

2.3 Deputy G.P. Southern of the Chief Minister regarding apprenticeship schemes for young people.

Does the Chief Minister consider that, with only 15 apprentices aged 16 to 22, the States as an employer is doing all it can to address the unemployment amongst young people? What extent will Advance to Work or Trackers placements play a role in improving this situation and does he believe that these schemes are adequate substitutes for full apprenticeships?

Senator I.J. Gorst (The Chief Minister):

There are currently 15 apprentices under the age of 22 employed by the States under the old Jersey Apprenticeship Scheme. This is now being replaced by the Trackers Apprenticeship Programme, which was introduced in December of last year. It is an updated more flexible scheme that gives each apprentice access to a personal mentor and puts a focus on training and quality work. All new apprentices starting with the States from this September onwards will be taken on under the new scheme. Where appropriate, all States departments will be encouraged to participate in Trackers. For example, funding has been identified for 85 apprentice healthcare assistants within the Medium-Term Financial Plan. Advance to Work is an employment scheme. It does not aim to be a substitute for apprenticeships. Rather it is a scheme that provides both training and work experience to help out-of-work young people to secure employment.

2.3.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Will the Chief Minister explain to Members how long Trackers apprenticeships last and who funds them? Does a Tracker apprentice need an employer because my understanding is that if they have signed up for Trackers, they do not need an employer?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

Obviously Trackers is an apprenticeship scheme which is under the auspices of the Skills Executive and co-ordinated across the 3 departments of Economic Development, Social Security and Education. I do not have all the details in front of me but I am aware that they are available and I can provide the link for the Member so that he can understand that they work in partnership.

2.3.2 The Connétable of St. Helier:

Is the Chief Minister aware that the Parish of St. Helier has an apprenticeship scheme and currently has several apprentices working in gardens, stone masonry, decorating and the like and would he agree to pass on my thanks to his officers who have been assisting the Parish in maintaining that scheme?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I am absolutely delighted to hear that and I wish the Parish's apprentices the very best. There are currently 58 Tracker apprenticeships in paid employment within the private sector and it is my understanding that that actually deals with the current capacity of those people who have previously wanted to be taken on as apprentices but we must encourage more and I think that is the thrust of the Deputy's question. I agree with him and I was having a very interesting conversation only last night with the Ambassador for Latvia to the Court of St. James and discussing the way that they deal with apprenticeships in Latvia and the guild process that they have in place, something that perhaps we could also replicate here.

2.3.3 Deputy J.A. Martin of St. Helier:

The Chief Minister may not have the figure but given that the States of Jersey are one of the largest employers in the Island, could he find out the percentage of who we employ on an apprenticeship and trainee scheme against the private sector, which I fully understand at the moment we are hammering, saying they must take on locals and they must train up locals. Is the

Chief Minister confident and would he produce the figures to show that we are matching the private sector because we should be leading by example?

[10:00]

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I am not confident that we are matching the private sector and I believe that we can do far better. There has been a transition from the old scheme to the new scheme. As I said, there are only 15 currently under the old scheme, none in States employment under the new scheme, but as we arrive at September and in the period running up to that, then people are being asked to ensure that they are creating spaces and looking to see where they can create apprenticeships right across the States sector because it is not good enough.

2.3.4 Deputy T.A. Vallois of St. Saviour:

The Chief Minister just mentioned the Skills Executive and its co-ordination. Would it be possible for him to explain who is ultimately accountable for the delivery of these schemes?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I am surprised we have got to the problems of ministerial government quite so early in today's session but there we are. That is a very good question. Those 3 departments work together. They chair the Skills Executive on a rotating basis throughout the 3-year term of office and therefore each department, in effect, takes responsibility for chairing that department. One could say they are therefore accountable, but currently the Education Department provides the officer support and general resource, and therefore I think we can say that the Education Department is currently ultimately accountable but, as you will see from the way I am answering the question, it is not exactly clear.

2.3.5 Deputy G.P. Southern:

I am almost left speechless for once but I will find some words, I am sure.

The Deputy Bailiff:

You usually do. **[Laughter]**

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Will the Chief Minister confirm that at the moment only T.T.S. (Transport and Technical Services) is employing apprenticeships in the entire 6,000 strong workforce and will he indicate to Members how Trackers apprenticeships will be funded, how much does the employer receive and how much does the apprentice receive in terms of a wage?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

Unfortunately, I do not have all those details with me this morning. I think the Deputy might be right with regard to States departments but as the Connétable of St. Helier said, he as well in the Parish has got apprenticeships there. As I said, I am quite happy to provide the link for the Member so that he can see the detail of the Tracker scheme and how the funding is made available.

2.3.6 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Will the Chief Minister, rather than provide a link, provide an answer because I have already got one answer that has been privately circulated to me from the previous question I asked on this subject and I do want this in the public domain. Rather than just me knowing things, I think the public should know.

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I think you will agree with me that Standing Orders say that where something is already in the public domain, the Member generally has the duty to look for it but quite rightly, I am happy to provide the link for all Members.