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Deputy Mary Le Hegarat
Health and Social Services Scrutiny Panel
BY EMAIL

31 August 2021

Dear Chair

Re: Respite Care for Children and Young People

The Panel has requested responses to six questions concerning respite care for children and young people from the Minister for Health and Social Services. Under the Children (Jersey) Law 2002 [revised 2019] up to the age of 18 years of age (and up to the age of 25 years if they are care leavers) children and young people are the responsibility of Children, Young People, Education and Skills Service (CYPES). The Minister for Health and Social Services has therefore requested that I provide responses to your questions relating to children to complement his response pertaining to young adults that he has provided.

My responses in relation to children under 18 years which pertain to CYPES provision are set out below.

1. Do you believe that the current on-Island respite facilities available to children and young adults are utilised enough?

a. A number of respondents expressed concern about the lack of an indoor 'base' for community outreach respite services, and the closure of Maison Allo for overnight respite care. What steps are you taking to review existing respite care facilities for children and young adults, to ensure they are fit for purpose?

There has been significant work undertaken in recent years to expand the short break (respite) options available to children delivered through a combination of in-house and commissioned services. Informed by a public consultation in 2018 and partnership work with the Parent Carer Forum, a tiered short break offer has been developed. Tier 1 offers inclusion support to families and providers to support children with disabilities accessing universal provision. Tier 2 offers targeted weekend and school holiday play and youth schemes. Tier 3 provides specialist support and is assessed through a social work assessment of need. Specialist options include individual support to access community activities, short break foster care and overnight short break stays at Oakwell and Eden short break homes.

Tier 3 overnight short breaks (respite) is delivered from the two in-house Short Breaks Homes. Oakwell underwent significant development in 2014 to provide a state-of-the art provision and redevelopment of Eden House will commence in January 2022 to develop the facility to better cater for adolescents as well as younger children. Both facilities are well used to meet the assessed needs of children identified by Social Work assessment of need.

Overnight respite care for both children and adults comes under the auspices of the Regulation of Care (Jersey) Law 2014. It is the responsibility of the Jersey Care Commission to inspect respite care provided on the island. This applies to both private providers and HCS. Inspection Reports are available for public viewing on the Jersey Care Commission website.

Tier 3 specialist 1:1 support is offered by Autism Jersey who have their own base and during the summer use a part of Mont a L'Abbe School as a base from which they offer community activities.

Community outreach for children is offered through the tier 2 weekend and school holiday play and youth schemes delivered by Centre Point Trust and Youth Service. The providers use their own play and youth centres as well as Mont a L'Abbe School for school holiday provision. These facilities offer a stimulating range of opportunities to children and both providers also offer frequent community activities through trips out.

In conclusion, with the completion of the redevelopment of Eden House in quarter one of 2022, short break (respite) facilities for children requiring tier 2 and tier 3 support are fit-for-purpose.

2. Do you have a strategy in place to improve the retention and minimise turnover of staff employed to deliver respite care for children and young adults?

a. The Panel understands that shortages of trained staff to deliver respite care services for children and young adults are being exacerbated by the current work permits scheme. Please can you advise what mitigations are in place to ensure non-British or Irish staff trained in the delivery of respite care, receive a valid work permit?

Staff retention is good for Children's Short Break Teams at Oakwell and Eden Short Break Homes.

In terms of 'commissioned respite', private providers are responsible for their own staffing needs.

3. Respondents often cited a lack of information about the respite care options available to children and young adults in Jersey. Please can you explain how information about respite care options is made available to service users?

Families are informed of the short break offer to children in a number of ways:

1. There is information on gov.je
<https://www.gov.je/health/children/childdevelopment/pages/communityshortbreaks.aspx>
2. Families can call the Children and Families Hub to request advice and information about short break options
3. Practitioners across CYPES, Health and Community Services and the Community and Voluntary sector who work with children with disabilities have all been briefed on the short break offer and signpost families to the appropriate support

4. Families who complete registration on the children with disabilities register receive a quarterly newsletter with information about services and support in Jersey. In addition, families can opt in to be informed of consultations about existing or new services
5. The Preparing for Adulthood pathway for young people in the process of transitioning to adult services includes planning with young people and their parent carers for how their short break (respite) needs will be met after their 18th birthday

4. In relation to overnight respite care options, the Panel understands that the only facility currently available for overnight respite care is operated by Les Amis. Do you believe that the Les Amis facility meets the demand for overnight respite care from young adults and provides enough options for their carers?

This question relates to provision for young adults. The response to question 1 above outlines current overnight short break options for children under 18 years.

5. Some respondents cited a lack of continuity transitioning from child to adult respite care services, causing unnecessary stress to service users. Please can you describe the current pathway for service users transitioning from child to adult respite care services?

The Preparing for Adulthood pathway which commences at age 14 for children who will require ongoing support into adulthood provides a mechanism for planning the transition to adult short break (respite) services. The adult social worker who is allocated to the child joins the Preparing for Adulthood meetings when the child is 16 and completes an assessment at seventeen and a half years to determine eligibility for funding for support through the Long Term Care Benefit Scheme.

Often for children who have been receiving overnight short break support at Oakwell or Eden Short Break Homes, relationships have built with the teams over several years and leaving these services is felt as a significant loss. The Oakwell and Eden teams will work with the adult service who is going to provide short break (respite) support to promote as smooth a transition as possible for the young person and their family.

6. Do you believe greater involvement from regulated private sector respite care providers could improve the choice and availability of respite care options for children and young adults in Jersey?

CYPES has developed an approved provider framework for children's short breaks. Through this, significant tier 2 targeted provision has been commissioned from Centre Point Trust and Youth Service and this has significantly increased the number of children accessing short break activities. CYPES currently only has one organisation on the approved provider framework for the provision of specialist 1:1 support (Autism Jersey). The Commissioning team continue to encourage other care providers to join the framework to increase choice and capacity.

In conclusion, whilst significant progress has been made, CYPES in partnership with the Parent Carer Forum will continue to further develop the short break offer to children and work with Health and Community Services to promote smooth transition of support as young people prepare for adulthood.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'S' followed by a long horizontal line that tapers to the right.

Deputy Scott Wickenden
Minister for Children and Education