

**LIFE  
ON THE  
ROCK.**



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# Introduction

**Life on the Rock tells the life stories of 21 children and young people, aged from 9-18, on the island of Jersey. In line with her mandate, the Children's Commissioner wanted children's views to be central in the development of the study, and so it employs a unique children's rights-based methodology developed at the Centre for Children's Rights, Queen's University Belfast.**

The researchers worked with a children's advisory group (CAG) team to design the study including: developing the qualitative methods, interpreting the data and contributing to the design and dissemination of the report. The research team also conducted a secondary analysis of existing survey data collated by the Office of the Children's Commissioner. Further details as to how the study was conducted can be found in the appendix.

What emerges from the collection of stories is that childhood on the Rock is not one thing. For almost all the children who told us their life stories, it was characterized in the main by family, friendship and fun – often on one of Jersey's beaches or hanging out in St Helier. However, even though all of the children who shared their life stories spoke of these things, an overarching conclusion was that life was not enjoyed to the same extent at all times, or experienced in the same way, by any of the children. In this sense, life on the Rock was a continuous oscillation between a number of contrasts and conflicts in Jersey that existed, sometimes in tension. On the one hand, children appreciated how safe the island is, how everyone knows everyone in the communities in which they live, but on the other hand, there is less privacy or escape from the public gaze – whether out in town, or visible online. That also brings particular challenges to children whose lives do not conform to what was presented by children and young people as the 'Jersey norm' – straight and white, enjoying outdoor sport, interested in fashion and beauty, and speaking with an English accent.

While Jersey offers many of its children a seemingly idyllic backdrop in which to grow and develop and learn, many children do not enjoy this to the same extent as others since much of what is available comes at a cost.

These costs may relate to conflicts between housing, transport, leisure, school, or even medical assistance, and in this regard, not all costs fell equally. Living in certain parts of the island can preclude children from engaging in the many activities that are clustered in St Helier due to the expense and sometimes inconvenience of buses.

A stereotype of a Jersey child might be one born on the island to wealthy parents, getting a high quality education and enjoying a range of diverse, often outdoor, activities. Yet even some of the children for whom this was generally true reported challenges at times in their family lives, with their peers, or in school or their communities. When this happened, families were often very supportive but services that might have helped were not available or not as helpful as children would have wished. Safety concerns were notably focused on issues with peer groups, school and occasionally family. For children not born on the island, or living in families for whom financial worries were a concern, there were additional challenges faced. Their accounts of their lives suggested: challenges integrating; a reduced sense of belonging; instability; and at times significant stress. What emerged was not so much a tale of two lives (Jersey born or not; 'haves' and 'have nots'), but a complex array of experiences that are impacted not only by factors such as national origin and socio-economic status, but gender, disability, sexuality and race, among other things. This report tells the stories of young people living and growing up in Jersey, in their own words. All names have been changed to protect the identity of the young people who participated in the project.

## What is life like for children in Jersey?

Life on the Rock is presented under 10 core themes that capture the key aspects of children's lives on the island, such as accessing an education, getting support and social media. In each of the themes the data is presented in four sections. These are as follows:

### The Survey:

A secondary analysis of relevant data from the Office's 2018 survey of over 1700 children.



### Social biographies:

A synthesis of the experiences based on the 21 children's life stories.



### Vignettes:

Personal stories highlighting the experiences of individual children.



### The Children's Advisory Groups' Key Messages:

The CAG's response to the findings, focusing on what had resonance for them, what surprised them and what they think needs to happen so that children can enjoy their rights.



The discussion of the 10 themes is followed by the CAG's recommendations for each theme. These provide policy makers, professionals and other adults who work with children, information to consider when making improvements to their services, based on what is important for children.

The ten cross-cutting themes are followed by an account of the participants' aspirations about the future. These are summarised without analysis: the children's hopes and aspirations in many cases speak to their past experiences and current lives as well as their hopes for the future, whether that is on or off the island.

The report concludes with a significant cross-cutting theme which was threaded across the children's life stories – that of respect.

# Housing



Housing was one of the top five issues that would make Jersey better for over a quarter of children, with concerns increasing as children get older.

# 1

## Housing

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Jaya, 13	<b>9</b>
Sophie, 16	<b>10</b>

# Housing

*I think houses and flats are really expensive in Jersey and sometimes mums and dads don't earn enough money to afford a nice house for them and their children to live in and sometimes landlords have nice big houses but won't let children live in them. (survey respondent, female, 10)*

Life on the Rock for many children in Jersey, like 10-year old Joshua living on the west of the island, means life in a beautiful place, in a comfortable home within easy reach of a beach:

*I'm pretty privileged to live right next to the sea with a beautiful house. Eleanor also described a picturesque home in a quiet, convenient part of the island.*

*It's quite nice because it's not in the middle of the town and it's not just one of those houses by the road, it's an estate, so it's quite nice there and there's lots of trees around it. We know quite a few people in the estate, so it's nice and it's quite close to school. (Eleanor, 9)*

Yet children were aware that this comes at a cost. The adjective 'expensive' pervaded stories of homes with a range of superlatives added: very, very, very expensive; incredibly expensive; and crazy expensive. Olivia, a 16-year-old girl who lives in the South East of the island, knew that although her parents were in quite well-paid jobs and could pay off a mortgage, it wasn't the same for everyone: some like of my friends... live in houses, like, that are quite run down and all that. And especially like people who just moved over here.

Many of the children interviewed, particularly those aged 13-18, were aware of housing issues faced by their own or other families. Instability and disruption in home life featured heavily in a number of children's lives. For some, that was a result of the initial move to Jersey. Charlotte (18) described her family's move from a pretty massive suburban house which they owned, to rental accommodation in Jersey.

*My sister... the one closest to me, took it the worst. Me... my brother was kind of 'eh', and my older sister was also pretty upset. So, we had a... [Smiles] group of a distraught mum, kind of distraught kids, kind of [moving to Jersey] with all of our stuff. (Charlotte, 18)*

Other children born on the island, like Olivia, recognised the struggle to downgrade faced by newcomers in the quality of their homes on arrival, given that their four-bedroom flat... was like half the price of their current house. Initial moves to Jersey were often followed by periods of instability as children recounted moving home multiple times, perhaps because accommodation was attached to parent's employment, inadequate for the family's needs or sold by the

landlord. Even though Charlotte considered her family pretty well-off, they remained susceptible to such instability and were under threat of eviction at one point.

*The housing has been crazy too... the first house we rented for two years, then we moved to another rented house and because we were under the impression in the first house, we'd be kicked out... they were going to sell it to developers to knock it down ... Em, so like, they'd end our lease. And then the second house we were renting and then my parents decided they wanted to buy a house. So, we were renting until we found one and they did. So, we moved again, I think about 8 months to a year in that rented house. (Charlotte, 18)*

Struggles related to housing were not restricted to newcomer families. For Jackson, aged 14, whose mother was born on the island, constant movement from the age of three was linked to attaining affordable, accessible housing, which could accommodate his wheelchair.

*All I remember really is the last estate, and this estate really. I think we moved four times. And I prefer this one out of all of them houses... the problem was, it [wheelchair] didn't properly fit through the door and around the house so you had to maneuver, so yeah that house was kind of too small. And we got here and we preferred it a lot more because it is kind of open... And we got some stuff moved around. All the garden used to be gravel, which meant I couldn't get out and then we got it changed to bricks. (Jackson, 14)*

Poor or inadequate housing conditions featured in a number of other children's stories where they told of, for example, cramped living spaces, sharing a bedroom with parents, run down property or an inability to play freely at home.

*Because it was over this [business premises], so when we would be running around playing games they would come up and complain. They said we were as loud as elephants once. Lived in flat for around 4/5 years. Nice flat and mum had enough of them coming up through that time. Thinks that's the first place we lived. (Freya, 11)*

Jaya and Sophie's stories illustrate a number of housing-related challenges faced by children in Jersey. Both girls' stories highlight how children's experiences of housing are shaped by other factors – parental employment, family relationships and trauma, landlord regulation, residential status – and in turn impact on important areas of young people's lives including schooling and the formation of friendships.

## Jaya, 13

Jaya moved to Jersey at a young age with her parents and two brothers, a move she found difficult because of her perceived difference.

*Because I wasn't born in Jersey lots of people used to make fun of me and just say things about how I looked and about the colour of my skin... everyone knew each other and everyone had their friends, none were really willing to open up to other people. Some people were just a bit mean.*

On the breakdown of her parents' relationship, Jaya, along with her mother and brothers, had to access emergency accommodation for a really long time; accommodation that was unsuitable for a mother and three children.

*It was really cramped, it was a really small room... there wasn't much space for us... we would have to share the kitchen with seven other families that were there, so sometimes it was a bit of a squeeze. If you are trying to cook, there would be small children running around and sometimes if people would have hot pans it would be hard because the children would be running around.*

The stay in emergency accommodation was prolonged due to the lack of affordable housing, having no housing qualifications after living in Jersey for five years, and the exclusion of children from some accommodation.

*So, we didn't have qualifications, so the houses then were really expensive, and my mum couldn't afford them, so we had to stay there for a long time ... We did find one that was unqualified, and it was within the price range and they would say 'no children'.... we kept looking, all the houses were saying 'no children allowed' so that was also quite hard.*

In fact, it was really hard for Jaya, as in trying to access suitable accommodation her mother couldn't pay for us to go to a lot of things, and because she didn't have a lot of things other children would make fun of her, intensifying the bullying she had first experienced on arrival to Jersey. After five months in emergency accommodation, Jaya navigated access to those she thought responsible for housing in Jersey: *I wanted to see if there was anyone in charge of housing and stuff like that, then I found them, and I got their email and sent an email, triggering a process whereby the family attained qualifications and moved to a really nice house.*

## Sophie, 16

Although born in Jersey, Sophie spent her early life off island living in a **super safe, close knit** community where *everyone knows everyone*.

Due to implications of the financial crash in 2008, *we couldn't afford where we were living*. Sophie's family returned to Jersey when she was aged five where they lived in temporary accommodation with family friends in a *little room* for just under a year.

*It didn't feel like home because it wasn't our home, and we weren't in our home because our home was the house ... with the huge garden and the stinging nettles and the lavender and the edible flowers.*

The move also entailed a change in school, an unsettling experience for a five-year-old moving *from a school of 30 to being in a class of 30* and she described how *everything had to change* as she *forced herself to be comfortable* with her new peer group. Almost a year later, the family were able to access rental accommodation linked to Sophie's mother's job, a *weird but settling time in her life*, in a house that *kind of sucked*. The house, she recounted, did not *meet any regulations* with steep stairs to her bedroom she described as unsafe. The family moved again to a 'lovely' neighbourhood in a two-bedroom house with a garden and near her school. Again, however, the house was not to an acceptable standard with, at various times, mould on the walls, a smashed door, a garden falling apart and a rat infestation, which the landlord *refused* to address, and Sophie's parents *couldn't afford to fix*. Referring to a lack of *regulations on private landlords* she assessed that an attempt to complain would be futile due to the priority given to financial investment on the island.

*The government ... find it very hard to intervene with private landlords and I think it's cause they make them a lot of money [laughs] because a lot of money comes from offshore investment in the island... that's something I have a bit of an issue with ... they will put money above you so if they've got investors who are doing something wrong... who cares? Because they're making money off it and that was definitely felt when we lived there.*

Following her father's death, Sophie's mother *couldn't afford* to maintain high rental payments on her own, and eventually they moved in with her mother's new partner a few years later. The impact, again, was felt in a move to a new school *all on my own*, a *daunting* experience where she *suffered pretty bad bullying* and took a *very long time* to establish a friendship group. At the time of interview, a number of years later, she reflects back on a *rocky start* to a point where life has now *mellowed*. Yet, she holds aspirations to leave Jersey – *I don't think it's too happy a place for me*.

## CAG's Key Messages: Housing

- Houses, flats and rents are very expensive in Jersey.
- High housing costs may cause families to struggle, take on extra jobs or social services may get involved when it is not the parents' fault.
- Over population on some parts of the island encourages over building and pushes up prices in more popular areas. This can also cause noise pollution and criminal activity.
- People need to be more aware of land sales and planning permissions so they can know what is going on in the area, and have a chance to say if they think this is a good thing or a bad thing.
- People may not wish to come to Jersey because it is expensive or they may need to move outside of the main towns to afford a home, but then they may be further away from school and work causing traffic flow issues and environmental pollution.
- Different housing markets operate on the island (state, private landlord & employment related) and there is a lack of regulation around the quality and safety of some homes.
- Some property owners live off island, are difficult to contact and less likely to maintain their homes and deal with essential repairs and maintenance.
- Some families may experience overcrowding and high private rental charges while on long waiting lists to secure a home. A tough allocation system can affect their chances of getting social housing particularly when people are in need or need special adaptations to their home for a disability/wheelchair user.
- The quality of accommodation provided by work companies for people who come to the island to work with a company can vary. Modern and clean accommodation may be provided to professionals or those working in hospitality, but may be not so good for those working in agriculture on a farm especially if they have a young family.



# Leisure Time and Activity



*'Better places for young people to spend time and play in their local area'* was selected by 42% of respondents as one of the top five things that would make life in Jersey better for young people. As children get older, they are more likely to say that there is nothing to do and nowhere to go in their local area.

# 2

## Leisure Time and Activity

Leo, 10	<b>17</b>
Charlotte, 18	<b>18</b>



# Leisure Time and Activity

*I feel like as a teenager there's nothing much for us to do. Like there's stuff to do if you're 10 or under and there's things to do if you're 18+ but being 12/13-16 there's literally nothing to do.*  
(survey respondent, 'Other' gender, 14)

Leisure activities were a strong feature in children's accounts as they spoke of the importance of varied hobbies, sports and ways of spending time with their friends.

For younger children, clubs which offered a range of activities allowed them to explore new interests. Leo, for example, described a youth club with such variety that everyone would 'fit in'.

*It's where you can do whatever you want. There's football, basketball, there's table tennis, there's music room, there's movie room and then they always have loads of say, drinks, like they have Fanta or Coke, whatever, all of the fizzy drinks and everything. There's a snooker table, table football, there's anything you want to do, you'll probably fit in. You can just do whatever you want there and it's so nice.*  
(Leo, 10)

For Jackson (14), who has a physical disability and struggled to find something he enjoyed, discovering a talent for golf has been very important.

*When I was around the age of 10 I was a bit nervous about going on to be a teenager, I wasn't really like ready, so... I am here now, and I actually enjoy it a lot. But I feel like... sometimes in Jersey it is kind of like boring because there is not a lot of stuff to do in Jersey, but I have started to play golf... I have been playing that a lot and have gotten better... yeah, I actually play it quite a lot now.* (Jackson, 14)

Other young people spoke about the positive impact of leisure activities on their mental health, providing a *motivation to leave the house* (Sarah, 15) while many emphasised the importance of the social aspect of leisure activities. Much of what was good about what they did was linked to having fun times with their friends outside of school, where you can't really express who you are (Olivia, 16). Others noted leisure activities as a way of expanding their social networks through which they made some of their closest friends (Elliott, 16).

Many activities took the form of structured classes, most focused on various sports and children were aware that football – whether a personal interest or not – was a key feature of Jersey leisure time. Elliott, however, noted that opportunities on the island were more limited for children who didn't like certain sports.

*I don't particularly like football, or rugby or even watching it but if that's what you want to do there are loads of things people my age can still do. I think it is quite an imbalance... if you want to do like... not academic but more like sit down*

*like learning sort of things... like if I wanted to do something Politics related instead of something like say football you are obviously going to have a lot more football things to do... There is not really that much you can do ... it is not like there is a deficit of things, that you can't do anything... there is still some things that you can do but there could be more... there could be more for my interest.* (Elliott, 16)

Other structured classes included music, singing classes, drama and cadets and for some children, between school and structured activities, life seemed pretty busy.

*My best friend, I've known her since reception... we did a lot of stuff together. Like we do rugby together, we do swimming together, we do netball together, we do choir together. ... And I do extra- I do my school netball on Thursday... And then I also do like a netball club like club netball, not school netball, on Friday night with two of my friends.* (Victoria, 10)

Indeed, some children noted that as they got older, their studies impacted on their ability to maintain these important leisure pursuits. Whilst Joshua, aged 10, was one of few who also noted the importance of *relaxing*, it was difficult to see where some children fitted this in, or were able to prioritise it. For older children, relaxation came in the form of unstructured leisure with peers, most typically spent *wandering around town* and *hanging around* particular hotspots, as well as time spent in each other houses or connecting from home via online game consoles.

