JERSEY CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL SERVICES INDEPENDENT VISITORS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

ANNUAL REPORT

OCTOBER 2014

Introduction:

There have been two resignations from the Board this year, and the Deputy Chairperson has taken a 6 month sabbatical. The Board of Independent Visitors for Young People (I.V.Y.P.) now numbers eleven.

Members:

Sheila Warren (Chairperson)

Alice Chanter (Deputy Chairperson Oct 2013-June 2014)

Louise Clark (Deputy Chairperson from June 2014)

Rosie Baker

Helen Duncan

Lisa Le Maistre

Annette Le Moeligou

Richard le Quelenec

Deborah Morris- Monro

Paul Pinel

Louise Warran

Purpose:

To visit open and secure residential units in Jersey; to meet with the children and young people; to help monitor aspects of their life in care, and the preparations made for their progress into independent living.

The I.V.Y.P.

Endeavour to: monitor that standards are maintained; identify concerns and issues; discuss these at Board meetings and make recommendations to Children's Services.

Terms of Reference: (T.O.R.)

Our T.O.R. state that the I.V.Y.P. has been set up under the auspices of the Child Policy Group (C.P.G.) to monitor the services and care provided to vulnerable young people (Y.P.) in the care of the States of Jersey.

The annual review of the full T.O.R. was carried out by the Board and ratified by the C.P.G. in June 2014

Overall Review

After much discussion between the Board and the Children's Policy Group (C.P.G.), March 2014 saw the "Board of Visitors" (B.O.V.) name changed to "Independent Visitors for Young People" (I.V.Y.P.). This was done to alleviate any confusion with the Board of Visitors for Her Majesty's Prison (H.M.P.) and to emphasise our independence for service users.

As a consequence of this identity badges have been changed and our leaflets redesigned (at time of writing we are in the process of having them printed).

The Chairperson, Sheila Warren (S.W.) was delighted to be invited to attend the launch of the Joint Safeguarding Board in October, which provided an opportunity to meet representatives of the various agencies involved in the care of Looked after Children (L.A.C.) and promote the I.V.Y.P. Reassurances were given by the speakers that the forming of the Joint Board would in no way be detrimental to the care of the Y.P. formerly supported by the J.C.P.C.

Following our meeting with the Care Inspectorate on their review visit in July 2013, we were delighted to be invited to attend a meeting at the Halliwell Centre to hear their report on the progress made since the original report in 2011. The I.V.Y.P. were disappointed not to see more of the "front line" staff (involved in the care of Y.P) in the audience, as this was an opportunity for them to be encouraged by the Inspectorate's positive findings and to hear about the areas where improvement was still needed

Following the I.V.Y.P's concerns expressed in our 2013 Report regarding the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (N.S.P.C.C) plans to set up an Advocacy service in the Island and our worries about duplication of services, S.W. attended a meeting arranged by Sean Pontin (S.P.), Head of Social Work for the Children's Service. Also present at the meeting was Nick Cook (N.K.) Project Development Officer for the N.S.P.C.C. and Linda Dodson, Independent Safeguarding and Standards Service, who shared our concerns about duplication of services and over-whelming of Y.P. with personnel from numerous agencies. N.K. explained in more detail their plans for the advocacy service which will be available to all Y.P. in the Island, not solely L.A.C. children. S.P. suggested that quarterly meetings under the title of 'Voice of the Child' might be beneficial to foster understanding of each other's roles. To date the I.V.Y.P. are not aware that these have been actioned.

S.W. took the opportunity to invite N.K. to attend an I.V.Y.P. meeting to share his future plans. It took place in March 2014 and proved useful in reassuring the I.V.Y.P. that, although the services do cross over, the N.S.P.C.C's remit encompasses all Island Y.P. and would provide a safety net for those Y. P. who have had no contact with the Children's Service. N.K. has continued to keep the I.V.Y.P. informed of the service's plans

and we were delighted to be invited to attend the successful launch of their service in September.

Following requests by the C.P.G.to begin visiting the Young offenders (Y.O.) at H.M.P.(as reported in our 2013 Annual Report) the chair met with Jurat Kerley and Bill Millar H.M.P. Governor. Following on from this meeting the I. V.Y.P. were welcomed by the governor on a visit to the prison to discuss this further. No referrals were made during the following 6 months and at our annual meeting with the C.P.G. in January 2014 it was felt that, on reflection, it was appropriate to await the imminent changes planned for Greenfields which will see the Y.O. moved to that site.

