



**Jersey Care
Commission**

Summary Report

**Children's Social Care Service
&
Independent Reviewing Officer
(IRO) Service**

**Liberte House, 19-23 La Motte Street,
St Helier, JE2 4SY**

4 to 8 December 2023

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS

The following is a summary of what we found during this inspection. Further information about our findings is contained in the main body of this report.

Services for children looked after in Jersey have improved since the last [inspection](#) in 2019. Foundations have been established to ensure a more coherent social work offer for children and young people. Many shortfalls identified at the previous inspection have been responded to, including the creation of early help support, improved financial investment and infrastructure, and better support to care leavers.

This inspection has focused on the effectiveness of the support to children looked after, including the oversight of the IRO function ([IRO Handbook - Jersey](#)) in children and young people's care planning. Inspectors found that children looked after are receiving better support than they were in 2019, and some receive a good service, though the practice remains variable. Children looked after are now more central to thinking and planning, and for many, their outcomes are improved as a result of the intervention provided. Due to staffing pressures and some weaknesses in practice, the IRO function has been slow to develop. Recent actions taken to respond to those weaknesses are beginning to deliver more effective oversight of care planning for children, but it is too soon to evidence sustained impact.

Many of the critical practice shortfalls identified at the time of the last inspection have been addressed, such as children's access to mental health support, an improved focus on education, and more effective supervision and management oversight.

Positively, many of the political and corporate weaknesses have or are in the process of being addressed. There is now a greater commitment to corporate parenting responsibilities, Ministerial support, and a real focus on the vision for the reform programme by the Chief Officer for CYPES.

Some areas have been slow to progress, such as the development of the Government of Jersey's corporate parenting responsibilities. This has been hampered by the pandemic but also by continued changes in corporate and political leadership, and some real challenges remain to ensure that the Government of Jersey understands and delivers in this vital area for children and young people. Additionally, issues such as workforce instability, the lack of placement sufficiency, and weaknesses in infrastructure to drive improvement are proving to be formidable challenges. Resolving these weaknesses is fundamental to enabling the reform that is needed.

Progress in some areas continues to be hampered by perceptions of the service based on historical events. These continue to fuel a negative narrative, leading to anxiety and some silo working. Tackling this negative culture is the greatest priority for leaders to address, or it will continue to define the department and hamper progress. **Area for improvement 1**

Although there is still much more to do to provide consistently good services for children looked after, the inspection team did not find evidence to support the negative perceptions of children's social work services. The inspection team found that many children now receive good quality support and experience improved outcomes.

Leaders clearly understand the further work needed to deliver practice improvement, but leadership changes continue to impact the improvement programme. A new interim director was appointed during the inspection period, making this the third in less than two years. This creates fragility as new leaders 'start again,' often changing the direction of travel, inevitably impacting the pace of progress. It is now time to think differently about how to mitigate the continuing risk of workforce instability and take action to create a coherent approach to improvement, which should remain in place regardless of changes in political, corporate, or operational leadership.

This is a pivotal moment for Jersey's children's services. Although children are now receiving a better service, there are some stubborn challenges that are tough to fix. Jersey has the potential to become one of the best performing childcare systems in the British Isles. Political leaders have provided much-needed financial investment to support the needed reform. These additional resources provide Jersey with the enviable opportunity to think differently about how to deliver its social work services to children and young people, unfettered by much of the process dictating the UK social work system. It is now time to be brave and innovative about how to tackle the longstanding challenges. The future success of the service lies very much in the hands of corporate and political leaders, who have the motivation, ability, capacity, and power to create an outstanding service that children and all islanders of Jersey rightly deserve.

IMPROVEMENT PLAN

There were seven areas for improvement identified during this inspection for the Children’s Social Work Service and one area for IRO service. The table below is the Registered Provider’s response to the inspection findings.

<p>Area for Improvement 1</p> <p>Ref: Standard 2</p> <p>To be completed by: 12 months from the date of inspection.</p>	<p>To reframe the negative historical narrative of public and partner organisations of children’s social work services to shift perceptions to a more balanced, fair and evidence based view.</p>
	<p>Response of Registered Provider:</p> <p>Clarity in partnership making, derived from joint policies and practice quality standard.</p> <p>Joint panels that address roles and responsibilities when working with the children in our care. E.g., reconfiguration of the Corporate Parenting Board with the following reports and lead professional.</p> <p>The Accountable Officers Group will focus on system partnership improvement, working closely with the Safeguarding Partnership Board Chair.</p>
<p>Area for Improvement 2</p> <p>Ref: Standard 2</p> <p>To be completed by: 12 months from the date of inspection.</p>	<p>The development of an infrastructure and the capacity required to successfully implement the change/reform programme.</p>
	<p>Response of Registered Provider:</p> <p>A dedicated Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) function will be established under the formal process of Corporate Programme Management for the Government of Jersey. The SRO will be</p>