Accessibility of leisure activities and locations differed across the children's accounts. A minority spoke of amenities that were accessible in their local parishes and noted the convenience of walking or cycling independently to their location. More typically, however, leisure activities required travel across the island and most relied on transport provided by parents or, in a few cases, older siblings. Where public transport was a possibility for some older children, they noted that living and having activities on certain bus routes was an advantage but also added a cost to any activity, some children noting the added cost when turning 16. For Jackson, aged 14, the thought of public transport caused him to *panic* as buses are *quite crowded to get the wheelchair in there* and so he had never used it by himself. Alternatively, he would meet up with friends *now and again* locally for football but more typically connected with friends online every day via his game console.

The provision of sport and outdoor activities was evident across children's accounts and Jersey's many beaches was a positive point for children. Most children were engaged in activities – either structured or unstructured – which brought enjoyment or a sense of achievement. However, a number of children emphasised the lack of suitable provision of affordable leisure in Jersey. Whilst some activities

seemed relatively inexpensive – such as £2 for a football session or £30 for swimming classes for a year – other activities, typically not sport related, came at a greater cost. For example, music is a big part of Reuben's (age 14) life and whilst he enjoyed the school's free programme for learning a musical instrument, outside of school he had to stop his singing classes.

*They were asking my mum for like more money, so mum was like 'Reuben, you were good singing...' Because I learnt it myself 'so you don't need this, will you just stop?'... My parents thought it was not like a good use of money.*  
(Reuben, 14)

The expense of living in Jersey more generally also restricted young people's unstructured leisure opportunities as they noted the sometimes exclusionary cost of shopping, *to go out for food*, cinema and bowling.

*We don't always have money so sometimes we'll just hang out there, but then other times it can, it sort of depends on what you're doing. If you've got a massive group and you want to go bowling or something it can cost quite a lot.*  
(William, 14)

Whilst the best beaches were those with activities, a day at the beach could also turn out to be quite expensive. For a number of children, therefore, the provision of free or more affordable activities (including associated transport) was an important priority.

*So I think like if you have more activities that are like kinda like free or not as expensive, then more people will get involved because money is quite... expensive to be honest.* (Olivia, 16)

There was a sense across a number of accounts that as children got older – particularly in their teenage years – there were less age-appropriate activities, with much of the leisure provision aimed towards the younger ones (Olivia, 16) and older children relying more so on unstructured leisure activities.

*I think especially at my age, everyone moans the fact that there isn't enough things to do in Jersey because it's such a small island, once you've done something a few times it gets very boring [laughs]. ... I think Jersey needs to do a lot of work on... entertainment for especially young people in Jersey.* (Anna, 16)

Some children also noted being excluded from places because of their age. Jaya, aged 13, recalled times when she and her friends had been asked to leave a shop.

*Well sometimes I've been to [shop] with my friends and some of the assistant people say if you are not buying*

*anything please can you leave. Sometimes we just want to look, and they will say if we are not buying anything to leave, and we have to go out.* (Jaya, 13)

In a similar vein, despite McDonald's being a regular place for children to report hanging out, a number of children reported not feeling welcome there.

*I don't particularly like it, but a lot of people go to McDonald's [laughs]. But they don't seem to like us being there. Like it's quite funny at 8 o'clock they turn on classical music to try and lead the children out which I think's really funny. It doesn't work. [laughs].* (Sophie, 16)

A number of children noted the decline or dilapidation of certain leisure amenities in Jersey, suggesting that the island was not fulfilling all its potential. A number recounted how Fort Regent was the site of leisure opportunities for their parents' generation, a place *basically where everyone would hang out* (Sarah, 15), but had become *underused* in recent years (Olivia, 16). Millennium Park was another landmark referred to as a regular hotspot but was also noted to have fallen into decline in parts.

*I think if the parks were a bit fixed up, Millennium Park, the stuff in there is always breaking. There is a thing that is pinned to the ground by ropes, they are built into the floor but it's always wobbling. You know those big swings, it's like a basket like that? So, usually that one comes apart, so I think if the park was fixed up a bit more.* (Jaya, 13)

A number of children also felt that the island's many parks and green spaces could be better used to house a range of festivals appealing to different tastes and interests.

*But there's nothing that's like festivals that aren't based around music like... it'd be quite nice if we could do like another film festival cause it got cancelled. Cause it's quite nice to be all together watching a film... And to make it free would be quite good as well because then everyone feels like included cause they'll be them people who can afford to go and there might be some people who'll be like I can't go cause I can't afford it ... Like the cinema is quite expensive em, so it would be kind of nice if we could do like films in the park, cause they have loads of parks and greenery, but we don't really use it.* (Olivia, 16)

'Weekender' was a special fixture in the Jersey calendar, which was mentioned by a number of children, particularly older teenagers who had been on a number of occasions. Those who had been to Weekender *loved it* or it was simply *something to do*, but there were a number of negative aspects that discouraged others to attend.

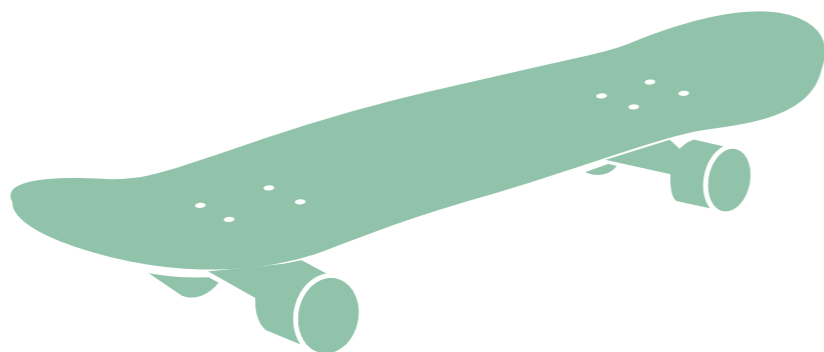


Sophie, aged 16, for example, noted that the only time she had ever been offered drugs was at Weekender and although she didn't feel pressure, she was clearly worried about six children being hospitalised after a bad batch of ecstasy – these kids are like 12. Like why is that happening? It just makes me feel uncomfortable. Substance use was also a feature of day-to-day social life for children and presented as a safety issue where some described friends who would expect me to do the same thing (Reuben, 14) and relationships broke down as a result. Safety concerns in this context was particularly noted by girls, attached to the very places that others had noted as usual hangouts. Millennium Park was to be avoided because of drugs... and drunk people (Anna, 16) as was Havre des Pas where young people were heavily drunk, typically high (Sophie, 16). Sophie, who had also witnessed incredibly drunk and high people at a house party she felt she needed to leave, continued to explain that substance use was linked to boredom.

*I just think there's stuff that needs doing with like alcohol and drugs. People fall into it really easily here. I think they get bored. Because there's not that much to do. And people just like end up doing drugs... the amount of especially as [my school] I find there's huge drug levels here and it's like... [groans] makes me a bit uncomfortable sometimes. I'm like why is everyone trying to like... do cocaine? (Sophie, 16)*

Boredom was also linked to children causing trouble. Oscar, aged 15, noted that fights at McDonald's were viewed as entertaining and could attract a crowd, Cause if we know about a fight, like everyone goes down to watch this fight (Oscar, 15). For others, however, such gatherings presented a threat where big groups of teenagers would intimidate younger children and the outbreak of fights caused concern (Jaya, 13).

Leo's and Charlotte's stories depict two different experiences of leisure in Jersey. Leo's account suggests he is fully integrated into Jersey leisure through his enjoyment and evident skill in football and is able to dedicate much time to this as well as leisure pursuits with the family. Charlotte, however, has many interests but struggled to find the time to pursue them as a result of her studies. She also expressed how her interests did not seem to 'fit' with Jersey youth culture, with negative consequences for her self-image and mental health.



## Leo, 10

Leo's parents moved to Jersey before he was born and he has lived there his whole life; his parents recognised **it's going to be a good life here**. Much of Leo's life story recounted positive experiences of both structured and unstructured leisure time on the island and this was reflected in the photos he chose to bring along to tell his story.

With a photo of the grounds of the Jersey Bulls, Leo explained he hadn't missed a single match of their home [games]. This was something he did with his dad in his spare time, and when his dad wasn't working. Leo and his dad also went off island to watch their favourite football team maybe once a month, if I'm lucky. Leo had played for his own local football club since the age of seven or eight where he described his coaches as being nice, and the team players as good footballers. He emphasised the importance of football with the range of photos he brought – his club's pitch, summer football camp and after his first football match for his school team which they drew, one all – and was clearly skilled with the accolades and opportunities he described receiving. He did express a number of frustrations, however, in relation to football, one being increased practise opportunity at the weekend: it would be really nice if there could be a school football pitch open. He also noted that:

*Jersey doesn't have the same opportunities as say UK people, cause say clubs [in England] only scout the ones in their country, they don't scout people in Jersey. Only like this club called Fulham, they come over, but they don't come over very often.*

Outside of football, Leo's hobbies remained active. When he was in reception, his parents took him to a running race... maybe 1K max and me and my friend, we were running together for the whole thing and at the end we came... I came out first and my friend came second. Since then, Leo had a number of cross-country achievements as well as doing triathlons – I enjoy that a lot. He also benefits from living in a coastal parish on the east of the island: it's really good cause I live next to the beach. He loves going to the beach with his sister and hanging out with his friends locally in the parish: loads of my friends live here. So sometimes we ride our bikes to each other's house, and we play football. He also enjoys the use of a friend's pool after football – It was so nice just to refresh yourself. Despite the opportunity to socialise within the parish, however, Leo noted that many leisure amenities were on the other side of the island and therefore required transport to be arranged.

*One thing about [the parish] that's not that good, is that most of the attractions in Jersey, they're all like on [the west] of the island. So, like the trampoline park, bowling, it's all over there and there's like no attractions... on this side of the island... on Sundays, my mum, she usually takes us, and [friends'] mums, we usually go to places like Amazing Maze and stuff like that. Nice places to go and just have some fun, just for us.*

At other times, when not with his friends and apart part from their shared interest in football, Leo enjoyed spending time with his dad, who worked a lot, walking their dog.

*We like going... on walks with my dog. It's nice cause you get to just pass the ball around and I love chasing my dog. It's really nice just to go on walks. Most people just find it boring and I'm like, how's it boring? It's fine for me.*

## Charlotte, 18

Charlotte moved to Jersey from another country with her family when she was 14 and immediately noticed that the **culture... was quite different**. It **took a few months** to establish a friendship group but eventually Charlotte made **genuine** friends, although she was aware, they were described as the **weird group** in school.

*At low times in her life Charlotte experienced anxiety and she described a lot of upheaval in life, some of which was particularly significant for extra-curricular activities as she felt the pressure to prioritise studies in a different education system.*

*I did a lot of extra-curricular when I was in [home country] in school, I was on virtually every sports team... I was in the school bands, ... the school musical, the eco-club, the year book club, the student council... So I was doing everything, and I really enjoyed it, but when I moved to [school in Jersey], I actually stopped everything. ... I felt quite... nervous and embarrassed about doing sports, and there was very different sports so I wasn't, em, good at them like I used to be in [home country], so I stopped. And em... singing... social suicide [laughs] so I stopped all of that! Em... and focused on studies because I really was worried about... the difficulty when I moved. That was all the talk: ... you have to pass this ... cognitive ability exam to get into [school] and I was really worried about it. And I was worried that because I was from a different- since the schools in [home country] didn't have like a standardised national curriculum, that I would fail school when I got here and ... grades are a pretty big thing in my family so... it's quite worrying.*

*An attempt to engage in some of the sport offered in Jersey resulted in her feeling a little down so she did not continue. Added to this was worrying about making friends as she noted different values among children in Jersey who really enjoyed going out drinking. She noted that her choice not to drink alcohol did impact on her peer group, noting some left the group and she and her sister were judged as outcasts for their choices.*

*I'm not a huge partier, drinker, ... don't do drugs. ... I think I went to my first party when I was... probably 17 because one of my friends invited me, but I didn't drink ... When we hung out with our friends in GCSE we would go to one of their houses and watch movies all night and play scrabble. That is what my friend group did. Which some people left because they were so annoyed with that. You know, why aren't we going out drinking, why are we playing scrabble at 3am?... I've never been that kind of teenager I guess, and em... it felt kind of strange at times because at school ... they'd make jokes or mean things but... em, we already were on top of that outcast for not em, joining in on drinking and stuff like that. Which I did quickly get the impression was, em, part of teenage Jersey culture. Kind of sad is that... what do I do in my free time? Bake. Cook. Read, watch movies.*

## CAG's Key Messages: Leisure Time & Activity

- Leisure time is important for everyone not just children. It improves your mental and physical health and you can make new friends.
- It is expensive to attend swimming, singing, music and sporting activities and lessons on the island. This can cause a divide between those who can afford to do well in life and those who cannot.
- It can be dangerous to play on the beaches and in the water unsupervised.
- Bad weather, travel, safety and costs to pay into centres for activities, can stop some families and children from taking part in free time activities.
- There is not much for children and young people to do, particularly for those between 11 – 16+ years, which may explain why young people drink, take drugs, hang about and sometimes get in trouble.
- Things like football and other team games, dancing, art and music lessons need to be freely available for all children and from a young age, to get them in the habit of viewing their pastimes as fun 'before drinking becomes fun'.
- Not everyone wants to play sport or hang out on the beach, especially younger and disabled children who need to be kept safe, according to their age and ability.
- Ice-skating and a roller skating rink would be a fun exercise for local children to get them off their phones and social media, and something tourists would like too. Entry prices would need to be low so all families can come.
- Young people, 13-16 years, view alcohol and drinking as fun. This attitude needs to be changed and other 'fun' activities need to be in place rather than them feeling they need to drink.
- Younger children in primary school need to learn about the effects of drugs and alcohol, as this can lead a child down a bad path and can lead to a criminal record that will affect their future.



# Being Safe



The majority of survey respondents felt safe in Jersey; 89% felt safe at home, 73% felt safe at school/college and 64% felt safe when they walked around. Females felt less safe walking around than males. **'Making local areas safer for young people'** was selected by 22% of respondents as one of the top five things that would make life in Jersey better for young people while 17% mentioned **'making schools safer'**.

# 3

## Being Safe

Olivia, 15	24
Reuben, 14	25

## Being Safe

More road safety, traffic lights and lights at night so its not pitch black. (survey respondent, female, 13)

*I would go to each school and ask everyone maybe in an assembly or something 'Do you feel safe at school?' because at my school my head-teacher asked that and only two year 6s put their hand up and she didn't ask afterwards which I think was quite bad. I would also ask 'do you feel safe at home?' because if kids are having troubles at home they should not come to school and take it out on other children, because that is not fair on the other children.* (survey respondent, female, 11).

Bullying was an issue that was raised by many children with 66% saying they had been bullied at least once in the month prior to the survey. Physical bullying (29%) was less common than being left out (52%) or called names/made fun of (52%). More males (39%) than females (21%) experienced physical bullying while females were more likely than their male counterparts to say they had been left out (56% and 44% respectively).

'Stopping people being bullied' was selected by 61% of respondents as one of the top five things that would make life in Jersey better for young people with concerns decreasing as children get older.

*Help and bring support to the young people of Jersey that are part of the LGBTQ+ community, especially in schools while walking in corridors I see a lot of bullying to the LGBTQ+ community that the school in not aware of or make the option to not see it as it can be a "difficult" topic to understand and explain to other students, I have to admit that this is the main reason for mine and other peoples anxiety and depression because it makes us feel very unsafe out on streets or even during our breaks at school.* (survey respondent, female, 13)

Jersey is considered to be *super safe*, and one of those places you don't lock your car doors or house doors. Anna has lived in Jersey her whole life and explained the attraction, particularly for families: *I think it's quite a safe parish to live in. Well Jersey as a whole is a safe place to live in and a good place to bring up children* (Anna, 16). Similarly, some children noted that there was not much crime (Joe, 15) and that *No one would really think of stealing a necklace from a shop window if it's open* (Victoria, 10). Others recounted their own experiences as young children to illustrate the safety of their parish. Elliott, for example, captured the experience of many children who are free to roam their areas without parents being concerned about their safety.

