



Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel

Government Plan

Witnesses: The National Association of Head Teachers and the National Education Union

Thursday, 17th October 2019

Panel:

Senator K.L. Moore (Chair)

Deputy S.M. Ahier of St. Helier (Vice-Chair)

Deputy J.H. Perchard of St. Saviour

Witnesses:

Mr. S. Cooper, Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers

Mr. B. Carolan, President, National Education Union

[12:59]

Senator K.L. Moore (Chair):

Thank you both for joining us today. It is very helpful that you have been able to make the time for it. I have to draw your attention to the witness notice, if you are not familiar with it, which explains the parliamentary privilege under which we work. We will just ask if you can try to keep your answers as concise as possible and we will endeavour to ask the best questions that we can and follow up, so we will hopefully have a free-flowing discussion. We will start with our introductions. I am Senator Kristina Moore. I am the Chair of the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel.

[13:00]

Deputy J.H. Perchard of St. Saviour:

Deputy Jess Perchard, member of the panel.

Deputy S.M. Ahier of St. Helier (Vice-Chair):

Deputy Steve Ahier, Vice-Chair.

Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers:

Sam Cooper. I am the head teacher of D'Auvergne School, but the local president of the National Association of Head Teachers.

President, National Education Union:

Brendan Carolan, a teacher at Victoria College, but I am Joint Secretary of the N.E.U. (National Education Union), Jersey section.

Senator K.L. Moore:

Thank you. This hearing is predominantly focused on the Government Plan and the impact that has on education and educationalists from your perspectives. We wondered if at the outset there was any particular statement that you wished to make in relation to the plan and the process and its development.

Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers:

Yes, I have got a few points, if it is okay for me to kick off. Head teachers and school leaders, while we are employed by the Government of Jersey, we work for our children, with the aim of providing them with the very best education service that we are able to. Our members have chosen to work with children and young people because we want to make a difference; it is a vocational profession. In respect to the proposed Government Plan, I, on behalf of the N.A.H.T. (National Association of Head Teachers), would like to recognise some of the ambitions of the plan that we feel will, if fully committed to, certainly improve the lives and outcomes of Jersey's children. I will get into some specifics if that is okay, so the intention to increase and expand the Jersey Premium offer is welcome news. However, we do not believe that it goes far enough, as it still falls over 10 per cent less than the Pupil Premium in the United Kingdom, notwithstanding the fact that costs in Jersey of employing staff are higher. The U.K. (United Kingdom) Pupil Premium is significantly higher than the Jersey Premium, but the impact that we can make with the Jersey Premium is perhaps even less because of the associated staffing costs that much of the money is spent on. The schools funding review is long overdue and its inclusion, with significant investment in the review process itself - I think £250,000 has been committed to the review process - is at least a recognition that there is a problem around funding of schools. Head teachers have been saying this for many years. I am aware that a primary head teacher, along with senior colleagues, senior officers at the department, have concluded a rigorous interview process recently to select the independent review team and the N.A.H.T. keenly await the imminent information of the methodology for us to give our input into what

the review would look like, the funding review. There is to be investment in school facilities and of course that is always welcomed because a great environment can do much to enhance outcomes. However, without going into school-specific details, the N.A.H.T. would strongly support a detailed analysis of proposed spends on capital projects to ensure that schools who might not yet experience ideal settings are given some equity and that they are not missing out on investment opportunities because of the investment in other settings. Quite simply, we raise the point of equity: that surely the Government should only be considering or contemplating upgrading certain facilities when they know that all other schools are at least up to standard, for example, around specific health and safety issues. We are not certain that that is entirely the case at the moment. Health and safety compliance must come first, as some parts of some schools - indeed, some schools in their entirety - are not experiencing the quality of environment that is detailed for upgrades of schools and the quality of experience that some schools are already benefiting from, but are still being further enhanced.

Senator K.L. Moore:

May I ask a question? Are you able to say what percentage of schools do not meet those standards?

Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers:

No, I could not give a percentage, but there are some specific examples where some schools, while they are not a risk to children in terms of the safety, there are some concerns about some structural defects in the school which we would hope would be considered as a priority before perhaps some luxuries are added to other contexts. What I would say is the detail of that is on page 147 of the plan and I will let you have a look at what I consider the ...

Senator K.L. Moore:

Of the glossy version? We call it the glossy version.

Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers:

Yes, the glossy version. We would simply encourage the equity, particularly for the most vulnerable pupils on the Island, is at the forefront of any decision-making process and is considered first. The plan barely mentions equity in respect of social context. I think it is mentioned a couple of times. Equity is referred to many times around fiscal issues, but when we are talking about social equity, it hardly touches on it at all. Essentially we would encourage a forensic analysis of schools' health and safety needs being conducted with school leaders. As a school leader myself, I raise issues with Property Holdings, but we are frequently told that the budget is not there to respond to the needs of my school, among others. Moving on, the Jersey school review framework - which we are just finishing the pilot phase of it, and it is about to be rolled out in its formal state - it is a tool that we believe will assist in improving educational outcomes for children. It helps schools continually learn and collaborate and we support its formal introduction. The crucial early years, the zero to 5

provision, needs very significant support. Too many children are entering schools having missed developmental milestones. The spotlight on this area in the Government Plan is welcomed by the N.A.H.T. In broader terms, there appears to be more agility, more flexibility in the Government Plan in respect to allowing funding to be allocated on a more flexible basis and this has got to be seen as an improvement on the M.T.F.P. (Medium Term Financial Plan).

Senator K.L. Moore:

May we just return to the early years there? Because of course there is no funding attributed to that in 2020, the first year of the plan, because that is the year that the Policy Development Board is still conducting its work and developing a plan for investment, but given that every year the cohort that misses out on the fruits of that decision-making is approximately 1,000 children who miss out and continue into the system, do you find it a bit disappointing that decisions have not been brought forward so that funding can be attributed in 2020?

Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers:

In terms of the funding model, yes. I think our point there is that we are happy that it has been highlighted and identified, but how we respond to that, it clearly needs some significant investment, but the work that the team are doing around that is welcome, but it is still further down the road that we are going to see the impact or the outcomes of it.

Senator K.L. Moore:

It is a long-term investment.

Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers:

It is a long-term investment, but the zero to 2 work, while it does not come under school leaders and the N.A.H.T.'s remit, we would welcome some significant investment in it so that it makes ...

Senator K.L. Moore:

It has an impact on school readiness.

Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers:

Yes, indeed.

Senator K.L. Moore:

Yes, and also development of the brain. We will not go into the details of the 1001 critical days, but we understand what you are saying, yes. Thank you.

Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers:

Shall I move on?

Senator K.L. Moore:

Please.

Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers:

I was going to move on to some concerns around the plan. How schools are funded is currently being reviewed. The Council of Ministers say that they: "will take action on the outcome and recommendations of this review and ensure that any cost implications form part of the next proposed Government Plan. Any identified need for increased school funds that is agreed by the Council of Ministers for the start of the 2020-2021 academic year in September 2020 will be allocated from available reserves or departmental underspent budgets in the first instance." We are not clear what that means in reality. What are these unidentified efficiencies and is it simply saying that: "If we have money, we will put it into schools"? It is a bit motherhood and apple pie, to be blunt, and it says that the cost implications will form part of the next proposed Government Plan, so 2023 plus, while we have got some really pressing issues now.

Senator K.L. Moore:

It may be the 2020, because of course the thing that is new about this is that it is an annual plan, so if the underspends ... I am not speaking on behalf of the Government, obviously, but perhaps what they are saying is if at the end of 2020 there is additional revenue, but of course that is a risk and that is something that has been flagged by the F.P.P. (Fiscal Policy Panel).

Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers:

Yes, there is nothing nailed down yet, looking forward, which will hopefully come as a result of the review.

Senator K.L. Moore:

Yes, thank you.

Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers:

Additionally, at the moment there is an education review process being undertaken by teaching unions, and the N.A.H.T. were involved in this process with the Education Department and officers of the department, but it seems counterintuitive to be undertaking a review of the school funding model on the one hand while scrambling about to look for efficiencies to support a gainshare pay settlement for our 2 partner teaching unions. On the other hand, it is one of the reasons why the N.A.H.T. are not currently engaged with the education reform programme. We really do feel that the funding review of schools should take place in the first instance and then we can take a view on

the real position that schools are in terms of their financial setting. With regards to the efficiencies - and maybe it was just my copy, forgive me here for my ignorance - but it indicates on page 111 of the document that the efficiencies that the Council of Ministers have been asked to progress are shown on table 1 of page 114, but ironically, there did not seem to be a table on page 114 indicating the progress of ...

Senator K.L. Moore:

No, it is on page 112. Oh, there is not a page 114. Yes, there is, sorry, I do apologise. I think it might be the table on page 112.

Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers:

All right, forgive me.

Senator K.L. Moore:

Yes, but you are right.

Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers:

The final point, from a pay perspective, is the absence of any commitment to provide employees with fair pay awards during the period of the plan. We welcome the inclusion of the statement that there is: "building capacity to plan and negotiate changes to pay, terms and conditions and develop trade union relations." However, what it does not do is contain any details that enable us to establish what provision has been put in place for school leaders' pay awards beyond 2020. Surely it is incumbent on the Government, given the current and recent climate around the union negotiations and disputes, that these are not repeated beyond 2020. It is important to school leaders for us to have confidence that we are going to be treated fairly and in an equitable manner by the employer going forward. Unless there is some form of financial commitment within the budgets for future years, which did not resonate through the plan, the States Employment Board will again be in a position of not having potentially the adequate funds to fund offers of awards that are acceptable to our members. At the moment, it would be fair to say that trust between the N.A.H.T. and the S.E.B. (States Employment Board) are at an all-time low.

