

Corporate Parenting Board

(5th Meeting)

22nd May 2025

Part A (Non-Exempt)

All members were present, with the exception of Connétable K. Shenton-Stone of St. Martin, Representative of the Comité des Connétables and Deputies R.J. Ward of St. Helier Central, Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning and S.Y. Mézec of St. Helier South, Minister for Housing, from whom apologies had been received.

Connétable R. Vibert of St. Peter, Minister for Children and Families
Deputy T.J.A. Binet of St. Saviour, Minister for Health and Social Services
Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat of St. Helier North, Minister for Justice and Home Affairs

In attendance -

R. Smith, Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police
D. Marriott, Director, Children's Services, Children, Young People, Education and Skills Department
A. Heaven, Assistant Director, Policy, Cabinet Office
N. Crick, Head of Service, Corporate Parenting, Health and Care Jersey
S. Phillips, Head of Informatics, Children, Young People, Education and Skills Department
S. Richardson, Chief Executive Officer, Jersey Cares
C. Farley, Chief Executive Officer, Brightly
C. Fearn, Secretariat Officer, Specialist Secretariat, States Greffe

Note: The Minutes of this meeting comprise Part A only.

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| Minutes. | A1. The Minutes of the meeting of 17th February 2025, having previously been circulated, were taken as read and were confirmed. |
| Declarations of interest. | A2. No declarations of interest were received in connexion with any of the items discussed at the current meeting. |
| Health and Wellbeing Sub-Group: report. | A3. The Board, with reference to its Minute No. A3 of 17th February 2025, received and noted a progress report from the Health and Wellbeing Sub-Group (the Sub-Group), dated 22nd May 2025, which had been prepared by Mr. N. Crick, Head of Service, Corporate Parenting, Health and Care Jersey (HCJ). The Board also received and noted the revised draft action plan for the Sub-Group, dated May 2025. |

The Board recalled that a draft action plan, comprising 5 priorities and associated actions, had been developed for each of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Groups, and that it was envisaged that the actions would be delivered in 2025, in order to create sustainable momentum to support further activity in 2026.

The Board noted the 5 priorities of the Sub-Group as follows –

- to review and improve the provision of initial health assessments (IHAs) and

- annual review health assessments (RHAs) for children in care;
- to develop Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to ensure access to timely and effective support for children in care;
- to implement 'health passports' for care leavers at the age of 18 years;
- to promote access to healthy living, sport, leisure and recreational services; and
- to embed healthy living initiatives into Children's Social Care services to support equal access to personal growth and social inclusion opportunities.

With regard to the provision of health assessments, the Board was informed that statutory requirements necessitated the request for and completion of an IHA by HCJ within 5 and 20 working days of a child entering care respectively. RHAs were then undertaken by Family Nursing and Home Care (FNHC) every 6 months for children in care under the age of 5 years, or annually for those aged between 5 and 18 years. It was noted that FNHC did not complete RHAs for children in care in off-Island placements, but they were responsible for requesting the assessments from the relevant local health authority and ensuring that outstanding actions were completed.

The Board was advised that, of the 53 children in care in the Island (as at the end of April 2025), 11 had not had their health assessments completed within the allocated timeframes, and 6 were currently awaiting an IHA or had outstanding IHA paperwork. The likely cause was believed to be a combination of delays in the initial request for the assessments by social workers and the writing up of the IHA reports by medical advisors, a refusal by some children to attend appointments, and the effects of long-term staff sick leave. It was noted that an interim medical advisor for looked after children had been appointed to address the delays and would remain in post until the end of May 2025.

It was further noted that, whilst 85 per cent of children in care had completed an up-to-date dental appointment, 13 children in care had not recently been seen by a dentist, although the Board was advised that a review was taking place, as it was possible that some appointments had not been recorded. To address the delays, Mr. Crick indicated that a summary of recommendations would be shared with the child's social worker and FNHC immediately following the IHA appointment to enable the care planning process to progress. A single point of contact had also been identified in the Children's Social Work team to ensure that the appropriate timelines for referrals were adhered to, and that actions were followed up. It was noted that, whilst a greater proportion of RHAs were now completed within the allocated timeframes, an improvement in notifying FNHC of upcoming RHAs 3 months in advance of the assessment was required. Recommendations could also be provided with greater alacrity following the assessment.