*They have got this huge big field there so you are literally free to do... they have this great big fence around the outside, so you could just wander. They have got this little woodland at the end... it is perfect really.* (Elliott, 16)

Many of the children who were not Jersey born said that their families had chosen to move to Jersey because it was a safe place for children: *way safer than England and over here you feel like a lot more safer* (Olivia, 16). However, while public safety was high and this was seen to be a draw for families from elsewhere, children, especially those who come from outside to live in Jersey, spoke of being bullied. Many children described how hard it was to fit in when they arrived and that they became the object of teasing, often for their accents. Freya moved to Jersey when she was three and although she hadn't got bullied directly, she described how it was *natural* for boys to bully newcomer children: *Mostly the boys do it... Boys calling names... If new kid comes and they don't like the look or sound of it, will start this behaviour* (Freya, 11). Jaya (13) moved to Jersey with her family when she was seven and described direct bullying *about how I looked and about the colour of my skin* which she attributed to others being *close-minded*, making it difficult for her to make friends initially. Whilst not described as bullying, Charlotte, who moved to Jersey when she was 14, described how she and her friends, who included her sister, were considered different at school.

*I'm pretty sure we were looked at as the... 'weird' group, if there were cliques in school, we were definitely the weird group... I've had, em... very judgy moments with, em, girls who've gone to my school just because I felt they were so ingenuine... we really were the weird group. People either called us the weird group, not to our faces, that was behind our backs, or it was the 'intelligent but odd' group or something like that.* (Charlotte, 18)

As described elsewhere in this report, Charlotte struggled to integrate with Jersey youth culture and experienced a lot of anxiety and mental health issues. Whilst one of her *biggest dreams* is to have children, she would not want to bring them up in Jersey despite a general sense of safety on the island.

*It's safe in the sense of you can leave your car unlocked and, house unlocked and stuff like that but, from what I've seen and what I hear about, I don't like how some of the systems here are in place and how they run... Especially here, because I wouldn't want any kid to go through what I went through, what my sister went through, or a lot of the people I looked around.* (Charlotte, 18)

Other differences were also thought to attract bullying, including not being into sport, being 'fat' or gay or autistic. Reuben, whose story is explored further below, experienced a lot of bullying firstly in primary school, followed by secondary school before he came out as bisexual.

*Throughout my primary/secondary I was ashamed of my body. The students that I had in my class didn't make life easy for me. They would like make fun of my weight or take something from my bag and they would make me chase them and sometimes I would stop and they would make fun of me... they would like call me names and I would like go into school and start crying because like... and they would see me crying and all they was just talk to them but they would just carry on even more. So they wouldn't do anything about it.* (Reuben, 14)

Keeping his sexuality to himself at that stage was important, as it was *another reason to bully me*. Oscar (15) identifies as transsexual and although he has not experienced bullying himself, he explained how other children bullied *people like me* who are perceived to be different.

*They bully like people like - in my year they bully people who like are more vulnerable, so they have like autism or something like that. And it happens a lot in my history class. This one girl, they throw like highlighters at her.* (Oscar, 15)

Oscar was concerned his classmate didn't *speak up* about her bullying and that the teacher did not seem to know about it: *the teacher should probably be more aware of it. It happens literally every lesson*. William, reflecting on his own experiences of being bullied, also noted that teachers should take notice of what is going on. Although worried that things may get worse if his teacher were to speak to the bullies, he highlighted other strategies to be distanced from those bullying him.

*What I've heard some teachers do here, is that they just move the whole class around, so it doesn't look like something to do with you. That's what I really want him to do but I don't think he would.* (William, 14)

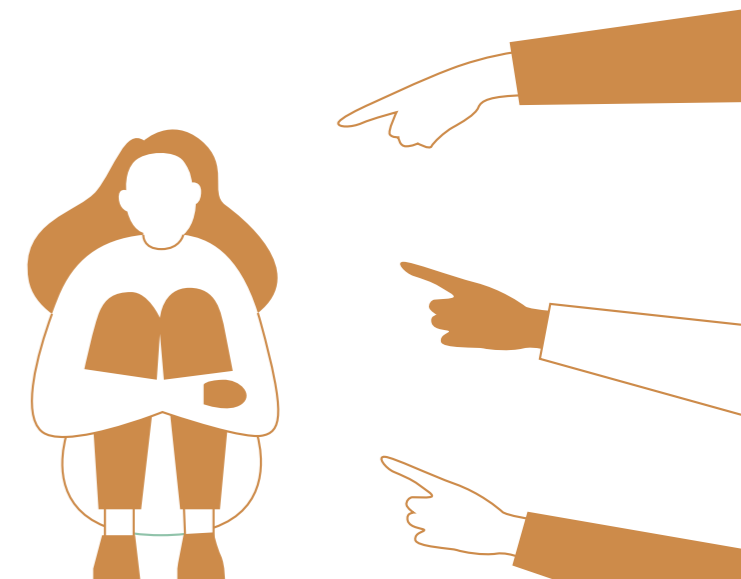
Outside of the classroom, the lack of streetlights and the *darkness* was mentioned regularly by some of the older girls when asked about safety on the island. Olivia (16) described feeling comfortable during the day, but at night she gets scared when it gets dark, drawing attention to the lack of streetlights: *It's quite- you have to rely on your own like torches*. Part of the issue for Olivia related to road safety, but also addressing the darkness problem would, she thought, promote tourism.

*But em, in the dark, most people like teenagers wear dark clothing cause it's like the kind of trend right now. It would be quite nice to have like more like street lighting as well. It gives it kind of, a bit more character to Jersey as well as like cause like- when you- like- on a plane like you know flying over a place and you see like loads of lights and you think oh that's like quite, kind of, lively and somewhere you want to be, whereas if someone flies over and sees Jersey as all like*

*dull, they'll be like, hang on a minute, this place looks a bit dark, I don't want to really visit here if I ever get the chance.* (Olivia, 16)

Whilst Sarah's main concern was her *mental safety*, she also noted the issue of a lack of streetlights and was wary of walking in particular places across the island: *Cause like- like you have to walk up this hill by [street name] and there's no head lights and it's really dark and it's just like this big scary hill. And there's also this- there was this like story of this haunting that took place there as well. But em... walking up there's quite scary* (Sarah, 15). Sarah made reference to a recent sexual assault on the island and whilst she noted it as a *rare thing*, it was in the minds of many and had perhaps heightened concerns for individual safety at the time of the research: *it happened on the brand new bus stop and it's a really bad bus stop, I don't know why they did it. There's no houses round there, there's no cameras, there's nothing there, it's just dark* (Leo, 10). Apart from this, however, some concerns were raised about fast drivers which put off Anna from getting a motorbike. Sophie's safety concerns about socializing at night time related to peers getting drunk and/ or taking drugs and becoming aggressive: *The one place I would never go at night is Havre des Pas because- well, Friday and Saturday night because my year group go on a Friday and Saturday and get completely hammered, usually on drugs, and it's not my scene* (Sophie, 16).

While a sense of safety in public was extremely high, young people felt most unsafe within their peer groups and in the school setting. Accounts of bullying, as explored in Olivia's and Reuben's stories below, were often accompanied by a feeling that teachers and others did not act to help them when they should have known what was happening.





## Olivia, 16

Olivia, aged 16, was born in Jersey and has grown up all her life in Jersey. She described much of her experience of growing up in terms of experiencing bullying at school, having to move primary school because of it. She continued to experience bullying in secondary school but was not able to move schools because she was sitting her GCSEs and did not want to complicate matters with different exam boards at a different school.

She described her school life as *quite a negative experience* where she did not fit in with her peers, especially what she called the *barbie-dollness* – *I was always left out. I was like the odd one out.*

Someone made an online account in her name and used it to bully someone else online. She could not understand why someone would do this and the experience made her feel *worthless*. She attended an emotional support scheme at school, but this did not help her *because they didn't really seem interested*. Olivia described how she wasn't listened to and *didn't really have a say* in the type of support she received.

*... taken out of lesson to talk to them about my feelings but they didn't really take it into account. They just kind of sat there and just made me do these activities that didn't really help with my well-being because it just went more downhill when I went to them.*

She attended the scheme from year 8 until year 10 when she decided it wasn't working and stopped attending.

*I would go home and I'd just be like, what am I doing with like - I'm missing out lesson time for something that I could be doing at home cause it was literally like colouring in a picture and I could do that at home if I wanted to do it in like my own leisure time. Like, I was missing lessons for something that just wasn't helping me.*

Feeling *left to my own devices* at one point, Olivia relied on family support at home and suggested that *there needs to be more spaces where you can talk and someone listens, because teachers... weren't really interested because they're more interested in like teaching cause they weren't properly trained*. Having completed her GCSEs, Olivia since moved school and is *happier* having found a group of friends, *so like, it's like- the group of like kind of the nerdy ones, the popular ones, the sporty ones. So I kind of found my group and I've kind of like mixed in with them, so it's a lot nicer.*

## Reuben, 14

Reuben's parents moved to Jersey before he was born and so he had lived in Jersey all his life. Reuben identified as bisexual, and initially confided in his best friend, which he described as *showing my true self*. When he later *came out as bisexual to everyone*, he described the reception as *supportive*, which made him feel *really happy and safe in the school*.

Nevertheless, Reuben described his feelings about safety generally as being *like middle, sometimes*, describing his experiences of going *into town with my friends* where they would meet teenagers from other schools that *I have never met in my life. They just like come out and like be rude like for some reason... they just like make me and my friends uncomfortable*. One example Reuben gave was when he was at McDonalds and *someone tripped me on purpose for no reason... all I could see was her and her friends laughing*. This made Reuben feel *a bit weird* and prompted him to wonder *why would they do that?*

Reuben met his first boyfriend in year 9, but described how he *felt really uncomfortable for some reason because... his friends and all of that*. This feeling of discomfort stemmed from the fact that *his [boyfriend's] friends and him, they do drugs and I was not like 100% comfortable with that*. Reuben found that *they expect me to do the same thing as well so like I didn't hang out with him that much, that's why he broke up with me*. Reuben confirmed that drugs were common in Jersey, but that not enough was done to address this; whilst *teachers did mention drugs* this was not sufficient because *they are still doing it. They are still doing like smoking and all of that*. Despite this, his break up with his first boyfriend left Reuben *thinking about death and I got really depressed about it*. Reuben *didn't want to talk to a teacher. I didn't want to talk to my parents. I did talk to my best friend which was nice*. Reuben did not approach a school counsellor or medical care because *I thought... it was like there is no point or anything*.

Whilst Reuben described his experience of coming out as a supportive one, his feelings around safety at his school were varied. He relayed that he felt *safe sometimes* but at other times felt challenged by teachers who told him not to speak in his parents' first language or commented on his appearance – *one called me a disappointment for boys for tying my hair up... That was a big shock*. Reuben described how his friends were really *annoyed at that* and this support explained how he felt *safe most of the time... but like some days... not really*.

When probed about possible reasons for not approaching adults for help when he was depressed and having thoughts of death, he explained that *it was like my body was just saying no*, but also:

*Because all my life, because like I was bullied and all of that... the teachers never did anything about it so when I was upset I was like 'you never helped me so why would I trust them now?' So yeah, that's why I didn't tell them. That's one of the reasons.*

Reuben later talked to us about how his experience of life in Jersey had changed since our first conversation. He described how *from the last time we talked, I came out as gay to my friends at the end of year 9*, and had *finally told my mum*. He had not told his dad, however, *because he doesn't like gay people very much*. Reuben described how things were good until he was attacked: *I was walking home and this guy that used to go to my school went and tripped me and said die you faggot, then spit on my face*. This attack left Reuben feeling *scared*, and he *stayed on the floor* until his attacker left. As a consequence of this, Reuben said he did not *feel safe... anymore* and was now *asking my friends to walk me home*. One of the effects of feeling unsafe was when he was alone, he would *always have the fear when I see someone*, and *I keep thinking I will get attacked again*. On a daily basis, boys in school *make fun of my sexuality*, using homophobic language such as *faggot or that's gay*.

Prior to this homophobic attack, Reuben had told us how he had previously been ashamed of his body and had been bullied, but had found the confidence to ignore bullies and to feel confident in his own skin (see earlier in this section). His experience of being attacked, however, left Reuben with severely low self-esteem which meant he had *not been eating much because people have been calling me out by the way I look*. Reuben struggled with how this made him think of himself: *even when I look at myself I would cry or tell myself that I'm ugly*. Comments about his appearance meant that Reuben did not eat *in school or in front of my friends*.

Despite struggling to process what happened to him, he still did not tell any adults at school because *I still don't trust the school with my problems because one of my friends told her problems to the school and the school told her parents so I can't trust them*. Reuben also did not tell his parents because their lives were *different lives from mine so they won't get what I am going through*. Not being able to tell anyone about his experience, or his feelings of being unsafe, meant that Reuben's life had been more difficult and he described times that he *felt like giving up*. Reuben concluded that in not knowing *who to talk to, or who to trust in Jersey*, he kept his struggles to himself, hoping that *I won't do anything stupid*.



## CAG's Key Messages: Being Safe

- Children and young people know about bullying and discrimination, such as disability rights, LGBTQ+ and racism, and that this happens a lot on the island.
- Adults need to be more educated about discrimination to understand how to be nicer to each other and more tolerant of diversity and how they can pass these messages on to children.
- Children can feel unsafe in Jersey especially when out at night alone as they are afraid of being approached by someone if they have to pass through particular areas, or if it is dark and they encounter a stranger who is drunk or on drugs.
- While the main towns may be well-lit at night, other areas on the island may lack adequate street lighting.
- The younger children thought security cameras around the island would help to keep them safe (as this is used to keep homes and property safe), whereas the older group thought that a more visible police presence in areas where attacks might happen, such as in the parks or open spaces, would stop people carrying out crimes.
- For older youth: A 24/7 advice centre with trained staff, managed by professionals and volunteers could provide somewhere young people can go to access help and support about lots of issues..
- For younger children: create child-friendly spaces in the main areas. Start a child-friendly spaces campaign and get local shops and businesses involved. Set up a free phone number children can contact if they feel unsafe and design stickers to put in shop windows and at bus stops etc., to let children and young people know they are welcome to come in if they need help to call home or to get off the street if someone is chasing them.



# Getting Around



One third of survey respondents thought the roads in their area were dangerous although this figure rose to 66% for 7 to 9 year olds. Males (38%) were more likely than females (30%) to agree that the roads were dangerous. Some children were also concerned about the lack, and cost, of public transport.

# 4

## Getting Around

Sophie, 16	32
Jackson, 14	33
Freya, 11	34

## Getting Around

*I live at the top of Trinity Hill and there are not many regular bus routes for a link to town. The only bus that passes my area is the 4 and its very irregular. By not having a regular bus route and not being able to drive it is very difficult to meet people in town or other parts of the island.*

(survey respondent, female, aged 14 years)

*Make the public buses free for children who use them to travel to and from school and in the holiday.*

(survey respondent, male, 11)

Jersey is a small place but children have different experiences of moving round the island, getting to school, attending activities, meeting up with friends, and generally being out and about. Younger children, whose schools and friends are close to home, seemed to find it the easiest. Joshua, who lived in a parish on the west of the island, noted the ease of accessing his clubs during the summer.

*I really like cycling. Like in the summer holidays, I pretty much cycled to every club that I did cause all the clubs that I did were nearby, or were decently nearby, so I could just cycle to them. And that was really fun. And we have a cycle path right outside our house so that's good.* (Joshua, 10)

Victoria, who is also 10 and living on the west of the island, lives really near to her school which is really fun cause we can walk to school, cycle to school in the morning. In the car it takes one minute, walking it takes like 5 minutes. She described that the roads near us are so quiet, that there's barely any cars so my mum might let me go across the road on my own. She trusts me. In addition to the quiet roads, she also enjoys having all the fresh air and that in like May and things, you can always smell the cow pat from the potatoes because the Jersey Royals are a really big part of Jersey.

