

STATES OF JERSEY



RESPONSE TO THE CARE INQUIRY: UPDATE REPORT QUARTER FOUR 2018 (S.R.17/2018) – RESPONSE OF THE MINISTER FOR CHILDREN AND HOUSING

**Presented to the States on 21st January 2019
by the Minister for Children and Housing**

STATES GREFFE

RESPONSE TO THE CARE INQUIRY: UPDATE REPORT
 QUARTER FOUR 2018 (S.R.17/2018) – RESPONSE OF THE
 MINISTER FOR CHILDREN AND HOUSING

Ministerial Response to:	S.R.17/2018
Ministerial Response required by:	25th January 2019
Review title:	Response to the Care Inquiry: Update Report Quarter Four 2018
Scrutiny Panel:	S.R.17/2018 was presented to the States by the Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel, for and on behalf of the Care of Children in Jersey Review Panel

FINDINGS

	Findings	Comments
1	All 41 actions identified as part of the response to the recommendations arising from the Independent Jersey Care Inquiry have either started or been completed.	<p>The IJCI Programme Board, chaired by the Director General of Strategic Policy, Performance and Population, was established in May 2018, and meets twice a month. The Board discuss and monitor the risks and issues across all projects in the IJCI programme. Project leads complete monthly updates on each project using the Perform reporting software tool.</p> <p>There are 42 projects in the programme, all of which have commenced; 17 have now been completed (5 in the last 6 months). One is in the ‘Identify’ phase; 3 are in the ‘Define and Plan’ phase; and the remaining 21 are in the ‘Deliver and Launch’ phase.</p>
2	The appointment of the Children’s Commissioner is seen as a positive development by organisations working with children and young people, and the legislation to underpin the role of the Commissioner will be brought forward at the start of 2019.	The Council of Ministers discussed the <i>Draft Commissioner for Children and Young People (Jersey) Law 201-</i> on 9 January 2019. Following a number of queries, a revised version of the draft Law will be discussed by Ministers on 6 February, ahead of lodging it for debate in the Assembly on 26 March. It is anticipated that, following Privy Council approval, the Law will be enacted in spring 2019.
3	A concern has been raised that the role of the Commissioner places an individualistic focus on children and young people that could promote parent blame and alienation. Consideration has been given to this issue in the development of the legislation underpinning the role of the Commissioner.	The role of the Children’s Commissioner is to promote and protect the human rights of children and young people in Jersey. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (“UNCRC”) as a whole places parents centre-stage in a child’s development. However, parental guidance must be geared towards supporting children to exercise their rights and make their own decisions, respecting the extent to which children can do this for themselves. Rights are not contingent upon a person’s ability to claim them, but extend to all.

	Findings	Comments
		<p>The UNCRC is the framework which will inform the work of the Children’s Commissioner. Whilst the UNCRC is directly focused on the rights of the child, it also emphasizes a central role for parents, families and caregivers as key players in realising children’s rights in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families are recognised as playing a unique and vital role in the lives of children, and the preamble of the Convention references that children should grow up in a family environment in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding. • A number of articles in the UNCRC acknowledge the primacy of the family in relation to children, with a presumption of non-interference. For example – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Article 5: Respect for parental rights, duties and responsibilities to provide direction and guidance to their children. ○ Article 7: The right of children, so far as is possible, to know and be cared for by their parents. ○ Article 8: Preservation of identity, including the right to family relations without unlawful interference. <p>The UNCRC does not take responsibility for children away from their parents and give more authority to Governments; however, it places explicit obligations on Governments to both provide the necessary institutions, services, support and facilities to families to enable them to care adequately for their children; and ensure that they protect the rights of families through measures that support and strengthen the relationships between family members.</p>
4	<p>A schools-based participation strategy has been developed which has engaged 58 representatives across 19 schools. 27 schools wish to develop a school council further.</p>	<p>Involvement in the student council network and relevant training has been offered to all Jersey schools. Twenty-seven schools (primary and secondary) have ‘opted in’, and have sent adult representatives to receive training in auditing/establishing effective student councils.</p> <p>The first meeting with student council representatives (58 students in attendance) took place on 25th October. The focus of the meeting offered students an overview of the preparatory work conducted with school staff thus far, and began gathering ideas to structure the future role and function of the network, which is to be co-produced with young people. The next network meeting is planned for February 2019.</p> <p>A SharePoint site and dedicated e-mail accounts will be created to support communication between schools and to allow requests/opinions to be sought regarding future</p>