[13:15]

Without the trust and support of school leaders, who provide a very significant commitment to putting Jersey children first, the delivery of many actions outlined in the proposed plan are potentially at risk.

Senator K.L. Moore:

In relation to the cost of living issue that you raised there, we are told ...

Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers:

I did not say cost of living, I said "fair".

Senator K.L. Moore:

Apologies, yes. On page 197 there is a table which has a line called: "Reserve for centrally held items." That is about £33.5 million in most years and we are told that that might be what you are looking for, but of course I do not know how it divides among each group of staff or what the plan is. It is a rather specific figure, but we do not have the background information on that. I do not know if that gives you any more comfort, but clearly that conversation has not occurred between yourselves and the employer.

Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers:

No. In terms of consultation, the N.A.H.T. were not consulted on the content of the particular aspects of the plan that affect our ...

Deputy J.H. Perchard:

That was going to be my next question. So you were not consulted at all during the drafting process of the plan?

Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers:

No.

Deputy J.H. Perchard:

The follow-up questions are pretty much void, but would you have expected to be consulted?

Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers:

We hold senior positions in the Island and I think it would be fair to say that we acknowledge that there is a lot of strength in the plan, but hopefully just through this brief presentation we have been able to identify some aspects that perhaps might have been helpful to have seen in the plan. If we had had a conversation about those in advance of the plan being drawn up, it perhaps might have shaped the plan slightly differently.

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Do you think there will be any changes to the way negotiations are organised in 2020?

Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers:

Around pay or ...

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Yes.

Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers:

I do not know. I guess that is something that is ... our members are always happy to talk with S.E.B. directly. It would be preferable to speak with the employer directly so that we are cognisant that they are fully aware of the very specific issues that we have around pay. Rather than perhaps always going through intermediaries, through officers, to speak directly to the employer periodically would be advantageous. If that was a step forward, it would be welcomed by the N.A.H.T.

Deputy J.H. Perchard:

Aside from the issue of pay, there are obviously a great number of other concerns in education pertaining to productive teams and workload and staff morale and bullying and harassment. Have any of those conversations taken place? What would you have hoped to see in the plan in relation to those particular issues?

Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers:

I have looked specifically at the Jersey's Children First part of the plan. We are talking about staff wellbeing and obviously that is a secondary objective in the plan around the Island's wellbeing. It would be helpful to see that resonate all the way through the plan, and equally for children to resonate all the way through other parts of the plan. For example, when you are talking about wellbeing and we see and hear headlines of the dental service on the Island, while they are fantastic people and do brilliant work, the lack of capacity that they have there at the moment has got to be having an impact on children and their wellbeing, so it is both. We would like to see the children's agenda threading all the way through other aspects of the plan and some of those aspects, such as the wellbeing, threading into the children's side of it.

Deputy J.H. Perchard:

I suppose arguably in the case of teachers and education staff, the pay dispute was probably magnified due to the already low morale and kind of over-worked feeling of staff. I think you already have people working every second of every day for an average wage who then are told their cost of living is going to go down. What I am saying is that they are inextricably linked, the wellbeing of school staff, the impact on children and the pay dispute, so perhaps in the plan we would also hope to see those being threaded together more explicitly. You are nodding, Brendan. Do you have anything you would like to add?

President, National Education Union:

You are pushing against an open door there.

Deputy J.H. Perchard:

Yes, so that you would jump in.

Senator K.L. Moore:

Do you want to add something?

President, National Education Union:

Thank you, Sam, for such a detailed analysis of what it said. Sorry, I will apologise for not having as much detailed knowledge of the plan, having not expected really to be here because, as you probably know, one of the issues is I really think in terms of allowing trade unions to have a say in shaping this plan. We are in a position where one of the main unions, the N.E.U., which I represent, has not officially got facility time even now, so I require the generosity of my headmaster to allow me out to this sort of meeting. That hopefully will be changed. We had negotiations only yesterday with the rights around education to get something organised, but as we speak, nothing is organised and the school are still a year's worth of remuneration owed for the time I took out in negotiations and other people had to cover for my role. Now, I absolutely like the idea of putting children first being the top priority of the Government. It is lovely to see that and it is really laudable, but when you look at what it boils down to, when you sort of nit-pick it and drill down, most of this really comes out the Children's Services failings and the Care Inquiry and most of what has been suggested about altering it is improvements in that area. Now, when you put 2 departments together, Children's Services and Education, in a period of time when funding is limited, then the one that has the biggest problems will get the lion's share of any additional funding. I worry for my members and for our education service in general that Education will be chronically underfunded going forward. There are several aspects to that. One is the realisation that the job is becoming increasingly difficult. The job involves lots of counselling of children and parents, lots of mental health issues, lots of pastoral issues, lots of issues that are really outside of academic attainment. Staff need to do those extra activities where there are no extra staff ever put into schools to enable it to happen. The normal day-to-day teaching job has had added to it maybe as much as 20 per cent additional activity, which is quite stressful in itself and quite emotionally taxing. I think it is not so much pay that causes people to consider their position in teaching, it is the fact that there is never any acknowledgement that the whole job itself is becoming so much more than just simply teaching every one of their pupils. Therefore, they feel completely drained by the end of a year, completely burnt out by the end of 5 or 10 years. It is really difficult to imagine a teaching profession where teachers will have been in their job for 20 or 30 years going forward. It is just not going to happen; they are just not going to be able to cope. I think the reason for that is there a disguised recruitment and retention