For other children, getting around the island is trickier. Some of the concerns are about road safety which influenced some young people's decision to travel independently. Anna (16), for example, who described living in a highly populated parish, was concerned about 17 year old boys, like going whizzing around the island in their new cars whilst William (14), living in the north east of the island, was concerned by speeding particularly at nighttime: *the problem is the roads at night are like a lot less busy, so usually people will go faster than the speed limit* (William, 14). Large lorries belting to the quarry

*Slow the traffic down. It's 30 mph outside my door with hardly any pavement on a blind corner. Please can we have a zebra crossing outside my school so I can walk on my own.*  
(survey respondent, male, 10)

on small roads was also an issue, whilst in the summer, distracted tourists drive on the wrong side of the road: *people who come from other countries – hard for them to get used to going on the other side of the road* (Freya, 11). When considered a risk to their safety, this had implications for children trying to move within and beyond their parish. Lucy, aged 10, for example, described crossing a busy road to school as a challenge. Usually the lollypop man comes out when the big hand's on the 8 and the small hand's em... on the 6 but she worries that when she goes to school early on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday for reading express only, the lollypop man isn't there. That, for her, is *come ci comme ça* as she gets nervous crossing on my own without him there.

Buses (or the lack of them) were mentioned a lot. Some were happy with the bus service, especially those on the Number 1 bus route as this is the best in the island. Joe, who is 14 and lives in the South East of the island, only gets the bus when I have to but he thinks the service is good, perhaps too good: *What's funny is that you can see from the Bourg slip, almost a fairly straight line, the next bus stop, which is just like at the end of the road.* Whilst some could get a bus home every five minutes from town, others feel less lucky. Sarah, for example, noted that the bus service needs to improve, as from her house, *there's only one bus and it goes every hour. And it's the Jersey Zoo one, so it doesn't go very far, and a relatively short trip could take like 40 minutes.*

The cost of the buses was also a major concern. Young people told us that if you don't get a pre-paid card it's £1.10 unless you have a bus card then it's like 80p. Sarah noted that not only is £1.10 an awkward amount. *Cause usually we just like have pound notes. And then you're left with loads of change, but also that price rise to £2.20 once they are 16 seemed unfair, given that the fare didn't vary according to distance travelled: even if you're travelling like 10 minutes you still have to pay like £2.20 cause it's the same amount like wherever you're going. So if you're going to St Ovens it's not as bad, but £2.20 is a lot* (Sarah, 15). Additionally, Olivia (16) explained that it is even worse for those that don't live on a direct route, *some people have to go through the bus station onto another bus and they have to pay for two tickets which is a bit... expensive, so it could go up to like £5 to get home.* This obviously adds cost to already expensive leisure activities for some, but Anna also points out that it seems unfair to require children to pay for transport to compulsory education.

*Because it's compulsory that children have to go to school, but yet if it's far too far for them to walk in the morning or their parents or someone can't drive them then they have no choice but to get the bus and having to pay for it and it's a legal requirement, I don't think that's right.* (Anna, 16)

Most children relied on their parents who were willing and able to do pick-ups to get about the island, particularly if they didn't live in St Helier or have a moped. Olivia summed the situation up as

*most people try and just... get picked up.* Several were keen to get mopeds once they were 16 – the route to independent travel. Others, like Anna, have been put off getting a moped by those *getting in trouble a lot and crashes.*

Sophie's and Jackson's stories articulate concerns about accessibility of transport and roads – one due to geographical location and the other related to disabled access. Freya's concerns about independent travel relate to personal safety, prompted in part by a recent sexual assault and having missed her transport on previous occasions.



## Sophie, 16

Sophie lives north of the island where buses are a major issue for her. She told us ***I'm 16 now so I pay the adult fare... It's so expensive.*** In her view, ***some of the bus routes are really bad*** and unfortunately ***the bus route I live on, the number [x], is the worst bus route on the island. So if I miss a bus, I have to walk.***

The issue with the buses imposes some limits on Sophie's social life. Although she likes to spend time at her friends' houses, the infrequent service makes it hard for her to have friends round to her house whilst meeting in town means she is either incredibly early or late.

*[L]ike my friends don't come round to mine quite a lot because the buses are so bad. It's like, plans have to be manoeuvred around my buses. Or I sit in town for an hour on my own, which is such a pain. And they're always late. All the buses are always late, everywhere. I've never been on a bus that's on time.*

Sophie also explained that the *transport issues* limited where she and her friends could socialise. On the one hand, there are *certain areas that you just don't go to cause it's like how do you get to them?* while they attend other places just for convenience – *Whether you want to go ... or not is irrelevant.* The result of this is that everyone ends up in St Helier.

*[S]o a lot of the stuff we do ends up being in town, just because it's convenient. I actually don't like town that much, but we go cause it's really convenient and if people have like house parties or whatever, the buses – most buses on island stop at 9 o'clock. So, you've got to find a way home without using public transport cause you are not getting on a bus.*

## Jackson, 14

Jackson, aged 14, is a wheelchair user. He plays football and golf and travels mostly by car but a lot of socialising with his friends also happens online. Buses are a problem for Jackson and whilst he has used them ***a couple of times with my mum***, he hasn't been on a bus by himself: ***I don't like the buses, it is kind of like quite crowded to get the wheelchair in there.***

*It is quite difficult to park in it.* Another issue for him is the narrow pavements as there are a couple that are not wide enough for his wheelchair:

*[S]o I have to drive like along the road. If like I was walking with my mum, she would be on the pavement behind me and I would be on the road in front of her.*

Jackson wants the government of Jersey to *help out with pavements, for example, it can't hurt to widen them a tiny, tiny bit.* It is also a problem when people park on the pavement when doing drops off at school. He says this has:

*[H]appened quite a lot at school where it is like... where we park there is quite a lot of people who park in the middle of the stopping bay and you can't go in front of them or really behind them. So that means when I get out of my car I have to drive out on the road and then get on to the pavement.*

## Freya, 11

Recently, Freya experienced a **big change** in her daily commute when she got her **own bus card and phone** started getting the bus to school rather than a lift with her mum – Freya, however, prefers to travel with her parents. Once she missed the bus home because it **said something completely different and I had to walk home.**

*Her mum was proud of me because I remembered how to cross the road and not get run over. She is frustrated that she has to wait at the bus station for the bus to school for more than half an hour because her older sister's bus to [secondary school] is earlier. In the winter, her dad gives her a lift to school which she thinks is safer.*

*Freya was concerned about a recent sexual assault as they still haven't caught him. At the bus stop it's just me on my own and all these cars go by and I'm on my own. I feel safer with my parents. She has told her parents about her worries and her mum understands. Her dad says not to be silly and that it won't happen but he picks me up because my mum wants him to, because I said to mum I don't feel safe.*

*Freya liked remembering number plates in case something happens then my mind will come in use. When someone has a problem, then you can tell them this is the car that did this. For example, on one occasion, Freya saw a lady and man go the wrong way and would like the government to have, a bit more signs to show the side to drive on for people from other countries.*

## CAG's Key Messages: Getting Around

- Public Transport around the island could be better.
- School aged children should get free public travel to ensure they are able to get to school. It's not their fault if they don't have money.
- Bus routes, frequency of buses and road maintenance receive less attention in areas outside of main towns.
- In rural parishes, the bus does not operate as often and stops earlier. This impacts on children and young people's ability to spend free time with their friends and enjoy their time doing things on the island.
- Bus timetables also change with the season, being more regular in the summer but less regular during winter. Lack of bus routes and restrictive bus timetables, accompanied by a lack of lighting on parts of the islands, affects children's safety when they are trying to make their way home on dark evenings or at night.
- Children and young people must rely on lifts from parents and friends, which is not always available or guaranteed.
- Because Jersey is a small island, young people do not feel the urge to obtain a driver's license.
- An unregulated 'Underground Uber' service operates on the island, where strangers offer lifts by posting on Facebook. Young people avail of this service if they need a lift home.
- Densely populated towns mean too many cars, busy driving conditions, traffic jams, lack of parking spaces and high parking charges. This can stop young people getting into towns by car and private transport, and is bad for the environment.
- Younger children are more likely to get around on bikes or on foot but speeding traffic, no pavements and lack of zebra crossings make it hard to get around safely.





# Staying Healthy



The cost associated with medical treatment was a concern for many of the children taking part in the survey. 'Making it free to go to the doctor if you're not well' was selected by 48% of respondents as one of the top five things that would make life in Jersey better for young people while 28% selected 'Making it free to go to the dentist'.

# 5

## Staying Healthy

Olivia, 16	41
Charlotte, 18	42

## Staying Healthy

*I would most lightly if children were ill i would let them to go to a hospital were you didn't have to pay anything except for medicane because there is no reason to pay and go in to A and E because when you pay it takes a long time for you to pay and while you are paying a child is in pain and needs treatment!* (survey respondent, female, 9)

### Free dentist because I need my teeth straighter and my parents can't afford it and they both work!

(survey respondent, male, 9)

*If I was the Children's commissioner the first thing that I would try and action is to make doctors and dentists free for those under the age of 18. I think it is important that children are well and can attend school. However I know the prices for these services are extortionate, resulting in some parents being unable to pay these fees. This will prevent the children going to the doctors/dentist and getting themselves better. As a child myself I know people who have not been to the doctors as they have been unwell, as the parents can not afford to go, and they only got worse resulting in them having more time off school than they should have had. I strongly believe that this should be changed first if I was the Children's Commissioner.* (survey respondent, male, 14)

Children described experiences with a range of medical and related professionals, a number recounting the availability of free healthcare, ease of access and treatment they were happy with. Sophie, aged 16, noted, however, that engagement with health services was often to seek treatment or support for an established issue rather than in the form of prevention. In relation to sexual health, for example, she noted that the free GUM clinic was based on *something's wrong, not, I need protection* whilst mental health issues were responded too often at a time of crisis: *We don't do a lot on mental health before you kind of hit your breaking point really. You hit breaking point and then you get support. It's not before* (Sophie, 16). Concerns were also raised by a number of children in relation to accessing some forms of healthcare, a need to travel for treatment, the availability and cost of orthodontic treatment and services and support related to mental health which emerged as a key issue for young people in Jersey.

Experiences of physical health issues recounted by children ranged from accidental sprains and broken bones, rashes, burns and general surgery to more complex conditions and syndromes. For some, getting an appointment with a healthcare professional (GP, dentist, pharmacist, specialist or other allied staff), could take some time and needed to be booked in advance. Leo, for example, explained that despite having a *really bad leg* there was a delay in getting an x-ray.

*[The GP] said that 'We're really sorry but we have to have it in the next month', cause all the Dr appointments... were booked to have an x-ray...I'm walking around on potentially a broken leg.* (Leo, 10)

Sophie, aged 16, also noted the difficulty in attaining a hospital appointment. Whilst her doctor's surgery has *been quite good* and she sees her GP regularly, hospital appointments were less available:

*if you get an appointment at the hospital, you're going. Because you'll not get another one.* Other children, like Joshua, noted the infrequency of attending healthcare, reporting that he had not seen a GP in a very long time: *last time I went to the doctor was probably when I was like one or something...I only go to the Dr if there's something wrong with me.* Some children noted that the cost of healthcare in Jersey acted as a barrier for some families accessing the services that they needed. Freya described her mother's frustration when taking her older sister to the doctor – *Mum said to my dad "£40 just to be asked questions"* (Freya, 11). Through her part-time job in a pharmacy, Sophie was aware of families who were unable to attend the GP.

*I know a lot of parents who just don't take their kids to the doctors. They're like we'll figure something out. I think I pay £38. So it's 16 and under is £38 for a doctor's appointment. Blood tests also cost money. I think they're like £20 or something. But doctors are expensive here.* (Sophie, 16)

Sophie continued to explain that as an alternative to visiting the GP, *a lot of people come to the pharmacy cause the pharmacist can give advice* (Sophie, 16). Sarah was unsure why her parents were *weird* about her seeing a GP *if I have something*. She was currently having *a lot of issues with my sleep* which she felt was also impacting on her ability to concentrate in school, yet her parents did not want her to access the GP, fearful, she thought, of the potential to become addicted to *sleeping pills*. She described her strategies, unsuccessfully, to self-medicate to alleviate symptoms and enhance sleep.

*I'm just trying like natural stuff like lavender oil, like, not going on my phone, having all the lights down ... and I've got like this spray which you spray down your mouth ... but none of that seems to be working.* (Sarah, 15)

Some children spoke of a need to access healthcare off island – either for themselves or family members - when there was a lack of medical specialists available within Jersey. Anna, for example, explained that she spent over two weeks in England for burns treatment.

*Jersey didn't have a specialist so my parents took me to A&E in the car, then I had an ambulance up to the airport, and then a private jet to Southampton Salisbury, and then an ambulance to the hospital. So, I was in there for two and a half weeks* (Anna, 16).

Anna noted the separation from family members during this time: *my mum stayed with me the whole time. My dad came over for a bit and then had to go back to work, but my mum was there with me the whole time.* (Anna, 16).

Orthodontic treatment was particularly important for young people's appearance and confidence yet lengthy waiting lists for an orthodontist meant that some children could wait a number of years for treatment while others were able to avail of private

options. Elliott (16) described his frustration in trying to access orthodontic treatment, having *been on the waiting list for five/six years now* and estimating it could be *at least another 18 months, 2 years* before he is top of the list. His main concern, at age 16, was arriving at university wearing braces where virtually no one else would have them.

*I am going to have to wait, which means I am going to be at uni with braces and everyone else will have them off. Which is a shame because a lot of my friends have had them and they are off now... that's such a long time for people to be waiting, and if they don't have a choice because they don't have that kind of money to like care for teeth... it is just irritating.* (Elliott, 16)

Even where children were assessed to have a pressing need for treatment, waiting lists were substantial, as Anna explained she *had to go privately* rather than wait four years.

*My parents ended up going private for me to get braces because I was on a four year waiting list and the dentist said that I had severe overcrowding in my mouth so I really urgently needed them to get my mouth sorted out. Em... and so my parents either had to wait like four years, I had to wait four years, or go privately so we had to go privately which cost £3,500 for braces treatment.* (Anna, 16)

The cost of private care, however, was substantial and for some, like Elliott, this was not an option – *even saving up, I don't have that money*. For those who sought private care, Sophie described how the cost could vary, thinking herself fortunate to receive treatment through a family friend for £3500.

*It's a nightmare getting braces here. I've heard some slight horror stories about private orthodontics. One of my friends, she was meant to have her braces off two months ago and she couldn't make the appointment so they went ok we can't see you for months. And it's like, but I'm paying you like £4,000 - £5,000 to get this done... So you can either get them free, but it'll take you nine years [laughs]. Or, you get them, you pay, and depending on where you go, the price dramatically changes.* (Sophie, 16).

Five young people spoke about their mental health at length, identifying issues not only for themselves, but for siblings and friends also, indicating its significance in young people's lives in Jersey: *it's crazy how many kids my age were just like crashing and burning at my school* (Charlotte, 18). Accounts included experiences of dealing with depression, anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorder, paranoia, some of which was triggered or exacerbated by traumatic and stressful life events such as bereavement, family illness or stress related to school work and bullying. Charlotte noted that a number of factors contributed to her anxiety but how she avoided talking about this when young.

*[A] bunch of things probably all had something to play with it... I didn't tell my parents. I was very much let's keep this hidden as much as possible. I don't know why, I don't know why I thought that was the best way to go* (Charlotte, 18).

The impact of mental health issues for young people and their friends were considerable, some noting feelings of apathy, hallucinations, sleeping and eating problems and speaking of friends' suicide attempts. Lack of understanding and empathy resulted

in social stigma, discrimination and difficulties with family, peers and education. Sarah described the reaction of her peers when her mental health issues were revealed at school.

*I know I was being called like names and there was like a big stigma on it and they didn't understand it whatsoever... there was only one person... who truly understood and was helping me and nobody else was and everybody thought I was like a bit weird.* (Sarah, 15)

Sarah later explained how her studies had been impacted as her *listening was getting worse*, probably a result of *not sleeping*. Anna also noted the impact mental health had on her education, especially in relation to her attendance. She described a particular frustration with the school system which didn't recognise the impact of mental illness in the same vein as physical illness and she felt pressured to attend school.

