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**Early Years Policy Development Board (the 'Board' or the 'EYPDB') Meeting 2**  
**Monday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2019, 1030 – 1300hrs**

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**Board:**

Minister for Education, Senator Tracey Vallois (TV) (Chair)  
Assistant Minister for Education, Deputy Jeremy Maçon (JM)  
Minister for Children and Housing, Senator Sam Mézec (SM)  
Deputy Louise Doublet (LD)

**Executive Support:**

Strategic Policy, Performance and Population:  
Andrew Heaven – Director Children's Policy (AH)  
Sarah Stoten – Policy Principal, Children's Policy (SS)  
Jack Norris – Policy Principal (JN)

Ministerial Support Unit:  
Martin Keith (MK)  
Sophie Bertram (SB)

In Attendance:  
Cathy Hamer – Chair Best Start Partnership  
Nicola Mulliner – Head of Children Early Years Service, Department for Children, Young People, Education and Skills  
Owain Lloyd – Deputy Director Childcare, Play and Early Years for the Welsh Government

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**1. Welcome and apologies**

1.1 TV welcomed all those in attendance, apologies were received from Senator Mézec and Mark Rogers.

**2. Personal Income Tax Presentation**

2.1 Paul Eastwood and Lynsey Reeves gave a presentation to the Board on areas of the current income tax system that have relevance to children. This covered the principles of

taxation and analysis of the 2016 year of assessment covering Child Allowance, Single Parent Allowance and Childcare Tax Relief.

The presentation is attached to the meeting notes and will be available on gov.je.

Child Allowance (only available to marginal rate tax payers who make up 87% of tax payers in Jersey) is set at £3,000 and has been this rate for 10 years, costing £11 million in 2016. Standard rate tax payers are not eligible for this allowance. Last reviewed in 1994, it is seen as the Government's contribution to the cost of bringing up a child.

Single Parent Allowance has been set at £4,500 since 1999. LD asked how many claim and PE advised that anecdotally there was no large under claiming.

Childcare Tax Relief (CCTR) is available to working parents each earning at least £5000 per annum. Payments must be made to registered child care providers to be eligible for CCTR which is per child and the maximum available is £6,150 (standard CCTR) for age 4 – 12 years (holiday clubs, wrap around care etc.) and £16,000 (enhanced CCTR) for age 0-4 pre-school costs. The maximum amount of £16,000 is claimed by less than 50 taxpayers. LD asked what the % of people claiming this relief was and LR advised that anecdotally it was under claimed as it appeared families were less aware that this relief could also be claimed for holiday care up to 12 years old. It was currently difficult to use existing data to confirm the split between enhanced and basic CCTR, the income circumstances of claimants or the number of children actually claimed for. Some parents who used informal and unregistered childcare options are prevented from claiming and relief, expanding CCTR to cover these types of childcare would challenge the role of the Children and Early Years Service who regulate and register child care providers to ensure minimum standards of quality and safeguarding.

The Board would consider future taxation options within their policy development and PE advised that this would be the correct way to start discussion on any potential changes.

It was suggested that in doing so, it might want to consider the following about CCTR;

Is it effective and sustainable?

Does it help people get back into work?

Is it maintaining quality?

Are people aware of it?

Would changes to CCTR continue to help the same people or influence behaviour in others?

Does it get the best outcome for families?

The relationship with Income Support (IS) was raised and it was agreed that a future presentation on IS components that are related to children would be required. The Board agreed that the complexities of the various tax reliefs and allowances and IS could be hard to understand for families when assessing options. Understanding and identifying

opportunities where the two systems work in parallel and not against one another was also a desire of the Board.

PE reminded the Board that due to most tax payers being prior year payers not pay as you earn the benefits of the current allowances and reliefs were not timely or targeted as costs of children and their care would be incurred a year before any reduction in income tax due through the system. LR highlighted that in recent forums established as part of the personal tax review, a large proportion of respondents supported the retention of CCTR and Child Tax Allowances.