As stated in our six monthly review, the Chair (S.W.) has made every effort to invite relevant professionals to alternate I.V.Y.P. meetings to increase our understanding of the many agencies with whom the Young People (YP) come into contact in their daily lives in order to ensure that the I.V.Y.P. maintain a high level of training and expertise. Additional opportunities to attend relevant conferences on and off Island is seen as important, but not always forthcoming.

In October, November and December 2013 we welcomed guest Speakers..

Linda Heinz, Senior Practitioner Leaving Care & 16+Team

Gay Waters, Advisor to Education Department & Autism Jersey.

Glenys Johnson, Independent Consultant, Joint Safeguarding Board (J.S.B.).and Heidi Sydor, J.S.B.

In January 2014 the Board were again delighted that the following representatives of the C.P.G. attended:

Senator Ian Le Marquand, Home Affairs Minister.

Senator Paul Routier, Assistant Chief Minister.

Deputy Anne Pryke, Minister for Health & Social Services (H. &S.S.)

Deputy Judy Martin, Assistant Minister H&S.S.

Phil Dennett, Service Director Children's Services.

Matters arising from this meeting regarding the visiting of residents at Strathmore, (age range 16-25years) resulted in the agreement by the C.P.G. that the I.V.Y.P. would be able to visit all residents if requested to do so, regardless of their age.

The Board welcomed this opportunity to meet with the C.P.G. and discuss their 2013 Annual Report, and thank them for their continuing interest in the Service.

In March, May, July and September 2014 we welcomed:

Nick Cook, Project Development Officer, Barnardo's.

Sean Pontin, Head of Social Work, Children's Service.

Emily Lindsey, Team Manager Adoption & Fostering.

John Hodge, Manager Shelter with Responsibility for Strathmore.

We would like to express our gratitude to all the above for finding the time to assist us in our task of attempting to understand all the many challenges each agency faces in their respective roles, and thus gain an understanding of the many challenges the Y.P. face in their daily live

At our Annual General Meeting in March we compiled a list of other agencies we would like to meet with, and areas of concern about which we felt we needed more information. As the list was extensive, four members of the I.V.Y.P. agreed to access information and report back on the following three areas: Data Protection, E-Safety and Staff Roles and Education.

Data Protection was researched by Lisa Le Maistre (L.Le M.), who identified many areas of concern and the I.V.Y.P requested a meeting with Ruth Johnson at the Chief Minister's Office, attended by S.W., L.Le M. and Mike Bowyer (M.B.), Children's Service representative on the I.V.Y.P., to discuss the way forward. Among the subjects to be discussed was Data Protection, e-safety, Freedom of Information and storage of sensitive information. Following on from this meeting a further meeting was arranged with Carl Ceillam attended by S.W., Paul Pinel and Debi Morris-Monro to discuss ways of ensuring safety of information sharing between I.V.Y.P. members. At time of writing we are awaiting his findings.

Paul Pinel (P.P.) agreed to research E-Safety

At a meeting with Jon Tarrant, E-Safety & E-Learning Manager, the subjects discussed were: the importance of safety on-line; possible preventative measures and how we could use this knowledge in our work as I.V.Y.P. They covered the dangers children face on-line, the websites to avoid and the facts Y.P. need to remember

Also covered were the areas of which adults/parents/carers need to be aware. Concern was expressed regarding the lack of choice of "parental control" by the main telecom providers. Since this meeting it is pleasing to note that one company has rectified this; others will hopefully follow. P.P. was shown an excellent E-Safety poster the Y.P. had designed and the I.V.Y.P. hope that this will be displayed in the Homes.

S.W. and Louise Clark (L.C.) researched Staff roles and Training.

The following is an introduction to the short report that was prepared following this research; the full report, with information obtained from the Director of Children's Services (D.C.S.) office, has been passed to the D.C.S. and can be accessed as a separate document to this Annual Report.

During the five years the IVYP have been visiting young people and observing their lives as LAC, it has become clear how closely their well-being and sense of stability is linked to the staff that are involved in their care.

