

**THE STATES OF DELIBERATION**  
**of the**  
**ISLAND OF GUERNSEY**

28<sup>th</sup> January, 2026

**Proposition No. P.2025/143**

**Policy & Resources Committee**

**Government Work Plan 2026-2029**

**MOTION UNDER ARTICLE 7(1) OF THE REFORM (GUERNSEY) LAW, 1948**

Proposed by: Deputy S Rochester

Seconded by: Deputy P Montague

To suspend Rule 24(2) of the Rules of Procedure of the States of Deliberation and their Committees to the extent necessary to permit the amendment below to be debated.

**AMENDMENT**

Proposed by: Deputy S Rochester

Seconded by: Deputy P Montague

To insert an additional proposition as follows:

- “6. To agree an additional workstream to the ‘Foundations for Our Future’ area of focus (under the ‘A Place to Grow and Succeed’ theme) with the objective of ‘Responding to the Needs of the Island’s Young People’, and to direct the Policy & Resources Committee to support the cross-committee coordination of the upcoming refresh and enhancement of the Children & Young People’s Plan ensuring that it:
- i) hears and reflects the voice of a wide range of children, young people and young adults via direct consultation;
  - ii) consults with third sector organisations supporting the island’s children, young people and young adults;
  - iii) takes into account existing relevant strategies and plans; and
  - iv) provides the necessary resources to undertake that consultation and to support the production of the enhanced Children & Young People’s Plan for consideration by the States of Deliberation.”.

### **Rule 4(1) Information**

- a) The proposition contributes to the States' objectives and policy plans by ensuring work to improve outcomes for children, young people and young adults is coordinated, prioritised and is framed by the voice of children, young people and young adults.
- b) In preparation of this amendment consultation was undertaken with the Committee for Health & Social Care and the Committee for Education, Sport & Culture. The Policy & Resources Committee have been kept informed.
- c) The proposition has been submitted to His Majesty's Procureur for advice on any legal or constitutional implications.
- d) The workstream will likely require an extensive consultation and engagement process, this is anticipated to cost less than £100k.
- e) Drafting advice has been sought from the States' Greffier and advice has been sought from relevant officers.

### **Explanatory Note**

This amendment proposes the addition of a workstream 'Responding to the Needs of the Island's Young People' to the Government Work Plan. It avoids duplication by using the statutory Children and Young People's Plan ("C&YPP"), a refresh of which is due this year, as the tool to ensure a holistic and coordinated strategy that reflects the direct voice of children, young people and young adults and seeks to address their needs.

The refreshed Plan is intended to provide a coherent, cross-government framework to improve outcomes for children, young people and young adults and amplify their voice in public life.

It is proposed that this additional priority is included in "Foundations for Our Future" under the "A Place to Grow and Succeed" category of work.

Improving outcomes for young people is intrinsically linked to wider government priorities, including workforce sustainability, economic participation, community safety, and long-term public service demand. Early, preventative investment in young people reduces future pressure on health, social care, and criminal justice systems while supporting the long-term retention of skills, experience, and future leadership within our community.

### **Rationale**

The Government Work Plan exists to direct resources towards the most important aspects of island life, yet no specific reference is made to supporting those who face some of the most

significant challenges on our island, namely those in the 5- to 25 year-old age range, i.e. our children, young people and young adults.

The Guernsey Community Foundation's Quality of Life Report, issued in 2025, showed that the Island's young people are suffering.

By the time our children reach the 16 to 25 age range, only 18% of males and 0% of females surveyed rated themselves as having high mental wellbeing; and of all age groups surveyed, young islanders were most likely to report high levels of low life satisfaction.

This issue, of course, starts in earlier life: only 28% of school age pupils say they have high self-esteem – a drop of 22% between 2016 and 2022, the period covered by the last Children and Young People's Survey. A more recent Jersey survey published in 2024 shows a similar and continuing decline.

The Foundation's Report also shows that our 16 to 25 year olds are lonelier than any other cohort of Islanders, with 28.4% saying they are intensely emotionally lonely (lacking close personal relationships) and 43% saying they are intensely socially lonely (they lack a social network).

If we want to address these heartbreaking statistics and give our young people a better quality of life and hope for the future, then we need to act – and to act early.

