

# Minister for Children and Education

19-21 Broad Street | St Helier  
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Deputy Sam Mézec  
Chair, Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel



## BY EMAIL

18 August 2023

Dear Chair,

Thank you for your letter of 2<sup>nd</sup> August with a range of questions for your follow up review of people and culture, specific to the Children, Young People, Education and Skills (CYPES) department.

Please see the answers below and do not hesitate to ask if you require further information:

**1. The internal processes and procedures in your department which can be used by employees to address complaints and grievances including for inappropriate behaviour, bullying and harassment. We are aware that there are set States of Jersey policies relating to these matters, however we would like to know the specific process that would be followed by employees within your department.**

Grievances and complaints are addressed through the Resolving Grievances Policy. CYPES employees follow the standard Government of Jersey policies and procedures in relation to these matters. A new improved grievance policy and procedure was established in 2023, along with disciplinary, following consultation and approval from the States Employment Board (SEB), Trade Unions and ELT. The policy includes enhancements such as the fast-track process and the introduction of a fact-finding process. The enhancements have resulted in our ability to move towards a quicker resolution.

Employees and managers can now access information and guidance for on the approach to resolving grievances through the Gov.je website as this is now a public document and is available via [Resolving grievances policy for public servants \(gov.je\)](#).

Bullying and harassment concerns are dealt with under the Dignity and Respect at Work policy. Concerns regarding whistleblowing are dealt with under the Whistleblowing policy.

Complaints or grievances from CYPES employees would normally be raised with line managers or the line managers manager, to resolve at an informal level. The CYPES People Consultancy Services Team provide advice to our managers and employees and monitor processes in line with the Government of Jersey policy and procedure. The informal stage is designed to resolve issues without escalation and allows for agreement with employees on how the situation is handled, benefiting all concerned if matters can be dealt with efficiently and effectively. As well as being able to come to a quicker resolution, the informal stage can also prevent minor grievances from becoming more serious.

It may not always be appropriate to deal with a complaints or grievances in an informal manner. If the formal approach needs to be used, due to the nature and seriousness of the grievance, an employee puts their grievance in writing. Again, grievances would normally be submitted to line managers unless the grievance relates to the line manager or employees feel it cannot be progressed by them.

In these situations, it should be the line manager's manager, the CYPES People Consultancy Services Team or the People and Corporate Services Case Management Team.

The person who receives the formal written grievance writes to acknowledge receipt of the grievance and arranges a meeting prior to commissioning a fact-finding exercise or an investigation through the People and Corporate Services Case Management Team.

**2. Whether any internal employee processes and procedures followed in your department differ from those within other departments and, if so, how and why. For example, we note that there is a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian in the Health and Community Services Department to ensure that the voices and concerns of staff are heard and acted upon.**

As explained in point 1, CYPES employees follow the standard policies and procedures in relation to these matters.

**3. The relevant officer(s) in your department available to employees as a first point of contact to raise concerns or grievances.**

As explained in point 1, concerns or grievances would normally be submitted to line managers unless it relates to the line manager or employees feel it cannot be progressed by them. In these situations, it should be the line manager's manager. Department union representatives, the HR Business Partners, the CYPES People Consultancy Services Team or the People and Corporate Services Case Management Team can also be contacted for concerns or grievances to be raised. Employees can also contact the dedicated speak-up line.

**4. What management information is available to your senior leadership team to enable you to gauge or measure the numbers of informal or formal concerns, grievances or disciplinary actions and how your management information is gathered and recorded.**

Managers are expected to adhere to the People Management codes of practice, policies, and procedures when staff raise concerns, grievances or when dealing with disciplinary actions.

The People and Corporate Services Case Management Team Management collate information in respect of formal procedures. This is provided to the CYPES HRBPs for presentation to the CYPES SLT every month. Individual cases are discussed with the relevant Group Director and/or Chief Officer.

**5. The challenges, if any, within your department in improving and maintaining a satisfactory workplace culture.**

- Focus on the workforce strategy has been on sustainability. CYPES has faced challenges in recruiting staff, which highlights that we need to continue to build a culture that attracts, retains and develops the best talent.
- The pandemic had forced change / increased service demands which can impact on resilience, workload, and wellbeing.
- Flexibility around working practice has been challenging particularly for the school's workforce and for critical front line services.
- Challenges with IT/System Changes for front facing services or schools-based employees.

