



Jersey Care  
Commission

## **FOCUSED INSPECTION REPORT**

**Fostering and Adoption  
Services**

**PO Box 142  
Union Street  
St Helier  
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**Inspection Dates  
2 & 3 December 2025**

**Date Published  
10 February 2026**

## 1. THE JERSEY CARE COMMISSION

Under the Regulation of Care (Jersey) Law 2014 ('the Law'), all services carrying out any regulated activity must be registered with the Jersey Care Commission ('the Commission').

This inspection was carried out in accordance with Regulation 80 of the Regulation of Care (Standards and Requirements) (Jersey) Regulations 2018 to monitor compliance with the Law and Regulations, to review and evaluate the effectiveness of the regulated activity and to encourage improvement.

## 2. ABOUT THE SERVICE

This is a report of the inspection of Fostering and Adoption Services. These social care services are operated by Children, Young People, Education and Skills Department (CYPES) and there is a registered manager in place.

Registration Details	Detail
Regulated Activity	Fostering and Adoption services
Mandatory Conditions of Registration	
Type of care	Social Care
Categories of care	Children and young people (0-18), autism, learning disability, mental health, physical disability and/or sensory impairment and Child Placements  Young adults 19-25 – only applicable to the Fostering service
Age range of care receivers	0 – 25 years
Discretionary Conditions of Registration	
The registered manager must complete a Level 5 Diploma in Leadership in Health and Social Care Module by 16 December 2027.	
Additional information	
The Commission received an application for a new Registered Manager on 30 October 2024, which resulted in registration on 6 January 2025.	

As part of the inspection process, the Regulation Officer evaluated the service’s compliance with the mandatory conditions of registration and any additional discretionary conditions required under the Law. The Regulation Officer concluded that all requirements have been met or were in progress.

### 3. ABOUT THE INSPECTION

#### 3.1 Inspection Details

This inspection was announced and notice of the inspection visit was provided to the Director of Children’s Services and the Registered Manager 35 days in advance of the initial on-site inspection. This allowed sufficient time for the service to prepare and submit a pre-inspection information request and ensure the availability of the Registered Manager during the inspection period.

Two regulation officers were present throughout the on-site inspection visits, having also undertaken three days of off-site inspection activity in advance of the visit. In addition, a Quality Assurance Manager from the Commission was in attendance at intervals during the on-site inspection.

Individuals receiving services will be referred to as children and/or young people for the purposes of this inspection report.

Inspection information	Detail
Dates and times of this inspection	27/08/2025 – 8.30am to 5pm (off-site) 28/08/2025 – 8.30am to 5pm (off-site) 01/12/2025 – 8.30am to 5pm (off-site) 02/12/2025 – 8.15am to 8pm (on-site) 03/12/2025 – 8.15am to 5pm (on-site)
Number of areas for improvement from this inspection	None
Dates of previous inspection Areas for improvement noted in 2024 Link to the previous inspection report	20 - 25 May 2024 One <a href="#">IR-Childrens-Social-Care-Independent-Reviewing-Officer-Service-IRO-Fostering-and-Adoption-Services-May-2024-Final.pdf</a>

### **3.2 Focus for this inspection**

This inspection included a focus on the area for improvement identified at the previous inspection carried out between 20 and 25 May 2024, as well as additional lines of enquiry outlined below:

- Strategic leadership, self-evaluation, organisational structure and workforce sufficiency.
- Quality improvement activity and performance management.
- Effectiveness of the action plan resulting from a Rapid Review in relation to social work practice.
- The recruitment of foster carers and prospective adopters.

## **4. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **4.1 Progress against areas for improvement identified at the last inspection**

At the last inspection, one area for improvement was identified, and an improvement plan was submitted to the Commission by the Registered Provider, setting out how these areas would be addressed.

The plan was discussed during this inspection, and it was positive to note that improvement had been made. This means that there was evidence of appropriate governance and operational procedures in relation to the fostering and adoption panels.

### **4.2 Observations and overall findings from this inspection**

Recruitment processes for panel members now reflects best practice, supported by strengthened safeguarding checks, clearer role expectations, and the introduction of annual appraisals. The regulation officers were advised that recent recruitment activity has attracted a more diverse applicant pool. Current panel members reported greater confidence, purpose, and improved access to training opportunities. Governance and decision-making procedures have also been enhanced, particularly through revisions to the Agency Decision Maker sign-off process.