Comments and concerns raised by LAC have often been about staffing: from the loss of a staff member; a particularly well liked worker being moved to a different home; the lack of availability of staff when needed, or dislike or resentment towards a staff member. The impact of these concerns is often reflected in a reluctance to adhere to rules and a resistance to staff, as found in many teenage homes, is a response to unhappiness with staffing issues.

As the I.V.Y.P. we have discussed our involvement with staffing in the homes. Our terms of reference are foremost to protect the interests of young people not the adequacy of staff. However, as our role is to 'monitor the services and care provided' it is inevitable that the impact of staff training and work patterns affect the service provided and thus the welfare of the L.A.C. The two are so inextricably linked and the well being, progress and future success of LAC is so dependent on expert care, it is impossible to observe one without the other.

The aim of this brief report is to highlight the concerns that we feel may directly impact the effective care of the children. (As stated it may be accessed as a separate document attached to the Annual Report.)

Findings

Brig-y-don

Whilst BYD has had challenges throughout the year, there are a number of changes which have enabled the home to move forward and to no longer be in a "state of crisis".

Challenging behaviour by some residents resulted in Parish Hall Enquiries, and police intervention as well as an admission to Greenfields. Moving staff without informing residents and emergency placements upset the dynamic of the house. This coupled with resident's unhappiness at not being allowed to keep a pet and their initial negative reaction to a new member of staff, caused upset and disharmony.

The temporary appointment of a member of staff as the new project lead in April has resulted in a number of very positive changes which have brought order and much harmony to BYD.

The newly refurbished lounge and "chill out" rooms have created a greater sense of "home" and improved all round relationships have resulted in a much calmer and happier place.

Currently the project lead, with whom we have had a mutually productive meeting, does regular daytime hours, as opposed to shifts, and we feel that this has certainly contributed to much greater stability and consistency. Residents know who will be there each morning and evening; there are routines in place and, it appears, unity of purpose among staff. We would certainly support/ recommend this working pattern when the new permanent house manager is appointed.

We look forward to the internet and laptop issues being resolved in the near future as well as the promised introduction of regular House Meetings for residents to improve "bottom up" lines of communication.

Seaview Flat.

This facility has been used when foster placements have broken down.

We remain concerned about both the suitability of this facility for some young individuals (namely the isolation whilst in proximity of a group home) as well as the number of placement breakdowns some Y.P. have experienced. We agree with the RCCOs in the long term value that could be garnered from investing in some intense work to repair and nurture any family relationships possible.

Visitors Rosie Baker Louise Warran.

Brig-y-don Flat

The small staff team, who are admirably led by Elizabeth, continue to strive to provide the very best practice and achieve the highest levels of personalised care for the YP in their care. They have met the challenges of providing home education and adapting to the changing needs of the YP, with insight and sensitivity.

A number of admirable strategies have been put in place which allow for behaviour management, self-advocacy and autonomy for the YP. My invitation to attend one of the weekly meetings of staff and YP provided an excellent insight into a model of respect and creative listening which allows the voice of the YP to be heard and respected.

The accommodation is less than ideal as it means the YP lives in virtual isolation, partly because of the location next to Brig-y-don There are automatic locking fire doors between the office and corridor space and the flat which means that the YP is locked in the flat when staff have to use the office and I am unable to visit the YP on their own. In addition, the position of the flat next to Brig-y-don, has led to incidents occurring with other residents and limits the programme of safely introducing independence for the YP.

The I.V.Y.P. does not believe that young people with learning difficulties should spend the night in a police cell. There are a number of issues here. The lone worker policy puts staff in a potentially vulnerable position. Staff can be left with no alternative but to call the police when an incident occurs at a time when no additional support can be accessed. There seems to be a very limited number of people who can be called upon to offer support and advocacy for a YP in this situation and therefore a police doctor can be put into the situation of assessing someone's capabilities. Regardless of these specific needs, the I.V.Y.P do not think that any YP, especially a LAC, should be placed in a cell, attend a Parish Hall inquiry or be interviewed by the police without suitably trained staff, known to the Y.P. We are not confident that a sufficient number of staff is presently available to fill this role.

The team and YP continue to welcome the role of the Independent Visitor and I am pleased to have been able to help staff highlight issues at a higher level which they have wanted to implement in order to provide best practice. Despite the challenges faced the YP continue to be open, friendly and welcoming when I visit.