With regard to the development of the CAMHS provision, the Board was advised that the offer to children in care was currently under development. It was envisaged that children in care would be provided with a specific CAMHS provision as part of the multidisciplinary offer currently being developed across Children's Services, which would facilitate targeted support for complex needs.

The Board was informed that the Sub-Group continued to work with a range of agencies and professionals to promote access to healthy living practices, including initiatives related to mindfulness, sports, and recreation. The Sub-Group had collaborated with Public Health to champion the needs of children in care and care leavers in enhancing access to and raising awareness of services, and this work was informed by feedback from young people. The Board noted that a wellbeing framework was being developed by the Jersey Youth Service, which would focus on physical, mental and social wellbeing, and accessibility and inclusion. The framework would be monitored to track progress, celebrate achievements, and

continuously improve service provision.

With regard to the development of 'health passports', it was envisaged that digital local health passports would be developed to improve care leavers' access to their personal health information when they reached the age of 18 years. The passports would be developed in consultation with the Included and Respected (Participation) Sub-Group, to ensure the views of young people were used to inform the project, and it was hoped that the passports would be available from 2026.

On a related matter, the Board was advised that work was ongoing to reinforce the Transitions Panel, which focused on supporting children in care and care leavers in the transition into adulthood and independence. The membership of the Panel, chaired by Mr. Crick, comprised professionals from across a range of key services to ensure the smooth transfer of service provision for young people turning 18, and to secure sufficient management oversight to enable any safeguarding issues to be robustly addressed. It was noted that the current areas of focus of the Panel included the development of terms of reference, a booklet defining threshold criteria, and a guide for young people.

Mr. Crick summarised that there was a need for better analysis of the health needs of children in care and any *lacunae* in relation thereto which required addressing. Neurodiversity was a key area, and it was important that the young people had access to health and dental care, whilst ensuring that they attended appointments on a regular basis.

The Board noted the position accordingly.

Corporate
Parenting data
dashboard
update: health
and wellbeing.

A4. The Board, with reference to its Minute No. A6 of 17th February 2025, received a PowerPoint presentation and heard from Ms. S. Phillips, Head of Informatics, Children, Young People, Education and Skills Department (CYPES), in connexion with the Corporate Parenting data dashboard, with a focus on health and wellbeing.

It was recalled that the dashboard aimed to consolidate a meaningful set of indicators to measure tangible progress in improving outcomes for children in care and care experienced young people.

The Board was informed that, as at the end of the first quarter of 2025, there had been 57 looked after children. Of these, 45 were in Jersey and 12 off-Island. It was noted that 20 were due to leave care over the forthcoming 12 months as they would turn 18. There were currently 86 care leavers, of which 8 were under the age of 18 years, 52 between the ages of 18 and 21 years and 26 between 22 and 25 years of age and it was noted that these numbers would increase.

Benchmarking had been undertaken with England for those children who had been in care for in excess of 12 months. That data demonstrated that, in 2024, 89 per cent of looked after children in England had undergone health assessments, compared with 59 per cent in Jersey. However, the Board was informed that performance had improved in this regard over the previous 9 months and quality issues relating to the data had been resolved. There had been some delays in children, who were placed off-Island, receiving their health assessments, but this had now been addressed.

With respect to dental checks in 2024, the figure for England had been 79 per cent and 63 per cent in Jersey. However, the Board was reminded that the small numbers of children in care in Jersey resulted in a distortion in the figures.

The Board noted that 11 of the children in care had autism spectrum disorder and 5

had other long-term physical health conditions or disabilities. Of those who were in school, 15 had a record of need (11 for social, emotional or mental health needs (SEMH)). A further 9 were in receipt of support for special educational needs, all for SEMH. Of the children in care in the Island, 32 were accessing the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), which now offered an 8 to late service.

