

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL SECURITY
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QUESTION SUBMITTED ON MONDAY 26th APRIL 2021
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 4th MAY 2021**

Question

“As the Minister with responsibility for equality, diversity and inclusion, will the Minister outline her priorities for action in these areas, including dates and targets/expected outcomes; and furthermore, will she state what, if any, resources have been or will be allocated to work in this area?”

Answer

The Minister is committed to improving equality, diversity and inclusion for all islanders and is overseeing several key initiatives as outlined below. This includes Delivery of the Disability and Inclusion Strategy, working with civil society to address concerns, training and development and protecting and supporting vulnerable islanders.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Cluster

Since the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Cluster was formed by Customer and Local Services (CLS) in 2020, the membership has grown to more accurately reflect the diverse community in which we live and we now have representation from faith groups, health and well-being groups and minority groups.

The Cluster meets on a bi-monthly basis and covers topics of concern and hears from speakers who have made a positive impact on Island life. They are currently focused upon the outfall from the pandemic and how minority groups, those with a disability and others have been particularly affected and how this situation can be improved.

The below is the standing membership with invited guests also in attendance.

Membership:

Liberate
Citizens Advice (Chair)
Thrive Jersey
Salvation Army
Grace Trust
Diversity Network
Strategy, Policy, Performance and Planning, Government of Jersey
States of Jersey Police
Customer & Local Services, Government of Jersey
Caritas
Community and Health Services, Government of Jersey
Jersey Employment Trust

Topics covered so far this year include.

- Employment Law – Diversity Network
- Friends of Africa – individual experiences – employment and immigration
- Employment Law - Jersey Advisory and Conciliation Service

- Jersey's "social safety net" Scope and limitations of the Island's financial benefit system

In addition, a sub-group is focused on evidence of the scope of the following issues:

1. Negative attitudes towards people coming into the island.
2. Businesses taking more responsibility for their licenced employees
3. Support available for those facing hardship who lose their jobs

The group will report the findings of the sub-group to the Minister later this year.

The Minister's intention is to work in partnership with key organisations to improve equality, diversity, and inclusion in Jersey.

Disability & Inclusion (2021 budget £ 311,000)

The Disability & Inclusion team is charged with delivering the Disability and Inclusion Strategy and ensuring understanding of the discrimination legislation.

The strategy is focussed on five priority areas including

- Communication & information
- Accessibility
- Health & wellbeing
- Education & employment
- Equity & rights

The Inclusion Team includes a project manager and 2 inclusion officers focussed on mainstreaming disability and inclusion across all departments of GoJ as well as across the island.

The targets for 2021 include:

- Accessibility & understanding of discrimination legislation for all islanders
- Accessibility audits undertaken in public buildings and schools
- Developing transport solutions to improve accessibility for all
- Promoting opportunities for disabled Islanders to be active citizens, for example increasing representation on boards.
- Promoting disability awareness island-wide
- Providing opportunities for elected members to appreciate disabled Islanders realities

During 2020 CLS funded a campaign to raise awareness of Disability Discrimination Legislation and access to broadband for disabled islanders.

In addition, CLS worked with civil society to ensure C19 messaging was inclusive and helped support the vaccination programme.

The Minister's intention is to continue to deliver the Disability and Inclusion Strategy in partnership with civil society.

Beresford Street Kitchen

£300,000 has been allocated to support Beresford Street Kitchen (BSK) in 2021 to help to provide training and employment for islanders with a learning disability. In addition to this financial support, CLS officers are working with BSK to develop a sustainable funding model which will enable more islanders to benefit from the enterprise.

The Minister's intention is to ensure BSK has a sustainable funding model to continue to provide a range of opportunities and life skills for disabled islanders.

Jersey Employment Trust (JET)

JET provide employment support for people with a disability and / or a long-term health condition. They also provide life and social pre-employment skills development for people with learning disabilities, those on the Autistic spectrum or others with a disability or a long-term health condition.

CLS has a contract with JET where officers can refer jobseekers who need that specialist support. In 2021 this is worth £1,029,592 for Employment Services and £800,492 for Vocational Day Services. The Minister's intention is to support vulnerable islanders gain key life skills and employment.

Supporting Vulnerable Islanders

CLS oversee and provide support, including funding, to a number of organisations who provide vital services for islanders. This includes, The Shelter Trust (£1.4M per annum) Refuge (£ 215,000 per annum), Citizens Advice (£271,000 per annum) Relate (£34,000 per annum) and Call and Check (£102,000 per annum). In addition, CLS provide funding for the Identification and Referral to Improve Safety (IRIS) Service.

The Minister's intention is to provide support and vital services for all islanders.

Financial Impact Action Group

In addition, the Minister commissioned the Financial Impact Action Group in July 2020 as a response to COVID 19. The FIAG consists of GoJ Officers and representatives from a number of relevant charities and organisation such as The Salvation Army, Mind Jersey, Grace Trust and Caritas.

The group's vision is to support the financial wellbeing and mental health of all Islanders impacted financially by COVID 19 through partnerships and practical action. The group have worked to support minority groups across the island during the pandemic.

The Minister's intention is to work in partnership with civil society to support the community.

Diversity and Inclusion Tool Kit

The Government has been working with Jersey employers to develop a Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) toolkit which will be available to all Jersey businesses and individuals looking to set up a business or employees looking to champion or advise their company on the steps and considerations needed for their D&I journey.

The toolkit will create a standard for D&I practices across all Jersey businesses by providing a framework to start on, or improve, their D&I journey.

This will help to support a more positive workplace and influence positive inclusion in our communities, creating opportunity for all. It will also help to attract talent and a more diverse workforce to organisations.

The toolkit is currently being finalised and is due to launch during May 2021.

Family friendly rights

During 2020, improvements were made to both family friendly employment rights and parental benefits to support an inclusive workplace. At the end of June, workers' rights were extended to provide 6 weeks

of paid parental leave to all parents, with a further 46 weeks of unpaid leave available. Breastfeeding rights were also introduced for the first time. These rights cover surrogate and adoptive parents as well as birth parents.

The diversion of officers to support covid projects led to a delay in the planned introduction of parental benefits but an interim scheme to support the employers of parents claiming their parental rights was implemented to minimise the impact of the revised start date.

In November, the States Assembly approved Regulations to replace maternity benefits with parental benefits available to all parents, including surrogate and adoptive parents. The length of the new parental allowance has been extended from 18 weeks to 32 weeks, with the parents able to split the allocation between them. A parental grant can be claimed by either parent. These benefits are available to babies due from 1 January 2021 including babies born early towards the end of 2020.

United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women

The United Nations (UN) Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was extended to Jersey in February this year.

By having CEDAW extended to Jersey, the Island has committed internationally to eliminating discrimination against women and girls, and to achieving equality between men and women. In common with other core UN Human Rights treaties extended to Jersey, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the extension of CEDAW marks the beginning, rather than end, of the Island's obligation to demonstrate its compliance with the principles and requirements of the treaty. There is a periodic reporting cycle, to which Jersey must contribute (via the UK to the UN); providing updates on progress made during the last reporting cycle.

Now that Covid-19 restrictions have eased there is an opportunity to celebrate this important development for Jersey and the Minister will co-host an event on Friday 28 May with the Minister for International Development.