



Early Years Roundtable Series 2023/24

Messages for policy makers in Jersey

By Jodie Reed, Natalie Parish and Sally Hogg, Isos Partnership

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Executive summary

Between November 2023 and January 2024, a group of 24 early years stakeholders from across Jersey met for a series of roundtable discussions about the future direction of policy. The group included representatives from the early education and childcare sector, public health, third sector, family and parent support organisations, employers, Government officials and parents. The group drew on their rich understanding of the services and systems that support the youngest children and their families in Jersey, insights from the latest local data as well as international evidence and ideas from outside Jersey.

They identified a critical need for new approaches to secure and improve outcomes. Providing children with the best possible start to life is a critical priority for families and will be essential for the island's future. Yet children's needs and families' lives have become far more complex in Jersey. This is creating more pressures and expectation on an already burdened system. There is, therefore, a need to think and work differently.

In thinking about making change, some key overarching principles emerged early in the discussions which framed much of the succeeding conversations, and which policy makers should also bear in mind. These are:

- ⇒ We need to be holistic and joined-up, thinking across service and setting boundaries
- ⇒ We need a clearer offer to families - but not a "one size fits all" solution
- ⇒ We need to empower parents as children's primary caregivers and first educators
- ⇒ We need to harness and build on existing system strengths – including Best Start
- ⇒ We need to learn from past experiences and develop a sustainable model for change

In more specific terms, the discussions enabled partners to form greater shared and informed understandings of the challenges and obstacles that need surmounting. With this starting point, the group generated many ideas and some clear shared priorities for the future direction of travel. These are summarised in the six policy imperatives below. Participants look forward to continuing the conversation and hope these imperatives, alongside the detail in the report, will provide a useful guide for Ministers and decision-makers as they consider both long-term aspirations and improvements which could be secured over the next two years.

- A. Provide accessible support from the very start, and ensure no child or family goes unseen or falls through the net between services by developing **more integrated community-based centres and clear multi-agency local support offers for families with children from pre-birth to the end of their school reception year**. New locality models could be scoped and piloted in priority communities in the near term, with a clear plan put in place for their sustainable development across the island.
- B. Improve the supply and shape of early education and childcare places to better match the needs of Jersey families' by **engaging and listening to parents to better understand needs and plan provision, encouraging school and private and voluntary providers to**

work together to address gaps in flexible provision in local communities, and by prioritising workforce challenges across the island. These are all areas where action could – and should - be taken immediately.

- C. Enable all families to make positive choices about how they balance family life and work without affordability being a barrier by ***extending the funded free offer, starting with a free funded early childhood education and care (ECEC) for 2–3-year-old children from low income households or otherwise at risk of disadvantage, and a stronger offer for children with emerging special educational needs and disability.*** Better enable parents to support their children in the first 1001 days of life, ***including through more generous paid parental leave offer for families from lower income groups.***
- D. Address challenges to recruiting and retaining capable and motivated early years practitioners through ***an innovative modern workforce strategy which adopts new recruitment approaches to attract the most able and motivated candidates, addresses low pay and regulatory challenges faced by childminders, and draws on community expertise and strengths to build quality throughout the system.*** There is also a desire to ***develop the whole early years workforce in a more integrated way*** in the future, so that those working with young children can develop more common understandings.
- E. Continue to evolve and strengthen systems for oversight and accountability, ***including engaging parents to understand if they need or would benefit from more/different information about early education and childcare providers, ensuring reviewer expertise is constantly refreshed with the latest international evidence, and fully harnessing learning from reviews to inform improvements across the system.*** Some feel there would be merit in a more integrated approach to accountability and looking at alternative models that which have the potential to deliver greater independence, such as the Jersey Care Commission.

Within each theme, areas of further learning were identified – and across the board there was a message that engaging parents more effectively and hearing their voices is essential to better understanding families’ needs and choices, and to shape services in response.

As independent facilitators, we were struck by the strong commitment, momentum and good will from all partners across the roundtable conversations. Some connections forged in the discussions are already leading to direct conversations between partners. Roundtable participants are looking forward to continuing to work with each other and with Government decision-makers to deliver the best possible outcomes for Jersey.

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About the Early Years Roundtables

Between November 2023 and January 2024, a group of 24 early years stakeholders across Jersey met for a series of four roundtable discussions about the future direction of policy. The group included representatives from the early education and childcare sector, public health, third sector family and parent support organisations, employers, officials from Government of Jersey and parents. A full list of attendees is provided at **Annex 1**. Isos Partnership provided independent facilitation for the discussions.

The aim of the series of roundtables was to provide an opportunity for those with different perspectives to share reflections on current challenges and to work collaboratively and creatively to set out desired future policy directions. It was not run as a consultation - but we deliberately selected a group of experts who were collectively familiar with a broad cross-section of views and concerns about the early years from across Jersey. Each roundtable had a thematic focus, with the group taking time initially to review evidence and exchange perspectives on the current state of play and challenges, before looking ahead to consider future aspirations and the kinds of changes needed. Five critical and interconnected policy and delivery challenges were identified and discussed in depth.

- ⇒ Challenge 1. How can we develop a more integrated early years support offer for families from birth onwards?
- ⇒ Challenge 2. How can we create Early Childhood Education and Childcare (ECEC) provision that matches what families need?
- ⇒ Challenge 3. How should the ECEC offer in Jersey be developed so that it works for all families with children aged 0-3?
- ⇒ Challenge 4. How can we transform Jersey's ECEC workforce so that it has the capacity to meet changing needs and is fit for the future?
- ⇒ Challenge 5. How can we ensure that the systems of governance and oversight within the early years support sustainability and deliver the best possible quality and performance?

The conversations were informed and stimulated by a variety of material, principally:

- A series of presentations from expert speakers. Contributors were: Kirsty Pearson, Government of Jersey economist; Sally Hogg, creator of the First 1001 Days Movement and Senior Policy Fellow at the Centre for Research on Play in Education, Development and Learning at the University of Cambridge; Katie Falle of 4Insight who have conducted the first ever Jersey childcare and early years providers survey, and June O'Sullivan, Chief Executive of London Early Years Foundation, the UK's largest charitable childcare social enterprise.
- International evidence and examples brought by Isos Partnership, much of which was set out in their evidence paper which was published by Government of Jersey earlier in 2023,

[Messages for Jersey from the UK and international evidence on optimising early childhood education and childcare \(ECEC\).](#)

- Background information and framing contributions from the former Assistant Minister for Children and Education Deputy Louise Doublet, and from Government of Jersey officials.
- The priorities and policy direction set out in the last major review of early years policy within Jersey - the [Early Years Policy Development Board \(2020\)](#). Participants were invited to fill out a short pre-event survey which invited them to revisit these ideas.

The remainder of this report captures the key emerging messages and points of consensus – and difference - from the discussions. It does not contain specific policy recommendations but gives some clear proposed policy directions and imperatives for change, which are intended to enhance understanding of the challenges and guide future planning. Making a reality of the vision set out across the report will be a whole system task – indeed a consequence of the roundtables conversations is that some participants are already beginning to work together on specific tricky issues and aspects of this. The full realisation of this vision will require a clear strategy, funding commitments and impetus from future Ministers. There are real opportunities for government action to make meaningful improvements to the lives of young children and their families within the next two years – as well as set in motion longer term system changes.

