



Patron, Lady Dalton

Deputy R Ward
Chair
Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel
By email: a.harris5@gov.je

5th November 2021

Dear Deputy Ward

**Jersey Child Care Trust's Response to Scrutiny Review
Re: Review of the Government Plan 2022-2025**

The Jersey Child Care Trust welcomes the invitation to provide comment on the areas of the Government Plan identified by the Scrutiny Panel as being of particular relevance to our organisation.

Young People Intensive Support – p.38 of P.90/2021 and p.54 R.150/2021

Our initial and overwhelming observation is a lack of recognition of the Early Years in this outline of support. Reference is made to the need to act now to minimise an escalation of need (p.54) however no reference is made to supporting need at the earliest point, in the early years. There is overwhelming evidence highlighting the benefits of intervening early and we know first-hand, through our services and the services of others we work with, that supporting children and families in the earliest years improves outcomes long term (Center on the Developing Child, 2021). This is a point which the Best Start Partnership could also provide a collective perspective on.

We strongly agree with the need to develop integrated intensive support which helps children, young people and their families at the earliest point. To deliver on this investment a focus needs to be placed on the development of appropriately skilled/trained personal on island. As a charitable organisation we have been called upon by Government departments to step in when appropriate staffing to support children with complex needs cannot be found.

Examples of this include:

- A request from the Complex Needs Team to provide specialist staff to support a young person who was awaiting a residential placement off island.
- Social workers seeking support for vulnerable families e.g. Nannies to provide care whilst parents attend court or support families when a parent is terminally ill.
- Request from Government to provide training support to the sector as capacity is so limited.

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Putting families first

Education Demographic Pressures – p.39 of P.90/2021 and p.56 R. 150/2021

The project summary speaks of an aim to reform the education funding formula and funding arrangements for children with SEN (p.56). What it fails to clarify is whether this extends to the Early Years. As a charitable organisation who acts as the sole provider of support for children with SEN in private nurseries we are well aware of the complicated funding formulas currently in situ as children move from private settings, to school nursery classes and then statutory schooling. We expect the impending Inclusion Review to be highlighting this and potentially informing decisions moving forward. It feels vital that decisions around SEN funding should be informed by this body of evidence and the recommendations being made as part of the review.

Efficiency and Rebalancing Measures

Reiterating the above, the argument to intervene early to avoid the escalation of need which requires substantial support and investment further down the line stands. These efficiencies work in direct contradiction to this. As an organisation who supports very young children with additional needs we have witnessed the direct impact of strained and overburdened therapeutic services on children's development and emotional well-being. This has been exacerbated further by the pandemic resulting in children's needs not being adequately supported as they enter the schooling system.

We appreciate being able to take part in this process and would welcome your comments or further questions.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "F Vacher".

Fiona Vacher
Executive Director