

# STATES OF JERSEY



## AUDIT OF GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT VACANCIES (P.73/2023): COMMENTS

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Presented to the States on 13th October 2023  
by the Chief Minister

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STATES GREFFE

## COMMENTS

The Council of Ministers and States Employment Board believe that vacancy management is a crucial element in managing public sector efficiency and costs.

Requests to fill vacancies need to be thoroughly assessed before they can proceed, and if approved, rapidly advertised, and filled. And vacancies no longer needed should be removed, freeing the budget to be used for other pressing purposes, or returned to the Treasury.

Ministers and Members of the States Employment therefore strongly agree with the thrust of the proposition, which is that we need to manage vacancies.

It was for these reasons that analysis, management and reporting of vacancies in government has increased, with Ministers and the States Employment Board focused on this task. This includes reconciling financial and human resources data and systems to identify fully and accurately what our actual vacancies are, giving us a clearer picture of the exact roles that are vacant, including their grade levels.

However, this proposition, while well intentioned, is unhelpful in this task.

The way to manage growth in public sector headcount is not to add more work and bureaucracy, such as this new audit, but to have effective data management, effective saving programmes and budget management, and effective controls when any department wants to recruit.

For example, half of all vacancies are in the Health and Community Services Department, and we are already well advanced on a financial recovery programme for the Department. This includes a focus on vacancy management and taking practical actions to remove vacancies enabling budget to be used for more urgent needs. We are also through the new Delivery Unit streamlining recruitment processes and removing barriers such as access to accommodation in key areas in both education and health where vacancies need to be filled.

We need to do this alongside a much greater focus on managing and mitigating the causes of public sector growth. That means being mindful when introducing new regulations and rules; streamlining and removing existing bureaucracy; and investing in automation and technology.

Members are kindly asked to reject this proposition, and to instead allow Ministers and the States Employment Board to focus their efforts on managing public sector staffing levels and efficiency.