

Corporate Parenting Board

(1st Meeting)

1st August 2024

Part A (Non-Exempt)

All members were present, with the exception of Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier Central, Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, and C. Glover, Chief Executive Officer, Jersey Cares, from whom apologies had been received.

Connétable R. Vibert of St. Peter, Minister for Children and Families, Chair
Deputy C.S. Alves of St. Helier Central, Assistant Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning (in lieu of the Minister)

Deputy S.Y. Mézec of St. Helier South, Minister for Housing

Deputy T.J.A. Binet of St. Saviour, Minister for Health and Social Services

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat of St. Helier North, Minister for Justice and Home Affairs

Connétable K. Shenton-Stone of St. Martin, Representative of the Comité des Connétables

S. Harvey, Chief Executive, Brightly

In attendance -

R. Smith, Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police

R. Sainsbury, Chief Officer, Children, Young People, Education and Skills Department

D. Marriott, Director, Children's Services, Children, Young People, Education and Skills Department

A. Heaven, Assistant Director, Policy, Cabinet Office

W. Byrne, Chair, Jersey Foster Carers Association

K.L. Slack, Senior Secretariat Officer, Specialist Secretariat, States Greffe

Note: The Minutes of this meeting comprise Part A only

Minutes. A1. The Minutes of the meeting of 27th March 2024, (which had not been produced by the States Greffe) having previously been circulated, were taken as read and were confirmed.

It was noted that officers from the Specialist Secretariat, States Greffe, would produce the official records of all future meetings of the Board.

Outstanding actions from previous meetings. A2. The Board discussed the following outstanding actions from previous meetings –

- it was noted that a process was being developed which would facilitate written acknowledgements of children's and milestone achievements;
- the data dashboard for the Board had been created and populated to June 2024, with statistics on those young people who were missing or who had committed offences. Any information that could lead to individuals being identified would be redacted and the format altered before being presented to the Board. It was

noted that during 2024, there had been an increase in youth crime and more individuals had been recorded as missing than in 2023;

- the operational frameworks to sit alongside the care leavers' offer had been developed by the Associate Director for Children's Care Services (Minute No. A3 refers), but further work was required on the offer itself; and
- with respect to an exemption from parish rates for care leavers up to the age of 25, the Chair indicated that this action could be marked as complete. The Customer and Local Services Department had confirmed that it could provide care leavers who were in receipt of income support with a sum of money to pay rates. It was noted that other eligible care leavers, who did not receive income support, could apply to the Don Gruchy Fund for these monies, but those on income support could not make such an application due to a caveat contained within the wording of the Fund. The Chair stated that he would like the Connétables to make a collective statement, confirming their acknowledgement that care leavers should be considered as a special case.

Shared
Operating
Framework.

A3. The Board received and noted a draft paper, entitled 'Corporate Parenting Board: A shared operating framework', which had been prepared by Mr. A. Heaven, Assistant Director, Policy, Cabinet Office.

The Board recalled that its formal establishment as a sub-group of the Council of Ministers had been a statutory requirement of the Children and Young People (Jersey) Law 2022 and that it had responsibility for all children in care and care leavers. Its role would be to provide guidance to corporate parents, to proactively engage with and support them to fulfil their roles and responsibilities and provide system leadership.

The 4 key themes the Board would focus on were as follows –

- the creation of loving, safe and stable homes;
- education and personal development;
- health and wellbeing; and
- inclusion and respect.

It was suggested that the Board should consider one theme at each of its quarterly meetings, supported by reports on key areas relating to the relevant theme. The aim was for the Children in Care Council (CiCC) to meet and discuss the theme in advance of the Board's meeting and provide input on its members' 'lived experience'. However, it was noted that the CiCC had not yet been established.

The Chair indicated that he had visited Medway Council's Corporate Parenting Board, which had created a number of sub-groups, comprising a range of individuals including care leavers, to consider issues and he advocated adopting a similar system locally. Mr. Heaven undertook to update the draft framework to include the establishment of sub-groups, which could include co-opted members with expertise in the area under consideration.