*...like you know you have to be in school but you have reasons why you find it very difficult and no matter what circumstance you give the school or whatever, you still have to be at school unless you're physically ill ... if you have a physical illness you go home but if you have a mental illness you don't.* (Anna, 15)

Support and treatment received for mental health issues included medication, counselling and social support. A number of young people were currently accessing CAMHS, or had accessed it in the past. When engaged with mental health services, experiences were mostly *really positive* (Sarah, 16) and for Luke (15), *everyone there was like really nice. Really helpful. Em, the person that I saw, they were really understanding and stuff yeah.*

However, it was typically a long journey to get to the stage of accessing support and whilst some young people recognised improvement more recently, they had usually experienced long waiting lists, meaning that they did not receive early intervention and their issues intensified as they waiting for help. Speaking of accessing CAMHS, Sarah noted that the urgency of need was not responded to.

*I think they... definitely have services in place but it's how you... access them. Like, it's mainly- Like because the waiting lists are so long, I don't think they understand that people need to be seen like straight away. So I think they're kinda trying to help but ... it's not the most efficient.* (Sarah, 16).

Once in the system, a further issue for young people was the turnover of staff, meaning that they had to retell their experiences to numerous counsellors – as many as 10 for Anna who *can't even remember all their names it was that bad* (Anna, 16). This can result in disengagement from the service if young people feel uncomfortable with the prospect of a new counsellor. Luke described, for example, that he hadn't *been there in ages because the person that I normally have has been off for like a year* (Luke, 15).

Gaps in mental health service provision were identified regarding geographical location and limited opening hours that did not allow for emergencies, or were not convenient, especially for children and young people. Anna was vocal that such limitations in provision presented a risk to young people who were in crisis.

In relation to the location of services, *everything being in St Helier* was unhelpful for young people in other parts of the island who may be

in great need of something and they didn't have the skills to like talk to their parents about it yet they may be reliant on them for transport to access services. A second gap noted by Anna was the need for an alternative to A&E - which was *far too scary* - for young people presenting in crisis given the limited access to mental health services for two hours on a Saturday.

*When I was really bad I was told to go to A&E and I thought 'I am never going to do that'. And em... in Jersey like the mental health team... only open like two hours on a Saturday or something and it's, like, ridiculous ... I mean I'm not going to plan my crisis at that specific time on a Saturday.* (Anna, 16)

The solution for Anna was to offer similar services in line with physical health services: *I think they do need more funding in that area to have a team 24 hours like they do for A&E and they're both just as important* (Anna, 16).

A first step towards getting health issues resolved was having someone listen and involve young people in decisions. A number of children noted that they did feel *listened to* by healthcare professionals such as GPs or mental health practitioners. In the vignette below, Olivia describes her frustration trying to navigate communication from a number of healthcare professionals. Following this, Charlotte's story gives more insight into the prevalence of mental health issues among young people and the impact on their lives.



## Olivia, 16

Olivia was born in Jersey and lived in a southern parish. Olivia was **currently seeing a doctor about a medical condition that I have and... it's been going on for seven years and they still haven't found out like what it is.**

Whilst this was frustrating, Olivia described communication problems between healthcare specialists; part of the problem was that while she was *seeing a specialist [outside of Jersey], and a specialist in Jersey, they're not really communicating between the two*. This was also the case between departments in the same hospital.

*I rocked up to my appointment and they were like 'oh can you tell me about what the x-rays showed because I can't access them because they weren't like shared with the department' cause it was a different department. So it was kind of like, both of the departments I've seen were kind of related in a way, and they just said like 'oh, we don't have the x-rays, em... we'll do another set' and all that but I... yeah I still haven't had the results for them because- it's weird because they don't give you the results and then they expect you to know the results!*

These communication problems also extended to communication from healthcare specialists with Olivia herself, however. Olivia did not understand what doctors told her because *they just give it in like doctors' language, and they don't really translate it for you*. Olivia's frustration was that she could not make meaning of her own health experiences: *I just see like loads of words that just don't make any sense to me and I'm like, they don't tell me what it is, so I look at it, and they're like, oh you have this, then show me a bunch of random words.*

Olivia's frustrations also related to numerous appointments - with few answers - and being taken out of school on a number of occasions *to go there for like 'ok how are you feeling today?' And I'm like... 'ok, I'm feeling fine at the moment' like you know... and they're like 'ok, bye,' and just like... end it there*. This, for Olivia, was indicative of them not really taking an interest. Medical professionals for Olivia haven't told me anything, and they just said like... *'just wait until your next appointment' ... and then you go there and they're like 'oh, you need your x-rays, like you know, try and find where they are like, I can't find them'. Can you like request them again, and they won't let you and all that*. This lack of information about her own health was deeply frustrating for Olivia, who suggested that *because it's your health as well, they need to let you have an insight into your health, like they can't really keep it just between the doctors, like they have to share it with you.*

## Charlotte, 18

Charlotte moved to Jersey when she was a teenager and had experience of mental ill-health. Charlotte found it difficult to **exactly pinpoint when, or why** she suffered from mental illness, explaining that she **had a great support network** and had a family who were **very loving**.

*She had witnessed many of her friends suffer also: it's pretty sad how much of the norm it is, to see kids having really hard times with mental health. It makes you wonder what you're doing wrong, really. And what's wrong with everything to make us feel this way. Mental illness had something of a devastating impact on Charlotte, her family, and her friends.*

*[I] didn't really eat, didn't really sleep... was having full on hallucinations in class, and, you know, walking down High Street... with both seeing things, hearing things... feeling things which was the creepiest one... Yeah. It was really- it was- I thought I was going crazy and it was a hard time. My sister... who was also in the same year as me, also was having a very hard time with mental health... [M]y attention span really was in the negatives at that time because no sleep, no food does not do good things for you... And then there were also other kinds of kids who didn't have the support network so, say there was trouble at home, outside of school, or... different pressures like that who.. well at least at my experience of school were the kinds who attempted suicide.*

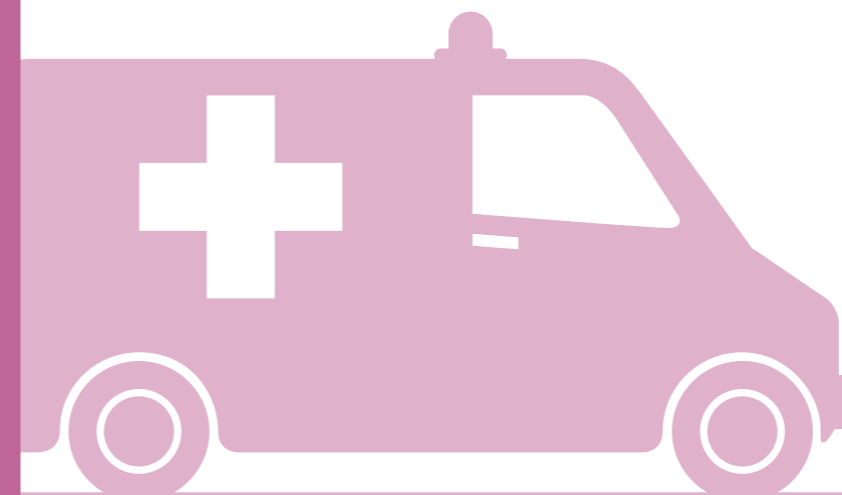
Charlotte's own support network consisted of her parents, sisters and her boyfriend, but not any friends at school. She did, however, keep her struggles from her parents for a period of time, even though she was aware *they knew something was wrong*. Charlotte's approach to her illness was very much *let's keep this hidden as much as possible. I don't know why, I don't know why I thought that was the best way to go.*

Eventually, however, she told her parents because, *I was ready for me to do something about it. I was saying this is happening, I want to go see a therapist.* Charlotte described how she *felt strange talking to someone about it because I'd spent so much energy trying to hide it from people at school and from my family... I was ready for it to be over because it was just exhausting.* Charlotte's mum took her to see her GP, who Charlotte described as a *very nice lady. She took it very calmly.* For Charlotte, the experience of telling her GP was *uncomfortable but she looked at it as a clinical thing. This was a doctor trying to help me.* The GP referred Charlotte to a therapist. This was a big step for Charlotte because she was *worried that the GP would tell my parents and it just sometimes makes me nervous thinking that someone else knows something about me that's personal and vulnerable. But she definitely did listen I think, I appreciate that, I appreciate I wasn't just given drugs and she referred me on.*

One of the key problems with mental health in Jersey, for Charlotte, was that as well as mental illness being a *huge problem*, it had been normalised due to its pervasiveness – particularly among young people that she knew – and the range of individuals it affects: *So I think you have people like me where they think it's normal to feel high levels of anxiety or depression because of school or because of friends, when really it isn't.* Charlotte described how for many of these students, particularly the *really struggling ones who didn't have the support network so, say there was trouble at home, outside of school were those just walking around, thinking ok let's just get through this one day, one day at a time. And it's just quite sad.*

## CAG's Key Messages: Staying Healthy

- Limited medical, dental and mental health services, coupled with money worries and long waiting times, affect children's access to the healthcare they need.
- Life in Jersey would be much better for children and young people if doctors, dentists and other healthcare costs were free for those under 18 years. Paying these costs can affect some families being able to access medical help when they need it. This is not fair, as children do not have their own money and it is not their fault if their parents cannot pay.
- Going off island to seek the necessary medical help and specialist treatments comes at a much higher cost, which includes loss of earnings, and paying for accommodation and travel. While some trips might be for specialist services, non-emergency and routine checks and procedures (ophthalmic matters) also require a trip to Southampton hospital.
- It is very worrying that some people resist going to the doctor until they absolutely have to - 'a life or death situation'. This means people could be living with illnesses for longer than they need to, or some illnesses could be more serious than first thought. Being sick for long periods can mean time spent off school, which affects children's learning.
- More mental health services are needed on the island, such as school and community counselling provision, particularly for teenagers. These should be available 24 hours a day, every day of the year, so young people can access these when they need arises.
- Access to counsellors should be in ways that are more discreet as children and young people are faced with many barriers and stigma when seeing counsellors.
- Wait times for referrals and being categorised according to a priority list make children feel that their problems are not taken seriously enough.
- Developing a quality relationship with a counsellor means you will get the help you need.





# Getting Support



Less than half (44%) of respondents said they knew of places in Jersey that helped young people who were feeling sad or worried. If young people felt sad or worried they would be most likely to talk to friends (59%), followed by someone at home (52%) or a teacher (18%). Eleven per cent of young people said they would talk to a school counsellor. As children get older they are more likely to say they would keep their worries to themselves (25% for those aged 11 to 12 years rising steadily to 62% for those over the age of 17 years).

# 6

## Getting Support

Anna, 16	48
Sarah, 15	49
William, 14	50



Having gone through it on my own, as she suggested, access to support service in Jersey often came too late: You hit breaking point and then you get support. It's not before.

Sometimes, absences in support may have reflected gaps in services, such as disability support. This was the experience of Jackson (14), who was a wheelchair user who benefited from a service offering personal care so like you had a chaperone, and we would go out to kind of get out of the house for a bit, but which withdrew its support from children, focusing on older people; Jackson also accessed social changes in social workers, which characterised a number of young people's experiences, this, for Jackson, was overwhelmingly positive.

Yeah, it was cause it's good to have like support there, someone that you can eh talk to and like, knows your situation... I think she's just like- really approachable and... she's like... an older version of me like. You can just like understand each other and like eh, we're kind of like similar like that... interested in the same things. (Oscar, 15)

For a number of young people, access to services stemmed from family bereavements. William (14) accessed counselling services after his father passed away – I had to get more counselling because I found it so difficult – and Sarah (15) sought help after a grandparent's death which set off the gerophobia, and a constant fear that she might be ill. Sophie's (16) story, however, illustrates how support needs could be overlooked or come too late. Macmillian nurses had supported her and her mum when her father passed away from cancer, seeing her twice a week initially. At her primary school, while there was a safeguarding protocol, there was no counsellor for her to access, although she recalls that [the school] were lovely, and they talked to my mum all the time and made sure I was alright, but there was only so much they could do. When Sophie reached secondary school, she received no support because her support from the hospice had ended. This was compounded by the speed at which these changes happened:

I went from having a counsellor once a week to having nothing. Because I didn't even have [the primary school] anymore. And my mum made the [secondary] school aware that my dad had passed. She had to fight to make them aware because they were like we don't need that information and she was like no, you do. It's kind of important. (Sophie, 16)

Sophie had struggled with pretty bad mental health issues in recent years and for her, despite all she had been through – bereavement, continued family illness, pretty horrendous bullying and harassment from a very creepy guy in school – she felt she had fallen through the gaps.

The thing that bothered me was I'm a kid that you would expect to be at risk for mental health issues and nobody picked up on it... I was a kid you'd think would be at risk and stress activities to help me relieve my stress but it just wasn't working which I think made me feel... worse. (Olivia, 16)

Similarly, Oscar stopped attending counselling at school due to the lack of bond with the counsellor and began to rely on friends for more informal support: If you do counselling you need to bond with the person in order to like... get... a positive experience from it, and we just didn't bond so... there's literally no point (Oscar, 15). Oscar did, however, have a more positive experience accessing counselling through a dedicated youth service – even though he doesn't talk about my feelings – and receiving support from someone he could relate to and who understood him made a crucial difference.

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A number of children spoke of contact with school guidance counsellors, sometimes as a first point of contact before being referred to specialist services. For some young people, such as Sarah (15), seeing the school guidance counsellor was something that's like really good and key to her accessing CAMHS. For Jaya (13), the benefit of a counsellor, who visited her while at school, was that she could talk to her about how I feel, and she will listen. This support at school was not the same for all children in Jersey, however, and some suggested it depended on personalities or an understanding of young people's struggles. For example, Sophie (16) didn't click with the school counsellor and Luke (15) thought the guidance counsellor just didn't really know what to do with me.

Disillusionment with counselling was not an isolated experience, but one that was experienced by a number of young people. Charlotte (18) noted how she couldn't help but think... that, if this is what they got, then it's not enough. Olivia's experience of counselling was unhelpful as the counsellor failed to appreciate the source of her issues, putting them down to 'stress'.

What we did was - we did like stress like management but I wasn't really understood that and they made me do like stress activities to help me relieve my stress but it just wasn't working which I think made me feel... worse. (Olivia, 16)

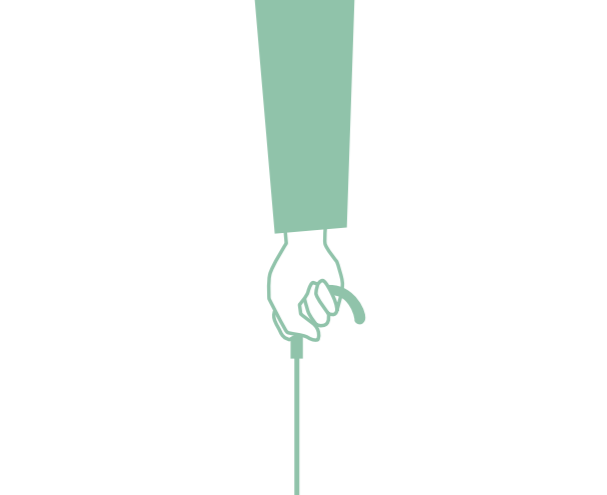
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Like Jaya, Oscar (15) also had experience of family violence and had been kicked out a couple of times, as a result of which he was referred to social services. He did not bond with any of his three social workers, only one of them was quite nice.

The other two were actually horrible. Part of this negative experience was not only being asked questions, that I don't even know how to answer, but because he felt that one of his social workers was quite biased towards my parents I think because he had like kind of the same upbringing, so, understand them more than he understood me, which I think it affected the whole thing. Oscar described the social worker he considered to be quite nice, as the only one I'd actually talk to. They would go for a drive and talk about... whatever – a positive experience because they would make each other laugh.

The three stories below illustrate that young people often first access support within school settings for the issues that they are struggling with, but that gaps in support and negative experiences can impact on their ability to engage with their education and also raise questions in relation to how much they feel they are being listened to. Anna's story illustrates how the ways in which her anxiety impacted in schooling were not understood whilst the lack of a guidance counsellor meant appropriate support within the school setting was not available. Sarah's and William's experiences were more varied, where they experienced positive support from individual counsellors but often felt their support needs related to learning were not being met.



More help and support for young people who are worried or feeling low (sad) was selected by 39% of respondents as one of the top five things that would make life in Jersey better for young people.