problem in the fact that many schools are chronically unable to get supply staff. We are breaking the terms and conditions, which suggest that there should only be one-hour additional supply given to the teacher per week. Most of them do far more than that in most secondary schools. I will not speak for primary. Sam, I think you can do that. Schools are just doing their best with an incredibly limited budget. What should have come first was the funding review, working out what we need, and also making a decision about what the future of Jersey education should be about, whether we should carry on with G.C.S.E.s (General Certificate of Secondary Education), whether we should go International Baccalaureate, how much vocational qualifications you require post-16, what we do at young age. If we want to put children first, we should have costed and looked at what is required to do that and then know what would be needed to be spent. We seem to have gone the other way around. We have come up with a great set of objectives without ever realising just what is involved in achieving those objectives in a climate where we are looking to cut funding in the state sector, putting Education together with a department which is chronically needing more money and more staff and therefore will get that lion's share.

Senator K.L. Moore:

It goes back really to the Deputy's previous question about consultation in the development of this plan, because of course it was published in July of this year, which is 14 months ... apologies, 13 months after the Government began their term of office. What went on in this 13 months to do that forward planning and preparation ...

President, National Education Union:

As Sam said to Jess, at no point were I or any of my members or any union colleagues from the N.E.U. consulted on what was involved and what we need to do. That has not occurred.

Senator K.L. Moore:

Obviously it was quite an intense time with many negotiations going on and strikes. Was there ever any hint that there was an interest in having those discussions and perhaps the negotiations took centre stage instead of discussions?

President, National Education Union:

I think obviously the most important thing is to prevent strikes and disruption to the school day, the school year, so that took priority, to solve the dispute first. But always running through the whole time was the idea that Education needed fundamental reform and we needed to look at the contract and the whole employment conditions for teachers and the schools themselves and what investment is required and in what areas. I agree with Sam that probably early years is a really fundamental area for investment, but I would also add the post-16 and the skills shortage in vocational areas. I think that is a really important area as well. Sam has mentioned the idea of trust and the relationship

between the S.E.B. and his union. We began the situation where in a sense teachers were often receiving pay in December when they should be receiving it in January, 11 months in arrears. Often negotiations went nowhere, so as Jess mentioned, I think we had almost a situation where it was never about pay, this dispute, it was about a fundamental lack of respect for the profession. To pay you in December, knowing that is back pay that people will get - luckily often it was less than inflation for the last 2 or 3 years - the feeling was we were being under-changed and we were being seen as not important enough. Now, teaching is important for children, there is no doubt about it, but more important than the pay is the working conditions, that they feel able to make decisions for themselves, they do not feel over-managed, they do not feel in a position where they can get involved in change and suggest change, that they are trusted by society. I think that is what is missing, really. It comes fundamentally from the point where the S.E.B., from their point of view, were quite happy to allow the pay dispute to drag on for months at a time, not get resolved, almost wear teachers down, so at the December point they would offer something and then they will accept it because of amount of back pay there. It was a treatment which was just derisory would be a way to describe it.

Deputy J.H. Perchard:

I was going to change the ...

Senator K.L. Moore:

Can I just ask one more question about staffing and shortages? Because I think we have covered a lot of the pay issues, but just last time the unions came to speak with us, there was a clear message, particularly from the teaching unions, that staff shortages were a chronic problem. You have mentioned already today the shortage of supply teachers and retention and recruitment were both mentioned as being big issues that were related largely to the cost of living. Is that still the case? Has there been any change in that situation?

Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers:

I cannot speak broadly on behalf of members about specifics, but from my perspective, as head of my school, I did not have a teacher for a class until about 3 weeks before the start of the autumn term, so we are in a pretty tricky place to get a class covered of primary schoolchildren without a body on a seat, so to speak.