The urgent need for action on early years

Early years matters for Jersey

Providing children with the best possible start to life is a critical priority for Jersey families today, and essential for the island's future.

Participants agreed that the vision for early years articulated by the Early Years Policy Development Board in 2020 is still valid today.

"The development of a system that: - improves the experiences and outcomes for all children during the Early Years- by providing all young children from conception to five with accessible, affordable, high quality, enjoyable education and care provision within their community, and- promoting children's development and well-being whilst facilitating an acceptable work-life balance within their family by recognising the valuable role of childrearing and meeting their parents' childcare needs."

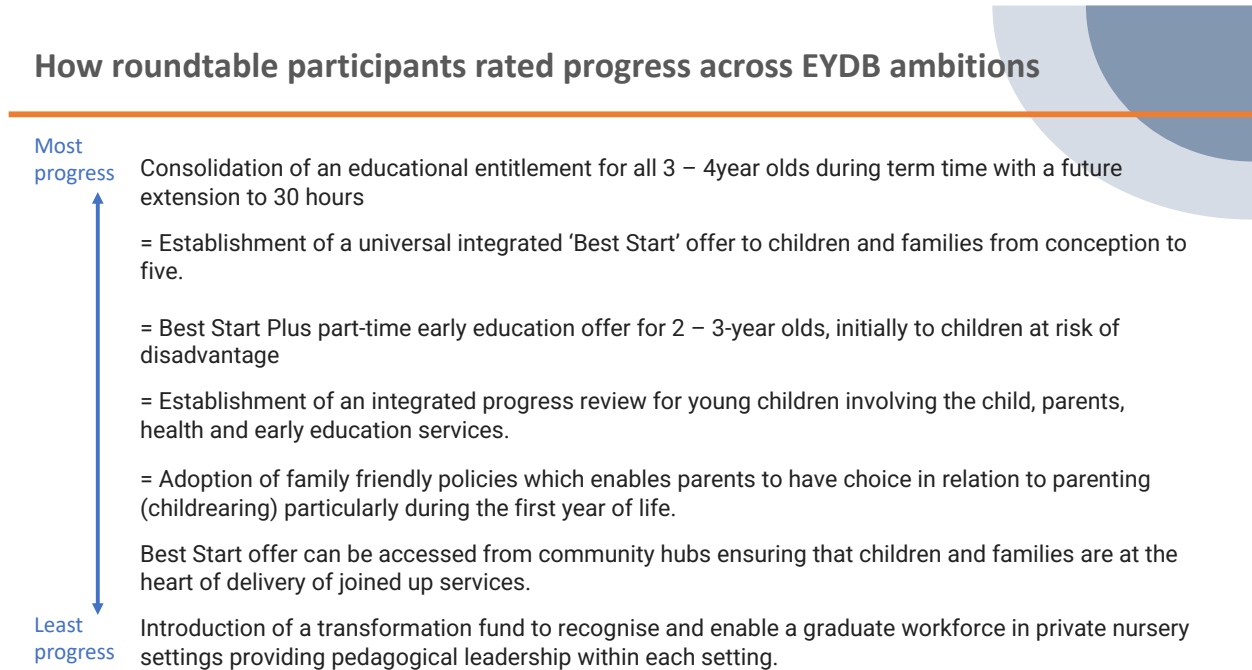
Realising this vision is essential for ensuring the wellbeing of families in Jersey, and for supporting the positive development and future life chances of Jersey's children. We know that being able to provide a positive environment at home, and parents having agency to make choices about how they balance work and care, are integral to children and families' wellbeing. The link between early years development and outcomes later in life has also long been clear from observational studies, but has been enhanced by [growing understanding of early childhood brain science](#) which shows the critical importance of strong early development, from pre-birth onward.

Participants spoke about how supporting children and families in the early years is critical for the island as a whole – for the economy today, for the future workforce, for improving early identification of need and reducing the costs of meeting very complex needs at a later stage. One participant said: *"There is increased awareness of the importance of social and emotional skills across the whole workforce on the island. And we know this is where it all starts"*. Another emphasised that good early years support, including a solid early education and childcare offer, could help incentivise families to stay living in Jersey.

However, whilst acknowledgement of the importance of early years is not new in Jersey, progress has been mixed. The [Early Years Policy Development Board](#) set out six priorities for change in 2020 (summarised in the ambitions listed in **Figure 1**). Whilst wanting to re-visit some of the detail, participants felt that these priorities were all still relevant. Yet whilst there has been good progress in relation to consolidating the educational entitlement for all 3 – 4year olds and extension to 30 hours, there has been no or little progress in enabling access to Best Start services from community hubs, in developing a clear offer of childcare and other

services for 0-2s, or in the introduction of a transformation fund to enable a graduate workforce in private nursery settings.

Figure 1: Roundtable participants’ ranking of progress of the Early Years Policy Development Board priority areas from pre-event survey



A new world of need – and of expectation

The context for early years support has become more challenging in recent years.

Need is growing and there is increasing complexity of need amongst young children. Participants observe that the level of identified neurodivergence is growing, there are more children with additional needs, and there is an increased complexity of needs compared to a few years ago. Echoing wider international trends since the Pandemic, professionals are noticing less developed social and emotional skills, increased speech, language and communication needs and reduced ability to self-sooth and self-regulate.

Increased needs are, at least in part, a reflection of wider hardships faced by a growing minority of families in Jersey. Participants agreed that there are a growing number of babies and young children living in families with high levels of need – these include parental mental health problems, alcohol use, and poverty. Growing poverty is a particular concern, and more young children living in sub-standard accommodation.¹ The cost-of-living crisis has exacerbated these challenges. Where parents have the skills to support their children, they may lack the resource

¹ Of the estimated 4,000 children in households in relative low income (RLI) for net income after housing costs, an estimated 1,400 of those are aged 0-5. - [R Income Distribution Report 2021 20230630 SJ.pdf \(gov.je\)](#)

and capacities. Some work multiple jobs/long hours to get by financially and *“don’t have any headspace”*. These parents do not always get the support they need to feel confident in their parenting or able to make positive choices about how they balance work and care.

This growing need of a significant minority of children and families is creating new pressures and expectations on professionals. Roundtable participants from both a school and private/voluntary sector nursery observed much less engagement from parents in settings than previously, and higher numbers of parents do not know about weaning or toilet training or supporting their child’s development, so they are ready for school. As one put it: *“Parents need a lot more looking after than they used to”*. In order to meet the increasingly complex needs of children and families, while working in an integrated way with other services, early years practitioners require greater skills, expertise and emotional resilience than in the past.

This pressure comes in parallel with (and is likely a factor in) rising workforce retention and recruitment challenges and strains on system capacity. One participant said: *“We have a workforce that has been brilliant for the last twenty years, but we don’t have a workforce for the new world”*. Others were concerned about gaps in the support offer and services available, especially for children and families with more vulnerability or facing greater disadvantage. Participants remarked on the lack of join-up between services.

In this context, there is a strong feeling that a growing number of children and families are not being well supported, and that the challenges of this ‘new world’ point toward the need to take a different approach to strengthen support in the future.