Recruitment and retention of foster carers remains a challenge, despite continued recruitment activity and campaigns. New initiatives such as the development of the 'Hive' practice model to support older children is being progressed, which may improve foster carer recruitment and retention.

Safeguarding practice is robust and consistently applied, with criminal record checks now routinely undertaken for all fostering households to ensure children's safety. The training for foster carers is comprehensive; however, uptake remains inconsistent due to practical barriers.

In contrast, adoption recruitment is robust, with a diverse group of adopters available.

A Rapid Review identified procedural and cultural weaknesses contributing to safeguarding failures, and the resulting action plan has driven improvements in training, policy, and quality assurance, which was evidenced during the inspection.

A revised self-evaluation framework reflects transparent understanding of progress and ongoing service deficits, particularly sufficiency and practice consistency. Performance management has strengthened, especially within the Fostering Service, although the Adoption Service performance reporting requires further development, however this is not impacting on outcomes for children.

Carer supervision and annual reviews show improved compliance, and relationships with foster carers have stabilised, supported by regular forums with carers and enhanced communication.

Supervising Social Workers supervision, however, requires further development. There was also clear evidence that assessments of foster carers and adopters are robust and child centred.

Early permanence processes have been strengthened; however, the Senior Leadership Team reports that procedural barriers within the court system continue to cause delays in achieving permanency decisions for some children and young people.

Leadership is purposeful and committed to improving outcomes for children, young people and their carers', with foster carers reporting continued tangible improvements over the past six months. Staffing levels are sufficient to meet the current service needs, supported by a predominantly permanent workforce.

Overall, the Fostering and Adoption Services are progressing positively, with improvements in compliance, however further work is required to strengthen quality and consistency of practice.

## 5. INSPECTION PROCESS

### 5.1 How the inspection was undertaken

The Fostering and Adoption Standards were referenced throughout the inspection.<sup>1</sup>

Prior to the inspection visit, all information held by the Commission about the Fostering and Adoption Services was reviewed, including the previous inspection report, reviews of the Statement of Purpose, variation requests and all notification of incidents. This also included a review and evaluation of the pre-inspection information request undertaken during the off-site inspection activity.

The regulation officers gathered feedback from 10 foster carers, two prospective adopters, one adoptive parent receiving post adoption support, one professional external to the service and two fostering and adoption panel members. They also had discussions with the service's management, political leadership and other staff.

During the inspection process, the service's self-evaluation, care records, complaints information, performance management systems, and service development plans were examined.

Upon completion of the inspection, the regulation officers delivered feedback to the Registered Provider, the Registered Manager, the Chief Executive and the Minister for Children and Families, who are associated with the strategic oversight and operation of these services.

This report sets out the findings of the inspection and includes any areas of good practice identified.

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<sup>1</sup> All Care Standards can be accessed on the Commission's website at <https://carecommission.je/>

## 5.2 Sources of evidence.

Follow up on previous areas for improvement	
Focus	Evidence Reviewed
<b>Governance and operation procedures for fostering and adoption panels</b>	Recruitment procedures for panel members Job descriptions Criminal record checks Data protection requirements Feedback from panel members
New key lines of enquiry	
Focus	Evidence Reviewed
<b>Strategic Leadership</b>	Recruitment and retention activity Corporate Parenting Board minutes Self-evaluation framework Government of Jersey 2024-2028 Sufficiency Strategy Organisational structure and workforce sufficiency Interviews with senior leadership and a political leader Service development plans
<b>Quality improvement</b>	Data and performance management Quality assurance framework and audit activity Interviews with managers, social work staff and a family support worker Case sampling of fosters carer (including connected carer) and prospective adopter records Review of early permanence processes Supervision records of Supervising and Assessing Social Workers
<b>Rapid Review</b>	Rapid Review action plan Agency Decision Maker process and oversight Connected carers assessment process
<b>Recruitment of carers</b>	Recruitment procedures for foster carers and adopters Induction and training of foster carers Complaints and feedback from foster carers Supervision records for foster carers Feedback from foster carers and prospective adopters Feedback from a professional Voice of the child in fostering and adoption assessments

## 1. INSPECTION FINDINGS

### Governance and operation procedures for fostering and adoption panels.

The recruitment of fostering and adoption panel members reflects best practice. Recruitment and selection policies promote fairness, transparency, and robust safer recruitment, including enhanced safeguarding checks and adherence to equality and diversity requirements. Job descriptions clearly set out the responsibilities of panel chairs, covering leadership, governance, quality assurance, and strategic engagement and for panel members case scrutiny, compliance and safeguarding. Data protection has also been strengthened with panel members now issued with dedicated laptops for accessing and sending confidential information. In addition, panel members and the chair will be subject to annual appraisal, which has not previously been implemented consistently.