### **3. Wales Early Years Policy Development**

**3.1** Owain Lloyd, Chair of the British Irish Council (BIC) Early Years **Deputy Director Childcare, Play and Early Years for the Welsh Government** gave a detailed description of how Wales had developed their own Early Years Policy.

OL advised that many of the issues were the same in Wales although there was much more complexity (A devolved Government with the Benefits and Tax system managed by England). OL felt the EYPDB had a big opportunity and advantage through the less complex form of government and regulations in Jersey. The Welsh Government has focussed on disadvantage in response to the high levels of deprivation and child poverty in parts of the country.

In Wales there are 22 local authorities who each do things slightly differently. There are 4,000 registered providers half of which are childminders. There are no major chains operating in Wales although there a few organisations with more than one facility. There are 5 umbrella organisations and the Government maintains a close relationship with them.

In 2005 the initial focus On Childcare Strategy was launched but this did not include any free offering, mainly improvements. In 2013 a whole Government approach was developed “Building a Brighter Futures – Early Years and Childcare Plan” (available on gov.je) and this had 5 key areas:

- Health and wellbeing
- Strong and positive families
- Home learning
- High quality education and child care
- Good primary education

There are various programmes:

- **Flying Start**, £75 million, 12.5hrs free via local authorities on a geographic basis providing enhanced health visiting services and development of Speech and Language Services to 36,000 children.
- **Families First**, introducing the concept of a team around the family, a £40 million initiative for the whole of Wales. Foundation phase 3 – 5 years old and up to 7 years

old with a shift to learning through play. Minimum 10hrs per week the term after the child turns 3, most children get 12.5 hrs per week.

OECD research recommends investing earlier rather than later and this and other factors will influence further development of Wales' Early Years and Childcare policy.

In 2015 England offered 30hrs per week to 3 and 4 year olds during term-time this is a universal non targeted offer. Wales started a similar scheme in April 2019 to families where both parents work for at least 16 hrs per week after a pilot test offering up to 30 hours over 48 weeks of the year. This has taken up spare capacity in the sector.

Wales is currently considering if providers and schools can work closer together to increase opening hours and reduce movement of children from setting to setting throughout the day. In addition there is a £80m capital funding programme investigating in co-location projects where the foundation stage (nursery – reception) can be delivered in the same place and not necessarily only on school sites.

Wales currently has two inspection systems, the Care Inspectorate which oversees Child Minders, Children's Day Care, Crèches, Out of School Care and Open access play provision whilst Ofsted carries out school inspection including school based nurseries. A move to an Early Childhood Care and education inspection model is being considered.

Wales has had the advantage of watching the English Childcare policy being rolled out and observed where changes were necessary. The first year evaluation has been positive from Parents in Wales. Those experiencing in-work poverty have reported that they have more disposable income available for outings or treats for their children, it is more difficult to find evidence that the Welsh policy is helping parents return to work. Nurseries are fuller and the sector appears to be more sustainable. The Welsh government provides business rate relief to nurseries which has provided these businesses with incentive to grow and meet capacity requirements.

OL concluded that the Children's Commissioner for Wales had highlighted the plight of children from workless households and that the high quality offers in the Early Years have the most impact on disadvantaged children. To this end the offer in Wales will now also be offered to children whose parents were in Education or Training. The 'Prosperity for All: the National Strategy Taking Wales Forward' sets out the long term vision to ensure everyone on Wales has good quality of life, living in strong and safe communities. Priority areas include Early Years.

#### **4. Jersey Premium in Early Years**

**4.1** Cris Lakeman, Senior Advisor, Jersey Premium and Julie McAllister, Early Years Advisory Teacher, gave a presentation on how Jersey Premium (JP) funding is being used in Early Years.

Recognised that the criteria that we use to identify children in accordance with JP criteria is not a perfect measure for indicating disadvantage. Within the current policy the funding

is not specifically attached to individual children, it can be used to benefit a wider group. Schools have become better at understanding the needs of its disadvantaged learners.