[13:30]

That is common across schools. Additionally, when I am recruiting very often for senior positions, senior teaching positions, you would be lucky if you get a candidate. That has not changed. Additionally, while we have the introduction of the Jersey Premium and the extension of it to 16 to

19 year-olds, as proposed in the plan, and it is fantastic, that money does not easily translate into the human resource that is often required to support these disadvantaged children and families because to get a body into school with the right skillset or qualifications or experience, being an Island, is nigh on impossible. So we can have the money there, but turning it into meaningful impact or having meaningful impact is very, very difficult. Equally, in a slightly different context, some children with a higher level of need, social and emotional behavioural difficulty, might receive banded funding, so specific funding allocated to them to help them remain in a mainstream class setting. That then means we have to recruit the teaching assistant or the key worker to work alongside that child, but where are they? Where is that person with that skillset prepared to work for that money, alongside the most vulnerable of pupils? Again, it is literally a daily challenge to find people to work alongside, as I say, some of the children with the greatest need. Nothing has changed since I was last with you.

President, National Education Union:

I think over the years what has changed is there are more needs, the amount that teachers have to do, the requirements are greater and children, for all sorts of reasons - sleep deprivation, the Xbox generation - have greater significant disadvantages when they start school and even when they reach secondary school. A teacher's job has become much more difficult, I think, over the years. There is no doubt about that. In terms of recruitment, the bottom line is a teacher in the U.K. looks at the Jersey scenario and says: "Oh, it is great, it is maybe 15 per cent more than I can earn in the U.K." But very quickly ... and we have had at least 2 examples in the last year of people taking a job as a head of department and then by the time they have researched the true cost of Jersey and the fact that they will not be able to afford to buy a property, they decline the job at the last minute, leaving us in a terrible situation. We have really had a problem also in terms of the amount of people who have applied in the first place. This is really going to become worse as time goes on. The elephant in the room is the housing issue because in a sense ... I have got a daughter myself who has just started teaching physics in a top U.K. girls' school, got a first in physics from York, 12 A stars, and she got taught in Jersey, she is Jersey-born. Now she is in the position where she is almost on the property ladder; she is thinking next year she will be on the property ladder in Altrincham, Manchester. If she came to Jersey, she would be paying rent, but that property in Altrincham will be increasing in value by £12,000 to £20,000 a year, so to come to Jersey is like: "I will take a £12,000 pay cut, please, before we start even thinking about my wages, because I would be earning a capital gain in the U.K. and taking a capital loss by being in Jersey." Anyone with any economic sense would not touch Jersey with a barge pole the way things are.

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Just reverting back to what you were saying before about the comments on page 96 about plans to: "negotiate changes to pay, terms and conditions and develop trade union relations" were you

involved in any direct consultation involving the Government Plan? Did you have any consultations directly with any Ministers?

Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers:

No.

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

None whatsoever?

Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers:

No.

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

On page 95 of the Government Plan, it says: "We need to rebuild and invest heavily over the next few years ... Failure to do so means that ... effective and affordable public services will not be delivered ..." Do you believe that that will be able to be implemented?

Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers:

If the funding review for schools was aligned to a recognition that to be a teacher in Jersey is not an attractive proposition if you are coming from the outside or do not have some heritage behind you in Jersey - for want of a better description - I cannot see the situation improving. Schools need to be heavily invested in, much more heavily invested in, and the prospect of becoming a teacher in Jersey needs to be much more attractive. That really will come down to pound signs. I am an optimist. It is one of the reasons why I am in education. I would hope that time would tell, that we can sit here at the end of 2023 and say: "Yes, we are in a much better place."

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Do you think there is any aspect of the Government Plan that maybe should be changed? Obviously the funding for I.T. (information technology) is huge, roughly £100 million in the first year. Do you think that it would be sensible maybe to put more money into education and funding staffing costs rather than investing overly in I.T. spend?

Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers:

To be honest, I do not know the detail of the I.T. spend sufficiently well enough. All I would say is that if it was an either/or, I would always say education, education, education because the prosperity of the Island is going to be built on the children of the Island.

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

With your recent negotiations on pay being directly linked to inflation, do you think that will be something that will be established now and that you will continue to try to have your pay rises linked directly to the cost of living?

Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers:

Kristina's point earlier on, she mentioned R.P.I. (Retail Prices Index). What I did not say was an R.P.I.-linked pay award, I said fair pay, because head teachers are comparatively well-paid, so what we have to do at times is recognise that there may well need to be pay constraints for certain pay brackets and it might not be an automatic assumption that we are all going to get R.P.I. every year. Should head teachers or deputy head teachers' pay always be linked to R.P.I.? I guess it depends on what the climate of the Island is at that point in time, because we have got to be realists and pragmatic, but as an underlying principle, I think we should be encouraging more people into the teaching profession, and if that means that teachers' pay is directly linked to R.P.I. and continually linked to R.P.I., maybe that is a position that should be taken forward.

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

How do you believe that you can improve negotiations with the S.E.B.? I know obviously you did not have a great deal of direct negotiations, but how do you think it should progress?

Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers:

To have those conversations early, as Brendan has alluded to, not to try to mop things up just before the end of the year. I do think S.E.B. are committed to that as well. I think they recognise that that has been a flaw in previous pay disputes or pay resolutions. That when we write to S.E.B. that they write back to us in a timely manner and do not leave it, as they did in this instance, 9 months between our submitting a pay claim and us receiving a note of an imposed pay award on us and nothing in the interim. If we could work together in a timely manner to resolve pay disputes, i.e. start in January to resolve where we might be for January 2021, rather than leaving it until August or September or whatever, November, to think about what is happening the following year would be a step forward. I get the sense from officers of S.E.B. that they are keen to work on that basis as well, so that would be welcomed, but I stand by the point that to have a direct conversation with the S.E.B. would be very helpful, at least to top and tail the conversations and the negotiations so we can lay out our points to begin with and round them off at the end of the process would also, I would suggest, be a step in the right direction.

Deputy J.H. Perchard:

I would like to ask about literacy. How important would you say improving standards of literacy are to the reduction of inequality between children?

Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers:

Absolutely fundamental, and a cornerstone of certainly primary education is developing literacy standards. It is one that I am particularly passionate about personally, but that is not just schools' responsibility, the third sector and families have got a big part to play in this. The third sector is referred to in this and the great work of organisations such as Every Child Our Future should be acknowledged and celebrated. The profile that they have in the Island is great and how the Island builds that into our D.N.A. (deoxyribonucleic acid) and into our culture of supporting and developing that volunteer section is something that we should be giving due consideration. The volunteer programmes such as E.C.O.F. (Every Child Our Future) make a difference to us. It is difficult to isolate and identify specifically what the impact is of standalone organisations like E.C.O.F. because the children are getting their standard diet already in schools. Alongside that, the third part of it of course is what is happening in the family home and how Jersey supports the busiest working mothers - I think it is in Europe, I am not sure if it is global, that we have got the highest percentage of working mums - but more broadly, how do we support working families to promote literacy, particularly or additionally when we have a really high proportion of E.A.L. (English as an Additional Language) pupils in some of our schools?

President, National Education Union:

Maybe the point the school 8.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. normal day is just no longer appropriate for modern-day society. Maybe schools should be working on until 7.00 p.m. If we really want to put children first, we really need to restructure the whole school day. We need to look at maybe 4-term years. All these are things that should be there, looked at, analysed, considered, especially in this new review of education. I welcome the fact that it is not just teachers, it will be society, businesspeople, everyone who will be involved in that review, but those are the sort of hard choices we need going forward because of the amount of people who are working and because of the fact that, in a sense, family life is unravelling in the way it is and social media. You mentioned about I.T. I remember probably 20 years ago we all got a laptop, every teacher in Jersey was given a laptop and it was: "Here you go, this is the future." We all got a laptop, we spent all this money on it. Within 2 years those laptops were defunct, no longer any good. That is the problem with I.T., it is a bit of a bottomless pit: 3 years after you make the investment, you have to make the same investments because the I.T. is no longer up-to-date. If I was given a choice between what to invest in, it would be in people rather than I.T. facilities.

Deputy J.H. Perchard:

Just to briefly follow up on my question about literary, I am a huge supporter of E.C.O.F. and I think their work is absolutely essential, but obviously in an ideal world, you would not want to have a society or a system that depends so heavily on charitable organisations. We see it in health as well, you have health charities who send someone to be at the bedside of someone just for comfort and

you think: "Why is that not happening already?" What is the thing that would need to happen already to improve literacy?

[13:45]

What would you need to begin? If I could give you anything you want to improve literacy in schools, would it be more people, would it be more time, would it be both? Would it be a complete restructuring? What is it that schools would ideally need?

Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers:

We are going through this conversation at my school at the moment. Absolutely, I have been in this post for 12 months as head of my current school and we have absolutely prioritised early literacy as a need and we have invested very, very significantly in the resources, but most important, it has been invested in the people. What we do not have enough of are the people. I do not have enough people in my school - and I have got a staff of 50 - and I have not got enough people in there to respond to the level of need to an ideal model. If we are really saying that Jersey is going to be the best place for children to grow up and to be brought up, then let us prove it. I should not be having to run personally lunchtime clubs or before-school clubs and dragging that teaching assistant away from that group of vulnerable pupils to work on this literacy project. I should be able to do both.

Deputy J.H. Perchard:

Would you say putting children first means investing in the adults who are responsible for the wellbeing, education and health of children?

Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers:

Yes, absolutely. It is all about the people. You can give me as much money as you like, but I have not necessarily, as a school leader, got the people behind that money to deliver what I want to do as effectively as I want.

Senator K.L. Moore:

Sorry, may I just ask one question about the literacy and needing more people? When you have a staff of 50, what is it that prevents you from having enough people to do what you really feel you need to do to deliver that literacy and improve literacy?

Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers:

It might be because of the size of the groups of the children, that we would tailor the programme individually, so these are not whole class programmes, they are specific interventions. Responding to the multitude of levels that the children are at and teaching a child to read and write is certainly

not a one-hat-fits-all approach, so I need a lot of people to do things at different levels for the children. That depends on their confidence; it depends on their age; it depends on whether they are an English speaker; it depends on the level of support that they are getting from home; it depends on the emotional baggage that they come in with that day, their preparedness for learning; the breakfast that they have had or not. A whole host of issues will influence how we structure the support.

Senator K.L. Moore:

It would be teaching assistants perhaps to get you over the line, so you had enough people to deliver those programmes? Is that where you are lacking?

Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers:

Yes, the programme that we are specifically running can be delivered by teaching assistants as well as teachers. Some other programmes can only be taught by teachers and that of course multiplies the cost, but extra teaching assistants in schools, colleagues who come from the U.K. and see the number of adults that we have in our primary schools are amazed at how few we have. I regularly go and see schools on the mainland and there is a different level of staffing in those primary schools. It is stark, the contrast. Again, it goes down to one of the things is around funding and what we can buy, not just for the money that we have got, but the marketplace out there as well.

Senator K.L. Moore:

Thank you. Sorry, you wanted to say something.

President, National Education Union:

I was going to say the point that you need to one-to-one support to really help literacy. I think all of us around this room probably read to our parents; that is how we got that support. But parents working the hours they do and maybe not getting home until 7.00 p.m. or 8.00 p.m., you cannot blame parents for the situation where they cannot put the amount of care and attention into their children. That is where schools maybe need to change and we need to have that body of extra teaching assistants to provide that one-to-one support that some will need.

Senator K.L. Moore:

Have there been any opportunities for union representatives and teachers per se - and particularly head teachers - to start having that discussion with Government about how best it is delivered?

President, National Education Union:

No.

Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers:

Not at a ministerial level, but we will of course have sensible conversations about this with our chief officers, with our directors, but within the current funding model and the confines and restrictions of recruitment, we are fighting with one hand tied behind our back.

Senator K.L. Moore:

Can we just talk a bit about wellbeing of teachers for a moment? We have talked about wellbeing of children and how that thread continues. Mr. Carolan has discussed and illustrated I think very well the impact and the emotional impact of dealing with counselling both children and their families. We take it as read that that is one thing that impacts negatively on the wellbeing of teaching staff. Are there other factors as well at play?

Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers:

I perhaps have been a little too much anecdotal. I am currently conducting a wellbeing survey of my team and so I have put it out to my colleagues about how they feel about working in our school. I feel, hand on heart, that I have invested in my colleagues in the 12 months that I have been there in terms of providing them with the space to develop professionally, training. I have done some pragmatic things like build them a new kitchen, I have built a staff lounge and a small garden in order that there is some space for them, that they get a sense that I am prioritising their wellbeing so that in the couple of minutes that they might have to stick their head above the parapet there is some appropriate space for them. But they are still coming back to me in the survey saying that their wellbeing is not considered enough, so I have put it out there, and the feedback is: "It is not you, Sam, it is just how I feel about working for the Government of Jersey." So it is not the offer that I am specifically ... it is not the context that they are in, it is the feeling that they have battled around pay, for example - and some of these colleagues of mine are teaching assistants, who are incredibly underpaid - and it is just the value and the sense of worth that they have from beyond the school context.

Senator K.L. Moore:

Is that your feeling?

President, National Education Union:

Yes. I feel the likes of Sam are doing all they can to look after the welfare of their staff, but it is a situation where the pressures on the job, as I have alluded to, are getting greater and greater, often from parents. In my 26 years at Victoria College, the number of emails, I come in to probably about 20 emails from parents in the morning and some of them are trivial, some of them are written at 11.00 p.m. at night and they are like: "Can you do something about this particular lesson? Can you do something about this particular group? Can they move set?" and so the job has become such that I deal probably more with parents than I do with boys now. They are competitive. Rightly so,

they are a fee-paying school, but what they are asking for is incredibly demanding and cannot be sustained by a school unless it had perhaps 30 per cent more funds and more staff. It is just impossible to give them what they require. I know essentially when we have a staff problem, we probably go looking at Les Quennevais and Le Rocquier for their best staff and almost cherry-pick those, so the other schools are in an even worse position in terms of what is happening. Until we can trust our staff and make parents realise just how demanding the job of a teacher is, they will feel demoralised, they will feel as if their welfare is not being taken care of.

Senator K.L. Moore:

Does the school sort of intervene and try to educate parents in terms of ...

President, National Education Union:

I think the people most under pressure are the management and the heads. I feel for Sam. I regularly see my deputies and heads and see that their position is intolerable. If teachers are working incredible hours, they are working even worse hours. Many of them are finding that it is just not what they signed up to many years ago or would never consider it as a career for their own offspring.

Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers:

Our colleagues work long hours because the job warrants it and it is necessary, because we want the highest for our children, but it comes at a cost. It does come at a cost. I know of a number of colleagues at the moment who are off through stress, a number who are on medication because of stress, and I am not talking about a handful, I am talking about a lot of people. The days are long, the job is difficult, but it is incredibly rewarding and that is why we are in it. Whether or not people are going to stay in it for as long as they used to, and Brendan's point, are you going to get people in education for 20 or 30 years, 40 years? I do not think so. There is a risk with that. There is a risk that experience is taken out of the top of the system and that you have an immature workforce - I mean that politely - in terms of experience and that will be ultimately to the detriment of the children. A typical day, let me take today: I was in just after 5.00 a.m. and tonight we have got a parents' evening, so it is probably going to be about 7.30 p.m., 8.00 p.m. tonight. These are long days. They are not all like that, but a couple of days, 3 days a week are probably like that for most head teachers.

President, National Education Union:

I think a huge pressure point is the middle management, the head of department, I think because they are asked to do lots of new tasks and data management and recording as well as running the department and the personal level of relationships that involves. They have also got to deal with all the day-to-day work that a head of department does. Over the last decade, the average time as a

head of department has become something like 15 months really in a school like Victoria College, where someone would be a head of department for 5 years, 6 years, and stay in the same department. We are getting into situations where we are on our third head of maths in 2 years, same with English, same with biology. Nearly every department apart from 2 has seen a complete rotation of individuals. We lose the experience, as Sam mentioned there.

Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers:

Coming back to the plan and Target Operating Model, while it is not affecting schools directly and head teachers and teachers are not front line on this, there are some implications around recruitment for backroom staff, so to speak. We have got restrictions on the administrative support or caretakers that we can now appoint. We cannot appoint those very important people on a permanent basis unless we argue for months and months and months to say that these are front line positions and should be given a permanent contract. We cannot have really admin staff and caretakers being given 9-month contracts and expecting us to have quality applicants and for them to get to know the school and the systems, for their time to be spent efficiently and our time to be spent efficiently inducting them, but that is the climate that we are in at the moment.

Deputy J.H. Perchard:

That has come out of the T.O.M. (Target Operating Model), sorry?

Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers:

Yes, it has got to be a consequence of the climate that we are now in. We have got an advert out at the moment for an administrator and we can only appoint somebody for 9 months on that. Our recent caretaker appointment: the caretaker left. One of the successes is that they went off to become a police officer, old caretaker, terrific, but that leaves me with a vacancy and I was only allowed a 9-month position.

[14:00]

Argued, but that took 3 to 4 months for us arguing it at director general level to replace a school caretaker with a permanent school caretaker. It should not go that far. It should just be a ...

Deputy J.H. Perchard:

What is the rationale that you have been presented with for that?

Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers:

Possible redeployments further down the line. No specific rationale whatsoever. It is just the climate that we seem to be in. The consequence is that there is a real impact on schools. I was without a caretaker for 3 months. Who is it that has got their head down the toilet?

Senator K.L. Moore:

You.

Deputy J.H. Perchard:

It is everything, is it not? It is assemblies, it is equipment ...

Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers:

It is a vicious circle.

Deputy J.H. Perchard:

... it is everything. It is a safeguarding concern as much as anything else.

Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers:

Yes. A bit anecdotal, but perhaps to just touch on it.

Senator K.L. Moore:

No, that is very helpful, thank you. I think you have both been quite candid and helpful in your comments as well. It is clear that there are solutions available and the willingness to discuss those. We are very grateful for your time. I will just check that you do not have anything that you wish to add.

Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers:

I would like to conclude, I think, by saying our colleagues at the department do a fantastic job. We have got a very close relationship with the people up at the Education Department, C.Y.P.E.S. (Children, Young People, Education and Skills), whether they be up the hill at Highlands or now down at Broad Street. We respect and value their support, but they are very, very thin on the ground now and their wellbeing in the delivery of this ambitious plan I would hope would be really considered very carefully, because we get a sense that they are stretched.

President, National Education Union:

I absolutely concur with Sam. It feels like there are sticking plasters being put everywhere rather than true investment. One of the reasons we remain in teaching, if I can speak for Sam here, is because we recognise the incredible level of effort, the dignity and integrity of many of our colleagues and we know it is important to society, to Jersey, to get the best we can.

Senator K.L. Moore:

Given what you said there, do you feel confident that the number one intention of the Government Plan to put children first is deliverable if this plan is agreed?

President, National Education Union:

No, not without a significant increase in resources.

Branch President, National Association of Head Teachers:

Yes, I would agree. I think it really needs some significant investment, investment financially, investment in people, investment in training and investment in the people who know the system, who know what is wrong with the current system, to be consulted to help improve the situation. The N.A.H.T.'s doors are open to those conversations. Thank you very much.

Deputy J.H. Perchard:

Thank you so much.

Senator K.L. Moore:

We know you have got work to get back to, so thank you very much for joining us today. I will close the hearing.

[14:03]