

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR CHILDREN AND EDUCATION
BY THE CONNÉTABLE OF ST. JOHN
QUESTION SUBMITTED ON MONDAY 6TH DECEMBER 2021
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 13TH DECEMBER 2021**

Question

Will the Minister provide the following information –

- (a) the number of homes currently available for both children in care and children leaving care;
- (b) data showing how the number of homes for care leavers has changed over the past 10 years;
- (c) what plans, if any, exist to address a shortage in available homes for care leavers, including sufficiency planning;
- (d) the Minister's own assessment of why a shortage in homes for children leaving care has arisen; and
- (e) advise what actions, if any, are being taken to prevent similar shortages from occurring in future?

Answer

- (a)
November 2021 residential homes and their registered capacity:

Accommodation for 12-25 year olds provided by CYPES:	For	Capacity
4 residential children's homes	Ages 12 – 18	10
1 secure children's home	Ages 12 – 18	4
1 residential YP home	Ages 18 - 21	4
1 supported independent living property	Ages 18 - 21	7
1 property for independent living	Ages 18 - 25	4

Accommodation for 16-25 years provided by others	
Strathmore at Shelter	16 Beds
Avalon	5x male
Bryan Skinner	5x mixed
Jeune House	11x female
Lydale	5x male
Woodbine	3x mixed

- (b)

We do not have access to this level of historical information.

- (c)

Dedicated resources have been allocated to develop a Sufficiency Strategy. This key action is detailed in the CYPES business plan. The purpose of this Strategy is to set out the Government of Jersey's vision for, and approach to, providing sufficient, safe, secure and appropriate placements for children over the next 10 years.

It has been long recognised that having such a strategy will significantly improve the outcomes for our most vulnerable children, young people and families. Securing appropriate placements that meets the needs of children and young people in the island is a vital step in ensuring stability and permanence in care.

The Strategy will not only review the right number of beds for children and young people that come into our care, but it will also ensure that the right support and interventions are in place to enable children and young people to remain at home where it is safe to do so and to prevent coming into care or placement breakdown. For some children, young people and families, their specialist needs require short term or longer periods of accommodation and care outside of the family. We therefore need to ensure that we have available not just the right amount, but the right sort, of placements available to provide the best care for individuals who need placements away from their family home.

In the same way that a parenting role doesn't stop at an arbitrary age, as corporate parents we have a responsibility to ensure Jersey children leaving care continue to receive appropriate support whilst they grow to live independently.

The Sufficiency strategy and recommendations will be published in Q2 of 2022, in the meantime we are working closely with external stakeholders to ensure we are meeting the needs of care leavers and enabling them to find safe and secure accommodation.

(d)

There has been an unexpected demand as a result of the global pandemic.

Barnardo's withdrew from providing the 7-bed supported accommodation service. The Government of Jersey stepped in to deliver the service creating unexpected staffing and finance pressures. We have since decided to deliver the service permanently which will be fully considered in the Sufficiency Strategy.

We are working closely with stakeholders such as JPH, the Housing Advice Service and Andium Homes to increase the provision in this area and to ensure our care leavers are supported through the housing process and allocated suitable properties through our partners Andium. Unfortunately, the demand is higher than supply at the moment with a number of urgent requests for properties needing to be prioritised.

'Staying Put' has enabled young people past the age of 18 to remain with their foster families. This is a positive outcome for those young people but it reduces the number of foster families available.

Difficulty in recruiting foster carers, particularly for teenagers, a review is taking place as to how best to address the recruitment to meet the needs of foster families and the children and young people they look after.

(e)

We are reviewing and using our data to help forecast future needs and requirements and developing a long-term sufficiency strategy. We continue to liaise with key stakeholders to increase their awareness of the needs of care leavers and encourage them, as corporate parents, to prioritize resources for these young people.