Deputy Victoria Li
Chair
Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel
States Assembly
By email to Rosalyn Sharp R.Sharp@gov.je;

30 October 2026

Dear Deputy,

Proposed Budget 2027 – 2030 in relation to the funding proposed for the Loving Homes Estate

Thank you for your letter of 15 October.

As you will be aware, Jersey Cares Limited is a Jersey registered charity[i] whose vision is for all people in Jersey who have had experience of care to consistently know love, belonging and opportunity. Since July 2019, Jersey Cares has spoken up for the children in the care of the Minister for Children and Families and for people of any age who have lived experience of care.

Through our advocacy work we aim to:

a) Speak out for meaningful change in the care system and how it could be implemented; and

b) Enable those who have current or past lived experienced the care system to become aware of their rights, and to speak up for their feelings and wishes to help them to realise their potential.

Advocacy for children in care has been on a statutory footing[ii] since 29 October 2025. We are commissioned by the Government of Jersey to provide Statutory Advocacy to children in care aged 5 – 18 and care leavers aged 18 – 25, under a commissioned service agreement.

Pursuant to that agreement we are prohibited[iii] from drawing on any information, data, or intelligence relating to children, young people, or their personal stories, provided or obtained in the course of delivering the Advocacy Service, for any purpose other than the delivery of that service.

This letter therefore draws only on publicly available sources[iv].

Our contract also restricts us[v] from public communications relating to the business of the Authority or on any matter with which the Authority may be concerned unless we have, on

each occasion, obtained the prior written permission of the Authority's authorised representative. The Director of Children and Young People's Services has therefore reviewed and commented on the earlier draft for factual accuracy. Responsibility for the views expressed, particularly with respect to the future state we would like to see, remains ours.

General Remarks

Jersey Cares welcomes the direction of the Children's Services Improvement Plan and its three priorities: Supporting Families, Loving Homes, and Care and Support.

We whole-heartedly support all investment that enables children to experience safe, stable and nurturing care and helps care leavers build fulfilling adult lives.

Our central recommendation is that the Panel examines how the proposed funding in the 2027 – 2029 Proposed Budget will deliver stable care, dependable relationships and accessible support. Investment in accommodation should always be considered alongside the people, skills, relationships and services needed to make that accommodation a safe and nurturing home. In fact, we regard the 'soft' element of people and skills as the more important element than the bricks and mortar, and the more difficult to get right.

The Corporate Parenting Board minutes of 28 July 2025 provide a useful historical baseline, to be read alongside subsequent published minutes and current delivery information. Those minutes record both significant pressures and improvement work already underway. The Panel could establish which commitments have been completed, what barriers remain and how the proposed Budget addresses outstanding needs.

1. What are the most significant challenges currently facing care-experienced children and young people in Jersey, and to what extent does the Proposed Budget 2027-2030 address those challenges?

The public evidence

The Children's Services Improvement Plan makes commitments to coordinated services, adolescent support and workforce development.

The July 2025 Corporate Patenting Board minutes record the Director's then assessment that some children were entering care too late and that improved practice could increase the number in care.

Areas to be explored

The 2027 Budget should demonstrate how these commitments in the CSIP will translate into accessible help, with clear staffing and training assumptions, service capacity and delivery dates.

Jersey Cares' views

Jersey Cares believes that care experienced children and young people have five connected needs: stability of home and relationships; timely therapeutic support; continuity of education; a supported transition to adulthood; and meaningful influence over decisions.

2. Do you consider that the Proposed Budget provides sufficient support for care leavers and young adults transitioning to independent living, including access to housing, education, employment and training opportunities?

The public evidence

The Children's Services Improvement Plan commits to sufficient homes for 16 to 19-year-olds and better support for care leavers.

The July 2025 Corporate Parenting Board minutes record housing pathway work and streamlined housing status decisions. They also record 22 care leavers awaiting Andium accommodation, with other figures elsewhere in the meeting for those housed during 2025. The April 2026 minutes report that most care leavers were suitably accommodated.

Areas to be explored

The Panel might wish to request reconciled, updated figures showing waiting times, accommodation suitability and the support available to sustain tenancies. This would establish how effectively the existing pathways work and where additional investment is required.

The published material reviewed does not provide a sufficient basis for an overall judgement on the adequacy of support. Updated information on demand, access, waiting times and outcomes would help the Panel assess this. Suitable homes could improve stability and reduce disruption if they provide the right capacity, open on time and have sustainable staffing and support. The public data at present is not comprehensive enough to connect investment to outcomes.

While the focus is on the Loving Homes budget, the Panel could also examine housing provision for young people whose support needs continue beyond 19. Preparation for adulthood should reflect readiness and individual circumstances, with opportunities to return for help after a setback.

The Financial Annex's broad service allocations do not, by themselves, demonstrate the sufficiency of the care-leaving offer. We recommend that a specific account of funding, staffing and forecast demand be assessed before reaching a conclusion on adequacy.

Jersey Cares' views

We welcome the objectives of the Children's Services Improvement Plan

We also welcomed housing pathway work and streamlined housing status decisions at the time.

Our priorities are:

- Suitable accommodation secured before leaving care, with continuing tenancy support;
- A dependable adult who remains available throughout the transition;
- Practical assistance with deposits, furnishings, bills and budgeting;
- Education and training support covering living costs, equipment, transport and holiday accommodation; and,
- Flexible and prompt help when an initial housing, education or employment arrangement breaks down.

We commend the "Care Leaver Offer" and the promises contained therein.

3. The Budget proposes investment in the Loving Homes Estate to expand and modernise residential care provision. In your view, what impact is this investment likely to have on outcomes for children and young people in care?