	Findings	Comments
		<p>initiatives, thereby empowering students further.</p> <p>Whilst the focus of the network remains an area to be co-produced with young people, there have been discussions regarding sharing ideas and initiatives between student councils, and offering an opportunity for colleagues/agencies to share ideas and gather views with students across Jersey. Links have already been made with the Children's Commissioner and Youth Connect to begin exploring future connections.</p>
5	<p>A Children's Rights Officer has been appointed as of November 2018 and will be working with young people in residential care to establish their priorities.</p>	<p>The Children's Rights Officer has been appointed on a secondment basis initially, whilst recruitment to a permanent post is scheduled to progress in early 2019. The main focus of the Children's Rights Officer role is to –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that looked after children ("LAC") and those previously looked after are aware of their rights, responsibilities and entitlements to current and future services. • Empower and support LAC to express their views, wishes and choices, and ensure children and young people are able to remain involved in all decisions which affect their lives. • Make and maintain contact and develop relationships with looked after children on- and off-Island. • Support the promotion and monitoring of services for LAC. • Undertake the investigation of specific complaints as directed by the group director. • Promote, articulate and increase understanding of children's rights throughout children's services. • Ensure that children and young people have the opportunity to initiate and facilitate service user-led initiatives with the aim of increasing positive outcomes for children and young people.
6	<p>Action has been taken as a result of the Ofsted inspection of Children's Services, and a Children's Services improvement plan has been implemented.</p>	<p>Governance around the Children's Services Improvement Plan has been established. The second phase of the improvement plan will be presented to the Improvement Strategic Board at its meeting on 14 January 2019.</p>
7	<p>The Jersey Care Commission has identified 20 recommendations to be considered by the States of Jersey in order to improve the Children's Services.</p>	<p>These recommendations are addressed in the Improvement Plan which is overseen by a Strategic and an Operational Board. A summary report detailing progress against the Ofsted and Care Commission's recommendations that are incorporated into the Plan, has been sent to the Chair of the Care Commission. This report will be updated on a quarterly basis.</p>

	Findings	Comments
8	The Jersey Children First model is intended to be rolled out to between 4,000 and 5,000 staff across professionals working with children. This includes both statutory and charitable organisations.	The Lead Officer for Jersey's Children First has been in post since February 2018 and work has progressed in this area. A whole workforce practice framework has been developed, published and operationally viable since mid-September 2018. A training programme has been established with a view to ensuring the wider children's workforce feel both confident and competent in working to the framework. This programme includes service providers both from the States of Jersey and the voluntary and community sector.
9	50% of frontline social work staff are employed in permanent posts, with the other 50% recruited from social work agencies as locums.	A social work recruitment campaign is currently being prepared for launch in January 2019. This will seek to recruit social work staff at all levels. A recruitment and retention strategy has been completed and is now in the process of being costed, and an action plan will be produced in order for the strategy to be delivered.
10	20 staff from across Children's Services have been engaged in an accredited systemic social work practice course in the United Kingdom.	The first training cohorts run from May 2018 to February 2019, with 3 different levels of training for Practitioners, Supervision and Senior Leaders. Staff have been very positive about the learning and development opportunities and the potential impact on practice and service delivery. In addition to the above, the service has commissioned the Social Care Institute for Excellence ("SCIE") as a learning and development partner working with the service over a 3-year period. The work will be organised in 3 phases: Recovery, Transition and Continuous Improvement, supporting improvement across 4 areas of workforce: development; practice framework; quality assurance and audit; and coaching and mentoring. Staff will be actively involved in contributing to agreeing the priorities and programme implementation.
11	An independent review of fostering services has been commissioned and an action plan is being developed to bring forward the recommendations.	The fostering review has been completed. An action plan is being developed in response. This is due for publication due in early 2019. The action plan is grouped into themes and progress is underway. There are areas for consideration with financial and resource implications. The report will inform the broader sufficiency strategy for looked after children in Jersey. A briefing for States Members will be held to share details of the review.

	Findings	Comments
12	It is welcomed that the Children and Young People's plan was developed in collaboration with children, parents, professionals working with children and decision-makers in the States of Jersey.	The Children's Plan was endorsed by the Council of Ministers in November 2018. The Children's Strategic Partnership Board Terms of Reference and membership has been agreed, with the first meeting scheduled for early February 2019. This Board will have oversight of the delivery of the Children's Plan and performance monitoring. Further engagement with children, regarding the Plan's final design and presentation, will take place in January before publication in February.
13	The Minister for Children and Housing has given a commitment that the vision set out in the revised children's plan will need to be funded properly within both the current MTFP and the next Government Plan.	Funding will be addressed through the Government Plan which will be progressed during 2019 (this is due to be lodged in July for debate in October 2019). The Government Plan will be informed by the commitments set out in the Common Strategic Policy, which are consistent with the Children's Plan's outcomes and priorities.
14	42 States Members and 11 Senior Leaders from across the States of Jersey have signed up to the Pledge for Children and Young People.	The Children's Pledge is symbolic of the public commitment by States Members and senior public servants to put children first.
15	Discussions with States Members who have yet to sign up to the pledge are ongoing in order to understand their concerns and, where possible, address them.	The Minister for Children and Housing will continue to engage with States Members who have not as yet signed the pledge.
16	The funding available for the response to the Independent Jersey Care Inquiry is set under the current MTFP until the end of 2019. A Government Plan for 2019 – 2023 will be developed during 2019 where funding for the response will be allocated. The level of this funding is as yet unknown.	The funding allocated in the current MTFP has enabled key pieces of work to be progressed. In those Care Inquiry response projects which will become business as usual, officers will need to ensure that resources are identified and allocated as part of the Government Plan for 2020 – 2023 for continued implementation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