Visitor Helen Duncan

Casa Mia

Casa Mia has now been a home for YP's for 2 years. Since it opened in August 2012, we have seen a full turnover of the YP with the original 3 having now moved on. During the course of the last 12 months, there was a focus for the original 3 residents to become more independent with them having their own transport (normally a moped) and to become self-sufficient in cooking & cleaning for themselves. Casa Mia has capacity for

further YP. The capacity has been utilised in order to provide respite for YP currently in Foster Care, where this may be required.

The challenge for the IVYP with Casa Mia remains one of trying to meet the YP on a regular basis. The general age of the residents means that they do wish to have a social life which will normally mean being away from the home meeting with friends. We have targeted dinner time and weekend visits in order to improve the meeting ratio but this has not really improved the results, particularly when the YP were catering for themselves. We continue to make every effort to remedy this situation.

Visitors Richard Le Quelenec Louise Clark

Field View

During the last twelve months all of the original Y.P resident at Field View (F.V.) have moved in to various forms of independent accommodation. It is reported that all are being well supported by the Leaving Care Team and many of the Y.P. continue to keep in touch with the staff.

F.V. is again at capacity all the rooms being occupied at time of writing.

The I.V.Y.P. are finding it increasingly difficult to meet with the Y.P. despite trying various days and times. The Staff continue to inform the residents of our planned visits but it is rare to find anyone at home, therefore no issues have been raised regarding any aspects of their care or surroundings .We can only assume that they are happy in this regard. (The use of a survey to monitor satisfaction with our service is also being considered)

The I.V.Y.P. feel that the ethos of F.V.is very different from La Preference (LP.) which had more of a "family feel" to it, and appreciate that this is probably what was intended to happen but the weekly prepared Sunday lunch at L. P. was an ideal opportunity for the I.V.Y.P. to visit and be sure of meeting all or some of the Y.P.

The I.V.Y.P. is satisfied that the Y.P. are aware of the aim of our service and will continue to visit, and be available to the Y.P. if needed.

Visitors Louise Clark Lisa le Maistre.

Greenfields Secure Unit

There were no residents at Greenfields (G.F.) for the first six months following our October 2013 Report. Since then there have been four admissions. Whilst resident at G.F the Y.P. keep within the boundaries of the service and appear to thrive in this environment under the care of the dedicated staff, their education continued throughout their stay. The Y.P. have suggested that their reasons for re offending are boredom and not feeling challenged enough at school.

The building is well kept and the interior is clean and well appointed. The staff are relaxed and welcoming and make every effort to engage with the Y.P. and find ways of encouraging them to develop.

There have been issues with availability of the facilities on site as both the Intensive Support Team and the Special needs Gymnastics Club have use of the Gym and games room. Whilst it is good to see the facilities being used for community activities it is difficult to explain and restrict the use of these facilities to the Y.P. for whom they were intended. Measures are now in place to help alleviate this situation. The Y.P. have also expressed an interest in attending other Island clubs and associations in which they have an interest and the staff and I.V are investigating this possibility.

Visitors Debi Morris-Monro Annette Le Moeligou Richard le Quelenec.

Strathmore

Strathmore is an extremely busy home, accommodating up to 21 youngsters in 18 rooms. The project provides safe, high-support, medium-term accommodation for vulnerable young people between the ages of 16 and 25. The Staff are on duty 24 hours a day.

The Independent Visitors feel that a 7 page license agreement is far too daunting for the young residents to sign on their arrival at Strathmore. Instead, we suggest this information could be contained in a centrally located file within the house, preferably forming part of the "simple to read and understand" information leaflet that is currently in draft, and the residents provided with a brief agreement summary to sign.

The issue of drugs and alcohol continues to be a concern for some residents. The I.V.Y.P. are unsure what help is offered to those residents who become involved in these activities.

The "residents meetings" have continued to take place periodically. A resident compiled extremely good minutes for their meeting held in July. This will certainly help the residents and staff to jointly address any issues that may arise. The kitchen door being locked when not in use is something which continued to cause tension with the Y.P.

With regard to guests visiting the house the Y.P. appear to be unsure about what time they are required to leave. It is also unclear as to what areas of the house the visitors are allowed access to. The I.V.Y.P. suggest that all this information is included in the information leaflet mentioned above.

