another significant challenge. As self-employed individuals, we are responsible for identifying, accessing and often funding our own CPD. Although some training expenses may be tax-deductible, this does not remove the upfront financial cost or the time commitment involved. For childminders working long days, training often has to take place during evenings or weekends, with no additional income for that time.

This can understandably put people off pursuing further qualifications and development. While the basic training requirements may be completed, there needs to be a more accessible and engaging pathway for practitioners who want to develop their knowledge and improve their practice.

CEYS do provide training sessions; however, feedback from some members suggests that these do not always meet their needs. Training needs to be relevant, practical, collaborative, and designed to build on existing professional knowledge, rather than leaving experienced practitioners feeling that they are being taught things they already know.

This raises an important question: how can we expect childminders to develop, improve and remain in the profession if the support, training and incentives available to them do not adequately reflect the demands of the role?

We are also unclear about how the available budget is intended to address these challenges. From what we can see, the emphasis appears to be on supporting families, rather than supporting the childcare sector who provide the childcare those families rely upon.How about supporting both.

Supporting families is undoubtedly important. However, sustainable childcare cannot be achieved by supporting families alone. We must also invest in the workforce and the self-employed professionals who deliver these services every day.

Is the level of funding and support provided through the Proposed Budget sufficient to ensure the long-term sustainability of childminding businesses, particularly in light of rising operating costs and regulatory requirements?

- No, because we have not seen any evidence of funding or financial support that would enable us to sustain and run our business in the long term.

We have also not heard of any increase in tax-allowable business expenses that would help ease the financial pressures we are facing. As a result, we struggle to see how this budget increase will benefit our business in any meaningful way.

Our concern is that, rather than providing genuine support, these changes will simply lead to an increased workload and greater stress, particularly when we are unable to help families who need our services due to regulatory restrictions. Having to turn families away when we know they need support is incredibly difficult, both professionally and personally.

Without clear financial support, meaningful changes to allowable business expenses, or a review of the regulations that restrict the help we can provide, we do not feel this budget increase will benefit us or the families who rely on our services. Instead, it risks placing further pressure on an already challenging situation without addressing the underlying issues.

Do you anticipate any unintended consequences arising from the proposed childcare measures, including impacts on the viability of childminding services or parental choice between childcare providers?

- We are pleased to see families across the Island receiving additional support to help ease the financial pressures of childcare. However, the concern goes far beyond the financial benefit to families, and it is important to consider whether the childcare sector has the capacity to meet the increased demand this support may create.

At present, there is simply not enough meaningful availability within the sector to accommodate additional children or the increased hours of childcare that families may

require. The limited availability that does exist would fall significantly short of the potential 20 hours being discussed, particularly if hours are being used as a measure to calculate the financial allowance.

While this initiative may help alleviate financial pressures for families, it risks placing further strain on an already stretched childcare sector. Ultimately, this could create additional frustration for parents who are eligible for financial support and have the means to pay for childcare, but are unable to access the spaces or hours they need because providers simply do not have the capacity.

This creates a difficult situation for everyone involved. Families are being offered financial assistance to help them access childcare, yet without sufficient provision, that support may not translate into a meaningful or practical benefit. Instead, the pressure is shifted from household finances onto an already overstretched sector, with parents potentially left feeling just as frustrated as before.

The issue, therefore, is not simply about making childcare more affordable, but ensuring that sufficient, accessible childcare provision exists to meet the demand. Financial support is undoubtedly welcome, but without a parallel commitment to increasing capacity, supporting providers and addressing workforce challenges, there is a real risk that the intended benefits for families will be undermined by the lack of available childcare.

Does the Proposed Budget provide sufficient support to improve access to childcare for children with additional needs or disabilities within childminding settings? If not, what further support would be beneficial?

- No, we do not feel the proposed budget provides sufficient support for childminders caring for children with additional needs or disabilities. The funding appears to be aimed at helping families with the cost of childcare, but there has been no clear information provided to show whether any funding will be available directly to childminders.

While financial support for families is welcome, it does not automatically give childminders the additional resources needed to care for children with additional needs. This may involve extra time, specialist training, additional equipment or extra support to ensure each child receives the care they need.

There is also the important issue that caring for a child who requires additional adjustments may affect the number of other children we are able to care for. Depending on the child's individual needs and the requirements set by CYS (Children and Young People Services), our registered or permitted numbers may be reduced. This can mean that by offering a place to a child who needs additional support, we may lose the

capacity to care for other children, directly affecting our income and the number of places we can offer to families.

Without appropriate financial support and practical help to reflect these additional responsibilities and limitations, childminders may find it increasingly difficult to offer places to children with additional needs, despite wanting to provide inclusive childcare.

If the aim is to improve access to childcare for these children, there needs to be clear and direct support for childminders, not just financial assistance for parents. Without this, families may receive help towards childcare costs but still struggle to find a suitable childminder, as providers may not have the capacity or resources to meet their child's needs.

We would welcome clearer information on whether any funding is planned specifically for childminders, and what practical and financial support will be available to help us provide inclusive childcare, manage any reduction in our available spaces, and increase access for children with additional needs or disabilities.

Are there any specific proposals, projects or funding allocations within the Proposed Budget 2027–2030 or accompanying Annex that the Jersey Association of Childminders considers should be amended, expanded or prioritised differently?

-ratio- We feel that some childminders have the space, experience and resources to care for an additional child, and that there should be more flexibility to allow this where it is safe and appropriate. Allowing an increase in the childminder-to-child ratio, where individual circumstances and safety requirements permit, could create more childcare places for families while also allowing childminders to increase their income. We believe this is worth considering as part of the budget discussions, as it could help address the shortage of available childcare places without necessarily requiring new settings to be established. Any changes should take into account the childminder's individual circumstances, the ages and needs of the children in their care, and their ability to maintain high standards of care.

Offering evening courses or more flexible training options could make it easier for more people to gain the qualifications needed to become qualified and help increase the number of people entering the sector.

We also believe that financial support for people undertaking childcare qualifications would be beneficial. The cost of training, alongside the time required to complete it, can be a barrier for those wishing to enter the profession. By funding training and providing financial assistance where needed, the Government could help attract more qualified

people into childcare, support the existing workforce, and increase the availability of childcare places for Jersey families.

Support from the Government would go along way to keeping faith in the profession, As we are regulated by the Government we must follow their regulations but that's where it ends, there is no on going support, No support/back up when we "should" close due to storms/covid, No support when the parents do not want to pay the higher fee the Government allowed us to charge. We are simply picked up and then dropped as suits which offers no reassurance for those who want to stay in this role but leave for more stability.

Best wishes

The JACC Committee