**6. Whether your department has any trade union shop stewards or representatives and, if so, the type of relationship held with those people to assist with resolving employee matters that are brought to the department's attention.**

CYPES has established processes for concerns to be addressed via Trade Union Representatives. They hold quarterly meetings with representatives for issues to be raised, discussed, and addressed.

Personal cases can be raised via department union representatives across the service who would normally then raise the concerns with a member of the CYPES HR team or senior management.

**7. Specific actions taken within your department to improve staff wellbeing and morale.**

We have:

- Strengthened (new funding and roles) classroom and business management support in schools.
- Started the work required to strengthen performance and development processes to drive ongoing performance improvement, helping leaders and managers to identify personal goals and priorities aligned with the school or service objectives and improvement priorities. From these conversations can come succession planning, act up opportunities, mentoring, shadowing, and future workforce planning.
- Engaged in the flexible working policy re-launch and instigated a school review on flexible working practice, guidelines, and toolkits for the schools' workforce (due in the next academic year).
- Developed mental health and wellbeing awareness in schools through the establishment of trained mental health leads in schools and targeted development sessions in schools supported by the Anna Freud Centre, London.
- Continued to develop the on-island workforce and invest in training and workforce development through the development of a significant training and development programme for Children Social Care staff as well as widespread training and development in restorative practice.
- Commenced improvements on communication, involvement and the engagement of staff and future workforce capabilities through information gathered through surveys.
- Worked on procedural and policy improvements around recruitment for the schools' workforce including increased recruitment support and better vacancy management.
- Worked with the Delivery Unit to establish a recruitment management function to assist with the current recruitment issues and challenges for education and the overall improvement of candidate management and support.
- Introduced role and service specific career pathways and progression plans, that allows for better opportunities for promotion, to move across the service and for career changes. For example, across Family and Community Services and Children's Social Care professional groups.
- Improved retention activities to ensure that workforce groups are stabilised and grown. For example:
  - an approved business case in the Government Plan 2023 – 26 to fund interim solutions to recruitment and retention of social workers.
  - established a funded bursary route for the Jersey Graduate Teacher Training Programme
  - established subject knowledge enhancement qualifications for the re-training of existing teachers beyond their degree/specialist teaching subjects.
  - developed an on-island programme to support newly qualified social workers.
  - established a university partnership to offer a degree programme for Jersey Youth Service.
  - appointed CAMHS mental health nurses who have completed on island training.
  - Introduced funded Master's-level qualifications for SENCOs and teachers

## **8. The creation or improvements of strategy, policy, and procedures in your department for the benefit of employee welfare and workplace culture implemented since the start of the new States Assembly term.**

A key Ministerial priority is *'establishing a strong, engaged and valued workforce working on behalf of children, young people and their families and ensuring services are delivered safely and effectively'* by:

- *addressing the acute recruitment challenges faced in nurseries, childcare settings, schools, Children's Social Work, Residential Care and CAMHS. To develop bespoke campaigns and improve processes to attract future colleagues to work for our services.*
- *engaging with early years providers to understand and address the challenges of workforce pressures.*
  - *addressing staff wellbeing by listening to the needs of the workforce, addressing day-to-day work challenges, for example workload, and providing opportunities for colleagues to grow with the organisation.*
- *ensuring robust governance, safeguarding and quality assurance frameworks are in place across CYPES and schools, ensuring children and young people are protected and service operate effectively.*

As detailed in question 7, work has commenced on several workforce initiatives to ensure the success of CYPES in achieving its strategic objectives and to address staff wellbeing by listening to the needs of the workforce, addressing day-to-day work challenges, for example workload, and providing opportunities for colleagues to grow with the organisation. Oversight of workforce activity is through the Ministerial Delivery Plan and the CYPES Workforce SLT Group which was established in September 2022. It addresses the strategic workforce challenges in schools and other services, where substantial programmes of reform are already underway. Work so far, since the establishment of the current States Assembly is focussed on workforce improvements needed to address cultural change including improved recruitment management, policy and procedural changes around accommodation, licences, and better onboarding support, along with improvements to the quality and reporting of management data.

## **9. Whether any routine internal department-specific surveys or polls are undertaken regarding people and workplace culture and the frequency and impact thereof.**

The CYPES Workforce Strategy was finalised in December 2022 underpinning the commitment to people and workforce improvements designed to improve wellbeing and culture. It was informed by workforce data and information taken from a range of stakeholders and surveys. It includes feedback from the Ministers meetings undertaken with Head Teachers, information from exit interviews, employee surveys and the opinions of the wider Senior Leadership Team and Heads of Service through workforce planning sessions. We aim to establish working groups to further stimulate action planning and discussion on our workforce delivery plans.