The Board was informed that, in early 2024, all children in care and care leavers had been invited to participate in an independent 'Bright Spots' survey. It was noted that the Bright Spots Programme, which was a research project that helped local authorities to use children and young people's voices to inform service development and strategic thinking, included surveys for children in care and care leavers, which were available on their website - <https://coramvoice.org.uk/bright-spots-programme/>.

Of the 26 children in care (aged between 11 and 17 years) who had responded to the survey, 31 per cent had recorded low wellbeing scores and 69 per cent had expressed concerns with respect to their feelings or behaviour. However, 82 per cent were in receipt of support. It was recognised that children in care generally faced more challenges and trauma in their lives than others and, as a consequence, had a greater propensity to develop mental health issues. It was acknowledged that children required stability, and that the impermanence of the homes locally was a significant adverse factor. It was noted that Jersey's stability figure was only 33 per cent, whereas it exceeded 70 per cent on average in the United Kingdom.

There had been a good response rate to the survey by care leavers, with 64 participating. Of these, half reported experiencing high anxiety and 47 per cent had a low wellbeing score. The same quantum rarely felt proud and 37 per cent were finding it challenging to cope financially. A quarter felt often or always lonely and 11 per cent reported having no-one to offer them emotional support.

Having discussed the foregoing, the significant shortage of Children's Homes on the Island was noted to be problematic and it was agreed that the Ministers on the Board should meet with the Minister for Infrastructure outside the formal meeting to discuss the steps that could be taken to address the issue.

Corporate
Parenting
Board
Sub-Groups:
update.

A5. The Board, with reference to its Minute No. A3 of 17th February 2025, received a PowerPoint presentation, entitled 'Sub-groups progress update', and a report entitled 'Creating Safer Loving and Stable Homes; Housing and Accommodation' and heard from Mr. N. Crick, Head of Service, Corporate Parenting, Health and Care Jersey and Ms. D. Marriott, Director, Children's Services, Children, Young People, Education and Skills Department (CYPES), in connexion with the ongoing work of the Corporate Parenting Board Sub-Groups.

It was recalled that Sub-Groups had been established in connexion with each of the 4 focus areas within the Board's thematic approach to improving outcomes for care experienced children and those currently in care, as follows –

- Education, Learning and Personal Development;
- Health and Wellbeing;
- Included and Respected (Participation); and
- Home, Housing and Accommodation.

It was further recalled that draft action plans comprising 5 principal objectives, the lead groups allocated to each priority, the associated actions, the delivery dates, and the progress status had been created for each of the Sub-Groups. The Board noted

plans for biannual joint meetings of the Sub-Groups, the aim of which would be to support collaboration across the focus areas and to enhance progress towards collective goals.

The Board was advised that a Delivery Group had been established to act as an interface between the Sub-Groups and the Board. The Delivery Group comprised chief officers from within Government, high net-worth individuals and delegates from businesses and Jersey Cares. As such, it was envisaged that the Delivery Group would represent the Island and its communities working together to help young people and act as a forum for oversight of the Sub-Groups, ensuring synergy across their activities and promoting a collective focus to support the Board in determining key priorities. A framework for creating a family business would be developed, supported by the wider Island community, which it was hoped would foster innovation and creativity to unlock potential and encourage ambitious corporate parenting practices. The Board was informed that the Delivery Group had held its inaugural meeting in May 2025.

The Board recalled that it had received a report on progress from the Health and Wellbeing Sub-Group at Minute No. A3 of the current meeting and noted updates in connexion with the Housing and Accommodation, Education, Learning and Personal Development and Included and Respected (Participation) Sub-Groups –

Housing and Accommodation

The Board was apprised of a shortfall in the availability of beds in residential homes in the Island for children in care, for which the Minister for Children and Families had a statutory requirement to provide appropriate services to under the provisions of the Children and Young People (Jersey) Law 2022. The lack of accommodation and its associated impact on children had been highlighted as a tier one risk in the Government of Jersey's corporate risk register, as a failure to meet this statutory requirement would result in legal and reputational risks for the Government and significantly impact the wellbeing of children in care who were subjected to repeated accommodation moves.