Framing thinking about change

Guiding principles

During the first roundtables, a consistent set of messages emerged about the broad direction of change required to deliver relevant, effective, quality, sustainable improvements to the early years in Jersey. These five high-level ‘guiding principles’ framed the rest of the discussions and development of ideas and should be borne in mind by all future policy makers seeking to make meaningful and long-lasting improvements in this area.

- **We need to be holistic and joined-up and work across service and setting boundaries.** In order to provide more holistic support to children and families, professionals and services need to work in a more integrated way. Today’s needs require more joined-up multi-agency responses and stronger partnership working between schools and private/voluntary early education and childcare providers. In a small island like Jersey, there are strong opportunities for this.
- **We need a stronger, clearer offer to families - but not a “one size fits all” solution.** There needs to be a more clearly articulated offer of services and support for families. What is offered and how it is delivered will vary to take account of differing types and levels of need and location. But all Jersey families should be able to understand the support that is available and that they are entitled to from conception and through the early years.
- **We need an offer that empowers parents as children’s first caregivers and educators - and enables them to make positive choices.** All families should feel confident and able to provide warm, loving care for their children at home and create a positive home learning environment. Families should feel enabled to make positive choices about how they balance work and care. Some parents need or want more targeted support – but not all parents.
- **We need to harness and develop existing system strengths – including building on the Best Start model.** We should make the most of existing resources and expertise and networks. We can do this through building on the [Best Start Partnership](#) which seeks to achieve transformational change through small, actionable steps and working actively in some areas to break down silos and achieve greater synergy of resources. We should avoid “importing a new model” for the sake of it.
- **We need to learn from past experiences and develop a sustainable model for change –** we should look at successful innovations during and prior to Covid, and “good ideas” which have been tested or launched within Jersey in the past, but not sustained. We should draw lessons from this to inform what we do and how we go about change.

More integrated early support

The challenge

Currently, all families in Jersey have access to health visitors from birth and a variety of forms of support provided by the voluntary sector and ECEC services. But the offer is variable across the island, inconsistently communicated and services do not consistently join-up or work together to provide a holistic response and support based around the needs of a child and family.

The lack of a clearly accessible integrated offer means that too many families with young children in Jersey struggle to access the right help at the right time when they have additional needs or vulnerabilities. New parents can feel isolated from support and not know where to go. Some families remain “invisible” – as one participant explained: *“In COVID, we pulled together lists of vulnerable children. And we saw that children who were vulnerable were not on anyone’s radar in the system”*.

Where good support has been put in place, it can be difficult to maintain across transitions between settings – for example, when a child moves into a school setting they are often unable to continue to access the additional support that they had in place within their previous early education and care setting. Families can find they are having to repeatedly tell their story and that of their child to different professionals.

As one participant put it: *“We need to think about a system that supports families as a whole”*. Without clear and explicit models for joined-up, local, integrated support it is hard for busy professionals and practitioners to move beyond their silos and the daily challenges they face. And in periods when pressures increase, the tendency can be to look further inward. The lack of integrated local systems of support means that as an island we are missing opportunities to achieve:

- Complementarity and collaboration – to meet the increasingly complex and diverse needs of Jersey families will take more than one service. Working better together could reduce gaps and overlaps between services.
- Connection and community focus – better connections and more consistent relationships for parents with local professionals and support services locally can mean that families know where to go – and services are responsive to local needs.
- Co-learning and development - greater integrated learning/training opportunities amongst professionals, better cross-service relationships and more shared expertise across the system.

In the context of the increasingly challenging and complex environment described, there is strong momentum to collectively address this.

Future policy direction

We need more integrated community-based centres and clear multi-agency local support offers for families with children from pre-birth to the end of the first year of statutory school age school starting age.

There was widely shared desire amongst participants to see **local multi-service early years family hubs or centres** established. The vision was for local, place-based centres which offer co-located whole family support, from pre-birth to school starting age. This would include ECEC, public health services, CAMHs, wider family support from the voluntary sector and specialist professionals and therapists who provide targeted help, all coordinated around a single physical point of access for families. The work of volunteers could potentially also be coordinated through a local hub. Throughout the discussion, several features were described as being important to any locality-based offering.

- *Strong support for parents from pre-birth* - There was momentum for a model which offered parents good guidance and support in a variety of forms from the earliest days. More than one participant felt that building on and/or replicating the parent support offer currently being provided by the charity Brighter Futures could be a good way to do this.
- *Integrated with ECEC* – Co-location of wider family support services with existing ECEC provision - whether as part of a community school or private and voluntary nurseries – was seen as critical. Participants spoke of the importance of “*meeting families where they are already*”. Co-location with ECEC would also help new parents to build trusting relationships with providers, increasing the likelihood that parents who professionals find harder-to-reach would be confident to take up services in the future. Given that childcare professionals are the daily frontline for many families, it would also increase opportunities to take action early where an additional need or vulnerability for the child or family is identified. Settings which do not host a hub might still be formally connected to nearby hub.
- *A personalised offer* - Participants felt that a bespoke offer to families that identified and responded to their specific needs would be vital. Developing use of named practitioners could be a good way to achieve this, enabling new parents to build a relationship with a single professional who would support them through their journey from pregnancy to five and assist them in getting access to the right support at the right time. One participant described this as like a “private banker” for new parents and young families with increased risk factors who would ensure that the best fitting services were “wrapped around the family”. Twenty-one Family Partnership Workers currently already work with those identified as having additional needs and other families – their work is hugely valued and extending their reach could be the right mechanism.

- *Reaching families who are currently missing out* – There was a lot of concern about families who currently go unseen or have a low profile with professionals. These might include parents outside the benefit system due to residency rules and/or those who may miss health visits, rely exclusively on informal care or not know how to access the support that is available. Locally integrated hubs could also be the basis for identifying and building understanding of families currently missing out on services and support due to not attending an early years setting or missing health visitor checks – and developing effective outreach approaches.
- *Data sharing* – ineffective data sharing is considered a key blockage to professionals working together effectively at the local level. To achieve better shared and more holistic understanding of families’ needs, and to smooth transitions, this needs to be addressed. The new Children and Young Person’s law will require practitioners to share information consistently as part of their duty to promote and support the wellbeing, and safeguard welfare, of children. For effective data sharing to take root across different groups of professionals at local level however, further work may be required to develop more collaborative mind-sets and put in place the right permissions and processes. A more common technological infrastructure could support this.

In taking forward the idea for a locality-based model of integrated support, participants emphasised that there is unlikely to be a one-size fits all model that works for the whole of Jersey. The approach to developing and locating multi-service hubs or centres must be **place-based, taking account of varied local community needs and a clear understanding of the variety of existing provision** already within each area and accessible to families living there. Careful mapping of existing services and needs within communities will be important to clarify where this kind of integrated offer could be achieved through developing existing services, and where further investment is required to build something new.

