

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHAIRMAN FOR THE EDUCATION AND HOME AFFAIRS
SCRUTINY PANEL
BY DEPUTY M. TADIER OF ST. BRELADE
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 28TH JUNE 2016**

Question

Further to the publication on 14th June 2016 of the Panel's report 'Nursery Education Fund' (S.R.2/2016), does the Panel intend to conduct a review into the efficiency or otherwise of the Minister's decision to means test the provision of 20 free hours' nursery care, as opposed to providing universal funding?

Answer

In the Panel's report (S.R.2/2016) on the Minister for Education's original proposals to means test parents for eligibility to 20 hours a week of nursery education funding for their child in a private nursery, we concluded that the policy to establish a £75,000 threshold had not been adequately researched, or subjected to impact assessment. This led to many significant issues being raised that the Minister has been unable to adequately answer. The Panel strongly recommended that, until such time as proposals were developed with appropriate levels of research, impact assessments or consultation with stakeholders, the proposition should be withdrawn.

Whilst the Minister has withdrawn the original £75,000 threshold and replaced it with a proposed sliding scale upwards from £85,000, the Panel is not yet satisfied that this revised means testing policy has been developed with any more appropriate levels of research, impact assessments or consultation with stakeholders. In the absence of such information we are unable to satisfactorily complete a full and objective assessment of the efficiency or appropriateness of introducing means testing in place of a universal funding provision, or reach a suitably informed conclusion.

The Panel will shortly begin work reviewing relevant parts of the forthcoming MTFP Addition. This may include further examination of nursery education funding if, as anticipated, it is contained within the MTFP Addition. We will report our findings and recommendations publically to the States at the earliest opportunity.