



**Children's  
Commissioner  
for Jersey**

## **Children's Commissioner for Jersey**

**About Us and Our Aims  
2019 - 2023**

This document is also available on our website or by request in the following formats:

- Easy read
- Large print
- Child friendly (with a reading age of 6-8 years)
- Portuguese
- Polish

For a more visual document, our 'Plan on a page' can be accessed on our website or by request.

If you have any difficulty accessing this document, you can contact us to arrange a phone call or a face-to-face appointment to discuss the content.

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## **Message from Deborah, Children’s Commissioner for Jersey**

This plan is for children and young people in Jersey – to show them what we will do to promote and protect their rights.

**On Monday 8 January 2018, my first day in office as the first Children’s Commissioner for Jersey, I promised:**

“I will listen to children and young people to find out what is important to them. I will speak up for children and young people to ensure their voice is heard.”

To ensure we prioritise the issues of greatest importance to children and young people across Jersey, we undertook a full-scale consultation involving them and the adults who work with them, to find out what my priorities should be. The findings were published in “The Children’s Commissioner’s Island Wide Consultation: The Findings,” which is on our website at [www.childcomjersey.org.je](http://www.childcomjersey.org.je)

The findings showed most children and young people didn’t know their rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This was ratified in the Island in 2014. It is important that our first four-year plan lays the foundation for developing and embedding a culture of their rights, and this is reflected in our aims. These aims will let us put in place the building blocks to make long-lasting change and to make life better for our children and young people. We will speak out on behalf of those children and young people affected by the themes in our consultation as we drive forward the aims outlined in this plan.

A significant development has been the passing of a law establishing my post, the ‘Commissioner for Children and Young People (Jersey) Law.’ This sets out the statutory duties of the Commissioner: what the Commissioner must do to promote and protect the rights of children and young people.

Our vision, mission and values are all in this plan. How we work as an International Human Rights Institution for children and young people is vital. We will ensure the rights of children and young people are at the heart of all we do.

Whilst this plan is our first step to showing children and young people what we will do to improve things over coming years, it's important we are accountable and can demonstrate the impact of our work. An annual report will be produced each year outlining what has been achieved and the impact it has had.

This plan is my commitment. It is how I will keep my promise. It will help us look back in four years and ask whether we have helped to change the lives of children and young people in Jersey for the better.

**Deborah McMillan**

## **Our Vision** - what we want to happen

Jersey is a place where the rights of all children and young people are realised and respected and their voices shape their lives.

## **Our Mission** - what we will do to help make it happen

We will champion the rights of all children and young people in Jersey. They all have rights by law, and the United Nations Convention on those rights has been signed by the Government of Jersey.

### **We will promote and protect the rights of children and young people by:**

- **Supporting** them to find out about their rights
  - In school
  - In their families
  - In the newspapers and other media
  - By publishing what children and young people tell the Commissioner is important in their lives
- **Listening** to them to find out what's important
  - By going to meet them where they live, learn and are growing up
- **Advising** them and those who care for them if they feel they're not getting the help and services they need or believe they are entitled to
- **Influencing** the government, other organisations and adults who have a responsibility for making a difference to their lives, by making sure they keep their promises to children and young people
- **Speaking up** for them on important issues - the Commissioner is the children's champion

## **Our Values - what we believe in**

### **We are:**

#### **Child and young person centred**

Children and young people are at the centre of all that we do. We involve them in all our work to empower them so they exercise their rights.

#### **Accountable**

We are open, honest and responsible in everything we do.

#### **Non-discriminatory**

We treat everyone with respect dignity and compassion. Whoever you are, you are equally important to our work.

#### **Brave**

We demonstrate fearless leadership. We will always seek to protect children and young people's rights even when it's difficult.

#### **Independent**

We champion what we know to be right, we will not be unduly influenced by people in power, with influence in politics, the media, or any other setting.

## **Office of the Children's Commissioner for Jersey**

**The appointment of the first independent Children's Commissioner for Jersey was recommended by the Independent Jersey Care Inquiry in 2017.**

The Office of the Children's Commissioner for Jersey is an independent office created by the Commissioner for Children and Young People (Jersey) Law 2019.

The main role of the Commissioner is to promote and protect the rights of all children under the age of 18, and all young people aged under 25 if they have care experience, have a disability or have been in contact with the youth justice system.

**To promote and protect these rights the Commissioner should:**

- Make sure children, young people and adults know about and understand the rights of children and young people.
- Make sure people in power and with influence in Jersey all respect, protect and fulfil the rights of children and young people.
- Make suggestions to improve the law, policies and the way people work.
- Research children's lives and let adults know when the rights of children and young people are not met or respected, and what needs to happen to ensure they are.
- Make sure adults listen to what children and young people say when decisions are made that affect their lives.