It was noted that the existing residential estate comprised 11 children's homes and a secure unit, although 3 homes had closed in 2025, and the challenges in recruiting foster carers were exacerbating the issue. The Children's Services improvement plan aimed to address the shortfall through reconfiguring the residential estate, which it was hoped would result in a high quality, sustainable and cost-effective model of care.

With regard to the provision of accommodation to care leavers, the Board was advised that a Partnership Pathway had been developed with Andium Homes, the Government of Jersey's affordable housing provider, to provide care leavers and individuals with complex needs with access to independent accommodation in Andium properties. Care leavers were assigned personal advisors from the Leaving Care team, who were responsible for supporting their application to register for a property. It was noted that, as at February 2025, 12 young people had been either in the process of completing their application for an Andium property or had been on the waiting list. The Board was apprised of the resource pressure applied to CYPES in instances where young people in care were awaiting independent accommodation, as this meant that their existing placement was not available to other young people in need.

It was noted that the management of demand for housing from care leavers would be improved and an 'Unlock Panel' introduced, which would afford them increased choice. Support would be provided to young people without legal status and modules were being developed for a skills programme, which would prepare care leavers to

live independently. The aim was to reduce the number of placements that broke down, provide young people with skills and ensure that standards of health and safety in homes were consistent. The recruitment of foster carers would also be enhanced;

Education, Learning and Personal Development

Work was underway with the virtual school to improve education retention and support care leavers to move to further education, training or employment through the creation of enhanced learning and opportunities, including those which were bespoke. Achievements and talents would be acknowledged and celebrated, and work would be undertaken to ensure that the service provision remained consistent, irrespective of the young person's location. An Aspirations Fair would be organised to signpost the opportunities that were available and to ascertain the aspirations of children in care and care leavers; and

Included and Respected (Participation)

A Children in Care Council (CICC) was being established *via* engagement with children in care and care leavers, which would function as the mouthpiece for all children in care and care leavers. Engagement events and activities had been organised to enable the young people to engage directly with Ministers and annual celebration and achievement events would be held, encouraging young people to become involved in the CICC. A drop-in service would also be set up, to ensure that officers were available to care leavers.

In order to measure the success of the Sub-Groups, dashboards and data sets were being established, which would enable monthly reporting to take place. Every young person's engagement would be monitored, with a view to better understanding the impact on and outcomes for them.

The Board was informed that, at the end of each year, the Sub-Groups would meet with the Delivery Group to review the action plans and strengthen them as necessary. It was acknowledged that, despite efforts by the interim Head of Service for Standards and Quality at CYPES, the young people were reluctant to participate but events had been organised and their individual views sought, and it was hoped that greater engagement could be achieved over time.

The Board noted the position.

Children's
Advocacy
Service -
Jersey Cares:
update.

A6. The Board, with reference to its Minute No. A4 of 4th December 2024, received an oral report from Ms. S. Richardson, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Jersey Cares, in connexion with the advocacy service and other workstream updates.

The Board recalled that Children's Services would refer children and young people, who were eligible for advocacy services, to Jersey Cares. Ms. Richardson informed the Board that the referral system was performing well, that all children in care and care leavers had been offered the service, and that uptake was improving. Funding had been sought to improve the technology to enable the data for each individual young person to be tracked on a computer records management system.

The Board was informed that twice-weekly meetings were held in order to discuss the young people who were not engaging with the service and Jersey Cares was keen to work with other charities and organisations to enhance its understanding of children's requirements, in order that services could be offered in a joined-up way, thereby enhancing the provision.

