

## **Early Years Policy Development Board**

### Final Report Explanatory Note September 2021

The Chief Minister is pleased to publish the Final Report of the Early Years Policy Development Board. The Board last met on January 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020 and confirmed the emerging policy priority areas. Subsequently, the Chair of the Board approved the Final Report which contained the headline recommendations for further policy development.

The Governments Emergency response to the COVID-19 Pandemic has meant that there has been a hiatus in progressing the final report. The experience of children and families during this period has served as a timely reminder as to how significant positive early years experiences are to children's outcomes.

Despite the delay the Boards Final Report remains broadly relevant to the current policy challenges faced in early years and is published alongside this explanatory note which acknowledges that the commissioned pieces of work used to inform the thinking of the Board is correct at the time of completion at the end of 2019.

Two particular areas of progress have occurred since the Final Report was written. These include.

- On February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021 the former Children and Education Minister confirmed that up to 30 funded nursery hours will be offered to children, aged 3 to 4, through the Nursery Education Fund (NEF) from September 2021. The announcement also included a new hourly rate of £6.70 (previously £5.49) which would take effect at the same time.
- On 17<sup>th</sup> November 2020 the States Assembly approved the Draft Social Security (Amendment of Law No. 14) (Jersey) Regulations 2020. These Regulations were the final step in a major ministerial project to establish a more family friendly labour market, one which recognises the role of all parents in the care of their children. As a result parents with babies due to be born or adopted on or after 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021 could apply for the new Parental Benefits. The Social Security Minister is committed to reviewing the impact of the family friendly changes to the Employment Law and Social Security Law after 2 years.

Whilst the recommendations contained within the Boards Final Report are not policy, and do not commit the Council of Ministers to a particular course of action, the advice of the Board provide a good foundation to inform our considerations of this important topic. The Chief Minister thanked the Board members and the executive support officers for their hard work in the preparation of these reports.