

Minutes of Children’s Strategic Partnership Board

Online via Teams

Thursday 25 June 2020

0930hrs – 1130hrs

Attendees
Department / Organisation
Minister for Children and Housing and Culture, Chair Director General of CYPES Director of Safeguarding Children’s Commissioner Voluntary Sector Representative No 2 Voluntary Sector Representative SoJP Director Children’s Policy Head of Strategic Planning and Accountability Director General of GHE Chair Best Start Partnership Board Justice and Home Affairs Family Nursing and Home Care Private Secretary to the Minister for Children and Housing <i>taking minutes.</i>
Apologies
Head of Communications, CYPES and Group Director, CYPES

	Item
1	<p>Welcome and Apologies</p> <p>The Minister welcomed everyone participating via Teams due to Covid – 19.</p> <p>The Minutes from the previous meeting held on the 6th March 2020 were approved.</p> <p>Since that meeting the following was noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Smacking ban has come into force, first jurisdiction in the British Isles to have that on the Statue Books. Communications plan regarding the ban was promoted. • Discussion around the Island Plan and how the voice of children was being considered. <p>Important issue especially in light of the last few months where the pace of legislative changes due to COVID 19 has raised concerns regarding the lack of consideration into children’s rights. The Minister confirmed he was unhappy with the lack of consultation with CYPES. One example raised was the increase in charges at the Urgent Treatment Centre, the imposition of that proposed charging structure was a breach of children’s rights. It has highlighted the problem in the process of making decisions without appropriate questions regarding Children’s</p>

	<p>rights being raised and dealt with. This issue led to discussions about commencing a voluntary Child Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) process.</p> <p>Discussion amongst the board about introducing a CRIA for the upcoming rented dwellings debate, an important piece of legislation and the perfect opportunity to frame through a children rights lens, this will hopefully shine a light on the reasons why this legislation is coming forward in the first place. The Director General of GHE confirmed that there is clear evidence that poor housing is detrimental to children's outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director of Children's Policy confirmed that a CRIA had been undertaken to support the return to schools, officers are learning and developing expertise in the area. • Director of Children's Policy confirmed that the minutes from the last board meeting highlighted creating different outcome groups to drive implementation of recommendations from the Board. Due to COVID 19 this has yet to be developed. Director of Children's Policy will look to pick this piece up in the next couple of weeks with key leads.
2	<p>Children's Commissioner Annual Report – Key findings and plans for the year ahead.</p> <p>The Children's Commissioner presented the annual report which covers longer than a 12-month period to encapsulate the journey the role has been on.</p> <p>Children expressed the need for the annual report to tell a story, with reflection. The report was initially meant to be published on the 11th of March however due to Covid 19 this was significantly delayed.</p> <p>Children's Commissioner expressed the privilege and honour she felt at being the first commissioner in Jersey and seeing a growing body of people actively looking at promoting and protecting children's rights. It is recognised internationally that Jerseys legislation is one of the most strongest pieces of law relating to the commissioner's role. This is a reflection of the fact that the rights of children are not inherit in the tradition of the islanders.</p> <p>Policy principles – make sure it sets out how we can respect children rights, protect and fulfil them. Children and young people in the island told the commissioner they wanted her to be fearless and brave. The Children's Commissioner expressed that the last few months due to Covid have tested the strong foundations of the law.</p> <p>The Children's Commissioner highlighted that assembly members had been quoting the UNCRC in debates which was refreshing and encouraging to witness. The Children's Commissioner confirmed that Jersey was now officially a national human's rights institution – role in monitoring/checking all relevant authorities are doing the best for children. The Children's Commissioner confirmed she is part of an international community group of European commissioners – wider community people are looking at jersey looking at the good things such as the ban of smacking. Legislation such as this is placing Jersey on an international platform, the Children's Commissioner is working to ensure that it is for the right reasons and not the sadness and darkness from the enquiry.</p> <p>Commissioners role and evidence provided is now reflected in case law, published in January 2020. This case involved access to Housing Control Work Rights. The Deputy Bailiff reflects on the commissioners' evidence that UNCRC key principles must be taken into account. This case law shows that Jersey is slowly turning a corner.</p>

The Commissioner has spoken to children and young people and one of the areas they told her quite clearly was that children are not asked their views in Parish and wider community matters. Their opinion was that adults assume children are not mature enough.

The presentation described the Flagship programme – rights respecting schools. Every child and young person in a school setting can learn about their rights. Established in law the youth advisory panel – unique Advisory panel work reflected in report.

Back in 2018 only 20% of children knew about their rights.

Commissioners office provided £100,000 fees to fund training for 55 teachers in children's rights and now all schools bar 3 are part of the programme. This includes one primary school and two private schools.

Children raised that they were worried about education. There were 1303 incidents that children were not included in classes during the period of the report.

The Children's Commissioner advised that she had been a stakeholder in the education reform piece and had assisted in big conversation, the launch of children out of the classroom project. Undertaken a lot of research into school exclusion.

The Children's Commissioner confirmed that her office had provided funding of £5000 to assist supporting Youthful Minds.

In 2019 the officer had 175 live cases broken down as follows:

- 34% Children's Social Care
- 19% Education
- 11% Private Law cases – voice of children.
- The officers were seeing 1 new case every other day.

Since January 2020 there has been an 81% increase in case work, not all COVID related. They are seeing 2 new cases every day. Similar themes developing throughout this year, high proportion linked to housing and work law.

The Children's Commissioner confirmed that she had intervened in an appeal case being presented at HAWAG this led to the decision being reversed and the parent being granted entitled status with limitations – family thriving in rented housing, children excelling in school and the mother is working.