Ms. Richardson indicated that Jersey Care's grant funding would cease in December

2025 and a bid had been submitted to continue to provide the advocacy service for children in care. This had included a 3-year business plan, outlining the direction that the organisation intended to take, which involved moving to a whole-Island approach and setting out how sponsorship could be obtained. Ms. Richardson informed the Board that Jersey Cares intended to mobilise resources to align with the Children's Services' Improvement Plan in order to support it in a constructive way. She emphasised that there were many adults in the Island who were keen to assist young people, and that Jersey Cares had been in contact with officers from the custody suite at the States of Jersey Police and the Prison to ascertain whether members of its team could act as an appropriate adult in lieu of a social worker, as required.

It was noted that Jersey Cares would not stop supporting care leavers when they attained 25 years of age and that the team was working to assist those who wanted to return to the Island in managing that transition. This work was funded separately from the Children's Services advocacy contract. On 16th June 2025, the Jersey Cares advocates would invite their clients to a dinner with the CEO with the aim of establishing a group of expert advisers by experience, enhancing relationships and encouraging participation in Government initiatives.

Ms. Richardson informed the Board that she had encountered many people who wished to foster but could not meet the requisite time commitment. Accordingly, Ms. Richardson suggested that these people (who would have been subject to the relevant safeguarding checks) could work alongside Jersey Cares to act as a constant presence in the life of a child in care until they turned 18. It was noted that a range of events had been organised to attract philanthropic or corporate sponsorship, but that these had historically not been well attended.

The Board noted the position.

Care Leavers' offer: update.

A7. The Board, with reference to its Minute No. A6 of 4th December 2024, received and noted the draft updated local care leavers' offer (the offer), entitled 'Local offer: guide for young people leaving care', together with an associated PowerPoint presentation and heard from Mr. N. Crick, Head of Service, Corporate Parenting, Health and Care Jersey, in this connexion.

It was recalled that the offer covered 6 areas, namely health and wellbeing, education and training, finance, housing, employment and relationships and that the Government had a statutory duty (which was devolved to the Minister for Children and Families), as corporate parents, under the Children and Young People (Jersey) Law 2022, to publish information about the services offered to assist care leavers in, or in preparation for, adulthood and independent living.

Consultation had taken place on the offer with partner agencies such as Brightly, the Employment, Housing and Social Security Department, children in care and care leavers and the offer incorporated those essential elements required of corporate parents but also signposted towards the additional support that was offered by other agencies in a clear way. The offer had last been updated 4 years previously but would henceforth be the subject of a formal annual review and it was noted that it would be relaunched in July 2025.

The revised offer included reference to the newly introduced health passports, drop-in facilities and accommodation pathways and incorporated feedback received from care leavers, particularly with reference to financial support. It was recalled that the Board had agreed to increase the one-off financial offer to those leaving care to £3,500 per individual (previously £3,000), which was provided for the purpose of establishing a home and reflected the increases in the cost of living in Jersey.

Ms. S. Richardson, Chief Executive Officer, Jersey Cares, indicated that her team wished to relocate from their current offices to a more child-friendly venue where they could be simultaneously independent and participative. It was noted that there was potentially some accommodation near the Youth Enquiry Service in Colomberie where a care leavers hub could be established, providing professional services for young people, though funding would need to be secured.

Plans to construct 6 units of accommodation, specifically for care leavers, in one place were noted, and the Board was advised that stability and positive benefits could be provided to this demographic if units for them were incorporated within each new development. The Board was informed that the Parishes had been contacted and asked to support this initiative as part of their Connétables' responsibility as corporate parents.

The Board noted the position.

Action
Planning.

A8. From the discussion of the shortfall in the availability of beds in residential homes in the Island for children in care, it was noted that Deputy L.J. Farnham of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter, Chief Minister, had established a group to review the situation.

It was recalled that 3 properties in the children's social care residential estate were closing in 2025 and that there was a significant shortage of available homes for looked after children. The Board was reminded that any house into which a child in care was placed was defined as a residential children's home and required specific permission under the Planning and Building (Jersey) Law 2002. In order to address this, work was underway with a view to amending the provisions of the law.