



JERSEY ADVISORY AND CONCILIATION SERVICE
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3 November 2022

Deputy Mezec
 Chair
 Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel
 (via email only)

Dear Deputy Mezec

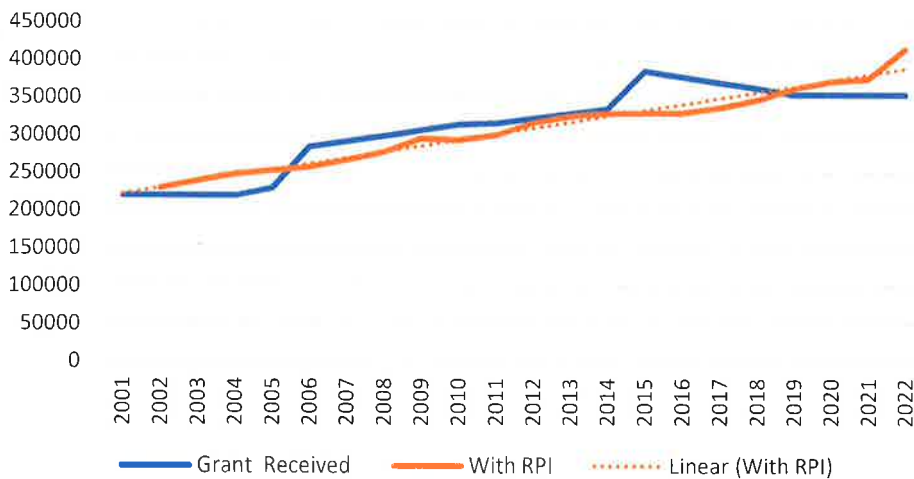
Re: Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel Government Plan Review 2023 – 2026 (JACS)

Thank you for your letter dated 26 October re the above inviting comments in respect of:

- **Jersey advisory and Conciliation Service Additional Workload (additional revenue programme)**

As an arms-length statutory body JACS receives an annual grant – previously from Social Security, and of late from SPPP. Below is a graph showing the effective reduction (in real terms) to the JACS grant since 2015. Between 2016 and 2019 JACS were tasked with making annual savings of 2% (compound) reducing the grant from £385,800 to £354,900 where it has remained since 2019.

JACS Grant 2001 - 2022



At the same time as such reductions taking place significant new legislation in respect of Race Discrimination (The Discrimination (Jersey) Law 2013) was introduced in 2014. Other notable legislative changes have been Sex Discrimination; Maternity Rights; Rest Periods (2015), Age Discrimination; protection for Reservists (2016), Disability Discrimination (1); Parental Leave 1 (2018), Extended Parental Leave (2); Breastfeeding Rights; and Disability Discrimination (2) in 2020.

JACS client-base was significantly expanded with the introduction of discrimination legislation due to the extension of rights to those not protected under The Employment (Jersey) Law 2003. The increase generally to client contacts was exacerbated in 2020 with the pandemic. The impact of Covid-19

necessitated swift and considerable changes to the way JACS operate as the service struggled to reach all clients that made contact immediately following the lock-down announcement. Regular updates to the website enabled information to be available to as wide an audience as possible providing additional support to clients at times the service was not available ie overnight or public holidays. Comments/feedback received from clients at that time were along the lines of ...'I didn't expect to be able to speak to someone' ...' I didn't think you would get back to me so quickly' ...'I didn't know you were available at the weekend'. On the latter comment JACS are not normally available at the weekend, but the team worked significant levels of additional hours in order to support the clients that needed the service.

In 2020 alone the 3.75 conciliation officers dealt with 12669 contacts from employees, employers, unions and other parties.

An additional impact of the pandemic was against the training delivery and the resultant reduction to income generated from such sessions. In order to mitigate the decline in any training income in 2020 JACS ended the SLA between the service and the Trainer that had been engaged in 2019. Changes to the way JACS offered (and continue to offer) services generally meant a difficult decision was made to make redundant an administration officer in December 2020 (this role is not an advisory one) as both physical callers and the lack of training sessions reduced the need for 70% of this role. As training sessions continue to be delivered via Zoom (against a market increase of (often free) Webinars) JACS now utilize Eventbrite as a booking and payment system – thus reducing costs further.

At this time JACS employs three full-time conciliation officers and one part-time (25 hours) administration and small business adviser.

The JACS Board (currently seven members) will be undergoing significant changes in 2023 when three of the members will be stepping down having completed 9 years with the Service. JACS have been fortunate that Board members have freely given their time and expertise to support the service particularly in respect of preparation the financial statements for the bi-monthly Board Meetings, the SLA reports to SPPP and in preparation for the annual audit. This significantly reduces the costs of the audit and ensures good governance of JACS finances. A recruitment programme for new Board members will commence early in 2023, however if applicants are not able to assist with the financial statements JACS will need to purchase external services to assist with this important role.

The operational costs for JACS has seen the erosion the small surplus the service had managed to retain by frugal fiscal management including some restructuring of the team. The extract below is from the JACS 2021 Annual Report:-

As per the revised Service Level Agreement (SLA) 2021 between JACS and the Department of Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance (SPPP), an annual grant of £354,900 (paid quarterly) was received. Prior to the annual SLA being revised, a budget was prepared (agreed with the Board) which predicted an overspend against Grant of £90,370, which would need funds to be taken from the JACS reserves. Due to the unknown impact of the ongoing pandemic no provision was included in this budget for training income. Throughout 2021 savings were made as the office made further in-roads to going paperless, reducing printing, stationary and postage, we also received a small amount of training income, resulting in the overall overspend being reduced to £500.

For 2023 JACS have set a budget with the tightest controls on fixed costs, however the variable costs are not areas that can be controlled and will be dependent on the inflation rates suppliers add to their services and goods.

The need an increase to the grant JACS receives will enable the Service to ensure that:

- The required accounting standards are maintained;
- The service offered is agile and responsive by buying in additional skill sets at times when it is needed for example an additional mediator to handle collective disputes;
- To invest in succession planning and training;
- In times of absence within the existing team and/or peaks in workload, to be able to pay for additional resource to maintain the standards of service that the public has come to expect from this service.

In September 2020 a report on Acas (the UK equivalent of JACS) looked at the economic value that Acas offered to the UK economy. The outcome of these independent findings showed that during the financial year of April 2018 to March 2019 that the services provide '...an overall benefit-cost ratio of £12 for every £1 invested ...' (<https://www.acas.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-09/Estimating-Acas-Economic-Impact-2018-2019-accessible.pdf>). Whilst JACS are significantly different in respect of size, resources and the delivery of our services if we apply this same analysis for 2020 using our grant of £355,855 this would bring our overall contribution to the Jersey economy to £4,270,260. An example of the benefit-costs when looking at JACS is in the number of matters that fall under pre-claim conciliation (the prevention of a greater number of Tribunal claims), and the early intervention with advice to parties including those that fall under collective disputes.

Yours sincerely



Patricia Rowan
Director