The management and staff have always offered information when asked and have been accommodating with our requests. However the I.V.Y.P. do have serious concerns that there may be a lack of adequate record keeping, particularly with regard to complaints against staff. The reporting procedure for Strathmore does not follow the same reporting framework or on line system as for the other homes for L.A.C; we recognise that many of the young people using Strathmore are not LAC.

This is one of the reasons which leads the I.V.Y.P. to question the suitability of two agencies co-facilitating a service, i.e. The Shelter Trust and the Children's Service. Along with our concerns regarding the number of residents accommodated at Strathmore.

The Strathmore building is in a good state of repair, inside and out. The living room has recently been re-decorated and feels extremely homely.

On a positive note, one resident describes a female member of staff at Strathmore as a 'saving angel'. Furthermore, we are delighted to note that some of the resident's issues have been taken forward and have been dealt with satisfactorily by the staff and the residents working together.

Visitors Alice Chanter Paul Pinel Lisa Le Maistre.

White House

When the White House was closed in April 2013 the I.V.Y.P. feared that this three bedded facility, which was set up as a therapeutic unit, might be lost to the Service, however the house was re-commissioned and three Y.P. were admitted at the beginning of 2014. Initially there were problems with staffing the house with regular personnel and it was noted that a number of staff from the other homes, supplemented by Bank staff were used, giving the Y.P. no sense of continuity of care and uncertainty within the staff who often felt unsure of where they were going to be sent the next day. This affected staff morale and impacted on the Y.P. making it harder for them to start building trusting relationships with their carers. This situation was eventually remedied and more permanent staff appointed following the intervention of M.B.

There have been many challenges over the ensuing months. Schooling a vulnerable Y.P., who has educational problems, in the place they live, which should be regarded as a place of refuge for them, is in the opinion of the I.V.Y.P. unsuitable.

The White House continues to provide a homely atmosphere for the Y.P. The building is clean and well cared for, the staff are welcoming and work hard to try and prevent challenging situations escalating.

An unnecessary situation which occurred involving a domestic worker who was conversing in the. Y.P's native language and cooking special traditional food as treats was reprimanded for exceeding their contract, this was happily rectified by MB and the kindness of a fellow employee was officially allowed to continue.

Visitor Debi Morris-Monro.

Oakwell

The I.V.Y.P. has experienced difficulties in accessing visits to these Respite Homes and as the staff found it difficult to accommodate our visits at their temporary accommodation at Maison Les Landes. The I.V.Y.P. voted to withdraw until the refurbishment at Oakwell was completed. This has now been accomplished and S.W. was delighted to be invited to attend the reopening ceremony on September 13 th performed by the Lt Governor Sir John and Lady McColl. S.W. took the opportunity to meet as many of the families as possible and explain the role of the I.V.Y.P. It became obvious that a second leaflet to promote our service would have to be produced, to appeal to this specialised area.

Oakwell is now an excellent example of a well thought-out building suitable for the variety of needs of the various residents. The whole has an open plan, warm, welcoming

appearance, and the individual bedrooms are delightfully decorated with all the necessary equipment present, but not obtrusive. The sensory room and the hydrotherapy pool will, I'm sure benefit the residents both physically and emotionally and give much pleasure to the Y.P.

The team involved in planning and implementing this transformation are to be warmly congratulated and the I.V.Y.P. looks forward to recommencing our visits.

Eden House

Visits to Eden House were difficult to arrange and unfortunately as a result of this, one of the specially recruited Visitors with Special Needs experience decided to resign. As we are now recommencing our visits to Oakwell we would like offer the same service to Eden house if appropriate. With one fewer I.V. with the necessary experience in this area we are temporarily unable to offer visits to Eden House but hope that we will be able to in the near future.

Reflections and Recommendations

Before presenting our reflections and recommendations the I.V.Y.P. would like to publicly acknowledge their admiration (expressed in a letter to the C.P.G. in January) at the speed of response and the success of the Multi Agency groups working together following the tragedies involving young people. We are sure that the professional response by so many staff at such an emotional time prevented the possibility of further tragedy.

