

JERSEY CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

INDEPENDENT VISITORS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

ANNUAL REPORT

OCTOBER 2015

## Introduction:

There has been one resignation from the Board this year The Independent visitors for Young People (IVYP) now numbers thirteen.

Louise Clark (Chairperson)

Alice Chanter (Deputy Chairperson)

Lisa Le Maistre

Deborah Morris- Monro

Paul Pinel

Louise Warran

Francis Katamba

Adam Freer

Sonia Tomas

Caro Tomlinson

Gerry Gray

Julia Lydford

Tyler Jeune

## 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.

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: (TOR)

Our TOR state that the IVYP was set up under the auspices of the Children's Policy Group (CPG) to monitor the services and care provided to vulnerable young people (YP) in the care of the States of Jersey.

## Overall Review

With a decline in the number of members and increase in homes to visit we decided to recruit new members. After a successful campaign and a gratifyingly large number of applications eight new members were accepted onto the Board. With initial training they started visiting the Care homes in August. They have all settled into the role.

The new interim head of Residential services attended our meetings as the liaison /contact between IVYP and the Children's Service from December to April. At this point he became too busy to attend so allocated the role to Service Lead for 16+ who has attended to date. This point of contact is essential to the effectiveness of IVYP. Ideally it would be Head of service to keep IVYP updated on all relevant activities in residential care homes.

The Interim head of Children's services left her post in the summer and has been replaced by a new interim head of Children's services who we have yet to meet. The original interim head attended a meeting and discussed the forthcoming changes that were planned for the service.

The Minister for Health & Social Services attended the April meeting to discuss his role and the Children's Policy Group. This Group (CPG) had not convened for some time but was in the process of being reformed and renamed (CAVA – Children And Vulnerable Adults Policy Group). The first meeting with new Ministers took place in May 2015. As our Terms of Reference states, our reporting line is to the CPG, it was encouraging to hear it was back in existence.

The Head of Professional Care Regulation discussed the new Care Regulation law that is being implemented on Island and the IVYP debated the possibility of being included in the Law, providing another aspect to monitoring care of children

Alice Chanter, Deputy Chairperson, has conducted a survey in all the residential homes and secure unit, of the views of the LAC (looked after children) regarding IVYP and the visits they make. They were provided with a questionnaire, which the majority of YP filled in. The results are being summarised.

The Chair (LC) has invited relevant professionals to meetings to ensure IVYP 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 2015 the following representatives of the CPG and/ or States of Jersey attended IVYP meetings:

January.	Senator Paul Routier	Assistant Chief Minister.
April.	Andrew Green	Minister for Health and Social Services.
July.	Christine Blackwood	Head of Care regulation
September.	Ruth Johnson	Director of Social policy

October.	Julia Wise St Leger	Head of Service, Children's Services
November.	Linda Harmer-Jones	Interim Head of Quality, Independent Safeguarding Standards

## Findings.

### Brig-Y-Don

There are currently six young people resident at BYD making the house full. As some of the residents are now sixteen they are accessing further education at Highlands. We are pleased to report that an additional meeting room has been created meaning that private meetings no longer have to be held in communal rooms.

Whilst not a replacement for the lost chill out room this additional space, with its direct access from outside means less disruption and more privacy for residents.

Weekly House meetings have become more imbedded with some residents taking the opportunity to raise issues and concerns.

The lounge is currently undergoing a make over with input from the residents. One resident has chosen new lighting and is being consulted re new wallpaper.

Whilst the home is, on some levels, calmer and more orderly we remain concerned about the placement of one young person whose effect on the dynamic of the house has been marked, with several of the residents feeling that their needs are not always being met, as staff is having to give additional time and support to this YP.

### Seaview Flat.

This facility has been used when foster placements have failed.

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 failed foster placements some YP have experienced. The flat is currently empty.

Visitors Rosie Baker Louise Warran.