# Getting Support

Improve the support network for young people and teach them how to deal with complex social situations e.g. bullying and peer pressure. (survey respondent, female, 16)

I have Asperger's and there is no support for girls like me (survey respondent, female, 15)

Have talks every week at schools to see what we want and if we have problems we can talk about. (survey respondent, male, 9)

Outside of health concerns as explored in the previous section, the struggles faced by children and young people in Jersey for which they sought support were varied, including bullying at school, coping with family illness and bereavement, violence within the home, hearing difficulties as well as mental health issues which had not been sufficiently addressed through health services. Formal and informal support systems emerged as a crucial aspect of young people's experiences in Jersey.

A number of children spoke of contact with school guidance counsellors, sometimes as a first point of contact before being referred to specialist services. For some young people, such as Sarah (15), seeing the school guidance counsellor was something that's like really good and key to her accessing CAMHS. For Jaya (13), the benefit of a counsellor, who visited her while at school, was that she could talk to her about how I feel, and she will listen. This support at school was not the same for all children in Jersey, however, and some suggested it depended on personalities or an understanding of young people's struggles. For example, Sophie (16) didn't click with the school counsellor and Luke (15) thought the guidance counsellor just didn't really know what to do with me.

Disillusionment with counselling was not an isolated experience, but one that was experienced by a number of young people. Charlotte (18) noted how she couldn't help but think... that, if this is what they got, then it's not enough. Olivia's experience of counselling was unhelpful as the counsellor failed to appreciate the source of her issues, putting them down to 'stress'.

What we did was - we did like stress like management but I wasn't really understood that and they made me do like stress activities to help me relieve my stress but it just wasn't working which I think made me feel... worse. (Olivia, 16)

Similarly, Oscar stopped attending counselling at school due to the lack of bond with the counsellor and began to rely on friends for more informal support: If you do counselling you need to bond with the person in order to like... get... a positive experience from it, and we just didn't bond so... there's literally no point (Oscar, 15). Oscar did, however, have a more positive experience accessing counselling through a dedicated youth service – even though he doesn't talk about my feelings – and receiving support from someone he could relate to and who understood him made a crucial difference.

Yeah, it was cause it's good to have like support there, someone that you can eh talk to and like, knows your situation... I think she's just like- really approachable and... she's like... an older version of me like. You can just like understand each other and like eh, we're kind of like similar like that... interested in the same things. (Oscar, 15)

## Anna, 16

Anna, a 16 year old female, was born in Jersey into a family who are all Jersey-born, except her father. Her immediate family have lived in the same house in a small but highly populated parish in Jersey for approximately 25 years, so she has never moved house. Anna has also never moved schools because she went to the prep school attached to her school. From year 5, Anna began to experience severe anxiety.

*I've always struggled with school... I haven't really liked school since then I guess... probably because of mental health issues that started like with school and environment and the structure that it's in and... I've always struggled with my attendance.*

This struggle with her mental health and school attendance has been difficult because school is a legal requirement. This prompted engagement on a number of occasions with the school welfare officer, but Anna describes this as *kind of like... someone invading your space* and an experience that, while well intended, was stressful because *under the stress I was under already with struggling to get into school, having someone on my back all the time was hard*, and she felt like she was constantly under a watchful eye.

Anna gave the example of her grandmother's death as a time when she was finding school tough: *that was a difficult time for me, and I think that that was about year 6 going into year 7 and... I mean it wasn't trauma as such, but I think it did have an effect on me*. At this time, Anna did not feel that she was listened to, or that she was provided with appropriate support. The school did not have a guidance counsellor which, for Anna, was a situation that was *baffling* because they still do not have a school counsellor. Furthermore, when Anna was having trouble getting into school in year 6, the support she was provided with was the school chaplain, which wasn't the kind of support I needed and... *I don't think she was really trained*. For Anna, this was important: *I think the school should have people in certain roles like if someone in their family has died, or something is going on at home, like the school should be a part of that*.

In order to make herself heard, Anna tried on a number of occasions to get involved with the school council, *every year most years I tried to get into it and didn't succeed with it*. In more recent years however, *when they've said about it I just haven't bothered because I've... just feel like I'm not getting into it*. For Anna's school experience, young people's views are not heard *unless you're on the school council or you tell the person in your year things you want to take back to the school council*. She thought of school as a difficult area for her, and later sought a space to for her voice to be heard, away from school, in an extra-curricular group that was mental health focused.

## Sarah, 15

Sarah was born in Jersey and lived in the south of the island. She attended a state secondary school and was referred to CAMHS by her school counsellor who she went to see one day at school *because I knew that I needed help*.

The school counsellor was the only adult that Sarah sought support from, and she was aware that *if it wasn't for the school counsellor I wouldn't have been referred so... I think that's something they need in place for every school [because] the waiting list for CAMHS is a big issue*. For Sarah, the school counsellor was *just someone for me to tell*, and her support from the counsellor *helped a lot*.

Sarah had also sought support from her school for her learning: the school was doing... *some tests on auditory processing disorder*. Her experience with this type of seeking support was more negative, however, as Sarah described how the school *haven't been good on that side because my mum has been trying to get me tests for dyslexia since year 4, but nothing's happened*. Sarah was initially offered orange paper but then that didn't help and then because I wasn't using the blue paper cause it didn't help, they just kind of just... *shrugged it off as if nothing was wrong*. In her experience, the school *weren't being very helpful* because she underwent tests, and then nothing happened. This, for Sarah, was *something that I think has lacked in... support*. The professional that dealt with Sarah's case *didn't seem to be listening to me at all really*. Or she just got me to do like these tests which I don't think were relevant and it was like quite bizarre.

Despite her frustration with seeking support for her learning, and not being told the results of tests that had been carried out, Sarah was told a year later that she would be *going in a different room for your exam*. Sarah was placed in a room with people who had... *severe learning difficulties, but that room was really disruptive because of it and I was like 'why am I being put in this room?' and they were like... 'because you are'*. For Sarah, *they needed to listen to me more and get my perspective on things*. Instead of just... *a test*.

## William, 14

William moved to Jersey when he was around the age of two. He attended a selective state secondary school and lived in a north east parish in Jersey with his mum. When William first moved to Jersey he was behind his peers in his learning because he had a hearing problem as an infant, for which he had not received support. Around the time he moved to Jersey, he began to experience anxiety every once in a while but never too bad.

*When he moved into year 7, however, that's when I properly get... proper anxiety, to the point where I can barely cope in lessons and everything. On his first day at secondary school, I couldn't stop crying, but at the same point I was too scared to tell anyone. William tried to convince my mum to let me not go to school and he had to lie to all my friends, and I could barely see them all the time because of it as well. William's anxiety was bad and he kept getting sick over it and kept throwing up.*

*In year 8, William experienced extensive bullying on the school bus, and later it got to the point where they started it in school. When his father passed away and he returned to school, he found it difficult but then all that bullying stopped and I feel like it's because of that. Despite the hiatus from school bullies, I had to get more counselling because I found it so difficult. At the same time, William was preparing for a school entrance exam, which he found... a lot more difficult, cause my dad would always help with me, with how I'd say it, how I'd say things. William again returned to counselling because I have this throat problem, which we think is to do with the stress, but I need to leave class for like five or ten minutes, or it will get to the point where I find it difficult to breathe.*

*Counselling featured periodically in William's life. At his previous school, he found that it helped for like an hour or two, cause it made me like feel better and I could get to lessons, but say it was too early in the day... I would almost start feeling it again. William told this to his counsellor, but they can't really do much about it because they can't take me out of too many lessons because eventually, I'm going to get behind in class. When it came to tests and assessments, however, William would have liked if they had let me go into another room... it would make it a lot easier and I would have been less stressed about it. Some of William's stress, therefore, came from tests. In his current school, he found that the school counsellor here helps me for like the whole day, I feel better the whole day... I found she was a lot more like calm and chilled than the other one, which made it a little bit more relatable and made it a lot easier to talk to her.*

## CAG's Key Messages: Getting Support

- Young people need more, and better, support systems and services in Jersey.
- Adults tend to brush off children's concerns and do not (or cannot) deal with them until it becomes a much bigger problem. Waiting until problems become really big may not help much. It is not good enough.
- Teachers need to be more hands-on and schools should talk to each other about children's support needs when they move from primary to secondary school.
- A relationship with a trusted adult is crucial for all children, not just for those identified as 'at risk'. Everyone, from a young age, should have support so that problems are less likely to arise and continue, and to prevent the development of mental health issues.
- Support should be tailored to children's needs. The child should be consulted so they can influence and get the help they think they need.



# Getting an Education



Survey respondents were positive about school/college with 52% saying they liked it and a further 32% liking it 'sometimes'. While 15% of respondents said they did not like going to school, the figure rose to one quarter for 14 and 15 year olds and fell to only 1% for 8 year olds. The majority of children (86%) thought their teachers listened to them at least sometimes while 51% said they were sometimes or often asked for their views about how their school or college is run. 'Helping young people to have more of a say at school or college' was selected by 24% of respondents as one of the top five things that would make life in Jersey better for young people.

# 7

## Getting an Education

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## Getting an Education

Ask the children what they want their school to improve on. Make schools in Jersey a fun place to learn. make sure that there isn't any bullying at their school. (survey respondent, female, 8)

There isn't a comments page so I'm going to use this. Children aren't taught about rights. PSHE lessons center heavily around drugs and STDs, with very little focus on building healthy relationships or mental health, or how to manage your life once you leave full-time education (taxes, housing, etc.). Some secondary schools do better than others, but after having attended 2 of the supposedly better schools, I have still found better information online. At [school], there is very little opportunity for students to express their concerns. There is no school council, or anything similar, so if a student has any concerns, it is difficult to know where to take said concerns. (survey respondent, 'Other' gender, 16)

Children's experiences of school and education in Jersey is, for many, a positive aspect of Life on the Rock because they are, like Anna (16), constantly surrounded by young people and you're there with all your friends. For Victoria (10), this positive experience was encapsulated by everyone really wants you to do well and to learn here. Jackson (14), who was a wheelchair user, liked the environment because if he dropped something, quite a lot of people would pick it up. For many young people, like Oscar, a young transgender male, school was a place where he felt quite respected and when Reuben (14) told everyone he was bisexual, his school made him feel really happy and safe. School trips also featured as vivid memories of happy and inclusive educational time outside the classroom where young people got to know their peers and teachers, and try new things: they're some of the best things that our school do (Victoria, 10).

Yet, these positive experiences of inclusivity were not the case for all children in Jersey. On Jackson's first day at secondary school, he discovered on arriving at the front door that we couldn't get in

because they weren't automatic, and although this was rectified over the summer holidays, getting around school was still not as easy as it should be... there are still some places I haven't been in the school. At lunchtimes, Jackson found it quite a pain to get to the actual canteen place to order food so like my friends used to go up and like buy it for me with my money – and now he brings his own lunch to school. Some children described the difficult experiences of moving to schools in Jersey where young people already knew one another. When Noah, aged 9, started school his family had moved from another part of the island and so he didn't know any other children and struggled as he didn't know much English words. Jaya (13) told of how moving to the island from overseas was difficult for her because everyone knew each other and everyone had their friends, none were really willing to open up to other people. Some people were just a bit mean.

Some young people spoke about the academic aspect of school. For Max (14), school is really good and he had been at top for a year. He enjoyed school because it is my future. In contrast, Joe (15) considered himself not very academic, so I don't really think I'd be able to get a high end job straight away. Even at primary level, Victoria (10) described how in choosing the private school she would go to for secondary level education, it was nicer to go to a school that's non-selective cause they have a range of different people, and your academic results aren't as important. She described her choice of school as based upon it being friendlier. Some young people spoke about specific subjects, with Anna (16), for example, telling us that she would value a greater curriculum focus on general life skills including sewing or DIY, [or] how to manage money because some things in maths, or biology, and physics and stuff, you'd never use ever again after that exam, which I think is ridiculous. In a similar vein, Noah (9) did not see the value in studying Religious Education because I don't really go to church or anything and I don't really think about religions.

One service that young people suggested needed improvement was careers advice: Jaya (13) explained that there is a careers fair, but they just tell you if you do these subjects you can do this and work for us, but they don't tell you if you need to do university and how to get into university. Jaya was choosing subjects based on her future plans to be a doctor, and the life skills she would need like cooking for herself. She suggested that careers advice needed to include what jobs you can get if you have certain GCSE's and A Levels. Sarah wanted to go to university but didn't know how much we have to pay, and Sophie (16) wanted the financing here to be a lot better... it's also like not very well explained as to how you do it. She also pointed out that support services such as social workers and psychologists were in short supply in Jersey and wished the Jersey government provided more support for qualifying in these fields, if they need something, help us get there. Cause I'd come back here if they paid for me to get here. The narrow range of jobs that existing careers services advised on was a problem for Anna.

So, I think there's still a lot more careers advice [needed] because people think of like the basic things like being a doctor, nursing and things but there's such like a wide range that people don't get to experience... I feel like even from a young age, they should like start building up like different jobs that people might not think about like, I don't know, like chiropractor or something that younger kids don't know about like, until they're older... There's so much finance in Jersey, it's like, not everyone wants to go into banking! (Anna, 16)

Whilst some young people did not find school a stressful environment, others, particularly those aged 16-18, spoke at length of the stresses that accompanied academic life. This ranged from Luke (15), who received extra support at school and described getting stressed quite easily in some of the lessons especially culinary skills... it is quite hectic and like I don't really handle it that well, to students like Sophie (16) and Charlotte (18) who were completing International Baccalaureate courses. Sophie described her academic workload as a very mentally... draining course, consolidated by Charlotte who told us that teachers could add to this pressure by emphasising that you screw this up, you screw up your life.

Many of the children interviewed, particularly those aged 13-18, told of experiences where they felt they had not received the support they needed from teachers – some of which is considered in detail in the previous section. Frustration was experienced when young people were not being given accurate and helpful information, and not being listened to. Sarah (15) described having tests done to investigate possible dyslexia and a processing disorder, but nothing was done with these tests, and she was not told of the outcome. What was significant for Sarah was not only that the person coordinating these tests didn't seem to be listening to me at all, but also that her perspective seemed to be dismissed.

They need to just kinda listen to... listen more and kinda just tell teachers and try and like sort something out instead of just kinda doing all these tests and then brushing them off like it's nothing and having no outcome from it. (Sarah, 15)

Many young people spoke about their school councils as a means of being listened to. Whilst Joshua (10) was not on his school council, he described how children in his school were able to give our own opinions which the school council relayed to teachers: they're kind of carrying our voice to [teacher]. Victoria's (10) head teacher took the time to explain the school development plan and she showed us that and things that we're working towards through electing school council reps. Eleanor explained how the student council were making the school improvement plan more child-friendly. For Jaya (13), being listened to was demonstrated by an anaphylaxis awareness day as her brother had a serious peanut allergy. In Jaya's experience of the school council, if you had something to say, they would listen, even when Jaya was no longer on the school council.

For others, however, student councils and representation of students in school was something that could be exclusive. William (14) noted he'd not really seen [the school council] do anything and when asked about representation he explained I'm not sure who's on it. Max (14) wasn't sure if it still ran; Jackson (14) wasn't sure if there was one. Sophie (16) explained how the student council at her school was a very select group of people who focused on cosmetic issues, or issues that aren't the biggest ones that need solving. These students were academic, doing well, and those not requiring much support in school. Sophie pointed out that there were no students with mental health illnesses, or ethnic minority students on the school council, so if there was racism going on, they wouldn't know. She described this as having a student council that was set up without... the people that need the changes the most in mind. While the school did consult its students, this had little influence on the workings of the school for students: the school do so many surveys. They do so many. But I've never seen change. Ever. For Sophie, an outlet for her became a mental health lobby group outside of school because it's nice to be heard, particularly by people with real powers.

The three stories below illustrate from different perspectives the ways in which young people may feel included or excluded from school processes and mechanisms and the extent to which their views are heard and taken into account.





## Elliott, 16

Elliott, a 16 year old male, was born in Jersey to Jersey born parents, and was completing his A-Levels. Elliott's early school experiences demonstrated the close-knit family support he received from his grandparents by whom he was **picked up every day**. Elliott's primary school experiences were positive with good school trips where the **whole class get involved**.

