

NEWS RELEASE

Date: 6/10/14

Place: St Helier, Jersey

INDEPENDENT JERSEY CARE INQUIRY APPEALS FOR WITNESSES FROM CHANNEL ISLANDS

Anyone with experience of Jersey's care system is invited to get in touch with an Inquiry set up to investigate the abuse of children.

The Independent Jersey Care Inquiry is looking into the sexual, emotional and physical abuse of children in a number of the island's residential and foster homes over the last sixty years. The actions and experiences of staff who worked in these services, government agencies, the justice system and politicians will also be reviewed.

The IJCI is led by Frances Oldham QC, with Alyson Leslie and Professor Sandy Cameron CBE. They have extensive experience of handling complex and sensitive inquiries, as well as expertise in residential childcare, abuse allegations and safeguarding young people. They are promising a "robust and fearless examination" to establish what went wrong and whether the abuse was covered up and make recommendations for the future.

The Panel would like to hear from people who have suffered abuse in care or foster homes on the island, as well as those responsible for providing or monitoring these services.

Arrangements are being put in place to support anyone who gives evidence at the hearings.

Stressing the Inquiry's intention to be open and transparent to the public, Mrs Oldham said:

"The Inquiry aims to understand what happened, why it was allowed to happen and what lessons can be learned. We know that many people who were in care in Jersey left the Island and live elsewhere on the Channel Islands and therefore may not know of the Inquiry. We will put witnesses at the heart of this process and do all we can to ensure that they are encouraged to trust us with their stories and experiences.

"Fair treatment of witnesses is a priority. In conducting all of this work, we will be acting independently: independently of the States of Jersey, independently of the police and independently of any other organisation or individual in Jersey or elsewhere."

The IJCI has already heard from experts on the care system as it tries to establish how care homes were managed and what normal practice was at the time in question. A number of former residents have also been recounting their experiences.

Anyone coming forward will be contacted by the inquiry's Legal Team, who can make arrangements for anonymity or for evidence to be heard in private. Evidence can also be given via video link by those not wishing to travel to Jersey. Arrangements for witness support are also in place.

The Inquiry team can be contacted via the following:

Email: info@jerseycareinquiry.org

Address: PO Box 551, St Helier, Jersey, JE4 8XN

Dial Freephone from Jersey/UK: 0800 735 0100

International callers dial: +44 (0) 1534 828798

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Photos available for use:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/jerseyinquiry/>

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you would like further details,
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