

November 1, 2023

Correspondence via email: k.decarteret@gov.je

Dear Deputy Curtis,

Thank you for inviting the Jersey Care Commission (the Commission) to provide comments and views about Childrens Service's (CYPES) additional expenditure as set out within the Proposed Government Plan ([R.141/2023](#)). We have only provided views on Children Services (CYPES), as we currently don't regulate the Ambulance Service. We hope the following views and comments will support the Scrutiny Panel's review.

It is recognised that the financial business case for investment in new provisions has been a significant request, especially when other Government Departments are under considerable budgetary pressures. Nevertheless, the Commission believes that the financial case made for additional children's homes in Jersey will enable looked after children to have access to a safe and supportive environment when they cannot live with their families. The Government must be able to offer greater choice and specialist support for local children and young people placed in care.

- Ofsted has reported that there is a national shortage of both children's homes and secure children's home places across England, even though the number of registered placements has increased. [Many children placed in homes far away from their families amid national sufficiency challenge - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).
- In December 2022, the Commission was notified that 2 unregistered children's homes had been set up in temporary holiday accommodation. During discussions with the Children's Minister at the Commission's Board meeting in May 2023 and subsequent meetings with the Chief Officer, the Commission was advised that the department had identified sufficiency gaps resulting in the need for additional capacity for several children in Jersey.



- Throughout 2023 Regulation Officers have evidenced several apparent issues regarding children's needs and how children's homes meet them. Due to the low number of registered places, it is rare for a children's home to have spare capacity or be able to have the opportunity to provide specialised care. Therefore, the high occupancy levels in all facilities have resulted in children's home staff needing more training to support children with a range of complex needs effectively.
- We have yet to inspect children's social care (CYPES), and this is due to take place in December 2023. The inspection will provide the Commission with the opportunity to focus on assessing the sufficiency and planning arrangements across the services. It is crucial that GOJ continuously assess sufficiency.
- The Commission plans to inspect fostering and adoption services in 2024. It has been highlighted within the service's self-evaluation submitted to the Commission in preparation for inspection, that there are challenges in providing adequate numbers of fostering placements, particularly specialist placements. During the inspection of children's homes, it has been evident that there are increasing numbers of children under the age of 12 who are looked after within registered care homes, because of the lack of fostering placements, which has placed additional pressure on the whole system.
- Staffing levels, as well as adequate training, have been reported as an ongoing area of improvement required during inspections of children's homes. Opening additional capacity will create further challenges for the department; including being able to provide for an increased workforce for a difficult area to recruit in to and being able to provide the essential specialist training required. Therefore, the Commission will be continuing to assess these necessary requirements as part of its statutory inspections of both children's homes and social care going forward.

We hope that the above information will assist the scrutiny review, however, should you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact the Commission.

Kind regards

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Chief Inspector.