

**STATEMENT TO BE MADE BY THE
MINISTER FOR CHILDREN AND HOUSING
ON TUESDAY 2nd JULY 2019**

Citizens' Panel

The 3rd of July 2017 was a sorrowful, shocking and significant day in Jersey's history. It was a dark day, when Islanders fully realised the horror that some of our most vulnerable children went through.

On 3rd of July 2017, the Independent Jersey Inquiry published its final report of the failings in Jersey's child care system over many decades.

That report finally gave a voice to all those who have suffered abuse and revealed the true extent to which Jersey institutions failed our children and their families.

The inquiry brought to light multiple incidences of child abuse suffered by Islanders in Jersey's childcare system from 1945 onwards.

One of the recommendations of the Independent Jersey Care Inquiry was that there should be 'some tangible public acknowledgement of those that have been ill served by the care system over many decades'.

The findings, published on 3rd of July, are a powerful reminder of the devastating consequences of child abuse and we must never forget that - and we won't.

Tomorrow, it is the 3rd of July, marking two years since the Independent Jersey Care Inquiry report.

It is a dark day that we want to turn into a bright day for all children, young people and their families. A day to celebrate our children and look forward to bright futures. We want the 3rd of July to be both a day of remembering Jersey's past but a day to look to the future.

I am pleased to announce today that Jersey will have an annual Children's Day from 3rd July 2020 and we are inviting and involving the Island's young people to get involved in all aspects of its creation.

A Children's Day for Jersey is one of the suggestions made by a Citizens' Panel – who are a group of independent Islanders who have been working with the Government of Jersey for more than a year.

In 2018, the Government of Jersey commissioned a Citizens' Panel to make a set of recommendations to honour the survivors and determine how Jersey should remember. Fourteen Islanders were initially recruited to form the Citizens' Panel, which comprises adult survivors who were abused in care and a number of randomly invited members of the public.

Together, the Panel concluded that in order to meet the Inquiry's recommendation of an official public acknowledgement of past failings, a number of permanent projects should be put in place. These would collectively allow Jersey to look back at its past and acknowledge that children had been failed and harmed but also, importantly, look towards the future to ensure that no other child in Jersey would ever have to experience such failings.

One Panel Member described their involvement with the process as follows:

‘I feel privileged to be part of The Care Inquiry ‘Legacy’ Citizens’ Panel. I have always had a profound sense of justice. My sincere wish is, the whole Island will support our carefully thought out hopes and aspirations for the future. This next step, will I hope enable a heavily divided community to work through its past well documented failings. There has been much loss, pain and in many cases irreparable damage done. Reconstruction goes hand in hand with reconciliation.’

The Citizens’ Panel agreed collectively that this ambition could be met through a commitment to implement all four elements of the Legacy Project, which was recommended to Ministers in July 2018; this includes a package of help and support for survivors and their families and the creation of a prominent memorial which will both acknowledge the realities of the past and speak to the future aspirations of the Island for its Looked After Children.

Today I want to talk about the other two elements of the Citizens’ Panel’s Legacy Project: Jersey Children’s Day and the legacy emblem.

Jersey Children’s Day will provide activities that celebrate childhood and family life as well as opportunities to remind children and young people that they should always be able to express themselves and share their opinions at any time. The Day will also centre on educating children, young people and adults about children’s rights and how they should not be afraid to speak out.

The Citizens’ Panel also recommended that there should be a recognisable emblem, which should be used to become the symbol of entire Legacy Project and provide a consistent link between all its elements. The Panel’s desire is that the emblem should be related to a butterfly or butterflies. Butterflies have come to have deep significance for the Citizens’ Panel as symbols of life, endurance, transformation and hope.

I am therefore delighted to announce that the Citizens Panel are inviting young people to submit a design idea for their legacy emblem, which will be used for Jersey Children’s Day and across the other elements of the Legacy Project.

Details have been shared with secondary schools, Jersey Youth Service and key public agencies. Full details will also be published on the Government website. The winner will be invited to work with a professional graphic designer to see their ideas developed into a number of different versions so the final emblem can be used on websites, social media, printed documents and items such as clothing, pencils or wristbands.

I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank each of the members of the Citizens’ Panel for their hard work and commitment in working alongside the Government of Jersey on the legacy project with such passion, personal insights and for their thought-provoking ideas, which I fully support. Today some of Citizens’ Panel have decided to speak out publicly about their involvement, for which I also thank them for.

I will finish this statement today with another powerful personal statement from the Citizens’ Panel:

“The past is the past and can never be forgotten. But the present and the future is now the way forward. Being on the panel was an insight into the suffering that took place by those that survived who will carry their scars until the end of their days. We the people of Jersey must ensure that this is never allowed to happen again in the future.”