The proposed enhanced C&YPP will base its recommended actions upon the above data points, along with the results of the forthcoming Children and Young People's survey; but, critically, it will also base its proposed actions on the most important voice for this strategy: that of young people. When surveyed, 61.9% of the Island's young people disagreed with the statement, "I have a say in what government does." 33.6% neither agreed nor disagreed. Only 4.5% agreed with the statement.

There is already much work being undertaken to support more vulnerable children through the Children and Young People's Plan – due to be updated shortly – but that plan currently has a relatively narrow focus on safeguarding, welfare and statutory duties. The enhanced C&YPP would be crafted in response to the voice of young people on the island. It would seek to meet the needs of all children, young people and young adults, as envisaged in the Children's law that directs the plan to be produced.

Today's young people face complex and interconnected challenges relating to mental health, education and skills, housing affordability, employment, inclusion, and participation in civic life. While existing policies address some aspects of these issues, there is no single, integrated plan that brings together government, business, third-sector partners and young people themselves. This proposed plan needs to work for and with young people to ensure that they feel valued, are able to participate meaningfully in island life, and are adequately represented in government policy.

In a time where our young people are reporting increasing feelings of isolation, deteriorating mental health and feelings of uncertainty about their future, we have a responsibility to provide support, agency and hope. An enhanced Children and Young People's Plan based on

the voice of young people would ensure coordinated action, encourage efficient use of resources, and promote measurable progress against shared priorities, reflecting the commitment of this government to this valued section of our community and to the resulting long-term social and economic sustainability.

## **Objectives**

The development of the enhanced C&YPP would incorporate, but not be limited to, the following objectives which are taken from the Children's Law:

- Physical, emotional and mental health;
- Protection from harm and neglect;
- Education, training and recreation;
- Contribution to society;
- Social and economic wellbeing; and
- Any other matters which affect our young people.

## **Interdependencies**

The development of the enhanced C&YPP will need to consider associated States' strategy and policy and bring together efforts where relevant. For example, interdependencies will include the super priority to shape and strengthen the focus on early years and families, the Mental Health Strategy, the Guernsey Housing Plan and the Economic Development Strategy.

## **Delivery and Governance**

The workstream will commence with a time-limited development phase, culminating in the publication of the refreshed and enhanced plan. Oversight will be provided through the Policy & Resources Committee in its role for policy coordination and the Committee will be responsible for ensuring cross-committee involvement. The strategy will need to remain responsive to emerging needs.

## **Impact**

Looking to other countries that have acted to ensure young people have a voice in the community, are well supported and thriving, we can evidence the impact of the proposed enhanced C&YPP. Examples of successful outcomes include:

**Denmark** – Adopted sustained investment in universal youth clubs, arts, sports and informal learning spaces; trained youth workers in mental health awareness; and remove cost barriers to access. This resulted in high participation rates in organised activities and evidence of improved confidence, peer connection and emotional resilience.

**New Zealand** – Adopted a Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy requiring every government decision to consider child wellbeing; used wellbeing indicators; and invested in culturally-grounded support. This resulted in improved service coordination and clearer accountability

for youth mental health outcomes, as well as increased recognition of identity, belonging and confidence as policy goals.

**United Kingdom** – introduced the UK Youth Parliament, a democratically-elected body representing young people aged 11–18. Debates held in Parliament, with young people having direct access to ministers and select committees. This resulted in improved mental wellbeing, self-esteem, social connection and agency across the cohort engaged in the parliament.

While this proposal supports better social outcomes, there would also be multiple economic benefits to Guernsey as a whole. This includes:

1. Improved economic productivity from young people's higher engagement at school and higher academic achievement leading to a stronger workforce and reduced absenteeism.
2. Reduced future health and social service costs as unresolved mental health problems can be more difficult to solve and require more expensive medical interventions and higher social support services; and
3. Benefits to families and communities, including reduced caregiver stress, better functioning communities and healthier future generations.

The above benefits resulting from engaging with young people and meeting their needs show that where a community focuses on the voice and needs of young people, better outcomes can be secured for those young people and the communities they live in.

Ultimately, these outcomes will help address known challenges in our island such as retention of talent and participation in education and the workforce.

Incorporating this amendment will help establish a shared vision for young people in Guernsey, strengthen trust between government and youth, and ensure policies are future-focused, inclusive, and sustainable.