Another key and overarching concern was that **any future locality-based multi-service offer should be sustainable**. Participants were very mindful that previous attempts at joined-up solutions to co-deliver services have often not lasted – typically dissolving over time as individuals/relationships change, political commitment wains, or funding comes to an end. Future policy needs to learn lessons from this experience, creating strong structures of leadership and oversight and clear accountability. A robust commissioning approach will be vital. Several participants envisaged that the new approach could begin in the next year or so with pilots or pathfinders – but these must be structured well and accompanied by a clear plan for learning and broader implementation afterwards, sustainable funding included.

Places that match families' needs

The challenge

Parent employment is high, but limited early education and childcare options are believed to be restricting work/care choices and increasing reliance on informal care

Government of Jersey data presented to the group shows that there are high levels of employment in Jersey, including amongst those at an age where they are likely to become parents (81% of Jersey's working age population is in work - compared to 75% in the UK).

However, the Jersey employment data does not capture whether parents are reducing their hours, nor differences in employment levels or hours worked across different income groups. Anecdotally the lack of useable and/or desirable childcare options is thought to be limiting parents' choice of job and hours. Roundtable participants who work closely with less well-off families and families with children with additional needs reported that many rely exclusively on informal care from family because they do not see an alternative. There is no data on the use of informal care, but data shared with the group on the relatively low use of formal care in Jersey (around 40% of under 4s compared to over 60% in England) would be consistent with high reliance on informal options within Jersey. (There are certain developmental risks associated with being exclusively in informal care over time – as highlighted in the evidence paper.)

A mismatch between the shape of provision offered and what families really need

At the whole island level, it is clear from the data that there is spare capacity with empty early education and childcare places in the system. The vast majority of these are in schools - data presented showed that at the last count school nursery classes have 188 empty places for 3 and 4-year-olds across 21 settings. The group noted that the inflexible and limited hours typically offered (such as term time only), and the limited age groups supported by school nurseries, often do not meet families' needs.

Private and voluntary settings and childminders/nannies tend to offer provision that is more flexible to cater to the needs of working families and also serve younger children, but these are mostly full (with the small amount of spare capacity showing up in the data mostly a reflection of seasonal flow). Three private and voluntary settings – around 80 places – have been lost in the last couple of years due to closures so there are fewer places than there were before. There has also been a major decline in the number of childminders and nannies. Whilst declines may, to an extent, reflect natural wastage due to declining birth-rates in Jersey, both parents and providers on the group reported that the squeeze on places in these parts of the market is creating significant challenges for families. One parent representative reflected that often families end up with childcare providers that they do not feel provide the best options for their children because they are the only options to offer the hours they need - *"It's not really a choice"*.

Workforce challenges are limiting places – especially for children who require more adult support

Both schools and private and voluntary sector providers report that the current difficulties they face in recruiting appropriate Level 3 qualified staff is impacting their ability to maintain or expand places. The impact of this is disproportionate for children with a particular developmental need who require a higher ratio of adults to support them. Increasingly, settings say they are not able to offer a place, even where additional funding may be available through Jersey Child Care Trust's Best Start Plus Nursery Funding Programme, because they cannot secure appropriate staff.

Childminders reported often being overrun with requests from families wanting their services in the context of their declining numbers (childminder numbers have halved since 2014 and only four new childminders have registered since the pandemic). The group of childminders we consulted after the roundtables said that there is increasing demand for part-time childcare places from families. This demand can be hard to satisfy as childminders are faced with the difficulty of finding a combination of families whose part-time requests complement each other in a way that the childminder is able to fill their places (and remain financially viable) without overstepping maximum ratios on certain days.

There are lots of data gaps which mean we don't understand supply challenges and how they relate to what parents want

Whilst there is good data on the total number of places and providers relating to children aged 3+, the Government appears to lack data and information that would give a meaningful picture of whether the right places are available to meet families' needs.

Participants observed that information is not collated systematically on the supply of places for younger age groups, nor on overall hours offered and how this breaks down across localities. The new Jersey childcare and early years provider survey will address this at least partially – although schools are not included within the initial data shared (an omission that is currently being addressed). Currently there is no information collated from the full spectrum of parents about how satisfied/unsatisfied they are with the current provision of places and the type of provision they want and need.

Participants noted that there is a lack of ability centrally to make a reasonable projection of the level of places required. This is both a result of the issues just described but also due to difficulties understanding the population of babies and young children in Jersey. The government thinks that without net inward migration the number of pre-school children will fall steadily. But the best projections currently rely on 2011 Census data and numbers of children migrating are very hard to estimate.

Future policy direction

We should support and encourage school and private and voluntary providers to work together locally, listen more to parent’s voices to understand need, and prioritise workforce growth and development.

Participants felt that there is significant scope for private and voluntary nurseries and schools to collaborate better locally to increase the supply of places that meet needs of local families. One said: “There are lots of [historic] examples of good practice across settings that we could draw on to help each other”. Another commented: “None of us have the answers or the expertise we are going to need, it has got to be cooperation”. There was a sense across the meetings of links already starting to be forged. One Jersey Early Years Association representative said: “I can see doors opening between school sector and private sector”.

The headteacher on the group acknowledged the need for schools to look at providing a better wrap-around offer for their nursery children over extended days and during holidays – and was interested in pursuing this in his own school. This could, potentially, be through collaboration with private and voluntary sector providers. One idea was that clusters of local early years settings from different sectors could work together to ensure a complementary offer of childcare for parents within communities (or parishes). This could be organised through the proposed locality-based model for integrated family support outlined above.

The sense was that any cross-sector partnerships need to be forged locally, rather than imposed from above. However, creating the environment for this to happen is likely to require some Jersey-wide action. Participants commented that settings and schools have worked together constructively in the past, and there continue to be great examples of not-for-profit providers such as Centrepoint providing wrap around care for school-age children. But the realities of current workforce pressures have led to collaborations dwindling, increasingly siloed tendencies, and even a sense of competition over staff. A basis for trusting dialogue and co-development of solutions across the sectors could be supported through an island-wide initiative such as a joint forum or independent oversight body.

Engage with parents to understand their current and future needs better

To be able to meet shortages and develop places that meet parents’ needs at a community or cross-Jersey level, the system needs to better understand parents’ childcare needs and levels of satisfaction with the offer currently provided.

Participants widely agreed the importance of capturing parent voice and engagement to inform this. Some emphasised the need for an exercise that was robust and would reach a wide demographic of parents to hear their views and experiences. One option which garnered support when put forward was a parent survey. This might look similar to the detailed Department for Education [Childcare and early years survey of parents](#), which happens annually. A more basic parent survey could then happen more regularly for monitoring purposes. Surveys could be complemented by parent focus groups to get “under the skin” and glean a

more in-depth understanding of the compromises and trade-offs that parents feel they are making and to explore barriers and drivers of childcare choices, differentiating across groups.

There is also further work to be done to understand the likely future numbers of children and demand for places. Birth data is already in use centrally for this purpose. Some participants were keen to explore the potential to use health visitor data to map demand/need from all families more extensively, perhaps including new questions at mandatory visits to assist this.

The need to prioritise action to develop the future workforce was also a clear message. This is discussed further in the workforce chapter below.

