

Corporate Parenting



Corporate Parenting Board Meeting
20th October 2023



**Corporate Parenting Board
20th October 2023
11:30-13:00
Education Committee Room**

ATTENDEES

Minister for Children and Education
Minister for Health and Social Services
Chief Officer CYPES
Associate Director for Children's Services
Assistant Director Policy
Representative for Andium Homes
Representative for Brightly
Representative for Jersey Cares, COO
Acting Children's Commissioner (Participant Observer)
Representative for the States of Jersey Police
Associate Director for Innovation, Transformation and Business Support
Representative for the Comité des Connétables
Research and Administration Officer
Commissioning Officer
Jersey Cares, Development Lead – Advocacy and Participation (Update on Care Council)
Team Manager Improvement and Redesign (Update of Therapeutic Home)

APOLOGIES

Minister for Home Affairs
Minister for Housing
Assistant Minister for Children and Education with Responsibility for Children's Services and Assistant Minister for Treasury
Assistant Minister for Children and Education (Early Years)
Chief Social Worker & Group Director
Associate Director of Engagement and Participation
CEO, Jersey Cares

1. Welcome

The Minister for Children and Education welcomed everyone to the Board. She noted that there had been some workshops held over the summer so that the Board could work more effectively together and focus around a strategic vision and outcomes. Meetings would be held more regularly and would be slightly shorter.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28th April 2023 were approved, subject to the amendments made during prior circulation via email.

The Minister for Children and Education went through progress on the actions of the previous meeting:

- Senior Policy Officer to review wording of Terms of Reference, including dates for circulating minutes and agendas and the functions of the Board. - The Minister for Children and Education noted that this still needed to be finalised and reviewed by the Board. The Assistant Director of Policy noted that the papers had been circulated a week before the meeting and a draft Board plan was emerging.
- Senior Policy Officer to draft forward plan for the Board. - The Assistant Director of Policy noted that there were a few items such as Trust Funds and Bright Spots which did not make the agenda for this meeting and could be added to the forward plan. The forward plan was currently in draft format and was being developed for future meetings.
- The Chief Social Worker & Group Director to investigate payment issues and escalation processes for the care leavers offer and financial payments. - On the agenda.
- The Chief Social Worker & Group Director identify ways to assist care leavers with Parish Rates, including information sharing. - On the agenda under AOB.
- The Andium Representative to discuss options for care leavers rent and look at options for retaining floor coverings between tenants to reduce unnecessary cost of new flooring for care leavers. – The Andium representative noted that there had been a change in policy in relation to tenants removing carpets between tenancies. If carpets are in a reasonable condition, they could be retained. There was also some ongoing work to discuss providing carpets in all Andium homes. The Andium Representative also noted that there was an active workstream to look at preventing tenants from the private sector having to pay duplicate rents due to overlapping tenancy agreements. She noted that Andium tenancies ran on a monthly basis and that they could start any day. The Brightly representative asked about the grant scheme for carpets and whether this was a loan or a gift. The Andium representative noted that this was for a fixed period while permanent options were being investigated but that this was a grant / gift. This was only in Andium homes and not in other housing trusts. The COO of Jersey Cares asked if there was a way care leavers could be exempt from paying double rent in between tenancies. The Andium Representative confirmed that they were looking at options, but also needed to be mindful not to set a precedent for all people coming from the private rental sector.
- Associate Director for Children’s Social Care Services to develop operational frameworks to sit alongside the care leavers offer. – This would be covered in the agenda.
- Associate Director for Children’s Social Care Services to explore the collection and use of data to inform decisions and actions within the service. – The Associate Director for Children’s Services asked the Brightly Representative to confirm the objectives of this action in relation to service delivery. The Brightly Representative noted that there had been a discussion early in the previous meeting stressing the importance of a plan and secondly the importance of data for informing the plan and tracking progress. The Minister for Children and Education noted that in the last meeting there was not sufficient time to discuss the data. There was general data presented each quarter and this would allow the Board to see trends. The



Associate Director for Innovation, Transformation and Business Support suggested that there needed to be a discussion on which indicators to focus upon.

- The Chief Social Worker & Group Director to look into the processes for accessing the care leavers offer, including information share. – To be covered in the agenda.
- The Minister for Children and Education requested from the Officers to develop operational guidance that sat alongside the care leavers offer. – To be covered on the agenda.

The Minister for Health and Social Services asked about information sharing protocols with stakeholders about those in care. The Chief Officer of CYPES noted that this was a particular issue around low numbers that were identifiable. However, it was important to develop clear guidance around information sharing for the Board.

