

ELECTION CANDIDATES 2026

The Jersey Employment Trust supports the stance taken by the Association of Jersey Charities who have set out a clear message to candidates in this year's Islandwide elections. The AJC are inviting candidates to support this pledge:

"I recognise the vital role charities play in Jersey and commit to strengthening partnership between Government and the charitable sector."

Candidates are urged to support the third sector in the following ways:

- *Recognise that charities are strategic partners in policymaking and strategic delivery
- *Provide stable, multi-year funding for essential services
- *Consult charities early in policies affecting the communities they serve
- *Ensure fair commissioning and procurement processes
- *Invest in the long-term strength and sustainability of Jersey's charitable sector

JET's message reinforces this. We ask candidates to **champion diversity and inclusion** across Government, public services and the community; stand up for the most vulnerable in our society, ensuring that policy decisions reflect compassion, **fairness and dignity** for all residents; and help build a kinder, more inclusive Jersey, where everyone feels valued, respected and supported, regardless of background, identity or circumstance.

What are JET's biggest challenges in dealing with the Government?

The Jersey Employment Trust receives only annual, year-to-year funding. **This limits long-term planning, makes budgeting difficult, and requires significant time and resources to secure each year.** We need inflation-proof, multi-year funding arrangements.

While we understand the need for strong reporting, the growing volume of requirements pulls us away from our core work. Compared with other departments, we often feel subject to disproportionate scrutiny, which can undermine trust in our expertise. This can also impact on our overall cost savings to the government due to the time taken.

We are more than happy to report and audit but streamlining this would be helpful. Some individuals are assigned actively seeking work status even when employment is not a realistic outcome. This process, and its link to Income Support, needs review to ensure it reflects people's actual capabilities and circumstances.

Are charities truly valued in the Island?

There can be a sense that **the full value of charities is not always recognised.** At times, decisionmakers appear to take a short-term view, overlooking the long-term financial and social benefits that charities provide. **There is focus on short-term statistics rather than long-term savings.** Charities are also more cost-effective than the same or similar services in Government, therefore investing is saving year on year.

Charities like JET take a holistic approach to supporting people. Although our primary work focuses on employment, we frequently assist with wider needs such as social housing, income support, and signposting to wellbeing services. These aspects are key to ensuring that people have the best opportunity to gain and maintain employment.

Acorn Training & Development delivers vocational services that offer essential benefits to people with disabilities. This support reduces pressure on already stretched health and social care systems by helping individuals maintain independence and stability. We also operate robust safeguarding practices. Disabled people are statistically more than twice as likely to experience abuse, and at Acorn we build trusted relationships that allow us to monitor wellbeing and identify concerns early.

What are the biggest barriers to employment for people with disabilities in Jersey?

People with disabilities experience unemployment rates around twice those of non-disabled people. Several factors contribute to this gap:

Flexible and part-time opportunities are limited. There are not enough roles that match the needs of people managing disabilities or long-term conditions, making suitable work difficult to find.

Recruitment processes, interviews and workplace environments are not always designed with accessibility in mind, creating obstacles before employment even begins.

Some employers, particularly larger organisations, worry about 'getting it wrong,' fearing moral, financial or reputational consequences. Smaller employers may feel deterred by regulations or unsure about what support is available. Despite progress, **there is still stigma around disability in the workplace**, and this can influence hiring decisions.

What would you need from the next government to strengthen your impact?

The Government of Jersey should model best practice as an inclusive employer.

Although there has been progress, it is uneven and too slow. The government workforce still does not reflect the diversity of the Island.

The Island needs improved mental health provision and faster diagnoses. We increasingly support clients who are waiting for social housing, talking therapies, or assessments for autism or ADHD. Long waits create delays we cannot overcome, because people become 'stuck' without the support they need to move forward.

There needs to be greater consistency in social work support. Clients often receive help during a crisis but then struggle to access ongoing support. Inconsistent involvement makes it harder for us to coordinate care and maintain progress.

Is job retention important?

Yes. It's essential both for employers and employees. JET works closely with employers to help them retain staff who may be at risk of leaving work because of a change in their health, circumstances or support needs. Keeping someone in a role they know is almost always more cost-effective than recruiting and training a new employee. Retention reduces turnover costs, preserves skills and experience, and helps maintain continuity in the workplace.

For employees, staying in their existing job is often critical. Once someone leaves work due to ill health or disability, their chances of finding new employment drop significantly.

Evidence consistently shows that good work supports wellbeing, routine, confidence and overall quality of life.