

2.4 Deputy A.E. Jeune of St. Brelade of the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture regarding providing appropriate training to match job vacancies in the Island:

Given that many of those completing courses this year are experiencing difficulties in finding suitable positions in which to fulfil their ambitions for which they have studied and qualified, does the Minister consider it appropriate to increase the number of places available for study at Highlands College and what procedures, if any, are in place to ensure that the training given is suitable to the vacancy situations in the Island?

The Deputy of St. Ouen (The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture):

I will try to be more brief. Yes, it is appropriate to increase the numbers of places available at Highlands College to meet increased demand due to economic recession. However, other initiatives are also being pursued. A youth training initiative, advance to work for young people unable to gain employment, an extended apprenticeship scheme to provide more places in more diverse occupations, a graduate work experience scheme to be established if local graduates are unable to secure employment later in the year, and a careers service strengthening scheme to enable the service to meet increased client need and to provide resources for short-term retraining opportunities for adults who may need to consider changing career.

The Bailiff:

Deputy, do you wish to ask a follow-up? You do not have to.

Deputy A.E. Jeune:

I thank the Minister for his answer. I will come back again another time, thanks.

2.4.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Is the Minister aware of any permanent, long-term, additional resources that are being put into the area of job seeking, in particular for young people?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

At this moment in time discussions are still ongoing about what finances may or may not be required following the introduction of these initiatives. However, the funding for these initiatives are all provided within the fiscal stimulus package.

2.4.2 Deputy J.A. Hilton of St. Helier:

In recent years the construction faculty has been oversubscribed by quite a large number of applicants. Is the Minister able to tell the House how many additional places have been offered to students in the construction faculty?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I have not got the details of that. However, I have been notified that although perhaps block layers might not be required, dry liners are. I am informed that within a relatively small period of time block layers can be retrained to meet the demands of the dry lining that is currently required on the Island.

Deputy J.A. Hilton:

Would it be possible for the Minister to, by email, inform the House how many additional places have been offered in the construction faculty, please?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Absolutely.

2.4.3 Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Could the Minister just clarify for the House what numbers of apprenticeships are available at the moment and is he aware what increase is likely, through his knowledge of Education?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I cannot give absolute details at the moment because, clearly, this is a moveable feast. As individuals approach the Careers Department and the Social Security Department identifying their needs, the aim is that we will meet and provide for them. Clearly we have got a good base insofar as that through Project Trident we have a large group of employers who are already involved in working with my department to provide work experience.

2.4.4 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Will the Minister agree to come to the House showing the way in which the numbers of apprenticeships that have been available over the past 5 years have declined and the moves, the initiatives, under special measures to compensate for the recession, that they will only restore numbers to what they should have been all the time?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I am not aware that the apprentice traineeship schemes have declined over the past 5 years. However, I will be happy to provide any information that the Deputy may want.

2.4.5 Deputy A.E. Jeune:

Given that in the answer from the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture he mentioned the economic recession, is it not also true that the economic recession is having an impact on the Project Trident positions that are available?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I am not aware of such; however, it is clear that there are employers, as I am led to believe, that are keen to be included in the apprenticeship scheme. This is borne out by a past experience, which was ... I think happened in 1997.