A recent recruitment campaign for panel members has been completed, and it is understood that the applications received represent a more diverse community than previously reflected.

Feedback from the Panel Chair and a panel member indicated recent improvements, that are helping to strengthen the panels role as a key safeguarding and decision-making body. Panel members also reported a renewed sense of purpose, empowerment, and optimism supported by recent training opportunities, avenues to exchange feedback and early evidence of improved practice.

Overall, the fostering and adoption panels are demonstrating clear progress, underpinned by strengthened governance and operational procedures that ensure they respond safely and effectively to the recruitment and retention of foster carers and prospective adopters, thereby supporting improved outcomes for Jersey's children and young people.

**Strategic leadership, self-evaluation, organisational structure and workforce sufficiency.**

The combined actions set out in the Government of Jersey 2024–2028 Sufficiency Strategy and the development work of the Corporate Parenting Board represent important steps toward stabilising and strengthening the Fostering and Adoption Services. Overall, these services are demonstrating a positive trajectory, with clear alignment between strategic aspirations, such as increasing capacity, embedding early permanence and therapeutic practice and operational improvements, including workforce stability, governance and post adoption support. Nonetheless, challenges persist in relation to foster carer recruitment which may continue to impact on sufficiency. This will be discussed further under the heading of ‘Recruitment of foster carers and adopters’.

The Fostering and Adoption services have a clear management structure, with accountability flowing from the Head of Service through team and practice managers to advanced social workers. Recruitment of Practice Development Leads within the wider service is anticipated to further enhance practice quality and drive continuous improvement.

Staffing levels are sufficient, with 70 per cent permanent staff, supported by dedicated recruitment and business support roles.

The regulation officers reviewed the revised Self-Evaluation Framework (SEF) provided by the services. The SEF offers a transparent and candid assessment that outlines recent improvements and their impact, identifies current challenges within the Fostering and Adoption Services, and sets out priorities for the forthcoming 12 months.

The SEF demonstrated that the Senior Leadership Team has a clear understanding of progress in compliance, quality assurance, and workforce stability, supported by strengthened data performance tools and improved governance structures. However, it also identifies ongoing deficits, including sufficiency issues (recruitment/retention of foster carers) and inconsistency in practice, such as the quality of supervision. The SEF further reflects Senior Leadership Team committed to continuous improvement and to delivering child-centred practice, while acknowledging that significant work remains.

One staff member commented:

Overall, I can see a journey of improvement, and it is great to see the investment that is being made in the team.

Overall, the service is well-positioned to consolidate recent improvements in compliance and quality assurance; however, further progress is required to enhance the quality, consistency and continuity of practice.

Additional comments from staff:

*“It has been so beautiful to see them grow and development as foster carers.”*

*“It has been a real privilege to support them [foster carers] and see the child develop so wonderfully.”*

A Supervising Social Worker commented, *“They have been the best children’s social worker I have ever worked with; we have had a great relational approach together to support the foster carer through some really challenging circumstances, where they had also lost trust with the service.”*

## Quality improvement activity and performance management.

Data performance management in the Fostering service has improved since the last inspection, supported by weekly and monthly performance meetings. Performance reporting is comprehensive and provides the Leadership Team with clear oversight of compliance against key metrics, including visits to foster carers, completion of annual reviews and the maintenance and regular updating of essential documentation. Regular meetings between the Fostering Service and Child in Care Team have further strengthened shared performance oversight and contributed to improved outcomes for children, young people and their carers.

The Leadership Team acknowledged that performance management reporting for the Adoption Service requires development in 2026. The regulation officers welcomed this recognition, noting that due to the small numbers of children being adopted, the current limitations in reporting have not had any discernible impact on outcomes for children.