The Minister for Children and Education noted that 15 minutes was needed to run through the actions at future meetings.

3. Update on progress re Capital Programme Residential Homes / Therapeutic Home

The Team Manager Improvement and Redesign noted that plans were at a confidential stage, and this was still to be discussed with parish representatives. There had been aspirations for a number of years to establish a therapeutic children's residential home. They had initially been looking at properties in the Government estate, including those on the Overdale site. However, it was necessary to go into the private market, and an offer had been agreed on a property. There was a substantial garden and agricultural land. There had been verbal confirmation from a survey that the property was in a good condition. The next steps would be stakeholder engagement with political representatives and neighbours. It was intended that an application would be submitted for a change of use by the end of November. The Team Manager Improvement and Redesign suggested that the Corporate Parenting Board members might visit the site to understand the potential. The Brightly Representative felt that this was positive and highlighted the benefits of agricultural therapy.

The Brightly Representative asked about how the home might be staffed. The Associate Director for Children's Social Care Services would bring a staffing plan to the next Corporate Parenting Board. There would be CAMHS Clinicians, the Service Manager for Looked After Children and the Service Lead for Residential Homes working together. There would be broader work to develop the functions of the home. The Minister for Children and Education noted that this could be an update for the meeting in the first quarter of 2024. There could be an invitation to the Associate Director for Mental Health and Wellbeing. The Chief Officer CYPES noted that it was important that there was prominent support for Education and Skills in the home too. There would also be involvement from the Jersey Youth Services.

The COO of Jersey Cares noted that this was a good opportunity for participation and engagement with children in care. The Team Manager Improvement and Redesign noted that two care leavers had visited the site, and this was in the workstream. The



Chief Officer CYPES noted that it would be really good to have some input and engagement assistance from Jersey Cares and this had been part of the ambition for the island health strategy since 2008. It was important to see this as a positive development and there had been challenges with other residential settings and the ability to provide this kind of provision on island. The Chief Officer CYPES noted that there would be a dedicated programme which would be overseen by the Associate Director for Innovation, Transformation and Business Support.

The Minister for Children and Education highlighted a letter drafted to the Minister for the Environment asking for support in expediting the planning application for the therapeutic children's home. The Board approved that this letter could be sent.

The Team Manager Improvement and Redesign provided some other service updates. This included the refurbishment of two bespoke homes at Westmount and also Eden House. There was the replacement of the therapeutic pool at Oakwell and refurbishment of Maple House. There was work to update the CCTV and courtyard at Greenfields.

The Brightly Representative asked the Team Manager Improvement and Redesign for the names and details of new homes so that these could be included in the Brightly Christmas appeal.

The Minister for Children and Education asked if a TEAMS channel could be created for the Corporate Parenting Board for future updates and to collect meeting papers.

4. Update on Children in Care Council

The COO of Jersey Cares and the Jersey Cares, Development Lead – Advocacy and Participation introduced themselves to the Board.

The Jersey Cares, Development Lead – Advocacy and Participation presented plans for the Children in Care Council. The Minister for Children and Education noted that this was an important development to get feedback from the children in care without exposing them to a large Board meeting which might be intimidating and act as a barrier to genuine engagement. Jersey Cares had been working with the Associate Director for Engagement and Participation to develop plans for the Children in Care Council. The COO of Jersey Cares highlighted the importance of listening to understand and hearing the collective voice of children in care. It would improve trust, increase the children's confidence, and make the children feel valued. Children were keen to share their opinions with adults about their everyday lives. It would enable the children to more likely engage with those caring for them and listen to guidance. Not listening made children feel ignored, unvalued, and unloved. Listening was part of effective relationships which children needed to thrive. This plan was no different to listening to other children and acknowledging their views. It was important to understand about their lives.

The Jersey Cares, Development Lead – Advocacy and Participation outlined the plan for making difficult conversations safe for children and young people. He outlined the

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model of discover, define, develop and deliver to provide solutions for children and young people. He gave a case study from Scotland and the success of changing the Law to prevent siblings from being separated from each other. There had also been issues with children feeling safe in Education and how children in care were treated in Education settings. Schools needed to respond differently to those in care. This was a journey, and it was important to start the process and the data would reflect changes implemented overtime. The Jersey Cares, Development Lead – Advocacy and Participation suggested a sustainable and safe approach to participation. He outlined the 3–6-month plan and visions, including defining what the Children in Care Council was, building on good practice including the engagement and participation tool kit, and helping to equip the Corporate Parenting Board with the tools needed for good and safe participation. There was ongoing work around independent advocacy, continuing support for the Care Leavers Offer and creating the Jersey Cares Participation Offer.