The following comments and recommendations are made in the knowledge that as the I.V.Y.P. we have a somewhat superficial view of all the many issues and challenges the service faces on a day to day basis, coupled with the numerous changes that have occurred in senior management in the past twelve months, which must have been unsettling for the staff who are dedicated to the young people in their care. We would, however, be failing in our remit if we did not present the following findings.

On a positive note the confusion around the allocation of holiday opportunities which occurred last summer has been resolved with planned and enjoyable holidays experienced by the Y.P. who have shared their enjoyment of these events with the Visitors. We are grateful to M.B. for organising these arrangements which are now on a formalised annual basis.

The disturbing situation at Brig-y-don (see the B-Y-D report) has improved and though there is some way still to go the I.V.Y.P. are reassured that the crisis situation we felt existed at the home last year is now improved. This has not been achieved without a lot of hard work from the parties involved and they are to be commended for their diligence.

The issues brought to management's attention around Secure Accommodation Order reviews and placements have been addressed and changes made to administration and venue appears to have made a positive improvement for all those involved.

The following are areas of concern the I.V.Y.P. would like to bring to the attention of the C.P.G.

- 1. Services for the 16+ group in our opinion are not sufficiently highlighted. The N.S.P.C.C.'s new advocacy service may well help to improve this situation .One of our areas of concern is the Doctor and Dentist bills that these Y.P. cannot possibly afford to pay. We feel more should be done to lobby the Medical Primary Care Board to ask all of their members to waive their fees for this group of L.A.C. (we are aware that some already do so). It should not be left to Charities to cover these costs.
- 2. More opportunities for training and advancement within the Children's Service. The I.V.Y.P. have also missed the bi annual J.C.P.C. conferences they used to facilitate, leaving us wondering if the promise that the continuation of services to Children would not be affected by the introduction of the Joint Board has been fulfilled. The information programme we have put in place for ourselves in no way compensates for attendance at conferences with renowned U.K. speakers. As with staff retention, if we are to retain our present volunteers and recruit more for the future, providing stimulating training is a powerful tool.
- 3. The increase in Self-harming amongst the Young People which we understand is also a feature for U.K. Children's Services at this time.
- 4. The Board do not think that any young person especially a L.A.C. should be placed in a police cell, (see B-Y-D Flat report) attend a Parish Hall (P.H.) inquiry or be interviewed by the police without a suitably trained staff known to the Y.P being present to support them. The Police and Criminal Evidence Act (P.A.C.E.) states that a juvenile has the right to an appropriate adult present when in custody or interviewed by police. Adults can be trained for this role. The I.V.Y.P. are not confident that a sufficient number of staff are presently qualified/available to fulfil this role. The I.V.Y.P have noticed a reluctance for front line staff to attend P.H inquiries with the Y.P. We note that it is usually the same senior member of staff who attends, which poses two problems. Surely the closest care worker to the Y.P is the most appropriate, and what happens when the senior staff member is unavailable off Island on holiday?
- 5. The success of the response by the Y.P. to the regime in place when they are admitted to Greenfields must be applauded, but leads us to question whether enough support is being offered to them when they return to their respective homes, to encourage this positive behaviour to continue.

Acknowledgements

Due to parking problems at Beresford House the I.V.Y.P. relocated to The Bridge for their monthly meetings and would like to thank the J.S.B. for the use of their Board room for the last two years and thank M.B. and S.P. for securing the use of the Bridge for them.

To Anna Hamon who has transformed the efficiency of our meetings with her succinct and invaluable minutes and help in accessing any follow up information we request. We wish her well with the impending new arrival and welcome her relief Clare.

To Mike Bowyer for his support in following up our many requests with efficiency and unfailing patience and good humour.

To all the staff of the residential Homes who continue to welcome us on planned or unannounced visits with openness ,and a welcome cup of tea, regardless of their own busy schedules and who attempt to resolve our concerns and answer our questions with unfailing patience. Thank you.

To all members of the I.V.Y.P. who continue to give their time, not just visiting the young people but studiously writing professional notes and following up any concerns the Y.P. bring to them and attending monthly Board meetings. They continue to provide a listening ear to the young people in the care of the Children's Service and ultimately the States of Jersey with dedication and compassion.

Finally to the young people themselves who continue to amaze us with their resilience and fortitude in facing their challenging life journeys with courage and hope. We wish them well.

Sheila Warren

Chairperson, Independent Visitors for Young People.

October 2014