



Submission by the Jersey Child Care Trust to the Co-ordination of Services for Vulnerable Children

Introduction

The Jersey Child Care Trust (JCCT) was set up as a charity by the States in 1997 with a remit to co-ordinate, promote and facilitate the expansion of high quality and affordable childcare provision in the Island. A copy of the JCCT's Constitution is attached as Appendix 1. The JCCT's latest Annual Report and Accounts are being drafted and when the document is ready for distribution a copy will be sent to the panel.

This submission will begin with general comments to the Panel, followed by a small selection of JCCT projects.

The JCCT's office is located in the Bridge Centre for Families and Children and so is the first point of contact for all parents seeking information and advice. The team of 3.7 full time equivalent staff also provide projects to work towards the JCCT achieving its aim.

A Universal Focus

The Implementation Plan focuses on children in care, and this is accepted as a most important area of need. However, as the JCCT has argued over the years – supported by the experience of other countries – the taking of appropriate action in respect of children generally from their earliest years, including the enhancing of parenting skills, can produce significant long-term benefits for children, their parents and the community at large.

One particularly successful move in this direction is the recent States decision to provide up to 20 hours free nursery care for all children, the year before they begin primary school. This universal approach to ensuring that our most vulnerable children have access to good quality early education and care, at a time when a child's brain development is nearing its peak, will provide many long-term benefits for the Island's future.

A Joined-Up Approach

The recent formation of the Early Years and Childcare Partnership (EYCP) shows a promising joined-up approach, which encompasses all services and departments whose role is linked to the early years and childcare sector. There is good potential in the structure that has been provided by the EYCP and with the enthusiastic response that it was given by members at its inaugural meeting, the JCCT has high hopes for a more joined up approach to all work within the sector of early years and childcare.

The day-to-day challenges of multi-agency working for the JCCT have been eased by our move to the Bridge over three years ago. The JCCT team provide the Childcare Information Service from our office at the Bridge and the team link effectively and daily with those professionals directly working with vulnerable families. In turn, these professionals who are based with us at the Bridge, are fully aware of our Projects and are successfully and actively referring vulnerable children into our Projects as soon as they are identified.

The JCCT has identified one multi-agency service, which is not based at the Bridge, but would benefit by being housed in this multi-agency centre. As a member of the Procedures Sub-Group of

the Jersey Child Protection Committee (JCPC) the JCCT would also benefit, along with the other agencies by having the JCPC Professional Officer, administrative support and Training Officer based here at the Bridge. The links that are made when working in such a multi-agency centre are frequent and ultimately children and their families benefit from this way of working.

Minister for Families

The JCCT agrees, in principle, with the Williamson's report recommendation to have a Minister for Children. A similar recommendation was raised previous to Williamson's Report by thirteen member agencies of the Jersey Parenting Forum at a meeting in June 2006, which was attended by the then Chief Minister, Senator Frank Walker. Please see Appendices Two and Three.

A Minister for Families would encompass all those services with responsibility for children from conception up to 17 years of age and their families. The recent "3D's – Drink, Drugs and Deprivation" hosted by Dr Rosemary Geller and the Department for Health, gave a key message that joined up multi-agency working with the whole family and input that starts at an ante-natal stage will produce the best outcomes for children. A Minister for Families would ensure that those relevant agencies, departments and families in Jersey were best represented in the States.

The member organisations present at the meeting of the Jersey Parenting Forum were:

Parenting Services

The Bridge

ACET

Jersey Child Care Trust

NSPCC Pathways Project

Education, Sport and Culture – Early Years Advisor

The Library

Autism Jersey

Brooke Advisory Service

Social Services – Family Support Services

Youth Action Team

Family Nursing and Home Care

Jersey Early Years Association

The JCCT Projects - Working with Vulnerable Children in Jersey

The Special Needs Inclusion Project

This Project enables pre-school children with special needs to access mainstream private childcare provisions. 16 children accessed the project last year and this year, 11 are currently involved. A multi-agency Steering Group allocates hours of one to one support based on levels of need. Trained Support Workers are either employed by the Project or their roles "back-filled" by the Project to enable them to provide one to one support to meet targets set by health professionals with the child.

£46,000 annually is privately raised by the JCCT to meet the costs of this Project.

The Supported Places Scheme

The JCCT provides at least 25 part time nursery places for vulnerable pre-school aged children identified and referred to us by professionals. £45,000 is privately raised by the JCCT annually to meet the costs of this Project.

Currently the Project aims to meet the needs of vulnerable 3 – 4 year olds, but in September when the States free nursery education scheme begins, the Project will change to meet the needs of vulnerable 2 – 3 year olds. There will be a change of emphasis with the new Scheme. Whilst the JCCT will continue to just provide the funding and appropriately placed children in part time nursery places, the referring professional will use the Scheme as an incentive to engage or to continue the parental engagement within a parenting support type service, such as is offered by the Bridge and

NSPCC Pathways. A multi-agency response has been put in place ready to consider referrals through a Placement Panel.

The Childcare Information Service

Parents may visit, call or email the team at the JCCT when seeking information and advice on choosing and paying for childcare. This provides a universal approach to ensuring parents can access appropriate information. Leaflets are distributed in English, Polish and Portuguese and every effort is made to ensure that they are distributed to known places where parents frequent.

The team have information and lists of available childcare in the following areas:

Day Nurseries

Pre-Schools

Nursery Classes

Family Day Carers

Nannies and Accredited Nannies

School Age Care

Approved Babysitters

The office of the JCCT is open to the public, Monday to Friday, 8.30 am until 4.30 pm. www.jcct.org.je is also available to access 24 hours a day.

The Small Grants Scheme

The JCCT provides at least £30,000 of funds by means of small grants to be applied for by private registered childcare providers in Jersey. Grants are mainly applied to equipment, toys and resource requirements and occasional sustainability grants are awarded to assist providers who may be experiencing short term and unexpected financial difficulties.

Continuous Professional Development

The JCCT co-ordinates a multi-agency approach training programme to those working in private childcare to access evening courses. Almost 1000 training places are provided every year by the JCCT, giving childcare practitioners access to professionals such as child psychologists, health visitors, midwives, art tutors, bereavement counsellors, health promotion professionals and child safety professionals.

The JCCT is available to meet with the Panel should it to discuss any of its work in more detail.

1st June 2009