The regulation officers reviewed foster carer records, which evidenced improved compliance with regular supervision sessions and annual registration reviews. However, the quality of supervision remained inconsistent. Supervision records for foster carers did not consistently demonstrate comprehensive discussion and analysis of key issues, such as the child's progress, safeguarding concerns, and the carer's support needs. It was acknowledged by the Senior Leadership Team that foster carer supervision requires further development to ensure supervision is robust and supports continuous improvement in care standards.

The Registered Manager reported progress in strengthening relationships with foster carers over the past 18 months. Quarterly foster carer forums now provide opportunities for carers to share their experiences and for the Leadership Team to communicate key service developments, including the revised foster care handbook and the provision of dedicated laptops for foster carers.



One foster carer commented:

My Supervising Social Worker is excellent, honest and transparent.

Quality assurance activity, including a diagnostic review of the Fostering Service and purposeful visits to foster carers has resulted in safer practice and highlighted areas requiring further attention, for example ensuring children and young people being seen alone and their bedrooms are routinely checked. The Fostering Service has a quality assurance process in place regarding foster carer annual reviews, and the Team Manager applies appropriate rigour to this process. However, this rigour is not formally recorded. The Registered Manager acknowledged that formalising this process will enhance transparency and enable more effective tracking and monitoring of required actions.

The Adoption Service has developed an evidence-based early permanence strategy to ensure that decisions regarding children and young people are made at the earliest opportunity. This strategy has included training for the Senior Leadership Team, managers and staff to raise awareness, strengthen understanding of the importance of early permanence and promote accountability across the system.

The Agency Decision Maker's (ADM) oversight of early permanence decisions has been strengthened. However, a more consistent cultural shift across the Children's Social Care Service is required to ensure that children's need for early permanence is prioritised. The Senior Leadership Team reported that ongoing barriers within the court system continue to cause delays in achieving permanency for some children and young people. The Leadership Team demonstrated a clear commitment to improving outcomes and is taking active steps to strengthen understanding across the partnership of the importance of early permanence.

Processes for prospective adopters, from initial enquiry through to approval, follow a defined workflow and are managed electronically. However, early permanence and matching processes for children currently fall outside this workflow. The Adoption Service acknowledges that integrating these processes into the existing workflow would enhance consistency and efficiency. However, the current approach is not impacting outcomes for children, young people, or adopters, due to the low number of children identified for early permanence.

Supervising Social worker supervision was routinely completed, with records detailing the discussions held and the actions agreed. The Leadership Team recognised that the quality of supervision requires greater consistency to ensure that foster carers and prospective adopters receive timely, purposeful support with a clear focus on safe care and progressing plans for children.

**Effectiveness of action plan resulting from the Rapid Review in relation to social work practice.**

Since the last inspection in May 2024, the service has undertaken a Rapid Review in line with the Rapid Review/Serious Care Review Practice Guidance from Safeguarding Partnership Jersey. The purpose of this Rapid Review was to identify learning, strengthen individual and multi-agency working and consider how safeguarding systems could be improved to reduce the risk of similar incidents reoccurring.

The resulting action plan was evaluated during this inspection and was found to have effectively identified procedural and systemic weaknesses that contributed to the previous safeguarding failures. The plan also acknowledged senior leadership accountability that has driven measurable progress in training, policy, quality assurance, and cultural initiatives, leading to improved awareness, decision-making, and escalation practices.

Additional training has been provided to assessing and supervising social workers to improve their understanding and practice in conducting connected person viability assessments and full assessments. This includes the development of a flow chart to support the process and ensure that assessments are completed within required timescales.

Oversight from the Agency Decision Maker has also been strengthened, with rigour applied to panel recommendations and where decision-making on the initial viability of connected person foster carers is required before a child or young person is placed with them.

Recognising the need for more robust assessment of foster and connected person carers, the Fostering Service has developed a suite of documents that define 'what good looks like'. These documents set out the standards expected of assessing social workers and are a current focus for the Leadership Team to ensure that they are consistently embedded in practice.

### **The recruitment of foster carers and prospective adopters.**

Recruitment and retention of foster carers remain a challenge for this service, with several contributory factors impacting on sufficiency, such as the cost of living and appropriate housing. There have been a number of fostering recruitment campaigns, which have targeted various demographics to reach a diverse community. This activity has been longstanding, and it is understood will continue.