	<p>supported by a dedicated change and programme delivery team.</p> <p>The structure in CSC to be reviewed, noting the change in demand in 2024, evidenced by data and performance.</p> <p>A strategic and operational plan will be developed that is organic and smart to oversee the changes and development of, for example, the new Children’s Therapeutic Home, and the recruitment and retention of a workforce that is not only permanent, but where interim staff receive the incentives to stay in Jersey.</p> <p>Clarity regarding the vision and offer to children, young people, and families in Jersey.</p> <p>Draw on the existing skills and expertise in the organisation and sourcing help when required. A business support and enablement function will be developed.</p>
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<p>Area for Improvement 3</p> <p>Ref: Standard 2</p> <p>To be completed by: 12 months from the date of inspection.</p>	<p>The development and implementation of an effective quality assurance framework to enable leaders and staff to know the quality of social work practice and understand its impact for children.</p>
	<p>Response of Registered Provider:</p> <p>A new Q.A Framework will be created and in place to understand the work for years 1, 2, and 3.</p>

	<p>Audits that are collaborative and themed will be embedded to be the eyes and ears of the organisation.</p> <p>From audits, we will identify and address gaps in training, interventions, skills and the Whole Practice Model (including partners).</p> <p>Supervision template has been reviewed.</p> <p>Reports that will address all areas of practice and produced at the Improvement Board, Performance Oversight Group and Corporate Parenting Board.</p>
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<p>Area for Improvement 4</p> <p>Ref: Standard 2</p> <p>To be completed by: 12 months from the date of inspection.</p>	<p>To improve the stability and sustainability of the workforce at all levels.</p>
	<p>Response of Registered Provider:</p> <p>Positive communications that are on and off-Island, to encourage recruitment and retention.</p> <p>The way in which staff in Social Care can access places to live and stability is being considered. A wider lens when viewing recruitment and retention, given context, so that agency staff are encouraged to stay and made attractive through a revised offer of contracts.</p> <p>Staff wellbeing, experience and support will be a key focus.</p>

<p>Area for Improvement 5</p> <p>Ref: Standard 6</p> <p>To be completed by: 12 months from the date of inspection.</p>	<p>Focusing on the period before legal proceedings commence (Pre-proceedings), to secure early permanence plans and processes to reduce and avoid unnecessary delays and create security for children.</p>
	<p>Response of Registered Provider:</p> <p>Pre-proceedings work is now embedding within supervision, case management review panel, audits, and child protection reviews.</p> <p>Permanency planning meetings are across the service with Heads of Service from safeguarding and permanence to chair fortnightly meetings.</p> <p>Early identification of potential care proceedings to be addressed within early identification of risk and need.</p>

<p>Area for Improvement 6</p> <p>Ref: Standard 1</p> <p>To be completed by: 12 months from the date of inspection.</p>	<p>Radical review of the missing from home and care processes to ensure information is systematically collected, collated, shared and analysed effectively to inform the reduction of risk.</p>
	<p>Response of Registered Provider:</p> <p>A Serious Incident Notification (SIN) process has been established with SIN's to come to the attention of senior managers to address.</p> <p>Plans that address the children, and circumstances that produce a plan that identifies:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reasons why

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Risks, including contextual 3. Mapping of involvement with others 4. Areas of interest 5. People of interest 6. Partners working together to review the next steps 7. Feedback from children <p>Heads of Service Safeguarding to take over this role through greater accountability oversight.</p> <p>Children in Care Council / Participation involvement to help shape the intelligence and feedback from children.</p>
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<p>Area for Improvement 7</p> <p>Ref: Standard 9</p> <p>To be completed by: 12 months from the date of inspection.</p>	<p>Children's Social Care to collaborate with health partners to ensure that review health assessments are timely and initial health assessments are of high-quality when children first become looked after.</p>
	<p>Response of Registered Provider:</p> <p>Social Care to work closely with Children in our Care Health Professionals. A Royal College of Paediatricians assessment will be undertaken in April 2024. Health providers will work with the department to develop a sustainable plan for health assessment delivery.</p> <p>Initial Health Assessments to be collated on the data and reported weekly. The Corporate Parenting Board will have formal oversight of delivery along with the Accountable Officers Group.</p>

Area for Improvement – Independent Reviewing Officer Service

<p>Area for Improvement 1</p> <p>Ref: Standard 2</p> <p>To be completed by: 12 months from the date of inspection.</p>	<p>There needs to be evidence of sustained improvement in the delivery of the IRO function, with the identified development plan requiring senior leadership oversight to ensure implementation.</p> <p>Response of Registered Provider:</p> <p>IRO report coming to Corporate Parenting Board on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>Development is underway of IRO data set to evidence the Quality Assurance Framework.</p> <p>Voice of the Child in feedback forms from February 1st 2024.</p> <p>Information packs are being developed for children, young people, then separately for partners, colleagues, and foster carers. This will fully explain the service.</p> <p>Audits concluded by IROs to understand practice and training needs.</p> <p>Development of the outcomes of the Childcare Reviews that will form the analysis of the work of the IRO.</p>
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The full report can be accessed from [here](#).