It was noted that meeting had taken place on 31st July 2024 on the subject of the creation of loving, safe and stable homes. Officers from Andium Homes, Policy, Children's Social Care and the Customer and Local Services Department had attended, and it was agreed that this could operate as a pilot, before establishing sub-groups for the other 3 areas of focus.

Some concern was expressed with respect to the ongoing issue of children in care

who went missing and were engaged in anti-social behaviour and criminality. The Board recognised the importance of corporate parents adopting a robust approach to endeavour to ensure that children in care were diverted away from the criminal justice system. It was acknowledged that proactive and timely action was required and that, in recent months, significant progress had been made through partnership working but that further work was needed to prevent the criminalisation of young people. It was suggested that, historically, measures had been implemented too late to support young people or take them into care and the Board was keen to avoid a repetition of these failings.

The Board was informed that the Exploitation and Missing Group had been established 6 weeks prior to the meeting and comprised a range of professionals. It was noted that the Director, Children's Services, Children, Young People, Education and Skills Department, would provide an update to the next meeting of the Board on the work that was underway to strengthen the response to children at risk of exploitation and those who went missing.

Care leavers' offer – update.

A4. The Board received an oral report from by Ms. D. Marriott, Director, Children's Services, Children, Young People, Education and Skills Department, in connexion with ongoing work on the care leavers' offer (the offer), as set out in the 'Guide for young people leaving care'.

It was noted that greater co-ordination had been required in respect of the above, so a more structured plan had been devised.

Jersey Cares would consult with young people on the offer and an outline plan and timeline for delivery of the same would be provided to the Board at its next meeting.

The Board noted the position.

Children in Care Council update.

A5. In the absence of any representatives from Jersey Cares, the Board agreed to defer consideration of this item to its next meeting.

Forward plan 2024 - 2025.

A6. The Board received and noted indicative forward plans for 2024 and 2025, which set out meeting dates for members of the Children in Care Council (CiCC) to discuss their experiences of the key themes for the Board, as set out in Minute No. A3 of the current meeting, namely –

- education and personal development;
- health and wellbeing;
- inclusion and respect; and the
- creation of safe, loving and stable homes.

The Board noted the dates proposed for the consideration of each subject and for feedback to the CiCC to ascertain whether its members had been assisted to meet the objectives.

The Board was mindful of the fact that the CiCC had not yet been established but it was agreed that this should not prevent progress on the key themes.

The Board accordingly approved the forward plan.

Jersey Cares – paper on

A7. The Board received and noted a paper, entitled 'Young Adults with Experience of Care: Discussion paper on 'home'', which had been prepared by

‘home’. Jersey Cares but had not formally been included in the agenda for the current meeting.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec of St. Helier South, Minister for Housing, stated that it would be inappropriate to discuss the matter in depth at the present time, as a representative from Jersey Cares was not in attendance at the meeting. However, he advised that the paper helped crystallise what ‘home’ meant. He emphasised the importance of not relying on data, but instead focusing on lived experiences.

Jersey Care
Commission
inspection
report.

A8. The Board received an oral report from the Chair in connexion with the publication on 30th July 2024, of the Jersey Care Commission’s inspection report entitled ‘Children’s Social Care, Independent Reviewing Officer Service, Fostering and Adoption Services’.

The Board noted that whilst some areas for improvement had been highlighted, previous shortfalls had been addressed and progress made. The Chair was gratified to note that the positive progress had been acknowledged and he commended staff members who were committed and acted in the best interests of young people.

It was noted that 3 areas for improvement had been identified, as follows –

- the mapping of pathways and processes to collaboratively support vulnerable teenage children at risk in care and in the community;
- identifying and addressing legal barriers, to enable full benefits to be delivered to children in care and care leavers; and,
- improved operational procedures and governance for fostering and adoption panels.

The Chair emphasised the importance of Ministers and their respective Departments recognising that care leavers should be considered as a special case.

Matters
arising.

A9. It was noted that the current meeting of the Board would be the last attended by Mr. S. Harvey, Chief Executive, Brightly, as he had resigned his position. The Board thanked Mr. Harvey for his service and congratulated him on all that he had achieved during his term in office.

Date of next
meeting.

A10. It was noted that the next scheduled meeting of the Board would be held on 25th September 2024 at 1.00 p.m.