

Thursday 08 September 2022

Work still to be done to address the weaknesses in oversight of the management of the States of Jersey workforce

Comptroller and Auditor General issues latest report

Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG), Lynn Pamment, has today, 8 September 2022 published a Report on the **States Employment Board - Follow Up**.

In 2019 the then C&AG undertook a review of the role and operation of the States Employment Board (SEB) and concluded that the arrangements for the SEB were not fit for purpose. This 2022 report follows up on the status of the action taken to implement the recommendations made in the 2019 C&AG Report as well as relevant recommendations made in other C&AG reports.

Lynn Pamment found that considerable progress has been made during 2021 and 2022 in implementing many of the recommendations assessed as part of her review. However, the most significant recommendation in the 2019 C&AG Report, relating to the need to fundamentally review the framework for the oversight of human resources of the States, involving both the SEB and the Jersey Appointments Commission (JAC), has not been implemented. The new Council of Ministers (CoM) and SEB should prioritise this review as recommended both by the C&AG and the Democratic Accountability and Governance Sub-Committee of the Privileges and Procedures Committee in its report in February 2022.

The C&AG noted that legislation to ensure the independence of the JAC in line with the C&AG recommendation is still in draft form. The new SEB should prioritise its review of this draft legislation and bring forward a proposition to the States Assembly.

The C&AG commended the People Strategy published in November 2021. She also noted that significant work has been put into organisational development and into developing the Government of Jersey workforce. The C&AG found however that effective workforce planning is still in its infancy with workforce plans still being developed.

The C&AG also noted that, whilst a new Human Resources (HR) dashboard is in place and is reported to the SEB, there are concerns over the accuracy of data which is still being cleansed. Information on diversity and on compliance with HR policies is not yet included on the dashboard.

Good progress has been made over the last year in respect of health and safety with regular reports presented to the SEB, alongside a risk register. However, there is more to be done. Compliance with health and safety requirements and the resources applied to the function are inconsistent across departments. One Ministerial department does not have any qualified resource to deliver the action necessary.

Work has been on-going to update all the Employee Codes of Practice during 2022, along with a full suite of accompanying HR policies. A new People Policy Framework has also been developed.

The C&AG notes that, despite efforts to promote the performance management system 'My Conversation, My Goals', compliance is very inconsistent and poor in some departments.

The Report makes 18 recommendations. It also identifies seven areas of work planned that should be prioritised by the Government as well as three areas where the Government should consider taking action.

Lynn Pamment said:

"The publication of a People Strategy in November 2021 was an important milestone in setting out the high-level objectives and a clear strategy for developing the public service. The People Strategy now needs to be delivered in a systematic and prioritised manner ensuring that regular checks are made on its impact.

"There is still work to be done to review and address the weaknesses in oversight of the management of the workforce, reported by the C&AG in 2019 and the Democratic Accountability and Governance Sub-Committee in 2022. Weaknesses remain relating to the establishment and functions of the SEB and the JAC. In addition, there are ambiguities and gaps in the current arrangements."

On the day of publication, the report will be publicly available on the Jersey Audit Office website www.jerseyauditoffice.je at @AuditJersey on Twitter and on the Jersey Audit Office page on LinkedIn.

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- The Office of Comptroller and Auditor General is known as the 'Jersey Audit Office'.
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