

Thursday, 23 May 2019

Report on key worker accommodation published

The Minister for Children and Housing, Senator Sam Mézec, has published a report into housing options for Jersey's key workers.

The report, which was prepared on behalf of the Government of Jersey by independent housing advisors, Altair, examined the suitability of current key worker housing and set out potential solutions to address staff recruitment and retention pressures faced by a number of government departments.

The term 'key worker' as defined by the report, is widely used in the UK and has also been adopted by the States of Guernsey, and to some extent in New Zealand and Australia. The term is specifically linked to housing solutions for particular employee groups where there are skills shortages, or their roles are seen as essential.

Among its findings and recommendations, the report identifies the need to:

- review employment practices that may create barriers to the recruitment and retention of key workers
- develop new good quality key worker accommodation, including
 - Short-term 'landing' accommodation for new arrivals
 - Long-term leased accommodation
 - Partial ownership
- make any required changes in legislation to facilitate the delivery of the key worker accommodation solution

One of the recommendations from the Independent Jersey Care Inquiry (IJCI) report was to focus on building a sustainable workforce by removing barriers to recruitment and retention of a sustainable childcare workforce. The publication of the report is one of a number of actions currently underway to improve the standard and availability of accommodation provided to key workers when they come to work in the island.

In response to the report's release, the Minister for Children and Housing said: "I welcome the release of the report on key worker housing. The high turnover of staff in some areas of teaching, and health and social care, has been a cause for concern in Jersey and the cost and quality of accommodation has been cited as one of the factors contributing to it. This report has

explored these issues and will now help us to develop options to attract and retain high-quality professional workers.”

The Government and Andium Homes are working together to improve the housing offer for key workers. Andium Homes has made available 48 studio and 2-bedroom apartments to doctors, nurses and social workers at Plaisant Court, and refurbishment work has commenced at Hue Court to provide 90 new flats for key workers.

Deputy Richard Renouf, Minister for Health and Social Services, said: “Attracting staff with specialist skills is essential for islanders’ health and well-being, and was recognised as a problem facing the island by the Independent Jersey Care Inquiry. I am pleased that this independent report has been published which, together with the steps we have already taken to improve the offering for key workers, will provide them with high quality accommodation that meets their future needs.”

The second stage of the review has now commenced, which will undertake more detailed research into the costs associated with providing key worker housing, the level of demand and wider consultation on the type of housing offering that could be made available to key workers.

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Notes to Editors

- ~~1. For further information, please contact the press office on 01534 440430 or pressoffice@gov.je~~