A more generous offer

The challenge

There is not enough early childhood education and childcare support for parents of children aged three and under, particularly for those from disadvantaged backgrounds

Jersey's childcare offer for 4-year-olds is generous and compares favourably with the government funded early education offer in England and other countries. Jersey currently funds 30 hours free nursery education each week, for 38 weeks, during school term-time only, for all 4-year-olds, and for 3-year-olds due to turn 4 in the school year. There is also enhanced pre-school tax relief for under 4s of working parents and a childcare component of income support. However, the funded early education offer for parents of children aged 3 and under is much less comprehensive. Part-time nursery placements for 2- to 3-year-olds not meeting their developmental milestones and living in low-income households are funded by the charity Jersey Child Care Trust (JCCT), which is backed by both a Government of Jersey grant and wider donations. However, the criteria for accessing such support are tightly defined. It does not amount to a universal or targeted entitlement to early education and childcare for those aged 3 and under.²

Consequently, the Government of Jersey currently subsidises a much greater proportion of childcare costs for older children than younger children (for 0-3s families pay 80% of the costs and government 20%, whilst for 4-year-olds families pay 44% and government 56%). As a result, the average annual cost to families of a childcare place for a child aged under 0-3 is over £18.5k, which is twice the average cost for a child aged 4. Childcare is particularly expensive for families with multiple children under 4 (due to how the tax relief works).

Colleagues who took part in the roundtable discussions felt that the relatively higher cost of childcare for those aged 3 and under borne by parents was leading to constrained choices, higher use of informal care and potentially restricted access to high-quality early education for deprived families where it was needed most.

There is strong support from parents in Jersey for a more extensive funded early education and childcare offer for those aged 3 and under, as evidenced by a recent petition that attracted more than 1,800 signatures. The parental appetite and demand for additional government funding for childcare has been sparked, to some extent, by the high-profile announcement in England of a 30 hour per week funded childcare offer for the children of working parents aged 9 months to 2 years inclusively (although in England there are wide concerns about the deliverability of this offer on the timescales announced, and about the potential ramifications

² Until 2022, Jersey Child Care Trusts' Better Start Partnership Fund (BSFP) and Special Needs Inclusion Programme were entirely funded by charitable donations. Following the creation of a time limited Government Covid Recovery Fund and Education Reform funding, a proportion of the BSFP was funded in 2022 and 2023 with some amounts shared with Jersey Child Care Trust two weeks prior to start of the funded year. Additional grants were made midway through the current year which enabled us to meet the growing needs within the confines of the programme's parameters.

for quality and equity). There is also significant political momentum, within Jersey, behind the possible extension of the government funded early education and childcare offer, recognising not only the potential benefits to children’s development but also the opportunity to attract more families with young children to remain or settle in Jersey. However, as a high-income, high-employment and low-tax economy the scope to offer state-subsidised childcare is likely to be more limited in Jersey than in places with a higher-tax and higher public-spending profile.

The developmental benefits of high-quality early education and care for children aged 2 to 3 are well attested in the international evidence-base and are particularly critical for those children from disadvantaged backgrounds. There was a strong view from those attending the roundtable, based on the evidence of the likely benefits to children, that Jersey should consider extending their offer of government funded high-quality early education and childcare to younger age-groups within the parameters of what is economically and practically possible. There was a particularly strong argument put forward for extending and cementing the offer of funded early education for disadvantaged children as this is the cohort whom it was felt would benefit the most from the additional investment and for whom family choices around work and care are likely most constrained.

There is insufficient clarity around how the vision for the first 1001 days will be made a reality

Jersey has a longstanding commitment, since 2015, to invest in and support the first 1001 days of a child’s life. Research shows this period is absolutely critical for children’s brain and cognitive development and their ability to form secure and trusting attachment with caregivers. While some good progress has been made, participants at the roundtables felt strongly that more action was needed to turn the vision for the first 1001 days into a reality.

Roundtable participants felt the imperative was for a developed offer for 0-3s that supports better child outcomes and family choices – but were cautious about incentivising all parents back to work when their children are very young. Instead, participants were keen to explore how the Government of Jersey might enable more parents to stay at home when their children were very young, should they wish to do so, without being fearful of the financial implications of that choice. The evidence supports enabling parental choice from 6-month to two-year-olds, so the role of government might not necessarily be about steering families into home or formal care but ensuring that their decision is not dictated by financial constraints, and that all families have access to appropriate and quality ECEC should they want it.

“Do we want to develop more capacity for 0-3s, or is it also about facilitating parents’ ability to stay at home – how can we be guided by the evidence on what’s best for children?”

Participants were also keen to explore how a targeted offer, potentially through the integrated hubs described above, could support families through parenting classes, structured play sessions, access to health or mental health support or more specialist interventions such as speech and language development. There was a healthy debate around whether such an integrated support offer for 0 to 2s should be targeted exclusively at vulnerable families and

informal carers, or whether it might also incorporate a universal strand that could be accessed by all families with children aged 2 and under.

“We need to think carefully about what really is best for babies and young children. Settings might not be what they need – can we support parents and babies to play together?”

Support for children with additional needs in the early years is precarious and piecemeal

Currently some Government funding for children with a disability, Special Educational Need or additional need from birth to school age is allocated on an annual basis through grants to the Jersey Child Care Trust which uses the money, together with charitably raised funds, to place specialist SEND support workers in private and voluntary nursery settings and to fund places for children in low income households with an additional need. The third sector delivery model has real benefits, not least in enabling the charity to harness other sources of philanthropic funding. However, funding for targeted support is not stable, is not formally linked to need and is not guaranteed by any form of legal entitlement. There is no government funding currently available to private early education and childcare providers to increase staffing to support children and families with broader emerging developmental or additional needs.

A clear message from roundtable participants is that the number of children with additional needs in early years settings in Jersey is rising and so is the complexity of their needs; that the current NEF funding model makes it very difficult to adapt the staffing and support within settings to meet the additional needs of these children; and that the workforce and recruitment pressures are creating a scarcity of staff with the right skills to support children with additional needs. This in turn can create a vicious circle: staff without the higher-level skills needed to support children with complex needs feel overwhelmed by the placed on them due to the lack of capacity in the system, and this in turn contributes to high staff turnover and even less capacity in the system.

There is compelling evidence from other areas that in a mixed early years market, made up of private, voluntary, community and state-maintained providers, unless the funding is calibrated in such a way that supporting children with additional or special educational needs is affordable for providers, then either children with SEND will struggle to find a place that can meet their needs or these children will be disproportionately concentrated in a very small number of settings who have the skills and capacity to offer the support they require. This is not optimal in terms of integrating children with SEND in their local communities and with their peers.

Future policy direction

We should extend the offer, starting with a free funded early education and childcare offer for 2–3-year-old children from low-income households or otherwise at risk of disadvantage

Our pre-event survey suggested strong continued support among participants for the EYDB proposals for establishing a universal integrated 'Best Start' offer to children and families from conception to five, and for establishing a Best Start Plus part-time early education offer for 2 – 3-year-olds, initially to children at risk of disadvantage.

