



Scrutiny Office

Senator Ian Gorst
Chief Minister
Cyril Le Marquand House,
The Parade, St Helier
JE4 8UL

26 January 2018

Our ref: 511/2/3

Dear Chief Minister,

Care of Children in Jersey Review Panel

I write to you in respect of the future of the Independent Visitors for Young People (IVYP).

The Review Panel met this morning with representatives of the IVYP in order to discuss its [submission](#) as part of the review. The Review Panel notes that a meeting took place on Monday 15th January between members of the IVYP and yourself, where concerns were raised over the lack of clarity in relation to the interim and future role of the IVYP. It is the understanding of the Panel that clarification over this matter has yet to be provided. This is a very serious issue, and I would ask that clarification is given to the IVYP about their current and future role as a matter of urgency.

As you will be aware, the Review Panel has met with the Care Commissioner and has been given a broad understanding of the planned inspection process, however, the information received from the IVYP raises concerns about the arrangements in the interim period. If the voice of the child is to be listened to, then it is vital that structures which promote this are utilised to full effect, especially in the absence of a formal inspection process. I would therefore ask that consideration is given to the role that the IVYP could play within the inspection process.

Members of the Review Panel intend to speak on this issue during the in-committee debate and I would therefore ask for a response outlining any actions prior to Tuesday 30th January.

Yours sincerely,

Deputy S.Y. Mézec
Chairman, Care of Children in Jersey Review Panel

Chief Minister of Jersey

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Chair, Care of Children in Jersey Review Panel
Scrutiny Office
Morier House
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29th January 2018

Dear Deputy Mézec,

Independent Visitors for Young People (IVYP)

I write in response to your letter dated 26th January 2018.

As referenced in your letter a meeting took place on 15th January between myself and members of the IVYP. At that meeting we assured them that we would work to clarify matters regarding their role in the short to medium term.

Further to that meeting, officers have been working to confirm proposed arrangements. These are set out in the attached letter which has been sent to them.

The IVYP are members of our community who have been giving their time to support children and young people in care, some for a number of years. We recognise that the Care Inquiry recommendation to terminate the IVYP – which we were obviously not sighted on before publication - must have been very disappointing.

We also recognise that members of the IVYP have developed a bond of trust with some of our children and young people, so it essential that we manage these changes in the best possible way.

Please do not hesitate to let me know if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely



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Chief Minister of Jersey

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Louise Clark, IVYP Chair
La Folie
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JERSEY JE3 8AN

29th January 2018

Dear Louise,

Independent Visitors for Young People (IVYP)

I would like to thank you and your colleagues for meeting with me recently. I am sorry that it took such a long time to arrange that meeting.

As promised, we have worked to both clarify short term arrangements and consider how best to progress in the medium to longer term.

For the time being, we would very much appreciate it if you and the other members of the IVYP will continue to visit children and young people in our care. Sheree Maher from our children's residential services will remain your link officer and Anna Hamon, who has just returned from maternity leave, will continue to provide any administrative support you may require.

We will be writing to staff in all our residential facilities to ensure they know that you will be continuing to visit.

As discussed in our meeting, we recognise that you have developed a bond of trust with some of our children and young people. It is essential that, in managing the change, we make decisions that are in the best interests of those children and ensure that their voices continue to be heard.

In order to determine how best to achieve this, we propose that in the first instance, we arrange a joint meeting with yourselves, representatives of children's services and the Children's Commission, and another meeting with the Care Commission. The purpose of those meetings will be to discuss and agree how we work together to best ensure children's voices continue to be heard.

We recognise that as group of people, you have developed a wealth of understanding and knowledge from your visits which we and others would be foolish not to capture and learn from.

The Care Inquiry Response report states that we will develop a plan for the 'phasing out' of the IVYP by March 2018. That does not mean that the IVYP will be disbanded by March but that, by then, we will hopefully all be in a position to have agreed future arrangements.

As discussed at our meeting, we are in a period of significant change. The Care Commission will be inspecting and regulating children's homes for the first time and the Children's Commissioner will be given statutory powers to help protect the interests and rights of children. We do not have all the answers at this point in time, but we must ensure that in the intervening months we do not disrupt existing channels of communication with children.

I do want to assure you that whilst we will be moving to statutory annual inspections of our residential facilities, this is not instead of other arrangements to hear of the voices of children and young people, but in addition to. I am concerned that, perhaps a result of how this matter was addressed in the Care Inquiry report, this has not been fully understood.

I know that every member of the IVYP has made a commitment to children in care. You have given your time, but also given of yourself. Thank you. In our efforts to respond to the challenges presented by the Care Inquiry, we have not given sufficient time or attention to the IVYP, for which I apologise.

Please do not hesitate to let me or Ruth Johnson know if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'I. Gorst', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

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Chief Minister of Jersey

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Cc:

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