### Brig-y-don Flat

I think that the YP and staff in this flat were let down by a number of factors outlined below. I am aware that I lack many details that may have impacted on this case but the role of the IVYP is to report on what they see and this is therefore my perspective:

1. The staff was invested in trying to improve the life experience of the YP, but the lone worker policy and changes in staffing led to inconsistent approaches.
2. Staff was not all trained or experienced in care for people with special needs.

3. Education provision was not suitable and staff was left trying to provide education and care: blurring the lines of their roles; stretching resources; requiring them to do admin and staff liaison whilst the YP were in the flat; restricting the YP's social interaction and leaving them understaffed and overstretched.
4. Inconsistent support was offered for the staff and YP with management often having little to do with the flat and requests for help with repairing building structure, holiday provision, access to Wi Fi etc. going on for months.
5. Specialist help was not brought in until crisis had been reached.
6. The care plans needed to be more detailed and staff needed time and training on how to use and report on it.
7. There has been a lack of back up support, so the staff has had to rely on calling the police, when specialist management support should have been available.
8. Senior management have put a lot of emphasis escalating behaviour being a result age and disabilities rather than reflecting on the advice of experts and the possible failings of the care packages provided for the YP.
9. The accommodation at Brig-y-don flat was unsuitable.

Finally, the IVYP were not informed when the YP were moved, for example to Greenfields or adult services. Communication with staff to arrange visits was not always coordinated, resulting in IVYP arranging visits and then finding staff was not aware of visit or the YP were out. This has also been a problem at Eden. Staff at both Eden and Brig-y-don flat have been very welcoming and supportive of our visits and this is particularly important where the YP may have learning disabilities, or are young. The IVYP are very reliant, in these circumstances, on the good will of individual staff and there seems to be a lack of consistency, as the role of the IVYP is not being told to staff by management.

Visitor Helen Duncan

## Casa Mia

There have been mainly long-term older -teenage residents in Casa Mia in the last 12 months. The home was reasonably stable until the introduction of a younger resident. One resident required careful monitoring due to risk of absconding and therefore two extra staff had to be on duty at all times. This made the home quite crowded and was disruptive to long-term staff and residents. The age difference between residents was challenging the older residents complained vehemently. It was explained that there was nowhere else for them to go. Continuing patterns of absconding now require all doors and windows to be locked, particularly as the home is adjacent to a very busy main road. Which adds to the frustration of older residents. The young residents have witnessed aggressive and rude behaviour and an assault on a staff member by the older residents. The situation is far from ideal but there are seemingly no other options.

The staff have provided a high level of care and support to the new residents and handled a difficult situation really well. The new residents have settled and are very well provided for with educational and recreational needs.

The older residents are supported in the transition to independent living and employment and will potentially be moving on to alternative accommodation.

Visitors Louise Clark Gerry Gray Julia Lydford.

## **Field View**

The past year has seen a lot of movement in and out of Field View.

One of the issues that came up during the year was the frustration that staff seemed unable to understand the emotional and behavioural drivers behind self-harming and used ineffective preventative methods to stop YP from self-harming. It was suggested that self-harm training should be given to staff to help them to understand the reasons that the YP engage in this kind of behaviour.

The IVYP are pleased to report that after feeding this information back to Children's Services, all of the staff were promptly sent on training courses to enable them to better understand this type of behaviour.

Confidentiality was another issue that came up during the year. Some residents felt they could not talk in confidence to any staff in the home because they immediately share the information with all other staff, record it and then react. They said that they would value the chance just to talk in confidence without any reaction or reporting. Perhaps the YP should be made aware of the external counselling services, which would be available to them, which would help to circumvent this problem.

There are residents who are under 16 currently residing at Field View, despite Field View being a unit for 16 to 19 year olds. This is because Children's Services are heavily overstretched and there is nowhere else for them to go. The staff is trying their best to adapt to this situation but it is far from ideal. That said, the residents have settled in well and the staff seem to be coping well.

There were no issues raised apart from those referred to above during the year.

Visitors Lisa le Maistre Tylor Jeune Adam Freer.

## **Greenfields Secure Unit**

There have numerous admissions to Greenfields in the last 6 months.