Roundtable participants were strongly of the view that the Government of Jersey should set an aspiration for a high quality, integrated offer for 0-5-year-olds that supports children's development, enables positive choices for parents and narrows the gaps between disadvantaged children and their peers. This offer could comprise:

For children aged 0 to 2, the Government of Jersey might consider a **more generous paid parental leave offer for families from lower income groups**, so that fewer families are forced for financial reasons to return to work sooner than they would wish to do so. In parallel, a new integrated outreach offer could be developed from the early years hubs to support effective parenting, building child development through play, forming attachments and more specialist health and mental health support. This offer might consist of some universal and some targeted elements, with the delivery tailored for each local community. The Government of Jersey might also consider making some funded childcare places available for children in this age group who are at risk or high disadvantage and who could benefit greatly from a structured early education offer. This would require a thought through identification process.

For children aged 2 and 3, the Government of Jersey should consider making a funded part-time early education and childcare entitlement for children who are from low-income households or otherwise at risk of disadvantage. This could mean, for example, offering 15 hours per week funded provision for children aged 2 to 3 in low-income households, those with disabilities and emerging Special Educational Needs as well as those who have otherwise been identified as vulnerable by children's services. More work would obviously be required to clearly define both disadvantage and vulnerability, but the policy intention behind the offer would be to target support at those children whom research suggests are most likely to benefit from access to high-quality early education and care, and those whose parents have least opportunity to procure childcare provision for their children themselves. The extended offer could be funded through an extension to the existing Nursery Education Fund, but rates would need to be carefully considered to ensure that these were sufficient to enable higher ratios that would be appropriate for younger and more vulnerable children. Where appropriate, ECEC sessions could be offered with parent/carers present to support positive parent-child interactions.

Depending on the impact of the funded offer for disadvantaged and vulnerable 2- and 3-year-olds, the Government of Jersey could consider making this offer available to all parents with children in this age range as a second phase of the development of a comprehensive vision for 0 to 5s.

Early education and childcare places for children with special educational needs, should be funded at a rate that enables children to receive the targeted support and intervention that they need. More consideration needs to be given to the way in which such funding is distributed. One

option is that providers might receive a higher hourly rate for any children with an identified special educational need, additional need or vulnerability. Another option is that providers might receive a whole-setting funding top-up that reflects the complexity of their cohort and enables them to make longer-term recruitment decisions to build the skills required to support children with more complex needs. A third option (which could work alongside the others) would see the Government funding the existing model of support workers provide by JCCT in conjunction with an 'ordinarily available offer' which would retain the specialist peripatetic workforce currently shared across settings. The integrated local hubs, supported by the JCCT, could also have a role in supporting a larger number of settings to develop the expertise required to support children with additional needs to thrive.

In terms of prioritisation and sequencing, the most urgent element of the above offer is to provide a clear early education entitlement for disadvantaged or vulnerable 2- and 3-year-olds, and a stronger offer to those with emerging special educational needs, as this is the group that the evidence suggests are likely to gain the most.

This offer would not be immediately deliverable and would require careful planning and staging to build skills and capacity across the workforce, ensure appropriate physical capacity to meet new demands as well as addressing the question of the optimum funding model. It would be likely to increase demand for places within the private and voluntary sector in particular and that sector would need appropriate support to grow. Demographic data suggests that the number of children aged 0 to 5 in Jersey is falling. This should enable some redistribution of existing funding for early education and childcare places for all children aged 4 and approaching 4 ("rising 3s") towards part-time funded places for disadvantaged and vulnerable children in younger age groups and for a more differentiated funding model that recognises the increased cost of providing high-quality provision for children with a range of complex needs.

A workforce fit for the future

The challenge

Sector leaders have consistently raised concerns about the challenges of recruiting and retaining high quality, capable and motivated staff. This is an issue perceived to be having implications on both capacity and quality of early childhood education and care provision across Jersey – and also posing challenges in the UK, leading politicians there to take positive [action](#). Staff shortages are such that several providers said they do not feel able to be selective about candidates. One nursery manager participant said: *“Sometimes we have no choice but to take them because we need a body on a seat.”*

Early insights from the first ever Jersey childcare and early years provider survey were shared with the group and provide quantifiable data to evidence these challenges in relation to private and voluntary settings including nurseries, childminders and nannies. Schools were not included in the survey information that was shared, but school participants also reported facing significant challenges recruiting appropriate staff at Level 3 which are having an impact on school-based early years provision.

Significant concerns about skills and qualities of practitioners

A relatively high proportion of the 495 practitioners working with children in the private and voluntary sector are young and have low qualifications. The survey showed that around a third of practitioners are aged under 25. Over a third do not hold a Level 3 qualification or higher, and strikingly around a quarter have no formal qualifications. Only 7% of practitioners working directly with children in private and voluntary nurseries hold a degree level qualification.

Participants who manage nurseries said that they struggle to find motivated and dedicated new recruits and are not confident that the qualifications and training being provided in Jersey are sufficiently robust or equipping trainees with skills appropriate to meet the needs of today.

Areas that were felt to be lacking amongst new recruits and the workforce more widely include: skills for working interactively with parents, skills for identifying additional needs, skills for supporting children with emerging speech and language difficulties, and knowledge on how to work effectively with wider services that support children and families.

Turnover and vacancies are generally high – and especially high for settings with low pay

The employee turnover rate was 19% in private and voluntary nurseries – this is broadly in line with turnover in early years settings in England where a “workforce crisis” has been widely reported. Two-thirds of nurseries in Jersey report having vacancies equating to around 40 open positions – 77% of these were for full time, qualified roles. Around half of all nurseries reported having difficulty recruiting to their current vacancies. The most commonly cited difficulties

included lack of suitable qualified candidates, difficulty recruiting to part-time positions, unattractive salaries and increasing burdens.

Challenges are particularly acute for some settings – with some nurseries having lost 30% of their staff in 2023. The survey found a clear correlation between high turnover and low pay. Around half of nurseries do not pay a Living Wage to all of their staff – and turnover was higher in these nurseries which was very striking to participants.

Childminders and nannies are in decline – many still love the job, but feel it is getting harder

There are currently 45 childminders and 34 accredited nannies in Jersey. Despite reporting high levels of job satisfaction across most aspects of their role, the number of childminders has halved in recent years and the survey suggests that a quarter of childminders have considered leaving their role in the last year.

Some of the departures may be pandemic related. A cohort of older childminders are reported to have taken the opportunity of the pandemic and a natural break in their work with families to retire. However, the childminders we spoke to also feel that the role is getting more difficult, the burden of paperwork and regulation greater and that this may be leading others to leave. One key issue is the rise in the proportion of families requesting part-time provision which, for childminders, often comes into tension with inflexible regulations around ratios. This lack of flexibility means that to fill their places across the week, and not have an overlap, they must find families with a precise combination of requirements.

There are also very few new recruits to childminding. There have been only four newly registered childminders since the pandemic. This is despite ongoing efforts by existing childminders and by the Government to promote the profession and the provision of financial incentives for joining. Childminders speculate that this may reflect shifting attitudes and aspirations – Gen-Z are perhaps more likely to opt for more bounded and less intensive roles.

Future policy direction

We need a modern workforce strategy incorporating new recruitment approaches, addressing low pay, drawing on community strengths to build quality and thinking across boundaries.

