

Review Panel – Care of Children in Jersey

Record of Meeting

Date: 21st November 2017

Present	Deputy S.Y. Mézec, Chairman Senator S.C Ferguson Deputy J.A. Hilton
Apologies	Deputy T.A. Vallois, Vice-Chairman
Absent	
In attendance	Mr G. Houston, Chair of the Care Commission Mrs L. Jacobs, Care Commissioner Mrs C. Blackwood, Head of Professional Care Regulation, Community and Constitutional Affairs Mr A. Harris, Scrutiny Officer

Ref Back	Agenda matter	Action
	<p>1. Meeting with the Care Commissioner</p> <p>The Review Panel received Mr G. Houston, Chair of the Care Commission, Mrs L. Jacobs, Care Commissioner and Mrs C. Blackwood, Head of Professional Care Regulation, Community and Constitutional Affairs for a meeting to discuss the role of the Care Commission in respect of the Independent Jersey Care Inquiry.</p> <p>Mr G. Houston explained that he had been appointed as the Chair of the Care Commission earlier in 2017 and a team of four commissioners had been subsequently recruited. It was noted that one commissioner was based on-island, with the other three based off-island. The team all had a background in health and social care and had been appointed to oversee the regulation of care services in the Island. It was explained that currently the Minister for Health and Social Services acted as regulator in the Island, and this was due to transfer to the Care Commission upon approval of the Regulation of Care Regulations, which were due to be lodged for debate on the 22nd January 2018. It was hoped that, subsequent to States approval, the regulations would come into effect from April 2018 at which point a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) would be established between the Chief Minister and the Care Commission. It was noted that the current team undertaking the work in respect of the regulation of care regulations would be seconded to the Care Commission. This was in order to maintain the existing infrastructure for human resources and information technology.</p> <p>It was noted that the Care Commission had scheduled six meetings throughout 2018, which were planned to include workshops with key stakeholders to gather information, and Board meetings whereby further decisions would be made.</p> <p>Mr G. Houston explained that the Commission's accountability to the Chief Minister had been recognised as a potential challenge, but the</p>	

appointed commissioners had previous experience working for Arm's Length Organisations. It was noted that the Commission would be funded by the States of Jersey and by income from registration fees from local care providers.

The Panel questioned the progress made in establishing Terms of Reference for an independent review of the Children's Service. Mr G. Houston explained that the Chief Minister had written to the Commission, asking it to prepare an inspection, and that a project brief and draft Terms of Reference had been formulated. It was noted that the inspection was due to be undertaken in partnership with Ofsted, and conversations had been ongoing with the Deputy Director of Social Care Policy to that end. It was explained that this would be commissioned as a single tender action. The Commission was due to discuss and finalise its project brief and Terms of Reference at its meeting in December, after which the preparation for the inspection would be undertaken in January and February of 2018. It was anticipated that the inspection would be completed in April and May, with a final report being published in September 2018.

Mr G. Houston explained that the purpose of the inspection would be to identify good practice, but also identify gaps in provision, from which recommendations could be made. It was noted that there would be provisions that would allow any serious concerns to be escalated to either the Managing Director of Community and Social Services or the Chief Minister if needed. It was explained that this would be a constructive piece of work that would not just identify concerns, but also promote and identify good practice. Requests had already been made for a profile of the children's service and a chronology of any recommendations that had been made from previous inspections.

It was noted that this inspection would focus on looked after children and that a rolling programme of inspections was due to be developed by June 2018. This would include regular inspections of children's residential care in the Island. As part of this inspection process, it was noted that a children's homes inspector was to be appointed on the Island with a responsibility for ensuring this process was carried out effectively. The Head of Professional Care Regulation explained that the budget for this programme would reside within the Care Commission, but requests for funding had been made to the States to pump prime the process. The Panel noted that the Independent Care Visitors would be disbanded once this process had been established.

Mr G. Houston anticipated that there would be turbulence during the inspection process and anxieties would surely exist about the inspection. It was noted that openness and transparency were crucial to the success of the inspection and the Commission would encourage the children's service to publically respond to the findings of the inspection.

It was explained that the Chief Minister could request the Care Commission to undertake inspections on specific issues, and that the Commission could make recommendations to the Chief Minister as to areas that required inspection.

Mr G. Houston explained that copies of the project brief and Terms of Reference were not able to be shared with the Review Panel at this time,

	<p>as further ratification was required by the team of commissioners. Once it had been agreed it would need further discussion with Ofsted and then consultation with the subjects of the inspection.</p> <p>Further consideration had to be given to the manner in which records were accessed by the Commission. It was explained that consent would need to be gained from the data subjects and the Bailiff prior to any case files being shared with the Commission.</p>	
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