

Services for Looked After Children



During 2010 and 2011 an independent inspection of services for Looked After Children in Jersey took place. This information leaflet provides a summary of that inspection process and its findings.

Who are looked after children?

Looked After Children is the term used to describe children and young people who are cared for by Children's Social Services. They are supported by social workers, residential care workers and/or foster carers. Rather than living at home with their parents they live in children's homes, in therapeutic units, or with foster carers.

Why have an independent inspection?

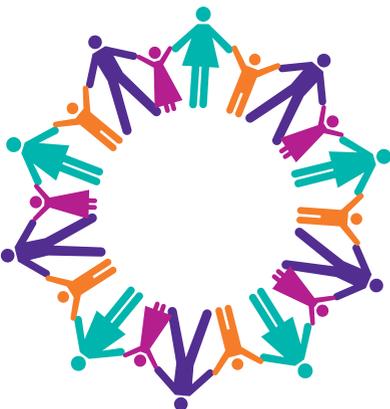
We need to know what parts of the services we provide for Looked After Children work well, and what needs to improve.

In 2008 Andrew Williamson, a leading name in Social Work and former Director of Social Services in the UK, recommended that our services for Looked After Children be independently inspected. It is important that inspections are independent so that people feel they can talk freely about any concerns or problems they may have.

Who carried out the inspection?

The inspection was carried out by the Care Inspectorate. The Care Inspectorate is an independent organisation, a "care watchdog" that inspects social care and social work service across Scotland. It does this to make sure that people receive the highest quality of care and that their rights are promoted and protected.

Jersey's Children's Policy Group, which includes the Ministers of Health & Social Services, Education Sports & Culture and Home Affairs, approached the Care Inspectorate and asked them to undertake the inspection. Scottish Ministers had to agree that Care Inspectorate staff could carry out the work in Jersey.



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What did the inspection involve?

This inspection focused on:

- services provided to children in children's homes, therapeutic units, foster care and Greenfields secure unit
- services provided to young people leaving care

Inspectors asked children and young people what they thought about the services they received

What did the inspection find?

The inspectors found some areas of our services to be good or adequate, for example they found evidence that:

- good, flexible, personalised care was resulting in good outcomes for some Looked After Children and young people. Those in foster care and some specialist units had very positive experiences

many young people were benefiting from social work support. This was evident in the way they described how they felt about themselves, the care they received, and their improved ability to manage their behaviour

other agencies working alongside Children's Social Services provided a range of complimentary support, particularly Jersey's Youth Service

- staff were experienced, committed and skilled. They work well across different agencies, shared high aspirations for the children and young people, and effectively undertook key tasks such as assessment and care management

steps had been taken to strengthen senior management structures, and that there was a close and effective working relationship between the Minister and senior managers



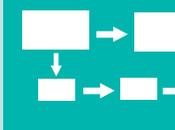
The inspection also found some areas of our services to be weak and in need of improvement. This included the need to:

gather the views of children and young people who are looked after



develop a systematic and comprehensive approach to service planning

The Plan



improve the ways that senior managers communicate and engage with staff



ensure we collect accurate information about our performance and how well our services work



improve the management, training and support of residential child care



Perhaps most importantly the inspectors concluded that whilst improvements were needed, our capacity to improve was good.

They recognised that there was a clear commitment to quality improvement at all levels in the organisation and that the work already being undertaken to change meant we would be able to quickly develop fully modernised services.

What next?

The inspectors made a total of 14 different recommendations, all of which have been adopted by the Children's Policy Group. These recommendations have been included in a service improvement plan that aims to address the shortcomings identified by the inspectors. These recommendations also provide a baseline against which future progress will be measured.

The Children's Policy Group will work to oversee delivery of this service improvement plan alongside the Children's and Young Person's Strategic Framework, launched in November 2011.

Do you want to know more?

You can download a full copy of the Care Inspectorate report and a summary of the service improvement plan from www.gov.je/LookedAfterChildren

Or, if you want more information about the inspection process, the Children's Policy Group, or Children's Social Services please contact the Children's Policy Group in the first instance. They will be able to direct your query to the most appropriate person.

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