The group's vision is for a strong, stable workforce of early educators with the skills to meet the increasingly complex needs of children and work in an integrated way with professionals across the early years landscape. Addressing the immediate acute shortage of qualified practitioners, while simultaneously building an environment where the concerns and ambitions of committed staff are well understood and they are nurtured and enabled to progress, is a necessity. Participants were inspired by the examples of recruitment and retention strategies provided by London Early Years Foundation and felt that achieving the vision would require a similarly innovative approach which harnesses Jersey's strengths.

The previously stated long-term aspiration for a graduate in every setting is still seen as worthwhile, however given the range of pressing issues that need addressing at the lower qualification levels, there was a sense that this ambition should be put on a longer-term track.

New recruitment approaches

There could be a **Jersey-wide recruitment campaign** for early years educators, based on the key principles of recruiting for motivation and attributes, valuing staff and promoting the moral purpose of early education as a social good. This would be with the initial focus of attracting 40 new entrants into the profession. In the case of childminders this might mean selling the innate strengths of their form of provision - the holistic working with families, the focus on play-based learning, and the autonomy. The London Early Years Foundation (LEYF) provide a good example of this approach in practice already. The group heard about their values-based approach to recruitment, which is very tailored to speak to the aspirations and priorities of “Gen-Z” and “employs for attitude and trains for skills”. The approach has resulted in lower recruitment costs, positive returns on investment, lower staff turnover and better staff performance.

There could also be a programme developed **to fast-track applicants from similar or related professions**, to enable a swifter acquisition and accreditation of skills in on-the-job learning. Recruits through this route would be subject to clear minimum standards. There is scope to learn from past attempts in this space in Jersey.

Addressing low pay

Whilst some participants emphasised that pay was not the main obstacle to recruitment, others noted the markedly higher turnover in nurseries that do not offer staff a living wage and viewed this as a clear indication that the undervaluing of staff is problem. Many participants would, as a priority, like to see a **living wage set as a basic minimum standard** that all providers must pay. Further analysis will be needed prior to this to understand why those providers not currently paying living wage are failing to do so, and to minimise the impact of making the living wage compulsory on parent fees and the sustainability of individual settings.

Bespoke solutions for childminders

Childminders would like to see a **more case-by-case approach taken to managing ratios**. They appreciate the need to regulate numbers of children cared for to ensure quality of provision , but argue that introducing greater flexibility could make a big difference to their ability to function sustainably and could be done safely. A process could be introduced allowing childminders to appeal to increase their ratios to 1:4 in particular circumstances and where they could demonstrate certain criteria. Regulators could, for example, require them to show that they have sufficiently high skills/qualifications to manage a larger number of children confidently, the right equipment in place, and the approval of all parents. In most cases this would be a short term to help parents to return to work, but until the space becomes available - not just for ‘emergency circumstances’ as currently permitted.

Drawing on community strengths to build quality

Participants were supportive of the idea of **developing local early years communities of practice** across private, voluntary, childminders, nannies and school-based provision, as a way of both developing skills and providing career fulfilment and progression. These communities could be a locus for action-research and quality improvement. Funding to providers to initiate a pilot could be one way to facilitate the development of these communities and ensure broad cross-sector engagement.

The developing communities of practice could work with Highlands **to co-develop the skills that are essential in today's early years educators and ensure that these are embedded in programmes of study** for new recruits and a revised CPD programme tailored to drive up relevant skills for today and address some of the perceived gaps outlined above.

Working across boundaries

There is a desire to go beyond thinking about elements of the workforce in isolation.

At least one participant expressed enthusiasm to explore whether there might be scope for **better resource sharing across public, private and third sectors**. This could potentially be examined as part of the proposed localities model for working put forward earlier in this report.

The need for more integrated working across different professions within the early years workforce - including but not limited to early educators, public health professionals, family support workers raises the question of whether a **single early years competencies framework** could be developed, encouraging professionals to develop more consistent approaches and common language. There are examples of this approach being used successfully in other [places](#).

Ensuring quality and accountability

The challenge

The purpose of a system of governance and accountability for early years is to ensure, firstly, that the quality of provision in individual schools, settings and providers is high and that there is support (and, if necessary, sanctions) in place to improve quality should shortcomings be identified. Secondly, effective governance can create an environment of continuous learning and improvement so that excellent practice is understood and shared around the system. Thirdly, the system of governance and accountability should enable parents to make informed decisions about their childcare options, understanding the strengths and character of different settings. Finally, good governance and accountability allows policymakers and leaders to understand the progress and impact of the system as a whole and use that information to inform future policy development.

In Jersey, there are currently different systems for holding early years providers to account, depending on whether they are school-based nurseries or private and voluntary settings. For school-based nurseries there is a 3-day school review carried out every 3 years by a small team that is led by an ‘off-island’ reviewer and includes heads and deputies from other schools in Jersey. All aspects of provision in the school are reviewed, including early years, and there has been a focus in recent iterations of the review framework to ensure that there is sufficient focus and expertise on quality in the early years. The reports are published, though no single grades are given (unlike Ofsted inspections).

For private and voluntary settings, a 2- or 3-day site visit is carried out annually by a member of Jersey’s early years regulation and registration team. The visit includes observations, discussions and scrutiny in 6 areas (Safeguarding and Welfare; Healthy Child and Adult; Enabling Environments; Learning and Development; Interactions, Engagement and Working Together; Effective Leadership and Management) and leads to judgements on the requirements met and the quality of provision. The report is made available to the setting but is not published.

In discussion at the roundtable, participants were clear that both school and early years reviews are seen to be effective and work well at the scale at which Jersey operates. Several participants described a strong culture of mutual trust and respect, with enough tension in the system to ensure that the relationship does not become too “cosy”. The overall message from the roundtables was that the current approach to governance and accountability is effective and provides a solid foundation on which to build. Nonetheless, the group felt that there were ways in which it could be strengthened further.

Are parents able to make informed decisions about childcare?

One of the specific concerns raised is whether parents are given enough information in the right format to be able to make informed choices about childcare based on an understanding of quality.

Some of the parent representatives on the group felt strongly that this was not currently the case.

For school-based nurseries there is a concern that review reports can be quite lengthy and complex, and early years will only be one of many elements covered. For some parents this may mean that information about the quality of the nursery provision is not accessible enough and they may not know the right questions to ask in order to interpret what the report is saying.

For early years settings, reports are not published and therefore parents are reliant on asking questions of the setting itself to ascertain its strengths, areas for development and overall quality. A key reflection from the roundtable was that currently we don't know enough about how parents make decisions about childcare and early education, what information they currently find helpful and what additional information they would find valuable.

There was a strong feeling among some roundtable participants that annual reviews of private and voluntary early years settings should be published in the same way that school review reports are. However, others felt that this might change the open and trusting relationship that has developed between settings and the early years regulation and registration team, which was generally felt to be a strength in the system. There was also a debate about the extent to which parents would look to review reports as a source of information about a setting versus other sources such as their own direct observation of the setting or recommendations from other parents.

Is early years expertise in the accountability system continually refreshed?

Participants discussed how to ensure that the governance and accountability system is based on the most up-to-date and relevant knowledge of good practice in the early years. The school review framework has evolved over recent years to ensure that there is a direct and explicit focus on early years. Participants voiced the aspiration that this trend should continue to ensure that, not only is early years covered as part of the review framework, but that review teams include members with recent and relevant early years expertise.