The public evidence

The July 2025 Corporate Parenting Board minutes recorded a tier-one Government risk, the closure of three homes and loss of eight beds, together with concerns about staffing and the security of interim leased provision. This makes the distinction between replacement and additional capacity particularly important.

Table 21 of the Budget proposes £4.067 million in 2027, £2.310 million in 2028 and £5.298 million in 2029 for the Loving Homes Estate: £11.675 million in total, comprising £6.135 million for residential care and £5.540 million for secure care.

The Budget also records forecast programme expenditure of £295,000 in 2026 against a budget of £2.269 million, with expenditure reprofiled into subsequent years. The Panel could establish the reasons for this change, its consequences for children and the assurance available on revised delivery dates.

Areas to be explored

Each project should have a funded operating model covering recruitment, training, supervision, therapeutic support and maintenance. The secure-care element should be supported by a distinct assessment of need and an explanation of investment in preventative and less restrictive alternatives.

Jersey Cares' views

Jersey Cares supports investment in suitable, stable homes.

Our view is that children (and care-leavers) should help shape their homes. Success should be measured through placement stability, wellbeing, relationships and children's own accounts of safety and belonging.

4. Beyond investment in accommodation, what additional support services, programmes or interventions are required to improve the wellbeing, aspirations and life chances of care-experienced children and young people?

The public evidence

The July 2025 Corporate Parenting Board minutes identify a particular shortage of fostering provision for teenagers while also recording improvements within the fostering service.

Areas to be explored

The Panel should recognise that progress and could examine whether the Budget supports further recruitment and retention, appropriate remuneration, specialist training and practical help for carers. Residential investment should sit alongside a sustainable range of family-based options

Jersey Cares' views

We support a mixed range of on-Island accommodation solutions, with the inevitable prospect that some children's needs will always be too specialised to be able to be supported in a small jurisdiction. Our view is that long term planning should minimise avoidable placements away from Jersey and support continuity of relationships, education and advocacy when they are necessary

Our priorities include:

- Consistent staff and carers, supported through effective supervision and manageable workloads;
- Timely therapeutic and mental health support, with continuity into adult services.

- Support for family and sibling relationships where appropriate to the child's wishes and welfare;
- Educational assistance that follows children through placement changes;
- Accessible independent advocacy, including for children who cannot readily communicate their wishes; and,
- Ordinary opportunities for friendship, sport, culture and community participation.

Independent advocacy should be accessible wherever a child is placed, with sufficient time to build trust and support participation in decisions. These recurring services should be funded alongside the estate programme.

5. Are there particular barriers preventing care-experienced young people from accessing education, employment, training, volunteering opportunities or stable housing, and should further investment be directed towards addressing these barriers?

The public evidence

The existing offer already addresses several practical costs that can otherwise obstruct participation.

Areas to be explored

The review could test whether eligible young people know what is available, receive help promptly and can sustain their chosen housing, learning or employment arrangements. Published entitlements and successful access are different measures.

Potential barriers for examination include administrative requirements, interrupted education, additional support needs and the timing of assistance.

We do not present these as established current service failures. Further investment should respond to evidenced unmet need or delivery constraints. Changes to processes or coordination may sometimes be the more effective response.

Jersey Cares' views

Jersey Cares supports combining personalised support with flexible financial help: educational bursaries, paid work experience, apprenticeships, tenancy assistance and help with essential participation costs.

Young people with disabilities, additional learning needs or interrupted education should receive tailored support. Volunteering could provide meaningful experience and connection alongside realistic routes into paid employment.

6. How effectively does the Proposed Budget support the Government's role as a corporate parent, and are there areas where additional investment or policy development would improve outcomes for children and young people in care?

The public evidence

The July 2025 Corporate Parenting Board minutes confirm that four thematic subgroups and a Delivery Group were already established, with further initiatives planned for 2026.

Later published minutes record progress in participation and education.

Areas to be explored

The Corporate Portfolio Management Office oversees expenditure on the Children's Social Care Improvement Programme. Existing programme assurance should help the Panel examine the proposed Budget's assumptions and expected outcomes.

The Panel can build on those arrangements by asking for current reporting that links Budget commitments to delivery dates, responsible services and benefits for children.

Jersey Cares' views

We recognise the existing Board, subgroups and delivery arrangements.

Children's participation should influence priorities and evaluation, with accessible feedback explaining what changed. Individual independent advocacy should remain available alongside collective participation. Information presented publicly must protect children from identification.

Overall

We encourage the Panel to support the Children's Services Improvement Plan's ambitions, as we do, while seeking clear evidence of delivery.

The central questions are whether suitable homes and dependable support become available when children need them, whether the workforce can sustain that provision, and whether care leavers experience a secure and supported transition to adulthood.

Yours sincerely,



Simon Nash
CEO
Jersey Cares

[i] registration number 437

[ii] under Article 44 of the Children and Young People (Jersey) Law 2022 and, Children and Young People (Independent Advocates) (Jersey) Regulations 2025.

[iii] at clause 6.1 of the Service Specification

[iv] including, *inter alia*: the Proposed Budget 2027 – 2030 (P.73); the Proposed Annex – Budget 2027 – 2030 (R.159); the published minutes of the Corporate Parenting Board (https://www.gov.je/caring/children/socialcareservice/pages/corporateparentingboard. aspx), and especially that of 28 July 2025 and the published notes of the Children's Services Improvement Plan (https:// www.gov.je/Caring/Children/SocialCareService/Pages/ChildrensServicesImprovement Plan.aspx).

[v] at clause 11.04