*And from what I can remember, everybody enjoyed it. He also described one particular teacher as brilliant because she has completely turned me around when Elliott was experiencing some behavioural challenges.*

When he began secondary school, he also described his form teacher as *brilliant* and *really funny*, but his experiences of school changed two years later when *it was almost as if they couldn't control the classes*, and many of his school year left *because the situation got to the point that it was really quite bad* and because he feared that he was *not going to do very well regardless of how you try because you are not getting taught* which Elliott described as a *spiral*. Elliott noted that this was not teachers' fault but pointed to the relationship management system in the school.

*The way they reprimanded the students just didn't work, or it was just the way they did it. From what I can remember, no calls home to parents if it was really bad so there was no incentive for them to stop it. I mean there just isn't, so they just don't.*

This later restricted Elliott's subject choices in his new school because large parts of the curriculum at his previous school had not been covered: *we were so behind*. When he began his new school, he was told *don't worry about it*. Elliott suggested that he didn't think *there was a clear structure* when it came to dealing with behaviour in his previous class but suggested that this may also be because of the setting system at the school: *they were slightly lower set, people would know that they are in a lower set*. For Elliott to voice his concerns about his learning, however, there was no *solid body that you could go and talk to* because the student council rotated each week and there was no consistency. When he moved schools at the end of his third year, there was no student council at all, and so Elliott was instrumental in setting one up with his peers. For Elliott, this has been a positive experience because a member of the senior leadership team sits in on the meetings.

*She is on the senior leadership team... so she has some influence in what goes on. So, she sits in but she lets the students chair it so she is not telling you what we can and can't discuss.*

Whilst the student council has had an audience that has taken their views seriously and credited them with some influence on events, however, Elliott also explained how some treatment of the student council was tokenistic, particularly in relation to the Jersey government's *Putting Children First* policy priority.

*We went down to Highlands one morning, and the council met with the whole cabinet ministers, the deputy chief minister there... so asking them questions like that 'Putting Children First' thing. But it turns out they just wanted us for a PR stunt which was a bit of a shame...*

Elliott's experiences in having his voice heard in school prompted his desire to get *into politics*, yet this was not offered by his school as a subject choice and there was no agreement between his school and local private schools for him to pursue these studies on a reciprocal agreement, meaning his school was *left out in the cold*. Additionally, there were no leisure activities for more academic interests, but many for sport, in what Elliott described as *quite an imbalance* because there are *not that many ways* in which children can participate in decision making around Jersey.

## Luke, 15

Luke was born in Jersey and went to a state secondary school there. He has Asperger's Syndrome and lives in an eastern parish. Luke's experiences of school were sometimes unusual, mostly because of how people responded to what could sometimes be perceived by others as strange behaviour.

When talking about his early school experiences, Luke described how *some of the teachers didn't know what to do with me because... on one hand I was smart apparently... on the other hand I just did pretty much whatever I wanted... such as putting a bucket on my head for no reason*. He added, however, that he *did have friends though. I wasn't a complete outcast*. Looking back, Luke explained that *the thought never crossed my mind that I was different in any way*. In primary school, *you got to know who was in your class quite well and anyone who didn't know me didn't really talk to me... so I was ok within my class but kind of outcasted with everyone else. So I wasn't a complete outcast, but I wasn't completely in*. Luke explains that he didn't really mind this but *used to walk around the playground* and that he had made up a song he repeated, one line of which he could remember: *no one to play with, no one to play with*. Luke's teacher *told the class to play with me* but Luke found this *so embarrassing* looking back – *he didn't really realise it at the time*.

Luke relayed one of the times he got in trouble was one of the times he demonstrated strange behaviour. On this occasion, he had sharpened a stick and hurt a classmate with it, but it was *a complete accident, like I didn't intend to hurt him*. Luke had to go and *see the headmaster's office* where the head took away the stick. *The head wasn't really angry, he was more disappointed. And that is how you make a kid feel bad. You don't shout at them; you make them feel that they have done something wrong*. In Luke's experience, *scathing disappointment, that's how you get through to kids*. This was because *your brain more readily and easily remembers negativity than positivity. That's why negative reinforcement works so well*, although he added that *it may not have the intended effect*.

When he moved to a private secondary school in year 7, he was *disappointed about not being able to hang out with my friends* because of the collegiate house system, and his friends being in *different houses*, and therefore different classes. Luke spoke about his fascination with a science display – what he described as *one of my problem areas* – walking into the science block. Around half way through year 7, *my mum decided no, it's not too good for me*, and this was when Luke *moved school to where I am now*. Luke thinks *it was something to do with they don't really know how to handle me because they have never had someone with Asperger's before*. He had been at his current school since then. Luke acknowledged that his teachers *definitely tried*, but *it depended what mood I was in. If I was in a good mood then I would do stuff, and if in a bad mood, I would reject any kind of support whatsoever. And that still happens today*. Luke described this as a *'me' problem*, but added that he gets *stressed quite easily*.

## Noah, 9

Noah was born in Jersey and learned English as a second language. He lives with his parents and younger sister in the south west of the island. Noah told us different stories about going to school: that he had **lots of friends** at his school; and also that one time, **a friend pushed me because we were like playing and I fell... and I broke my bone.**

Noah also told us how it was difficult when he started primary school because he had gone to a preschool in another parish. When he began primary school, *he didn't know lots of things and didn't know much English words.* Not only was he not speaking English at home, but he had *grommets... in my mouth and I couldn't like speak properly.* As time went on, however, Noah started to *know more people and started to speak English properly.* His teachers helped him *a little bit.* Noah sometimes found it hard speaking two languages because he *didn't know all the words.* Noah's favourite subjects are maths because he likes *adding and doing different sums and adding and times tables* but doesn't like *RE or English.* His dislike for English was because *sometimes you need to do a lot of writing and sometimes it's too much.* He found English difficult. Noah didn't like RE because *I don't really go to church or anything and I don't really think about religions.*

When asked if he had ever had any problems in school, like bullying, Noah told us about a boy *who used to be in our school, who was naughty to me and other people.* Noah himself had been in trouble at school before when he was *playing football and I tackled a friend and... he started being angry because I tackled him and he was about to score and he started running after me and getting me. And then I pushed him away and then the teacher saw and went in trouble.* The teacher was *angry at us* and Noah had to go to the Head Teacher and miss break time. He felt sad about this, but didn't tell the Head Teacher what had happened *because she was angry and she just told us to stay in for break.* Noah didn't feel like he could tell her what happened.

This was even though Noah thought the school did ask for children's opinions. For example, at his school they did *Philosophy for Children* where children *make up a question and we talk about it,* for example, *do you think people should have like special help.* In these sessions, *some people think no and they explain why they think no.* The school also had a *school council* where you could *write something and you could put it in the box. Or when we do school council meeting you could say it.* Noah was not on the school council, so this meant he could not go to the meetings because they were for *only school council.* Noah had only ever put one thing in the box which was *that I wanted to be a rights-respecting person and... I didn't be it.* Noah expressed his disappointment at not being chosen because *she said at assembly if you want to be a rights-respecting [person] you could put your name in the box, and we could choose who's going to be. And I put my name in the box and she didn't pick me, she picked four other people from my class.* Noah wanted to be a rights-respecting person because *it's quite fun and there's meetings and you do like interesting stuff and important stuff.*

## CAG's Key Messages: Getting an Education

- Not all children have a great time at school. School is stressful because of all the testing and it gets harder and more formal each year they progress.
- Teachers sometimes do not listen to children and good teacher support depends on the situation and the teachers' time.
- Depending on what's going on around you, it can be hard to get motivated for school, so more free time to relax and sleep is required.
- Children are aware of an 'academic divide' that focuses on academic attainment and negates the opportunity to obtain vocational skills. A constant focus on academic subjects is draining.
- Some subjects are viewed as useless because the need for that information is unclear. There is an assessment disparity between different subjects, which influences how young people chose the subjects they do, affecting their future.
- Some children think school is an 'artificial environment', more fun and subject variation is required. Activities, such as football or crafts undertaken during the school day might cater better for those who are not doing academically well at school.
- Careers advice is severely lacking in schools. At primary level, careers focussed information could help children understand the importance of some subjects, and see how formal qualifications influence the types of jobs they aspire to. This information will empower children to shape their own future based on their aptitudes, abilities and preferences. At secondary level, more information is required on accessing A levels and a university education, which is typically off island.
- There are some courses affiliated with universities available on the island, but they are limited to law, social work and finance.
- Some young people may look forward to moving off island for university. For others it can be scary to leave home and get on a plane and leave.
- Young people in Jersey rely on parents or start their adult life in debt with a student loan, to pay their university fees.
- Even though Jersey is part of the British Isles, UK university administrators label students as foreign international who must pay full international fees.
- For children and young people who move to the island from another country, a new education system can be particularly daunting.
- Disabled students struggling to access school should be a thing of the past.
- Children and young people have good suggestions on how to improve school for everyone.

# Social Media & Online Life



Survey respondents were not asked specifically about online activities; however, a few mentioned them in their open-ended responses to questions about how their local area could be made better for children and young people and what they would do if they were the Commissioner.

# 8

**Social Media &  
Online Life**

Anna, 16

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## Social Media & Online Life

*Make more attractions and activities, for example convert the old swimming pool at the fort into something fun and exciting that all young people could use. Because there is not much going on and available for young people would not spend so much time on social media and spend weekends drunk.*  
(survey respondent, female, 16)

### More fun activities. Free Internet.

(survey respondent, male, 12)

### Certain gaming areas (tabletop, cards, video gaming etc), a community area.

(survey respondent, male, 13)

### Give us something to do in the winter cause all we have is computer games and parents just moan to u about it if you are on for to long, this could be made better but there isn't much i think of could change this.

(survey respondent, male, 14)

Many children and young people participated in their social lives partially online. Some young people, like Jackson, played video games with their friends online. Social media was also a means of personal expression. Max *didn't have the confidence to tell my parents that he was gay*, so he came out on Instagram, knowing that his family would see his post; others, like Sophie, used it for her photography hobby. Overwhelmingly, however, social media was a means to stay in touch with friends. Jackson (14), who was a wheelchair user, talked of some challenges he faced getting around Jersey and described his use of social media as *talking to friends a lot more because say like the holidays for example you could be just sitting there doing nothing and you can go and talk for a bit*. Similarly, William (14) explained that he had social media accounts, but only used them for messaging people; *I don't really post anything, I just use it to message people*.

By some stretch, Snapchat was the most common social media application used by young people in Jersey. Oscar (15) explained that *it's all about Snapchat these days. Everything's on there*. The group chat function on Snapchat was particularly useful to young people, like Elliott (16), as *the way you keep on top of literally everybody*. Similarly, Jackson (14) had *all of our friends on it and we just chat really. That is how we like arrange meeting up, to see if we want to go out as well. We have like a group chat on it, so like a bunch of people just talking together to see if like everyone wants to go out and chill really*. The benefit of this for Jackson was that *you talk to your friends a lot more*. This was also a means of maintaining friendships, as described by Anna:

*[I]t's actually really good because... in a way you're like kind of socialising with people but like, if you didn't have it- like you wouldn't talk to your friends as much and I guess even though you meet up with your friends, like in person, you're still getting to know them online.* (Anna, 16)

Primary children were least likely to have social media accounts, and those who did spoke of parental controls where, like Lucy (10), *if [name] sends a message it comes up on [mum's] phone she can see it*. Lucy was confident that if she felt scared, the action to take was to *tell your teachers*. Joshua (10) did not have any social media accounts, explaining that he *didn't really care about that sort of stuff*, and Leo (10) described how he *didn't really want to have it anyway*, while explaining his dad's opinion that he was still too young for social media apps like Snapchat and Instagram.

For older children, uses of social media extended to highly personal images: Sophie found that *Snapchat is one of those weird ones where people use it in such a vain way. Like obviously people send nudes. I've never received one, thank god, but people do*. She described Snapchat as an app where *people really work behind a mask, whereas Instagram I don't find that really...* This idea of portraying themselves in a way that was distorted was also described by Olivia as a space where young people had to make false representations of themselves.

*So, social media is probably one of the biggest things people use today. And, you kinda have to look good on social media, like it's all about social media now. And, people kind of lie about what they do em to look good in front of like people... social media does have a big influence because you have to like kind of look good on it, but em, in reality, you kind of are lying about yourself in a way that gives a false representation of you.* (Olivia, 16)

For Sarah, one of the issues with social media was that *it's really quite like, personal, like adults- like your parents don't see what you're doing*. Having followed social media accounts like *extreme health pages*, which glorified eating disorders, she thought that *social media companies need to like take down stuff like that as well to keep an eye on it more cause if it's up there then anyone can access it and the school or people can tell you not to but if you don't think that there's anything wrong with what you're- like when I had that anorexia I didn't realise I did*. Similarly, Anna, who also experienced mental health difficulties, spoke about the effect of social media representations.

*Instagram can be a bad thing for like... self-image and... stuff like you see models and things constantly on Instagram. The effect of this was that young people can be more self-conscious because you're currently being fed with things that... oh I'm supposed to be like that.*

One concerning trend on social media – primarily Snapchat – was anonymous messaging which both Sophie and Oscar spoke about. Oscar (15) described it as *anonymous so you can write whatever you want. And I guess people kind of like, cause you're behind a screen, no one knows who you are. They like, text you stuff they*

*probably wouldn't say face to face...* Oscar, like others, had received negative comments because everyone does. Some young people had experiences of posting material online and experiencing *people make mean comments*. Jaya described the inescapable nature of social media when it came to experiences of online abuse on the part of her friend who:

*[P]osted a picture on Instagram and this girl was being mean and saying that she looks fat and stuff like that, then this other girl joined in and they were ganging up on her. Then the argument broke out and people were arguing with each other over the text, the girl who posted the picture had all these notifications coming to her phone.* (Jaya, 13)

Arguments over social media were not isolated to Jaya's experience. Reuben described Snapchat as a place where there was *a lot of drama*. These arguments could go on for prolonged periods of time, escalated by others publishing content on their own accounts.

*We were like on Snapchat for hours and I was like to the point, there was no point but what they did, they started screen shooting the chat and putting it on their story to show all their friends and it just went around so I dropped them all.* (Reuben, 14)

The instant nature of being able to access young people in their private spaces was one that Sophie, who had experienced bullying, linked to her mental health. Social media, and particularly Snapchat, was described as a space she had to take care with.

*I think Snapchat's fine, the one problem I have with it is Snapmaps because my [laughs] brain goes into weird places, if people don't reply I start thinking that they don't want to talk to me... So, it's only because I can see when people are active on Snapchat whereas on Instagram and on Facebook you can turn that feature off. So, if I don't want people to know if I'm active, it doesn't show me if they are. Whereas on Snapchat, even if I turn off my location, you see everyone else's. So I can't turn it off, I can't turn off seeing other people's and it takes control to not look at them.*

Young people were asked if they knew where to go to get support for any issues they encountered in their online lives. For Reuben (14), approaching a teacher was futile because when he approached them before, their response was that the online arguments had taken place *outside of school so they can't do anything about it*. Alternatively, he was told to *ignore the behaviour*. Whilst Jaya (13) suggested that *people usually go to one of the teachers they trust*, many, like Anna and Sarah responded with *I don't know*, and some suggested that they would talk to teachers or parents. Anna suggested that:

*[Y]ou just like kind of talk to someone in your family or parents or your school or something. I don't think they have any of that like specific thing like if you're being cyber bullied or something like that you would go to like... like... like a responsible adult.* (Anna, 16)

One issue that emerged with regard to social media and online lives was the lack of clarity around support networks if children were experiencing cyber bullying or lacked awareness of the risks online. Olivia (16) highlighted a course delivered by the police in Jersey called 'Prison Me No Way', in which young people had an assembly once a year about *drugs, relationships, like online safety and all that*. Whilst they could, in theory, go to the Head or something if *something has happened, in reality, they don't really listen to you, they just kind of sit there, just not doing anything!* One of the issues which arose from any awareness raising that did take place, therefore, was the distinct lack of awareness about where to go for reporting issues.

*[W]e haven't really been told about it. We've only been told to like see your teachers but- half the time teachers just don't really care. They just kind of sit there saying oh I need to teach like you know, it's not my job. I'm being paid to teach, not basically be your counsellor.* (Olivia, 16)

Reuben suggested that what young people are in need of is *help or show people how to like... how to deal with something, like a drama with snapchat or any social media. How to like avoid like getting it worse. Because I don't know what to do. I would just argue with them*. This need for awareness building about online behaviour extended beyond cyber bullying to the future of young people's lives, and the perceptions of their behaviour. Olivia thought that *there needs to be somewhere where- like education about online safety as well since everything is online now like- everything you do online leaves a footprint, like you can't erase what you put online, it's there forever, employers look at it...*

Social media has many advantages for the lives of young people in Jersey, as elsewhere, but also poses risks and heightens anxiety already existing in their lives. Anna's story illustrates these tensions related to social media as she navigates her relationships.



