

**STATEMENT TO BE MADE BY THE
MINISTER FOR CHILDREN AND HOUSING
ON TUESDAY 24th SEPTEMBER 2019**

Two-year review by the Independent Jersey Care Inquiry

As Members will recall, the publication of the 2017 report from the Independent Jersey Care Inquiry was a wake-up call for everyone with responsibility for children in care in Jersey. The Report identified individual and systemic failings and gave a voice to all those who suffered abuse. It revealed the true extent to which Jersey institutions failed our children and their families.

In accepting all the independent Care Inquiry findings, the Government also agreed with the Panel's view that they should assess our progress two years after the publication of their Report.

Earlier this year the Panel members returned to Jersey to collect evidence. They met more than 200 people and heard views from experts and others working with Jersey organisations. The Panel also received extensive documentation on the changes taking place in Jersey's public services.

Along with other Ministers, I took part in round-table discussions with professionals, care-experienced people and voluntary organisations at St. Paul's Centre. These discussions were open to the public and media and helped the Panel to test the insights they had gained during private meetings.

The Panel's review was published yesterday. As Children's Minister, I would like to thank the Care Inquiry Panel for their comprehensive review of the changes we have made to services for children and young people, since the publication of their report two years ago.

The Panel's review is encouraging when it states, "we commend the progress which has been made in respect of our inquiry recommendations to date and recognise that a huge amount of effort has been put into starting that change".

Further evidence of progress in securing a permanent, high-quality workforce comes today as the Government of Jersey has announced the appointment of a new Director of Children's Safeguarding and Care. Mark Owers, a social worker who grew up in the Island and started his career in Jersey's Children's Services, is returning 'home to Jersey' having been appointed as the new Director of Children's Safeguarding and Care.

The Panel's Review also identifies areas where work remains to be done and areas which the Panel believes could be strengthened or improved. This is a welcome appraisal of our collective endeavour to enable all children in Jersey an equal opportunity to be safe, to flourish and fulfil their potential.

In July this year the Government Plan was lodged with this Assembly. It contained within it a very clear priority of 'Putting Children First'. This Plan, and the accompanying investment, demonstrate our commitment to learning lessons from the past and to improving outcomes for our children and young people, both now and in the future.

This two-year review is a welcome, external assessment of our work to 'put children first'. As the Minister for Children, I will continue to work tirelessly with other Ministers, elected States Members and officers to improve any areas where the Panel remain concerned.