The Children's Commissioner confirmed that she is currently supporting the Minister and policy officers with the indirect incorporation of UNCRC in law. It is expected that a gap analysis workshop will be undertaken in July. The report will be launched alongside "Our Lives in Numbers" which is a project looking at data across multi government departments. It will also feature a report titled "Life on the rock" where young people express what its like growing up on Jersey.

The Children's Commissioner confirmed her role in leading the periodic review the UNCRC will conduct as to how the Island is complying with the convention. Report is expected on the 1st November 2020. Housing work law example of a piece of legislation not compliant with UNCRC, the patterns in casework have highlighted this.

Other areas of concern include income support provision based on parental rights, basic health care, youth justice review particularly the deprivation of liberty and increasing the minimum age of criminal responsibility to 14 years of age. Concerned that children are held in custody overnight in police stations.

	<p>The Minister thanked the Commissioner for her presentation and asked if there was anything, she would like to see improvement on to assist the role in the future. The Children's Commissioner confirmed that she would prefer if the Government consulted with her and her office in all legislative/policy matters so they ascertain whether they need to advise rather than only being referred to pieces of legislation that explicitly mention children.</p> <p>The Children's Commissioner also referred to additional budgetary support as the increase in case work has had a financial impact.</p> <p>Commissioner supporting Guernsey in her role, supporting schools to be rights respecting and supporting them with resources.</p> <p>The Chair of the Best Start Partnership Board confirmed that they had held round table talks with the Childrens Commissioner regarding the voice of babies and young children. Joint approach to respecting rights in early years settings. Recognise the different ways we listen to the voices of babies and young people. Opportunity for Jersey to lead the way in this field.</p> <p>The Chair of the Best Start Partnership Board confirmed that the partnership is looking into understanding of impact COVID 19 and lockdown on babies – they are developing a briefing paper and want to survey parents and have the opportunity to track those babies through into the future.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>Government Plan – approach to resetting of the Government Plan and proposed timeline.</p> <p>Acknowledged that the original Government Plan had ambitious projects focussing on the CSP of Putting Children First. Acknowledge that due to COVID work has had to be suspended on some projects.</p> <p>The Head of Strategic Planning and Accountability thanked the Commissioner for her presentation.</p> <p>Head of Strategic Planning and Accountability confirmed that the Government Plan focusses on delivering political priorities. The use of data and evidence driving better decision making into government plan and operational business plans.</p> <p>COVID 19 has had a dramatic impact on the plans for the Government, policy officer's attention has been diverted to the response to the pandemic which will ultimately result in challenging times around public finances.</p> <p>There is still an increased need to continue to respond to the pandemic at the same time as focussing attention on the recovery phase. CSPA will not be reworked – Putting children first arguably even more important. Focus on developing strategies to support economic and social recovery – focus on future.</p> <p>Projects need to be financially viable, Politically realistic and deliverable within the time, resources and capacity available. The Plan will be lodged by the 12th of October.</p> <p>Head of Strategic Planning and Accountability posed the following questions to the board to help develop new growth projects or redesigning of current plans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What will you do to transform your day to day work BAU to support better outcomes for children? • What can you improve or do differently? • Can you reprioritise your growth for 2021 – 24 • What will make the most difference to outcomes for children

- What will make the least difference to outcomes for children – halt/defer/reduce
- How can you best support children in recovering from the impact of COVID 19
- What is the impact (challenges and opportunities) on children of COVID 19 data evidence?
- What is the priority?
- What will make the most difference and how will you measure your impact.

Discussions assumed around the board about the roles of wider partnership including civil society children’s charity and faith groups to support the ambitions of the Government Plan. The Childrens Commissioner supporting broader members of the partnership to build a strong collation of the government to lobby and be the voice of children. A strong partnership will ensure that the right support is directed to the priorities in the government plan.

The Minister asked the board what opportunities the government should focus on through the learning from the pandemic to create something better. The Director General of CYPES raised the interconnect with the children’s plan and the partnerships focus to deliver on that. Within priority key outcomes for the future have they been changed by COVID – these need to be addressed. Integrated working between voluntary sector and government is key as neither party can deliver on their own.

The Director General of CYPES highlighted it was important to review the structures that already exist and use them to drive change forward.

The Director of Children’s Policy confirmed that there would need to be a refocus to establish the deliverables. Identity areas of most impact board which the board can relay back to the Minister to give clarity around where some priorities should be. The Voluntary Sector Representative and No 2 Voluntary Sector Representative confirmed they would take the questions Head of Strategic Planning and Accountability posed in the presentation and take them back to existing groups within the voluntary sector.

Head of Strategic Planning and Accountability confirmed due to the challenging timeline around the Government plan that conversations would have to happen quickly. The Government Plan should be in the back of everyone’s minds for future projects etc that need to be considered and lodged. The board confirmed in discussions that the Government Plan should feature as a frequent agenda item in order to develop the strategic aims of the board into policy and decision making.

The Director General of CYPES confirmed that due to time constraints the need at the moment is to use existing mechanisms to impact the Government Plan and the Children’s Plan. Prioritise outcomes and whether data emerging regarding the impact of COVID can be used to see what new trends are emerging and what the future may look like.

Both the Director of Children’s Policy and Director General of CYPES confirmed that there may positives which have emerged from working during the pandemic that would be beneficial in maintaining due to be a more efficient process and assisting in the recovery process.

The No 2 Voluntary Sector Representative confirmed that a review needs to take place of lessons learned throughout the pandemic and whether the boards thinking needs to shift to have more of an impact more quickly

4. AOB

Director Children’s Policy to follow up on Action points on reconvening outcome groups.

Director Children’s Policy to arrange a meeting for key CYPES Officers to discuss the best way forward for workshops.