

## Report to Jersey Children's Services Strategic Leadership Board

This is my report to the February 2020 meeting of the Board. I outline here the main developments and continuing challenges since the last meeting in November when Mark Owers had just taken up post as Director of Safeguarding and Care.

### Developments

Following Mark's arrival there is now a strengthened and permanent leadership team in place in Children's social care for the first time for some years. The ■■■ vacant heads of service posts were filled in November by internal candidates who took up post before the end of the year. This has created a more united leadership team under Mark with a common sense of purpose.

**'Jersey Putting Children First'** was launched on World Children Day in November, highlighting the 8 pledges to Jersey children and including several key issues from Jersey's improvement journey such as listening to children, early help, recruitment and retention, and support to children in care. *Putting Children First* large boards are now visible across Jersey and have generated positive community and business interest.

Children's service development day for all social care staff with SCIE and Team Jersey was held in early December. This influenced the development of a draft 'Our Plan', incorporating Jersey Care Inquiry and Ofsted learning, and building on the SCIE groundwork about restorative approaches. The draft **'Our Plan'** sets out purpose, principles and values, and priorities before going into detail of areas for development.

Significant additional funding for services for children in Jersey have been allocated in the latest the Government Plan. This has allowed the announcement of two major new developments:

- A new support offer for **children in care and care leavers** aged 14 to 25 was launched in January. Recruitment is taking place to establish this broader service offer which has been widely welcomed.
- An **intensive fostering scheme** for children with complex challenge who require a high level of care. This will enable more young people to be supported in family settings and in Island. Again recruitment is in hand.

Significant funding has also been allocated to develop **early help services** for children and families which is a major 'gap' in the range of services currently available.

Other recent initiatives include consultation on the redesign of Emotional Health and Well Being service (CAMHS); the permanent appointment of a children's rights team manager with some additional resource; a person dedicated to developing the children's complaints and compliments service and linking this to learning and practice improvement.

***Our Plan*** and the values and priorities that it sets out represents a programme of significant cultural change which will take persistence, determination and consistency over the next three years. One feature of *Our Plan* is that it is being produced with staff, partners and children and families and the current draft is a starting point for this wider engagement. The aspiration is to build a distinctive Jersey Children's Service based on UNCRC and relationship-based and restorative principles.

## **Challenges**

*Our Plan* will be discussed on today's agenda and it does pick up the issues and challenges below in more detail. However, I highlight them below because I think these are the key challenges for-Jersey children's services continued improvement.

The need for **a model of practice** that focuses on positive impact and outcomes for children - help and support that is effective and helps them grow and develop - is illustrated by the performance data below. The current children's service is still quite interventionist and tends to look at referrals through a focus on deficits and a child protection lens. There are high levels of referrals and assessments and Article 42 enquiries but only a small percentage of these result in the need for a child protection plan. Targeted early help and child in need approaches remain relatively undeveloped. These are also issues for the broader children's partnership.

The performance tables below which use Essex children's services (a similar demographic base to Jersey and an outstanding rated service) data (October 19) and Jersey data (Dec 19) compared to England wide data for 2018.

<b>Indicator per 10,000 children</b>	<b>Jersey</b>	<b>Essex</b>	<b>England</b>
<b>Referrals</b>	<b>619</b>	263	553
<b>Assessments</b>	<b>611</b>	275	532
<b>Article 42 (Section 47)</b>	<b>252</b>	46	167
<b>Initial child protection conference (ICPC)</b>	<b>71.7</b>	25	67
<b>Child Protection Plans</b>	<b>30.6</b>	18	45
<b>Children in Care</b>	<b>37.9</b>	28	64

**Child Protection Plan** numbers have gone up and down like a roller coaster in the last two years and are now at the level they were for most of 2018. The average number of CP plans over the last two years is 81 and the current figure of 67 is 20% below that.

A recent audit of all open child in need plans except those in complex needs team has recently been carried out. There are currently 200 CIN cases open across the Child In Need Teams. The findings suggest that the application of threshold at level 4 (suffered or at risk of significant harm) is robustly embedded across the teams. With just █ cases out of the 200 reviewed identified for an urgent strategy meeting. 9 further cases had been agreed to progress to ICPC prior to the review taking place. Almost a quarter of all cases should be held in Early Help rather than in statutory services. 35% of the cases held in were able to close. The Senior Leadership Team are taking forward a series of actions to address these issues however the development of the Right Help, Right Time model will be critical.

Children's services is now in a much more stable position in the service it provides to **children in care**. At the end of December there were 83 children in Jersey's care and this figure has not fluctuated by more than 5 in the last year. Placement stability is very good and above the England average. 34 children in care are aged 15 or over (41%) and only 11 are aged 6 or under. However, 23 children are placed off island (28%) which is not only costly and makes it difficult for those children to build strong relationships with their social worker, IRO and the virtual school, but also weakens their connection with the island and their home community. The number off Island is declining slowly - it was 25 a year ago. There are 5 young people off Island who are in residential care and there are 7 young people in residential care in Island.

There is a service for **care leavers**, but it is currently part of the children in care team and is under-resourced. Five new personal advisor posts have been job evaluated and recently advertised.

**Quality assurance** and case file audits remain an underdeveloped area. These need to be more strongly linked to learning and practice improvement with greater ownership of the QA process throughout the service, without it becoming too burdensome or time consuming.

There is a need to further develop the **Mosaic** case recording system and the Government's IT service are currently negotiating for the system to be hosted by the provider Servelec. This will then allow for a number of other developments to the Mosaic system which will make it easier and less time consuming for staff to use, and will support a more restorative model of practice.

**Recruitment and retention** of social workers remains a key issue; the current level of agency staff is 30%. The service are attending a recruitment fare in Birmingham in March 2020. Consideration of how permanent and committed social workers might be attracted to work and stay in Jersey needs to lead to a refreshed workforce development and retention plan – some ideas include: strong learning and support offer in first year to newly qualified staff; a generous progression scheme based on evidence of skills and good practice; a learning and development programme; a shared sense of purpose and working together.

In the Government **Efficiency Plan** there are two specific areas where savings needs to be found this year. Firstly in the reduction of costly placements and because off island placements have reduced this saving is on track. Secondly in residential care provision including staffing shift patterns. This is linked to consideration of sufficiency of provision in Jersey for children in care and of future use for Jersey's residential children's estate. In general there is a need to make sure that services for children and families in Jersey are cost effective and value for money, and that where there is activity that is having little positive benefit for children, the funding is redeployed to where it can make a greater difference.

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