**The Commissioner must do the following things:**

- Use the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and other relevant human rights instruments, including those already signed up to by Jersey.

- Involve children and young people and the people that work with them in the work of the office.
- Write a plan explaining the work of the office and tell people about it. We will have a new plan every four years.
- Make sure children and young people know about the role of the Commissioner and how to contact the office.
- Write a report every year saying what has been done to make sure that the rights of children and young people have been respected, protected and fulfilled.

**When the rights of children and young people are not being respected the Commissioner has the power to:**

- Provide children and young people with information about their rights.
- Support children and young people to complain.
- Work with people and organisations who provide services to help them to solve any problems or complaints before they reach crisis point.
- Investigate cases where the rights of children and young people have not been respected and suggest how things could be improved.
- Go to court for children and young people in certain circumstances.



## **Our Aims**

### **1. Driving change: We will develop and embed a culture of children and young people's rights in Jersey by:**

- **Helping** children and young people to know and understand their rights
- **Working** with government to provide expert advice on the rights of children and young people
- **Stimulating** discussion and debate about achieving an Island community that respects children and young people and places a real value on offering them the opportunities they need to fulfil their potential
- **Inspiring** people to achieve better outcomes for all children and young people, regardless of their background, family, income or status
- **Supporting** public bodies and civil society organisations to ensure they incorporate children and young people's views in everything they do
- **Promoting** the rights and welfare of all children and young people
- **Providing** Island wide leadership on the rights of children and young people, becoming the centre of advice, expertise and guidance for all on the Island

### **2. Doing it the right way**

**We will be a strong, resilient and inspiring organisation which promotes and protects the rights of children and young people by:**

- **Ensuring** children and young people's views are at the heart of all we do

- **Demonstrating** the highest standards in all we do - we will be a human rights institution
- **Setting** high standards in order to influence real change - we will be ambitious and daring
- **Developing** a culture of sharing knowledge and learning across organisations in Jersey
- **Being** a source of support and help for children and young people who feel their voices have not been heard by others who are meant to help, support and nurture them

### **3. Proving it can be done**

**We will make sure the rights of children and young people are at the centre of laws, policies and practice in Jersey by:**

- **Influencing** the development of policy and laws relating to children and young people and monitoring the effectiveness of policy implementation
- **Reporting** to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child and other international groups on how well the rights of children and young people are being respected in Jersey
- **Championing** the incorporation of the UNCRC into domestic legislation in Jersey
- **Using** the breadth of the Commissioner for Children and Young People's Law to promote and protect the rights of children and young people

# The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

## What is the United Nations?

The United Nations (UN) is made up of 193 countries from across the world. One of its roles is to support these countries to keep their human rights promises.

## What are children's rights?

Children's rights are the promises that the world's governments have made to children. Children under 18 have a special set of rights in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child - UNCRC.

The Children's Commissioner's work is rooted in the UNCRC. This was first signed by the UN in 1989. Since then, nearly every country in the world has signed it. Jersey's government signed in 2014, and has committed to the promises in the UNCRC. This means that they have agreed to do everything in their power to protect and promote children's rights to survive and thrive, learn and grow, make their voices heard and reach their full potential.

All children have the same rights. All rights are interconnected and of equal importance. **The rights in the Convention can be grouped into four categories – survival, development, participation and protection rights**, as well as a set of guiding principles that explain how governments should work to implement the UNCRC and how organisations like the Children's Commissioner can hold them to account.

For children and young people aged between 18 and 25 with care experience, a disability or experience of the youth justice system, the Commissioner will promote and protect their rights as set out in other UN treaties.

## **Survival**

You have a right to life, good food, water, and to grow up healthy

## **Development**

You have a right to an education and time to relax and play

## **Participation**

You have a right to say how you feel, be listened to, and taken seriously

## **Protection**

You have a right to be treated well and not be hurt by anyone

The UNCRC influences every aspect of our work. Every year on the 20th November we will celebrate World Children's Day. We will also report to the UN Committee when they review the UK's progress on implementing the UNCRC.

## **How we will track our progress**

We will ensure children and young people are at the heart of our work, putting in place a range of ways for them to tell us what we're doing right, and where we need to improve.

We will work with our Youth Advisory Panel, Adult Advisory Panel and Audit and Risk Advisory Panel. The three groups will hold us to account and give us advice on our work and where we ought to go next, as well as helping us to develop ways of measuring how we are doing against each of our aims.

We will produce an annual report every year that shows our activities and whether we have achieved our aims, and we will present this to the States Assembly.

## **Our Resources**

### **Our money**

The office receives money every year from the Government of Jersey, which has to ensure the office has enough money and resources to do everything it must do under the Commissioner for Children and Young People's Law.

### **Our team**

The Commissioner has a small team working in the office. More information on the team can be found on our website:

**[www.childcomjersey.org.je](http://www.childcomjersey.org.je)**