

FOREWORD

Our remit has been to establish what went wrong in the island's care system over many decades. This we have done, mindful of the duty that any society has to the most vulnerable of its members.

That there were failings is not in dispute. The States of Jersey final submissions stated:

“It is, without doubt and of incalculable regret, that children have been failed whilst in the care of the States of Jersey.”¹

It is clear to us, and dealt with in this Report, that efforts have been made, and are being made, to improve the care system in Jersey. As the States of Jersey acknowledged in its closing submissions to the Inquiry:

“It is, however, recognised that in the area of legislation and policy, there is still a significant amount of work required.”²

A looked after child is already at a disadvantage in his or her journey through life compared with a child being raised in a loving family. It does not matter whether the disadvantage results from a circumstance of birth or from events within the child's birth family. It does not matter whether the disadvantage is the result of a crime committed against the child or even a crime committed by the child. In order to overcome that disadvantage and have a fair chance of a productive and happy life, he or she needs more, not less, care and attention than a child who is not in care.

Treating children in care as a statistic or as a resource issue low on the list of financial priorities fails those children and shames the society that makes that judgement.

A care system in which insufficient effort is made to prevent children from being abused, whether physically, emotionally or sexually, or a justice system in which insufficient steps are taken to investigate and punish such abuse where it occurs, is indefensible.

¹ States of Jersey closing submissions, paragraph 55

² WD009424, States of Jersey closing submissions, paragraph 46

