

STATES OF JERSEY



YOUTH SERVICE PROVISION

**Lodged au Greffe on 10th May 2021
by Senator T.A. Vallois
Earliest date for debate: 8th June 2021**

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –

To request the Minister for Children and Education to prepare and issue law-drafting instructions to make the Youth Service a statutory service under the Education (Jersey) Law 1999; and to take the necessary steps to ensure that the draft Law is lodged in sufficient time for the matter to be debated by the States before the 2022 election.

SENATOR T.A. VALLOIS

REPORT

Firstly, it is important to explain the difference between a statutory and non-statutory service in the eyes of the Jersey political sphere. We know that with the development of Machinery of Government since 2005 the movement of power that affects people's lives has changed substantially between the legislature to the relatively newly formed executive/non-executive positions.

In the eyes of a parliament the requirements are for us to ensure appropriate governance and that financial/manpower aptitudes are aligned appropriately not only to legislation but any policy that comes before the States for debate. In an ideal world, statutory functions would be less likely to have substantial reductions made to their budgets through the name of efficiencies and would also have legal responsibilities to perform their service on behalf of the public we serve.

Hence my reasoning for this proposition and why we cannot be in a position that England have seen over recent years with the demise of their youth provision and the skills/experience that has been lost over time and having to rebuild that provision in recognizing the detrimental effects of not having such vital services.

Our Youth Service in Jersey is a real hidden gem.

My proposition calls for those who represent the Island to recognize the importance our youth service plays in our children and young people's lives. Whether this be through our youth clubs, after school activities, information, Advice & counselling, LGBTQ support, young carers, young people with additional needs, Outdoor learning, PSHE educational support to schools, Street work and the list goes on and on.

One of the many items that I started to undertake as Education Minister was the following;

The Minister of Education has a view that Government should introduce a clear statutory duty and guidance that defines a minimum and protected level of Youth Service, and that this should fit within the Education Law under the Minister of Education's powers. This would also include a definition of a sufficient or minimum level of youth services on a per-head of youth population basis and a funding formula similar to School funding arrangements.

Youth workers play an important role in supporting our children & young people and the Jersey Youth Services provide an essential part within our islands service for children and young people.

As Minister I was involved in a meeting with the National Youth Agency and was impressed with the work they were undertaking with the UK government about making Youth Services *statutory* for all local authorities. NYA made it clear that in the UK, youth services had been closed down to make savings and that it was seen that youth clubs and other services delivered, were not seen as valuable by some local authorities / decision makers at a local level. I do not believe this view is shared here in Jersey due to the grateful and generous support of our Constables and their parishioners to support their youth and community services. However, thinking long term greater security could be provided by ensuring parliament have a say in the future of the Youth Service rather than a round robin budget fight in the name of efficiencies!

All of us in this chamber have had involvement with the Youth Service whether attending a youth project, being part of your parish youth project committee, as a Connétable investing in children and young people through your local youth club or maybe your children or grandchildren may attend.

Guidance published by the National Youth Agency (NYA), as the professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) for youth work and youth services in England, was to provide greater clarity and consistency for the understanding of local authorities' statutory duty to secure and support access to quality local youth services. For further information on this body please see their website www.nya.org.uk.

The Department of Education for Northern Ireland have a statutory and non-statutory offering for their youth services and seems to have worked well for many years with transparent accountability and a youth council.

[Youth Service | Department of Education \(education-ni.gov.uk\)](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk)

This model may be a consideration for how we develop our legislation in Jersey recognising the importance of our parishes and community support to our children and young people.

Our Youth Service really do punch above their weight in providing the support and work of government on another level. Including picking up the pieces of statutory services that are continuously carrying out reviews and take substantial time to provide crucial support to our children and young people that very often our youth service, without a blink of an eye, step in to support.

It is no longer a system of purely growing roots from parishes but is and will continue to be, a fundamental part of our democracy and an instrumental role of our responsibilities of listening to the voice of our children.

At a hearing of the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Quarterly Hearing, the Assistant Minister confirmed that there were no current plans to bring forward changes to the Education Law. I therefore have no choice but to request the Assembly to recognise the positives of this proposition and the long term need for statutory security for our vital youth provision in Jersey.

I'm calling on the Chief Minister and the Minister for Children and Education for a bold and ambitious support for our youth services, with increased government funding, suitable property to provide services in an action plan and recognition of the vital work they carry out within the next government plan.

Financial and manpower implications

The work to draw up law drafting instructions and the law drafting itself should be capable of being accommodated within existing budgets. The intention of the proposition is to protect the Youth Service's funding by making it a statutory service but the proposition in itself does not have any direct funding implications; these would arise in future Government Plans.