The BeHeard Employee Engagement Survey and, the Teachers' Survey informed the People and Culture planning work and was combined into the CYPES Workforce Strategy with the aim of increasing engagement factors around job satisfaction, culture, work environment, career development and progression, digital experience and most importantly management and leadership.

During 2023:

- Employees participated in the three-year GOJ wide employee engagement (BeHeard) survey which provided valuable insights into the experiences of our CYPES workforce and the wider Government.
- A new teaching assistant survey has been carried out to provide insights into the teaching assistant workforce and to support future change.
- We have also participated in a UK national staff survey in Children's Social Care using the Social Work Organisational Resilience Diagnostic (SWORD). The tool is used to assess whether an organisation has the necessary conditions to underpin a resilient organisation, to support the wellbeing of staff and promote optimum social work practice.
- A wellbeing survey will be completed across the Early Years workforce to support future change.

**10. Whether when an employee leaves the department, they are automatically offered an exit interview and, if not, why.**

All leavers are sent a leaver survey form to complete before their last working day. The leaver has the option of asking their line manager for a face-to-face meeting if they prefer or to arrange a meeting with a member of Human Resources. Employee can also elect to be contacted by HR to discuss in more detail any of the answers they have given. The exit interview / leaver survey process is currently under review by the People and Corporate Services Policy Team. Data collected through these processes is regularly reviewed by the leadership team.

**11. Whether there are any emerging themes that can be taken from previous exit interviews.**

People and Corporate Services analyse the information gathered from all completed leaver surveys to report high-level trends and inform changes in practice where appropriate. CYPES leaver information is presented by the HR Business Partner to the CYPES SLT every month. Individual concerns are discussed with Heads of Service or Group Directors, subject to permission being provided by the leaver (as per the Data Protection (Jersey) Law 2018).

Out of the 180 employees leaving the service during the previous 12-month period:

- 37 were teachers
- 57 were teaching assistants / learning support assistants
- 11 were social workers or residential childcare workers

**Reason for leaving were recorded as:**

- 43 employees / 23% of CYPES leavers left indicating '*personal reasons (not work related)*'
- 24 employees / 13% of CYPES leavers left indicating reasons of '*leaving Jersey*'
- 26 employees / 14% of CYPES leavers left indicating '*career development in Jersey*'
- 18 employees / 10% of CYPES leavers left indicating '*end of fixed term contract*' (parental leave, staff cover, project, or short-term arrangement etc)
- 19 employees / 11% of CYPES employees indicating '*retirement*'
- 10 employees / 5% of CYPES leavers indicating '*better pay or benefits*'
- 6 employees / 3% of CYPES leavers indicating '*health reasons*'
- All other factors indicated were less than 5, including '*death in service, failed probation, as a result of formal action not returning after parental leave, ill health retirement, job dissatisfaction, other employment in Jersey*'

**12. Whether the Minister or Chief Officer works with the HR Business Partner to resolve concerns, the process that is followed and whether you have identified any challenges or concerns with the process that you have identified.**

Leaver survey data including reasons for leaving are reviewed by the CYPES HR Business Partner and an overview is provided to the Chief Officer and the SLT on a monthly basis. The Leaver Survey process has been in place since 2019 and replaced the former manual procedure that was not always applied and relied solely on the line manager. The procedure allows all leavers the opportunity to respond and to express opinion on a number of employee engagement factors in an open confidential manner. The reporting dashboard which was introduced in 2021 helps inform workforce planning and insight into the key issues for leavers.

**13. Any historic concerns or issues in relation to any of the above within your department.**

The department is undertaking significant change through the implementation of strategic change programmes including;

- Education Reform and Inclusion
- Care Reform to increase sufficiency and care outcomes
- Actionable Skills Agenda
- Mental Health and Wellbeing improvements
- Early Years

The department is showing signs of improvement through monitored performance, workforce metrics and fiscal responsibilities, but continues to face many inherent and legacy challenges across the core functions. The impact of the pandemic on education and mental health services is continuing to be felt and it is anticipated that this will continue over several years. Additionally, insufficient capacity planning in the care sector also presents key risks to the department. Given CYPES is a provision facing arm of Government, recruitment, retention, wellbeing, and staff satisfaction are critical to the success of the department in addressing these legacy challenges.

**14. Any other issues that the Panel should consider as part of its review in line with the Terms of Reference for the review, which can be found on the review page.**

I have no other issues that the Panel should consider.

Yours sincerely,



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