

STATES OF JERSEY



COMMON STRATEGIC POLICY (P.21/2024): SECOND AMENDMENT

Lodged au Greffe on 7th May 2024
by Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North
Earliest date for debate: 21st May 2024

STATES GREFFE

COMMON STRATEGIC POLICY 2024-2026 (P.21/2024): SECOND
AMENDMENT

1 PAGE 2 –

After the words “report accompanying this Proposition” insert the words -

“, except that on page 2 of the report in paragraph 5, after the words “Carbon Neutral Roadmap.”, there should be inserted the words “and further build on the recommendations from the Independent Jersey Care Inquiry 2017. As a Corporate parent, we will continue with the reform of Children’s Services to meet the Areas of Improvement identified in the 2024 Report of the Children’s Social Care Service and Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Service”.”

DEPUTY I. GARDINER OF ST. HELIER NORTH

Note: After this amendment, the proposition would read as follows –

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –

in accordance with Article 18(2)(e) of the States of Jersey Law 2005, to approve the statement of the Common Strategic Policy of the Council of Ministers as set out in the report accompanying this Proposition, except that on page 2 of the report in paragraph 5, after the words “Carbon Neutral Roadmap.”, there should be inserted the words “and further build on the recommendations from the Independent Jersey Care Inquiry 2017. As a Corporate parent, we will continue with the reform of Children’s Services to meet the Areas of Improvement identified in the 2024 Report of the Children’s Social Care Service and Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Service”.

REPORT

In order for the island to secure the best outcomes for its future, it is important to invest in children and young people. This means following the advice of the IJCI which was to ensure that “the welfare and interests of children are paramount and trump all other considerations.” ([The Report of the Independent Jersey Care Inquiry 2017, Executive Summary](#), p.55)

The latest inspection report from the Jersey Care Commission on children’s social care stated: “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.” (Inspection Report: Children’s Social Care and Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Services, p. 9)

It is therefore important, I believe, to ensure that a commitment is made in the CSP to delivering improvements for the most vulnerable young people in our community.

Whilst progress has been made, there is still much to be done to in the area of Children’s Services, for example ensuring a stable workforce (Recommendation 4, from IJCI 2017).

After the 2022 elections during the preparation of the Government plan 2023-2026, it was clear that Jersey had not undertaken a whole system transformation, supported by a co-production approach to develop a clear vision and outcomes that our whole island community can buy into.

Children's Social Care Reform, Improvement and Transformation has been proposed in the Government plan 2023 – 2026 and growth allocation in total of £26,216,000 over 4 years ([Government Plan 2023 to 2026.pdf](#), Revenue Expenditure Growth table, p. 105) has been approved with the addition of extra allocation in expenditure growth in 2024-2027 for children’s social care reform for creating new homes with a total of £6,800,000 over four years ([Government Plan 2024 to 2027 Annex.pdf](#), Revenue Growth Expenditure, page 22).

Reforming the system is a long-term programme which will require system-wide and culture change so it is important to ensure that this progress continues.

This programme for the next four years was planned to make significant change for children in need and those who are vulnerable or require protection. However, addressing all the areas for improvement across the system requires prolonged effort and investment. We must ensure we put in place good quality, effective services to improve the identification of vulnerabilities, better support families and prevent children and young people going into care.

For those who do go into care, it will ensure Jersey has a sufficient number and range of options including grandparents, foster carers and homes where children live, where high-quality outcomes are encouraged and achieved.

The development of infrastructure and the capacity required to implement the change/reform programme successfully must be done now, and should not be postponed.

The recent report on [Children’s Social Care and Independent Reviewing Officer \(IRO\) Services](#), published in February by the Jersey Care Commission, has recognised efforts and improvements made, report highlighting:

“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.”

Further:

“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.” (p.8)

This is why I ask the Assembly to support the continuation of work on the recommendations from the Independent Jersey Care Inquiry 2017, its [Two-Year Review \(R.123/2019\)](#) follow-up in 2019, and the implementation of the recommendations set out in the Children’s Social Care and Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Services report from the Care Commission through the inclusion of this amendment in the Common Strategic Policy.

Financial and staffing implications

No additional financial or staffing implications are anticipated as any resources required by this amendment should be covered by the approved allocation in expenditure growth in the Government plan 2023-2026 for children’s social care reform and additional extra allocation in the Government Plan 2024-2027 for new homes to be included in the children services reform.

Children’s Rights Impact Assessment

A Children’s Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) has been prepared in relation to this proposition and is available to read on the States Assembly website.

