Minister for Children
and Families

Government of JERSEY

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Deputy Catherine Curtis
Chair – Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel

Sent by email only

10th November 2025

Dear Chair,

Follow-up matters from the Public Hearing on 31st October 2025

Thank you for your letter dated 3rd November 2025 regarding the follow up information I committed to providing during the Panel's review hearing of the proposed budget 2026-2029. Please find my responses below;

Q. How many beds are in the Children's Services residential care current capacity?

The current number of beds available across the whole estate for children in need of residential care **is 18 beds (as at 31.10.25).** This is a complex issue, as not all available beds can be included in the bed ratio. Please note:

- The number of beds available does not include the secure home as the bed use this restricted to children who are remanded to custody or placed on Secure Accommodation Orders only.
- The number of available beds does not include bed space for short breaks arrangements. These are configured differently, dependent on need, and are not used for children in care, as children only stay for overnight respite. There are two short breaks homes, both offering overnight breaks for children with complex needs or life limiting conditions.

Q. What will be the total number of residential care beds in Children's Services after the transformation funded by the Loving Homes Estate Budget and the Children's Services Improvement Plan revenue expenditure?

Based on extensive mapping and site searches, a clear estate plan has been developed, which **will deliver 39 beds (by end of 2029).** This will require closing and temporary opening of homes in the interim period working towards a long-term sustainable plan.
What is critical is to ensure stability and longevity of the residential estate. To date, homes have been borrowed and rented short term, leading to homes having to be closed, and dilapidated, which is a high costing model. Most importantly this leads to substantial instability for children, resulting in repeated moves, continued trauma and upheaval for children who desperately need

stability and security. The new estate model will mean that properties are either owned or leased on a long-term basis, resulting in much greater stability and security for our children. The new model will also ensure greater sustainability in the workforce, with increased flexibility and relief/bank capacity to better support the homes and our children. Additional investment is also included to improve the training and development offer to the residential workforce.

Q. Please can you provide a further breakdown of the £500,000 allocated to 'Upgrades to CYPES Estates: Residential Homes and Secure settings'? During the hearing it was queried if there would be an average spend of £70,000 on each property – we'd be grateful if details of the assumptions and forecasts that have been used for this could be provided.

The £500,000 allocated to 'Upgrades to CYPES Estates: Residential homes and secure settings' is a rolling and reactive maintenance budget covers homes requiring upgrade, redecoration, replacement furnishings, damage repair, and dilapidations as part of tenant leasehold agreements.

For 2026, the service has critical costs forecast into the maintenance budget to maintain and upgrade the existing residential estate. A priority list of homes requiring work has been established and a schedule of works costed and planned against the allocation. Out of the £500k allocated, there is an estimated spend of £485k, set out as follows (but this does not cover the full likely costs of damage and remedial work which cannot be predicted):

- Refurbishment, kitchen replacement and decoration of one of the current children's homes - £35k
- Dilapidation costs of the closure of a current children's home when the tenancy contract ends at Qtr 4, 2026 - £125k
- Installing specialist CCTV into a new home and decoration of communal areas - £40k
- Refurbishment of a new property being provided as an interim children's home whilst awaiting creation of the new residential estate - £150k
- Essential update works to the emergency bed home, including sprinkler upgrade, decoration and carpets - 63k
- Damage repair buffer £75k

Q. Can you provide a breakdown of what the £7.615 million of funding in 2026 will be used for?

The breakdown of the additional **£7.615 million of funding** in 2026 is as follows:

- An uplift in demand of **£2.7m** to meet financial pressures in 2026 and beyond in respect of the revenue budget. i.e. rising demand in UK placements, inflationary pressures including new VAT duty, uplift costs in respect of foster carer payments, care leavers offer and short breaks
- Reform of the residential workforce including essential workforce development and a review of workforce Terms and Conditions **- £3.7m**
- Reinstatement of the recruitment and retention offer for qualified social workers and development of the social work academy to 'grow our own' social workers, with a new trainee scheme for promoting on island recruitment **- £190k**

- Workforce transformation including the development of the Multidisciplinary Service and the creation of the fostering mockingbird model - **£882k**
- Mosaic systems developments to embed critical system development needed to promote good quality social work practice and changes in ways of working - **£150k**

Q. Each year of this Budget has indicated different levels of required funding for the Children's Services Improvement Programme. What assumptions and forecasts, have been considered in preparing each year's estimate?

Funding levels required for the Children's Services Improvement Programme have been set according to the profile of costs in each year to deliver Option 3 transformation plan. These have been forecast based on extensive diagnostic and analytic analysis and on the following assumptions:

- Funding for uplift and demand pressures is built on the profile of extensive sufficiency modelling based on local forecasting (increases in 2027, 2028 as projected children in care numbers increase, then slowly plateauing after that).
- Reform of the residential workforce is based on the salary costs of the current residential structure with the value of new terms and conditions applied.
- Funding for transformation includes the 'grow our own' model creating a trainee scheme, which results in an increasing cost over the budget period as the cohort increases.
- Funding for recruitment and retention fluctuates over time to reflect the stage payments of the scheme (based on the increased in recruitment to social work posts, and then recurrent thereafter.
- Workforce transformation costs are based on the salary costs of the Multidisciplinary structure and an estimate of the annual running costs of the fostering mockingbird model.
- Mosaic system costs are based on the costs of a systems development post to support critical development of the data system which supports data input and recording of statutory intervention by social workers.

Q. Can you tell us about the proposed restructure of the residential estate (mentioned on page 22 of the Annex)? a. How different is this to current model?

We are unable to provide any further detail regarding the residential workforce reform prior to the consultation concluding. This could be covered in a private briefing or discussed after the workforce consultation has concluded of the panel require additional information.

Q. Can you tell us more about the social work academy and revised retention payments (mentioned on page 22 of the Annex)?

The creation of the social work academy would create an apprenticeship/trainee scheme for social work to promote a more sustainable long-term solution to the challenges to workforce stability. A pipeline of recruits through trainees, students, and Newly Qualified Social Workers would have a consistent and varied experience within the service underpinned by a dedicated team to provide workplace learning and development support.

The revised retention payments scheme will be based on staged payments over 5 years for new permanent staff joining the service (paid in year 1,3 and 5 of their employment). These schemes are well embedded across the UK and incentivise social workers to remain in employment with the host local authority for longer. This will re-instate a similar historical scheme that was implemented in Jersey some years ago which proved successful but for which the funding was only short term and expired in 2024. This will be an important part of the workforce ‘offer’ to attract social workers and incentivise commitment to staying with the service, stabilising the service and reducing social worker turnover.

Q. How will the retention payments work and be assessed for effectiveness?

As set out above, investment in a retention payment will promote workforce stability. Incentive payments would be backloaded with the highest payment made in year 5, thereby encouraging social workers to remain longer with the service. A key measure of effectiveness will be a reduction in the use of agency social workers down to a sustainable ratio and a reduction in turnover of social work staff.

Yours sincerely,

Connétable Richard Vibert
Minister for Children and Families