The Minister for Children and Education invited the Board to give comments and questions. The Minister for Health and Social Services asked about the kinds of evidence secured from the Scotland case study. The Jersey Cares, Development Lead – Advocacy and Participation noted that the Law had been changed and there was now an assumption that siblings would remain together. There had also been a tutoring programme with specialist support teachers and children in care had been providing training to teachers.

The COO of Jersey Cares highlighted the Council Tax exemption for care leavers due to poverty. Money was very tight when they left care at 18 and paying Council Tax created unnecessary poverty. There was also support for bursaries for lifelong education for those leaving care in recognition that care often disrupted and delayed educational outcomes. This enabled those leaving care to become self-reliant. The Jersey Cares, Development Lead – Advocacy and Participation noted that it was important to equip care leavers so that they did not permanently end up relying on income support. It was an investment in children so that they could become independent in adult life and also contribute meaningfully to society. The Minister for Health and Social Services asked if there was a means of tracking those outcomes. The Jersey Cares, Development Lead – Advocacy and Participation noted that there had been an improvement in children leaving care attending university and there were also inspirational individual case studies.

The COO of Jersey Cares also highlighted the importance of engaging those with care experiences in politics. There were examples of research assistants and politicians who had been in care and could bring this experience to their roles.

The Representative for the Comité des Connétables asked about exemption from parish rates and was keen to present this idea to the Comité. The Minister for Children and Education asked how this might be funded. The Jersey Cares, Development Lead – Advocacy and Participation noted that in Scotland some support was provided by central government. The Representative for the Comité des Connétables felt that this might be achievable for parishes for those up to the age of 25.

The Associate Director for Innovation, Transformation and Business Support asked what a Children in Care Council might look like. The Jersey Cares, Development Lead – Advocacy and Participation noted that it might be a group that regularly met up with up to 30 members who attended occasionally. Sometimes it was a small, committed group that grew organically. There would be a discussion regarding the structure for Jersey. It was important that all children had the opportunity to give their feedback in a way that was comfortable for them. The COO of Jersey Cares noted that this was not about individual issues but about collective barriers with a view to developing strategic changes. The Acting Children’s Commissioner noted that feedback about parish rates regularly came up.

The Chief Officer CYPES was interested to hear about the approach in Scotland. One of the challenges in Jersey was the size and proximity of the island so that children come together. It was important to focus on the collective voice rather than individual children. The education system was undergoing an inclusion journey looking at options to keep children included in education.

The Assistant Director of Policy would contact the Comité des Connétables to look at options for parish rates. The COO of Jersey Cares offered to speak to the Comité about Corporate Parenting training.

The Minister for Children and Education noted that during the workshops it was highlighted that there was a need to recognise the past but to focus on the future with a view to progressing. The Board needed to focus on what else was needed. Jersey Cares would be taking steps with the Associate Director for Engagement and Participation to progress the Children in Care Council.

The Assistant Director of Policy noted the importance of understanding the key themes and developing an understanding of where corporate parents could play a part. It was important to let young people set the framework and their agenda.

5. Update on Children in Care / Leaver Offer

The Minister for Children and Education suggested that the Board could ask the Associate Director for Children’s Services questions based on the report. The Associate Director for Children’s Services noted that the Outcome Group piece of work needed to be finalised with the help of care leavers assisting with the vision.

The Minister for Health and Social Services asked about plans for bringing off-island care leavers back to the island and plans around the therapeutic offer. The Associate Director for Children’s Services noted that there were currently 16 young people in care off island in a mixture of settings, including connected persons and family members and some in residential care. Some children might be able to be supported in a therapeutic setting on the island. However, the plans for therapeutic setting were longer-term and might not be in place for some of those currently off island. The COO of Jersey Cares highlighted the importance of understanding and offering of advocacy for those off island. Jersey Cares was keen to meet with them face to face and make them aware of their opportunity to access advocacy.