For reviews of private and voluntary settings, the roundtable participants noted the helpful division of responsibility between the registration and regulation team and the quality development team within the early years service and recognised the expertise and understanding of those conducting reviews. However, participants also raised the issue of how to keep the knowledge and expertise of reviewers up-to-date and relevant in the context of fast developing evidence on best practice. There is currently no 'off-island' element to the reviews of private and voluntary settings.

Does the accountability system provide a high-enough bar for new entrants?

Although there was confidence among roundtable participants that the current approach to accountability is rigorous enough to sustain and build the quality of established early years providers, they had concerns that the system was not robust enough to prevent poorer quality providers from opening new provision on the island. Some participants questioned whether the

current registration requirements for new settings set a sufficiently high bar and whether there was enough opportunity to scrutinise the quality of provision for new providers alongside their adherence to regulations.

Do we use what we learn from the governance and accountability system enough to inform island-wide policy and practice?

Finally, despite reflecting on the positive impact of the current approach to governance and accountability, roundtable participants noted that collectively leaders and policy makers in the early years sector could do more to learn from the body of evidence arising from reviews and be more explicit in sharing knowledge of good practice, as well as common areas for development. In particular, there were limited spaces and opportunities for professional dialogue about early years pedagogy between school-based nurseries and private and voluntary settings.

Is there sufficient independence in the system?

Some participants were concerned that there might not be enough independence in the review process. It was noted that, whilst teams worked separately, responsibility for improvement and responsibility for inspection and registration sit within the same Government of Jersey Department. Some felt this to be appropriate and practical given the small scale of Jersey. However, it was noted that the Jersey Care Commission provides an example of an alternative model with greater independence working successfully on the island.

Future policy direction

We need to continue to evolve and strengthen systems for oversight and accountability, including engaging parents to understand if they need more/different information for informed decision-making, and ensure learning informs improvements across the system.

The group were keen to recognise and build on the significant strengths of the existing governance and accountability model, and overall felt it had developed in a way that fits well for Jersey. Nonetheless, they identified scope for exploration and progress in relation to the issues raised above.

To enable to make informed decisions about childcare, some participants were very keen to move quickly to the publication of reports on private and voluntary nurseries – but as set out above, not all agreed. A **consultation with parents to probe how they currently make their choices, the information they use currently and the extent to which they recognise the features of quality provision and feel confident to ask the right questions** could be very valuable to resolve this matter. The relative merits of publishing reports, and the accessibility of early years information within school review reports, could then be considered and decisions taken.

To ensure that the system is based on the most up-to-date and relevant knowledge of good practice in the early years, there was broad support for the idea of **developing a deeper ‘train**

the trainer' regime for reviewers in the early years and childcare team, and for bringing in off-island experience on a regular basis. This could help ensure that those carrying out reviews had access to regular training and knowledge-sharing opportunities to continue to develop their understanding of best practice in other jurisdictions.

There would be merit undertaking further work centrally to **explore how the existing registration requirements could be used to ensure that poor quality provision is prevented from opening in Jersey.**

Participants were keen to see more evidence of how learning from the accountability systems is being drawn out and used to inform system-wide improvements. This might take the form of a **regular published improvement plan for early education and childcare** which demonstrates how findings from setting reviews are being fed back into decision making and continuous system improvement.

Although the conversation was very focused on nurseries due to time constraints, several participants commented on the need to think more widely about how governance and accountability works across different parts of the early years sector and how aligned it is. The **merits of moving more toward a Jersey Care Commission type model within childcare could be considered**, and some felt could deliver benefits in terms of independence. A more integrated approach would see the system draw on learning from all parts of the system too. For example, **a whole-island analysis of review outcomes and progress across all services in the early years** could be used to inform the development of the system as a whole and structure the development of local hubs / communities of practice.

Concluding thoughts

There is a need for a new approach to early years in Jersey in order to meet today's challenges and deliver support that benefits the whole island in the future. This report contains a wealth of specific ideas for consideration, and some very clear steers on future direction that key early years stakeholders in Jersey are in agreement about. They would like to see: more locally integrated early support, early education and childcare places that better match the needs of families in Jersey, a more generous offer to 0-3s (particularly those from low income households and otherwise at risk of disadvantage), a modern workforce strategy and continued efforts to build more effective oversight and accountability systems.

Within each of the areas above, actionable ideas were identified which could deliver improvements to the lives of Jersey children and families within the next two years with the right support from Ministers and government – as well as longer term aspirations which would require greater investment over time. And within each area, topics for further learning and exploration were identified. Across the board there was a strong message that engaging parents more effectively is essential to better understanding needs and choices and shaping services so they are relevant and fit for the future.

As independent facilitators, we were struck by the strong commitment, momentum and good will from all partners across the roundtable conversations. There was more consensus across the board than perhaps initially expected. And some connections forged in the discussions is already leading to direct conversations between partners about how they can work together better for children and families. We hope this report provides a useful resource for Government of Jersey Ministers and decision-makers as they seek to shape the future of early years support on the island. Roundtable participants are looking forward to continuing to work with them to deliver the best possible outcomes for Jersey.

Annex: Roundtable attendee list

Participants

First name	Surname	Organisation
Lydia	Arrowsmith	Grouville School
Amory	Charlesworth	St Lawrence Primary School
Michelle	Cumming	Family Nurse & Home Care (FNHC)
David	Bailey	Jersey Employers Group (JEG)
Fiona	Brennan	Brighter Futures
Alice	Bennion	Parent Carer Forum
Paul	Bourke	Jersey Early Years Association (JEYA)
Amber	Coupland	Parent rep / Best Start Partnership Manager
Trudy	Dillon-Nugent	PwC Working parents group
Martin	Farley	Owner, Charlie Farley's Nursery - (JEYA)
Cheryl	Findlay	Manager, Busy Beans Nursery (JEYA)
Rosemarie	Finley	Family Nurse & Home Care (FNHC)
Cathy	Hamer	Best Start Partnership
Tanja	Haynes	Head of Early Years, Centrepont (JEYA)
Nicola	Mulliner	Childcare and Early Years Service, Government of Jersey
Sean	O'Regan	Education, Government of Jersey
Daniela	Raffio	Commissioning, Public Health, Government of Jersey
Kirsty	Pearson	Economy
Stuart	Penn	Skills Jersey
Dawn	Rutherford	Marbral Advisory
Gail	Sparrow	Manager, Bethesda Pre-school (JEYA)
Fiona	Vacher	Jersey Child Care Trust (JCCT)
Marie	Wilson	Jersey Childminder Association*
Leyla	Yildirim	PwC

*Jersey Association of Childcarers, who represent registered childminders, were unable to attend the Roundtables due to timings. Instead, facilitators consulted Christina Jandron and a small group of members in a separate meeting afterwards.

Observers

Louise	Doublet	Deputy / Assistant Minister for Children and Education
Andrew	Heaven	Cabinet Office, Government of Jersey
Natalie	Kemp	Cabinet Office, Government of Jersey
Jonathan	Williams	Education Reform, Government of Jersey

Facilitators

Sally	Hogg	Isos Partnership
Natalie	Parish	Isos Partnership
Jodie	Reed	Isos Partnership

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