



Brighter Futures

Patrons:

Lady Dalton

The Bailiff of Jersey

Mr Timothy Le Cocq

Registered Charity No: 204

Deputy R. Ward  
Chair  
Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel.

23rd October 2020

### **Government Plan Review 2021-2024**

Dear Deputy Ward,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a written response to the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny review regarding the [Government Plan 2021-2024](#) (P.130/2020) and in particular to:

- CAMHS Service Redesign – p.47 – R.111/2020 and p.39 – P.130/2020
- Dewberry House (SARC) – p.51 – R.111/2020 and p.39 – P.130/2020
- Education Reform Programme – p.52 – R.111/2020 and p.40 – P.130/2020
- Covid-19 – School's Catch-Up Programme – p.55 – R.111/2020 and p.38 – P.130/2020
- Probation Service Posts – p.92 – R.111/2020 and p.88 – P.130/2020

#### **R.111/2020**

##### **CAMHS Service Redesign**

The proposed service redesign seeks to address a range of issues that have been a cause for concern over a sustained period of time. This is to be applauded.

The issues identified in this review have contributed to long waiting lists resulting in increased stress and anxiety, often extending beyond the individual child or young person requiring therapeutic intervention, and across the wider family system. Unfortunately, the current service redesign does not appear to go far enough to address these and other issues - specifically, the fundamental concerns that many parents experience early on in the process when concerns and behaviours etc are emerging. Regrettably, whilst many children are waiting for an initial appointment other support interventions are often not offered.

In the period between a referral and an initial appointment many parents have reported feeling 'alone and left to their own devices' with 'many lost opportunities'. It might be helpful if the service redesign could consider how to address this disconnect early on in the process, perhaps via regular, scheduled community drop in sessions supported by a CAMHS specialist. This might offer reassurance, allay anxieties thus enabling parents to cope until their child's appointment date. An early, proactive approach might prove to be cost effective through more effective triage resulting in reduced waiting lists and improved outcomes, enabling all to thrive and flourish.

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### **Dewberry House (SARC)**

The continuation of existing services and the proposed development of the model addresses the needs of victims sensitively, appropriately and in line with best practice guidelines. This project brings together the support and services, including therapeutic support, to the victim rather than the individual having to navigate the system and repeating their story numerous times.

### **Education Reform Programme**

This proposed project sets out the ambition for Jersey's education services to be as successful as the best in the world.

This is a laudable ambition but the project as outlined only begins to address the fundamental reasons for underperformance of various groups, including those children who are disadvantaged and/or experiencing persistent poverty once children begin school. This is too late for some children. The fundamental reasons for the variance across groups of children do not only begin to show themselves when formal education starts. These disparities are evident in the early years and to disregard these disparities until children begin school is too little, too late.

The first few years of a child's life are fundamentally important to their future life chances. There is a wealth of evidence to show that they shape children's future development influencing how well children do at school, their health, wellbeing and future achievements.

Children develop rapidly in their early years. The experiences they have between birth and age five, but in particular in the first two years, has a significant impact on their cognitive and social-emotional development, affecting their future life chances.

High quality early learning that delivers a broad and comprehensive range of knowledge and skills can ensure positive progression through school and beyond to later life. This is of vital importance to children who are vulnerable and/or disadvantaged (in the broadest terms) and who may have had limited opportunities within the first 1001 critical days.

Children's earliest experiences define their outcomes in childhood and beyond into adult life and those who fall behind before school often struggle to catch up. This project, as outlined, does not appear to address this.

There is a plethora of research evidence that highlights the importance of improving outcomes for children as early as possible through early intervention and high quality early years provision for vulnerable pre-school children is a critical element of this.

The report 'The Foundation Years' by the Rt Hon Frank Field, highlights the interventions and action needed to prevent poor children from becoming poor adults. There is a growing consensus that this needs to start in the early years and Brighter Futures fully endorses this view.

It is clear that all young children, whatever their background, vulnerability or circumstances deserve the best possible start in life and they must be given the opportunity to fulfil their potential. A failure to address these fundamental discrepancies only when children start statutory education fails to put children first - a key Government priority.

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A lack of investment for the Early Years not only fails to put vulnerable children first but the evidence demonstrates that a lack of early investment is very expensive to remediate later through intensive support and interventions later.

The Government's first and most important strategic priority has been clearly identified as 'Putting children first' and by failing to ensure that vulnerable and disadvantaged children are appropriately supported at a stage in their life where it has the greatest potential to be transformative, Jersey will be failing to 'Put children first'.

### **Covid-19 – School's Catch-Up Programme**

The above section, Education Reform Programme, outlines many aspects that are also pertinent and relevant here in relation to disadvantaged and vulnerable children. Intervention as early as possible is critical and this applies especially so to disadvantaged and vulnerable children who were unable to access Early Years provision due to Covid-19. This cohort of children – who are already behind their peers – are likely to have seen the gap in progress and development widen even further.

### **Probation Service Posts**

The Building a Safer Society (BaSS) strategy is a key element to tackling the negative impact on everyday life due to crime, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse.

The benefits of a multi-agency, cross-sector partnership to delivering the strategy is that this approach positively reaches, and engages, many who would not otherwise do so if delivered exclusively by the probation service. This project, as outlined, does not mention the continuation of the BaSS strategy and a multi-agency cross-sector approach which, if this is the case, much of what the BaSS strategy set out to do, and achieved, is likely to be lost, but especially in terms of early intervention and prevention.

Yours sincerely,

Ruth Brunton  
Chief Executive Officer.

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