Leaders shared a range of new recruitment initiatives with the regulation officers, alongside the development of a new practice model for the Fostering Service, called the 'Hive'. This enhanced support model is designed to provide stable nurturing homes for older children in Jersey with high and complex needs. These developments demonstrate the services proactive approach to addressing the ongoing challenges with recruitment and retention of foster carers.

Recruitment of prospective adopters does not face the same barriers, and there is currently a strong and diverse pool of approved adopters.

The policy and procedure for the recruitment and approval of foster carers and adopters reflects best practice and is aligned with the Jersey Care Commission Standards, the Children (Placement) (Jersey) Regulations 2005, and the National Minimum Standards for Fostering and Adoption. Safeguarding practice has also been strengthened through the routine undertaking of criminal record checks for all members of fostering households, including birth children and young adults in staying put arrangements.

The sign-off procedure used by the ADM for fostering and adoption panel recommendations has been revised and is scheduled for implementation in 2026. The updated process aligns with best practice, strengthening the rigour applied to panel recommendations of the panels and supports more timely decision-making and approval.

The training offer for foster carers, connected person foster carers and prospective adopters is comprehensive, aligned with best practice, and is delivered through a range of flexible learning formats, including face-to-face training where appropriate. Mandatory training and core/additional modules adequately cover safeguarding, therapeutic care, and placement stability, making the programme robust for carers who engage fully. Take up of the training offer among foster carers is at 60%, although this is below where the service would like it to be, this has shown improvement over the past 18 months. Outstanding training was noted and is being actively followed up through foster carer supervision records. Foster carers reported that, while they are fully willing to engage in training, they sometimes experience difficulty balancing these requirements alongside childcare responsibilities.

The management of complaints and compliments, feedback from foster carers, and allegations relating to standards of care were reviewed. This review provided assurance that no formal complaints had been made in the past year, that the service actively seeks feedback from carers, and that allegations concerning standards of care are managed appropriately through the Jersey Designated Officer.

Foster carers spoken to during the inspection reported noticeable improvements over the last six months in the continuity of support from their supervising social workers, as well as increased confidence in raising issues and concerns, which are now more consistently addressed by the Leadership Team. These recent improvements will need to be sustained, alongside the continued maintenance of a stable workforce.



Feedback from a professional indicated, that based on previous observations, foster carers had felt poorly supported, distressed, and unclear about expectations. At that time, concerns were also raised about incomplete documentation and weak communication. However, they reported that more recent observations indicate greater stability and more positive experiences for foster carers, including better support and clearer communication.

One adopter commented:

I cannot praise the post adoption service highly enough. Xxx really supported me, so praise where praise is due.

Feedback from prospective adopters was positive regarding both the assessment process and the support provided by the Adoption Service, including post adoption support. Evidence was seen of careful, sensitive and tenacious social work practice, with practitioners being actively supported by their managers.

In contrast, supervision for supervising social workers was less consistent and tended to prioritise information sharing, although records did show that key issues and agreed actions were documented.

The regulation officers noted that fostering and adoption assessments consider applicants' previous experiences, including adversity, to understand how these may affect their ability to provide care. This reflective approach keeps the child's voice central, ensuring placements are empathetic and responsive to individual needs.

Overall, the services are progressing positively, with improvements in compliance; however, further work is required to strengthen quality, consistency, and continuity of practice.

Additional comments from foster carers:

*"I have a really good relationship with my Supervising Social Worker, and they help to clarify matters."*

*"My SSW is a real star."*

Additional comments from prospective adopters and those parents receiving post adoption support:

*“The way they have [the adoption service] approached adoption was fantastic.”*

*“Fostering and Adoption have done a great job.”*

*“My experience was extremely positive.”*

*“Since Xxx has been involved, I have found it very supportive and empathetic, and I have been blown away with the service.”*

*“The matching process was amazing.”*

## **IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

There were no areas for improvement identified during this inspection, so an Improvement Plan is not required.

It should be noted that this inspection report should not be regarded as a comprehensive review of all strengths and areas for improvement that exist in the service. The findings reported on are those which came to the attention of the Care Commission during the course of this inspection. The findings contained within this report do not exempt the service from their responsibility for maintaining compliance with legislation, Standards and best practice.



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