	Recommendations	To	Accept/ Reject	Comments	Target date of action/ completion
1	The Minister for Children and Housing should establish a mission statement for the network of school councils that gives specific reference to how it will be truly representative of children and young people.	Minister for Children and Housing	Accept	<p>The project proposal initially submitted to all Jersey schools to promote the introduction of the Student Council network states a vision and underlying key principles. These are currently forged by adults, in the absence of children and young people's voice and participation.</p> <p>It is hoped that the initial meetings of the student council network can begin by establishing a co-produced mission statement, utilising the vision and principles above as a platform for further discussion.</p>	End of April 2019
2	The Minister for Children and Housing should ensure that the role of the Children's Rights Officer is evaluated as it progresses, with significant input and feedback from children and young people about its effectiveness.	Minister for Children and Housing	Accept	<p>Currently the Children's Rights Officer ("CRO") has developed a work plan for the next 6 months with a priority to make and maintain relationships with looked after children ("LAC"). These relationships will play a part in determining the officer's priorities. The CRO is developing a set of standards for their work; performance will be measured against these standards. The officer is receiving frequent supervision as they establish this new role. Most importantly, it is planned that that children and young people will have the opportunity to evaluate their experience of the Children's Rights Officer and be involved in the development of the role.</p>	May/ June 2019

	Recommendations	To	Accept/ Reject	Comments	Target date of action/ completion
3	The Minister for Children and Housing should publish quarterly updates on the progress being made by the Children's Services Improvement Plan.	Minister for Children and Housing	Accept	Following the establishment of the Strategic Children's Improvement Board in October 2018, it is the plan to publish quarterly updates on progress against the actions and outcomes set out in the Children's Services Improvement Plan, as well as updating the Public on how the Pledge is being fulfilled, and what is being done to deliver on the recommendations made in the Care Commission's report "Making A Difference; Driving Improvement". The format is under development and will complement the approach to the public-facing reporting on the implementation of the findings of the Independent Jersey Care Inquiry.	Ongoing quarterly
4	The Children's Service should ensure that quarterly reviews are undertaken to assess the impact of the Jersey First Model during 2019 and 2020. The purpose of these reviews should establish professional understanding of the model and seek to address any concerns that may arise.	Minister for Children and Housing	Reject	The difference made by implementing the Jersey's Children First practice framework will ultimately be understood by improvements in outcomes for children. These could be measured by reviewing a range of performance information across services that support children (e.g. timeliness of decision-making; access to the 'right' service; and impact), as well as asking children and families to tell us about their experiences; what worked well and what could be better.	N/A
5	The Children's Services should ensure that a varied and engaging programme of continued professional development is established and maintained for all frontline social work staff and their supervisors by June 2019.	Minister for Children and Housing	Accept	The Social Care Institute for Excellence ("SCIE") has now been commissioned as a learning and development partner, and will work with the service over the next 3 years. Staff will be actively involved in contributing to agreeing the priorities and programme implementation.	To be established by Q1 2019

	Recommendations	To	Accept/ Reject	Comments	Target date of action/ completion
6	The Children's Services should ensure that both foster carers and young people with experience of being in foster care are extensively consulted on the proposed action plan arising from the independent review of fostering services prior to its implementation.	Minister for Children and Housing	Accept	The report, recommendations and action plan will be shared with foster carers through the Jersey Foster Care Association.	2019
7	The Minister for Children and Housing should publish on a quarterly basis, through the Children's Strategic Partnership Board, a central register which clearly sets out the individual departmental funding allocations for the Children and Young People's Plan.	Minister for Children and Housing	Reject (qualified by response)	<p>The expectation implicit within the Children's Plan is that Government Departments will align their focus to achieve its 16 priorities and its 4 overarching outcomes by appropriately funding these activities.</p> <p>It is not intended that the Children's Plan will have its own funding-stream, but will instead be resourced from Departments' core allocations and existing commissioning arrangements with the Community and Voluntary sector.</p> <p>The Terms of Reference for the Children's Strategic Partnership Board sets out the requirement to produce an annual report against the Children's Plan's key priorities. The first annual report will be published in early 2020.</p>	N/A