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The Representative of the Comité des Connétables noted that the parishes were willing to help with rates but could not do so because of data protection unless care leavers identified themselves. The Representative for Brightly suggested a line at the bottom of the parish rates letter to indicate this. The Minister for Children and Education suggested adding a line about exemption from parish rates to the Care Leaver Offer. She wished that the Connétables were given corporate parenting training. The Acting Children's Commissioner was happy to provide Children's Rights Approach training as well. The Minister for Children and Education would write a letter on behalf of the Corporate Parenting Board to invite Comité to training. She asked the Associate Director for Children's Services to bring the co-production item back to the Board in December.

The Minister for Children and Education was meeting the UK Minister for Children and Families to discuss off-island placements. There had been an improvement in ensuring that all children who were off island were supported.

The Representative for Brightly asked about the reduction in looked after children to 65. The Associate Director for Children's Services noted that it had been predicted that numbers would go up due to community factors, such as increase in the population, increase of poverty, increase of families struggling with parenting, complexity of mental health, COVID, and crime statistics around domestic violence. There might be children at risk, who might be on the edge of going into care. There were currently more children exiting care, but there was always potential for the numbers of children to increase. The Associate Director for Children's Services agreed that the sufficiency strategy might need to be reviewed. The Representative for Brightly noted that he felt the care numbers might go up considering community factors and future impact of these. The Minister for Children and Education was keen that the Associate Director for Children's Services monitor sufficiency and prepare to have a bit more capacity in the system.

The Minister for Health and Social Services asked about measures around getting people into education, employment, and training. The Minister for Children and Education noted that there was extra support factored in for NEET young people in the Government Plan. The Minister for Health and Social Services asked for more content around this offer and therapeutic support. The Associate Director for Innovation, Transformation and Business Support agreed to present a plan around education, skills, and training to the next Board.

The Associate Director for Children's Services noted that for some time children had been living in a state of unmet need and risk, resulting in older children coming into the system. Now the age range of those entering care was lower, due to improved oversight and a grip on risk. There was more early intervention and support for the whole family to keep families together. There had also been some cases of children leaving care, Court proceedings concluding, and children going to live with connected persons within family networks.

6. AOB

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The Minister for Children and Education hoped to go round the table and ask about Board development issues, as there was now limited time for a discussion. The Minister for Children and Education noted that each item needed around 25 minutes for an in-depth discussion. The next meeting was on 7th December, she would sit with the team and consider the forward plan and agenda items for 2024. Options for this would be circulated to the Board. The Minister for Children and Education hoped the Board would meet every two months in 2024. The Acting Children's Commissioner asked for the opportunity for Board members to ask questions in advance. The Assistant Director of Policy felt that the next meeting should focus on three key items.

The final agenda item 'Board development issues – foundations, membership, vision and development plan' was not discussed as there was not time to do so (this will be carried over to the December meeting).

The Representative for Brightly noted concerns raised by Dr Peter Green about the lack of senior health representatives on the Board. The Chief Officer CYPES highlighted the Accountable Officers Group. The Minister for Health and Social Services was keen that there were enough connections in the right places, but it was important that there weren't too many officers on the Board.

The COO of Jersey Cares suggested that a video presentation before each session might help improve Board discussions.

ACTIONS

Senior Policy Officer to review wording of Terms of Reference, including dates for circulating minutes and agendas and the functions of the Board.

Associate Director for Children's Social Care Services to develop operational frameworks to sit alongside the care leavers offer.

Associate Director for Children's Social Care Services to explore the collection and use of data to inform decisions and actions within the service.

The Chief Officer CYPES to develop clear guidelines for information sharing for the Corporate Parenting Board and stakeholders.

The Team Manager Improvement and Redesign to organise a visit to the therapeutic children's home site for the Corporate Parenting Board.

The Associate Director for Children's Social Care Services to outline the staffing plan for the Therapeutic Children's Home

Research and Administration Officer to organise sending the draft letter regarding the therapeutic children's home to the Minister for the Environment.

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Research and Administration Officer to set up a TEAMS channel for the Corporate Parenting Board.

The Representative Comité des Connétables and the Assistant Director of Policy to look at options for exemptions from parish rates for care leavers up to 25.

The Minister for Children and Education to write to the Comité des Connétables to invite them to Corporate Parenting training and Children's Rights Training with Jersey Cares and the Office of the Children's Commissioner.

The Associate Director for Children's Services to review sufficiency in the system for the number of children currently in care and potential future capacity needs.

The Associate Director for Children's Services agreed to present a plan around education, skills, and training to the next Board.

The Assistant Director of Policy to develop a Forward Plan for the Board for 2024 and circulate agenda options to Board members.

Update on Children in Care Council to be given in January 2024 by Jersey Cares.