A large part of the JP work has been working with the Early Years team, this is driven by the fact that the greatest difference can be made during this time in a child's educational journey. It is a window of opportunity. The gap opens early and widens throughout a child's time in school, on entry to school its 4 months and 18 months by the time they leave.

The gap between children that exists on entry to school is fundamentally a language gap hence the focus of the work is around improving communication language and literacy.

Currently there are 2500 children identified as being at risk from disadvantage and potential underachievement, 400 of these are in the Foundation Stage.

The criteria that is used to identify children includes Income Support, Looked After Children and children newly arrived to the Island whose parents/carers have lived in Jersey for less than 5 yrs. Children who have lived in the Island for less than 5 years are underrepresented presumably because assessment of eligibility relies on financial information being submitted which may deter some families. However, schools are readily supporting these children regardless of them meeting the criteria or not

<5 years are being supported despite being unrepresented on JP lists. Children open to both Child in Need and Early Help can be supported by this funding regardless of whether they meet criteria for JP or not

Schools use the funding to address the needs of and understand the barriers to learning of their disadvantaged children and young people in a broader sense not solely restricted to the criteria for JP.

JP funding allocated for training has been instrumental in ensuring that the private sector have benefitted from: training, sharing practice and follow up support from the Standards and Achievement and the Children and Early Years Teams within the Education Department. Activity includes:

- Pre nursery children have benefited, some schools are inviting pre nursery families to weekly sessions to develop communication and language based around books.
- Children open to both Child in Need and Early Help can be supported by this funding regardless of whether they meet criteria for JP or not.
- Whole Island transition highlighting early any needs of children moving into reception.
- 10 additional hours allocated to children who are eligible for Jersey Premium (in School nurseries)

The Education Endowment Foundation has reviewed the best available international research and consulted with experts to arrive at the key recommendations for preparing for literacy. Their 7 recommendations are the areas that schools need to be putting their time, effort and money into and are used as a basis for the work in Early Years using JP funding.

By raising expectations and looking through the lens of disadvantage pupils, schools are strengthening relationships with external organisations such as Speech and Language Therapy, Jersey Child Care Trust, Every Child Our Future, Family Nursing and Home Care, REAL and Best Start Plus.

Whilst the funding has gone some way to improve outcomes for children in the early Years Foundation Stage there have been some barriers to further progress.

- The time before children come to school would be the best time to intervene
- There will be children in the private sector that would meet the criteria and benefit from the JP funding but currently JP is only available in the provided schools.

Having listened to the presentation, the Board went on to discuss future items for discussion and agreed to invite representatives from the Customer and Local Services Department to present an overview of the Income Support system. In particular all components that relate to families and children which might identify any parallels made between Tax policy and what the possible impact on families can be when seeking help in the early years of their child(ren)'s life.

As themes such as service integration and opportunities to understand need at an earlier stage in a child's life begin to emerge, it was also agreed to invite Family Nursing and Home Care to the next Board meeting in order to understand the work of Health Visitors and their early contact with families.

### **5. Action Points**

	<b>Action required</b>	<b>Allocated to</b>	<b>Required by</b>	<b>Date completed</b>
1	To arrange for FNHC and Social Security Officers to present at the next Board Meeting	SS	12 <sup>th</sup> July 2019	05 <sup>th</sup> July 2019
2	To arrange an additional board meeting in July or August	MK	5 <sup>th</sup> July 2019	Complete next meeting 2 <sup>nd</sup> August
3	Circulate engagement day summary to Deputy Maçon	SS	5 <sup>th</sup> July 2019	25 <sup>th</sup> June 2019
4	Circulate link to the Early Years Community Toolkit	CH	5 <sup>th</sup> July 2019	26 <sup>th</sup> July 2019

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Minutes agreed:



Senator Vallois  
Chair of the Policy Board

Date:

2<sup>nd</sup> August 2019

Agreed for publication:



Senator Vallois  
Chair of the Policy Board

Date:

2<sup>nd</sup> August 2019