This includes residents admitted for varying reasons, being forced to share the same living space- for example on a Secure Accommodation Order and on remand. The staff dealt

with the situation of mixed occupancy extremely well and the IVYP did witness a very endearing exchange between residents. The IVYP have visited regularly and there are no comments to make other than the care provided has been exemplary.

Both incidents of the 10 and 15 year old highlight the need for trained remand foster parents, which possibly would be preferable to the two young boys and would be much more economically viable rather than opening Greenfields for one child

November- there were new admissions to Greenfields. There were some placements in Greenfields because there were no available beds in any of the residential homes. This again highlights the need for emergency specialist remand fostering or emergency beds in the residential services.

Visitors Debi Morris-Monroe Louise Clark.

## 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.

During the year the IVYP have received several complaints from the YP about the home manager. The IVYP have listened and discussed with the home issues ranging from, use of the kitchen, the girls bathroom and eviction of YP. Some YP requested assistance of the IVYP with formal complaints.

Visitors. Alice Chanter Paul Pinel Tylor Jeune

## White House

The White House has the same residents residing continuously for some time, during the summer additional residents moved to the house. This remains the situation today.

The staff at the White house are extremely engaged with the LAC and work hard at supporting them. They recently redecorated the home and the LAC were actively involved with the decorating, choice of paint and pictures. They are taken on outings during the summer to encourage outdoor activity and exercise.

There have been some challenges over the ensuing months. The residents each have their own personal challenges but the staff work very hard at supporting and guiding them.

IVYP are always warmly welcomed by the staff, and encouraged to speak with the residents.

Visitors Louise Clark Sonia Tomas and Caro Tomlinson.

## Oakwell

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 YP. The IVYP visit each month and are very impressed with the level of care shown to the children that stay.

## The Haven

IVYP have visited The Haven House since the summer. They have received no complaints.

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## **Reflections and Recommendations**

The following are areas of concern.

1. Young offenders- under 18 years being held in La Moye adult prison. Yet again no sign of Greenfields being adapted to a juvenile prison despite assurances made this would happen by June 2014. The young offenders are not therefore visited by IVYP. With several of the LAC known to IVYP admitted to the adult prison it has been frustrating not being able to continue support of them. Perhaps with forthcoming changes to adult Board of Visitors to La Moye, IVYP may be allowed to visit.
2. Very limited training available for RCCO staff, despite this being highlighted on many occasions in the Scottish Inspectorate report 2013. Some training has been provided in self-harm to a few staff members and a programme of training in restraint to some staff. The vast majority of RCCO have no therapeutic training.
3. Lack of communication between Children's Services and IVYP, concerning admission of children to Greenfields, and new young people coming into care. Mainly due to loss of Contact between Head of Residential Services and IVYP.
4. Lack of fostering and adoption places on island requiring young children and babies to be placed off Island at huge expense.



5. Need for remand foster parents to avoid admitting a YP to Greenfields unnecessarily.
6. Shortage of therapeutic children's homes with specialist staff requiring children to be placed in homes that are unsuitable and cause disruption to residents. Shortage of residential beds which leads to families brought into care being separated and placed in different homes with some family members placed off Island.
7. Review of whistleblowing policy for staff in all homes with particular reference to Strathmore, to enable staff to highlight concerns for LAC wellbeing without jeopardizing their employment.
8. Turnover of social workers. Many LAC complaining that their social worker have left the service thus having continually changing social workers who do not know them or provide continuity of care. Number of social workers bank staff from UK.

## **Acknowledgements**

To Anna Hamon who attends our meetings and provides succinct and invaluable minutes and any follow up information we request.

To Mike Bowyer for attending our monthly meetings and his support.

To all the staff of the residential homes who continue to welcome us

To all members of the IVYP who continue to give their time.

And finally to Sheila Warren for her tireless dedication to children and young people in care, who stood down from the IVYP in 2015 after 4 years as Chair.

Louise Clark                      Chairperson Independent Visitors for Young People.

October 2015