## Anna, 16

Anna captured her online life as **a way to like see what other people in your life are doing** and spoke at length about how social media for young people was how they made and maintained friendships and connections.

*I don't know what we'd do without social media and like it would be weird for us not to have it because that's how we communicate and that is how we like... say oh we're going to meet up at this time, or like, it's how you make friends I guess.*

As well as making friends and maintaining these friendships, however, social media was also a space in which young people encountered relationship conflicts. This was a source of stress for Anna, but she also appreciated the benefit of being able to express her perspective more easily by arguing in text rather than by verbal confrontation.

*...like in the past like I had an argument with my friend and stuff and that was like... that was over text on social media. I kind of found- that was stressful but em... like sometimes I find it better you can like write out like what you want to say, that you might not be able to say in person, not like as being mean to someone but like you can... kind of get across what you're saying more without being face to face with the person.*

Like others who spoke about friendship conflict online, however, one of the drawbacks of this manner of conducting conflict in friendship groups was that the argument inevitably got 'shared' and others became involved in arguments that took place over a shared social media space: *it gets shared around more quickly than if it's an argument in person which I think is a downside and you end up like texting back and forth, back and forth when... it kind of does get quite stressful.*

Despite the benefits of their online lives and instant discoverability, however, the nature of social media's instant accessibility, especially for such a small place, was also a worrying feature because young people were discoverable at all times: *it's like, people can know where you are all the time which is... kind of scary but, sometimes it can be good cause then you can see where the- where people are, if you're trying to find them.* Fittingly, nevertheless, the upside of this instant accessibility for Anna, was to arrange social events in person.

## CAG's Key Messages: Social Media & Online Life

- Children, from a young age, are technologically advanced and 'cyber-aware' and many enjoy the benefits of using social media apps to stay in touch with their family and friends.
- Issues around safety, self-representation, peer pressure and constant judgement can affect their confidence and self-esteem. Yet they feel powerless to control some of the features, such as random contact from strangers.
- The online environment needs to be supervised and regulated to ensure children are safe.
- Children accept online verbal (and other) abuses as inevitable in their lives. Their expectation of this increases as they get older, and as parents have less control on what they are doing.
- Young people spend a lot of time online and should be encouraged to make decisions on how best to fit social media into a healthy lifestyle.





# Money & Employment



'More help for children (young people) and families who don't have enough money' was selected by 43% of survey respondents as one of the five things that would make life in Jersey better for young people. More females (46%) than males (40%) selected this as one of their top five as did younger children (52% for 7-11 year olds) compared to their older counterparts (39% for those aged 12+ years).

# 9

## Money & Employment

Elliott, 16

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# Money & Employment

*Make sure families have enough money to buy good food for their children. I've heard some children have had less food in their lunch boxes nearer the end of the month. This makes me realize that there are some less fortunate people in Jersey. (survey respondent, female, 11)*

*Everything costs a lot of money we don't have much so I miss out on things my friends do sometimes. (survey respondent, male, 10)*

*There is no garden or space in area where I live. We just need a better flat where I can have my one room, and all the children should have the same. But mum says that is to expensive to move to a different place a specially when she is not sure how much money she is going to get in a week. No child should have the same problem as my family. (survey respondent, male, 8)*

*I would make sure that families that don't have as much money as others are able to make the most of their education and are able to take part in everything as well so they don't feel excluded. (survey respondent, female, 16)*

Most young people – some at a very young age - were aware of the wealth that existed in Jersey, the high cost of living and perhaps had some idea of the financial status of their family.

*Jersey's quite wealthy I'd say, and pretty much everyone who lives here says that. Em, yeah, Jersey's quite wealthy and it's absolutely fine living in Jersey, hmm, but since I don't pay any bills and stuff, I don't know how much it costs. But, since we have a family of six, I'm pretty sure it costs quite a lot. (Joshua 10)*

Housing costs were described as *ridiculous, quite expensive* and a bit of a *pain*; as explored in more depth earlier in the report, those moving to Jersey often struggled with accessing the housing market. Young people described the situation in Jersey as distinct as they drew comparisons with other jurisdictions where friends and family lived.

*Oh yes, so expensive. I mean I was talking to like some of my mates from England they were saying... if you were going to buy a flat here you could basically buy a house in England. So yeah, it's nuts. (Oscar, 15)*

Some young people were aware of economic equality across the island, recognising that they were *lucky* if their family could afford, for example, private dental care or that others *don't have as much money* (Olivia, 16). Lucy, one of the youngest participants, recognised the unequal distribution of wealth on education - *some children need more education that's what I know. Cause, em, the richer schools get more money, the poorer schools don't get much as them... To make it equal, the money given. To them. Her advice was simple: To give money to the poor* (Lucy, 10).

The cost of living on the island was discussed by some young people in relation to utilities, food and leisure and some described how lack of competition influenced choice and cost of services on the island. Elliott, for example, described the downside of having one electricity provider.

*The cost of living over here compared to the rest of the UK is generally high anyway whether you are a family or just an individual it is much higher. Yeah, I would say so because often you don't have a choice about which companies you can go to especially if there is just one. So it is almost like they can charge... Because they know they are going to get away with it... the Jersey Electricity Company, they are the only one... It is not astronomical prices but they know that they can get that edge. They can charge you that little bit extra because they know they can. (Elliott, 16)*

A number noted that food, too, was expensive. Joe (15) explained that *because everything has to be shipped in, so the supermarkets have to pay for that food to come in and then we have to, in order for them to make any money. Whilst wealth and cost of living was discussed more generally among young people, however, they had more limited awareness about the particular experiences of their own families. In the most part, young people were unaware of state financial support that may be available, nor did they know if their families availed of such support – I'm not really clued up about that kind of stuff. I don't know!* (Anna, 16). Yet, when significant events in family life occurred, some young people were conscious of the financial impact these could have. Whilst Charlotte considered her family as generally *well-off*, she appreciated that the initial move to Jersey contributed to financial pressure in struggles to join the housing market and get *settled*. Following this, funding university fees for four children was a considerable financial hit for her parents, and given that *tuition fees were off the charts for an overseas student like me...* Charlotte chose to take a gap year:

*[M]y two siblings go to uni, overseas fee, at the same time. Yeah, and then two years after that, my sister and I were supposed to go but I- stayed back... Yeah definitely strain, but never in serious trouble. Yeah, I think we've always been pretty well-off with money and this was definitely a hit to the fund. But never in serious trouble. (Charlotte, 18)*

Illness and death of family members also impacted on income given the disruption to a parent's employment. Sophie described the impact of her father's illness and death and ultimately she and her mother had to move in with her mother's new partner given they could not afford their accommodation.

*We lived there for about a year and then my dad got diagnosed with lung cancer. And then when I was seven he died. So it was like then it was me and my mum and the rent was really high and obviously my mum was living off one wage. Eh- originally no wage, cause she took time off work to take care of my dad. Em... so we kind of had that living arrangement for about a year and a half. (Sophie, 16)*

Due to a long-term illness, Joe's father was unable to work since he was young and while Joe (15) was *not really in charge of the money* in his household and his parents *like to keep that to themselves*, he was aware that *we've not been having as much money*, and of the strategies his parents used to adapt to their circumstances.

*They buy a lot of reduced food, to save money to pay bills or something. I think when we've all moved out, they won't have to be buying twenty pence for a box of yoghurts or something... well supermarkets can charge what they like and my family have a keen eye for reduced food. (Joe, 15)*

Positive accounts of parents' employment, on the other hand, was often linked to flexible working arrangements where children appreciated the increased work-life balance and availability of their parents. Victoria described how flexible and remote working practices enabled her family to spend more quality time together.

*My dad and my mum both have a job so... my dad has like more of a full time job but he does it from home, which I really like, and sometimes he has to go out for meetings and things, and he sometimes has to travel to London for like two days and things, but yeah, it's really, em, good and then my mum... she does a part time job. They just call her when they need her so that she can pick us up from school, she can drop us off at school. Yeah. And in the holidays she's free. (Victoria, 10)*

Whether or not families were *well off*, young people enjoyed the autonomy of having their own paid employment. Four of the young people had secured part time jobs while still attending school, mostly in the retail and customer service sectors. Employment was viewed as a worthy use of time and something that could keep older youth occupied when there was not much else to do on the island for their age group – young participants, however, noted limited opportunities: *you can't get many jobs under 16 in Jersey so it's kind of like- I'm kinda stuck with what to do. (Sarah, 15)*. Having a job enabled them to spend money on things that they might otherwise have missed out on, such as leisure and entertainment activities but they were also conscious of saving and planning for their future.

*I'm not a huge spender just because I get nervous spending the money so I try to save a lot of the money I made from my part time job and now I want to save the money I make this year, just so I have it in the future.' (Charlotte, 18).*

Elliott's story below illustrates further the satisfaction attached to employment for young people, particularly when they feel they are respected in their role.



## Elliot, 16

Elliot has a part time job that gives him a great sense of autonomy, adds to his self-esteem, and encourages personal growth: *I love the job. It is a shame a lot of my friends they are just in a café or something and they don't like it very much. I am just quite lucky, I seem to like my job quite a lot.*

Part of the reason he enjoys it so much is that it pays him above the minimum wage for his age.

*It's £8.21 at the moment. We used to get the minimum wage, which was £8.10 or something. For my age they are allowed to pay... there is a lower wage if you are under 18, I think it is £6.90 or something.... But they don't which is really nice. They treat you like an adult because it is like a proper job.*

Not only does his job pay well, management were *really good* in the ways they assisted and supported their staff, and were mindful of Elliott's school commitments. Flexible working patterns and a zero hours contract work well for him, allowing him the freedom to fit paid employment around his schoolwork.

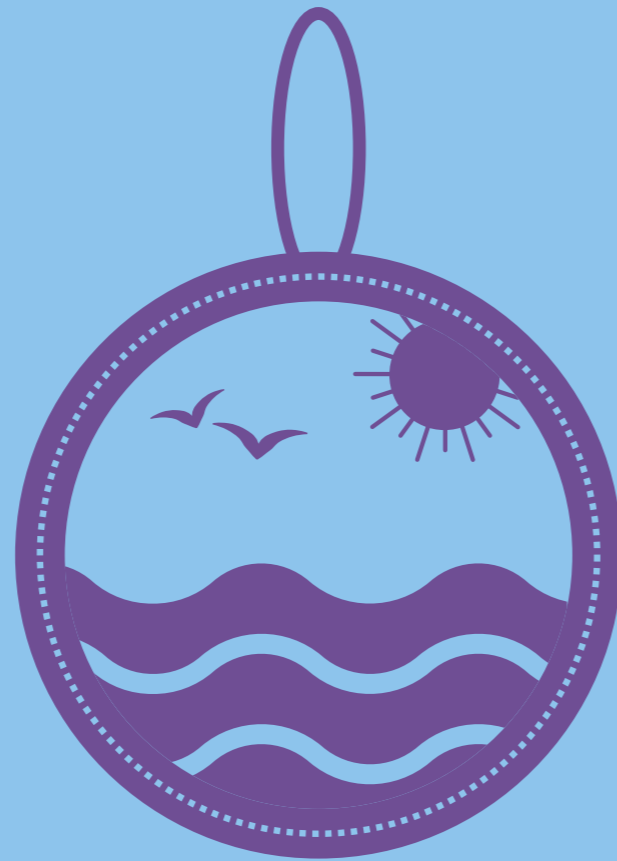
*I have only done 15 hours because it is so quiet... Well actually it is busy this week because it is half term but January, February, March, April, aren't busy with the exception of school holidays... If you are on a zero hours contract you can have virtually no hours, or loads of hours depending on the time of year and how busy they are so... yeah they are always really good.*

The company are very understanding of his situation, for example during exams month, *I wanted the month off in May and they were absolutely fine. I think I worked once in the middle just so you can keep the job but they are absolutely understanding about that, yeah. It is really good.* This mutual understanding not only increased his job satisfaction but his sense of purpose and loyalty to the company. During busier times, he is motivated to work extra hours and earns lots of money as a result: *in the summer I did 220 hours a month or something. So literally everyday but I loved it, it was really good and I earned something like 2 grand a month.* He is very wise managing his money and includes this in his plans for the future, *I spend some of it and save 70% of it, for uni and things.* But, most importantly, he can afford to treat himself too, *I bought the moped and stuff... And hopefully I will buy a car soon for July.*

## CAG's Key Messages: Money & Employment

- Jersey is an expensive place to live, with higher housing and utilities costs compared to the mainland or the other Channel Islands. Young people were shocked that younger children were aware of this and the difficulties this brings like family stresses and lifestyle. Young children should not be worrying about such things.
- Children do not earn money so must rely on parents to fund their lifestyles and pay for their essentials like transport, healthcare and school lunches.
- Some children have less food (and less nutritious food) than others in Jersey related to the high prices in the school canteens.
- Inequalities due to money worries link with affordable activities that could keep young people off the streets and away from alcohol and drugs.
- There are limited employment opportunities for children and young people and it is hard to find a suitable and stable job on the island even for those over 16 years.
- There is clear link between money, opportunity and a 'good' (healthy, happy, successful) lifestyle. Even when parents work long hours and many jobs, money left over for some families is limited after paying for essentials. This determines the quality and frequency of leisure activities and places children can go to with their friends.
- It is harder to own a house and pay off debt when you have less money, even if you work hard.
- The private housing rental market is not always of a good standard, is without regulation and there is a rising homelessness problem, which puts people at risk of harm.
- People are trapped in temporary accommodation or hostels and shelters, which should be a problem for big cities not a small place like Jersey.
- Circumstances outside your control, such as losing a job or losing a parent, can change family finances, affect lifestyle and the ability to pay for medical care and food.
- There is a stigma associated with receiving state aid in the form of benefits and an attitude in Jersey that people are lazy if they don't work.
- Parents may not always be best placed to help and inspire their children's education and other activities because, regardless of money issues, they may be busy, or not know what is available, beneficial or necessary for their children. If they didn't do it, they might not know about it or think it's important.
- The responsibility a part time job and managing your own money brings would keep more teenagers out of trouble and away from drink and drugs.
- Beneficial programmes such as the Trident Programme offers Year 10 youth a week of experiences focused on work, careers, volunteering and 'real world activities'. Schools should shift to focus more on teaching real life skills, like managing finances, mortgages, savings etc. that would prepare children better for the outside world. Programmes like this should be extended to more children and parents should receive family and financial education so they can manage their money better.
- Young people would like more independence and opportunity to make their own money and a more varied retail and leisure sector in which to spend their hard-earned cash. The responsibility a part time job and managing your own money brings, would keep more teenagers out of trouble and away from drink and drugs.
- The government need to do more to help people and families that are struggling to pay their bills so they will not end up hungry and homeless. They should introduce breakfast club at schools so all students can have breakfast.
- A focus on the transition from school to adult life could see life skills lessons normalised in schools to prepare them better for the outside world.

# Family Life



The majority (96%) of survey respondents said they lived with their parent(s) while 2% lived with other family members. Respondents aged 11 to 18+ years were asked about life at home and the majority strongly agreed or agreed that their parents/carers listened to them (79%) and gave them enough freedom (76%). Just over two-thirds (67%) of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they have a say in what happens at home and 89% felt safe at home.

# 10

## Family Life

Lucy, 10	77
Freya, 11	78



## Family Life

'Help for parents to bring their children up well' was selected by 30% of respondents aged between 7 and 18+ years as one of the top five things that would make life in Jersey better for children and young people.

### Help children and families. My mum looks after me and my sister and brother but not all children feel loved.

(survey respondent, female, 10)

*To have a safe childhood and make sure they have a nice parent/Guardian to live with* (survey respondent, female, 10)

*Parental courses mandatory for people seeking to have a child. If someone doesn't take it, or doesn't pass then they CANNOT register that child under their care. There are people who should never be allowed to be parents, this might help stop them ruining the lives of their children, who'll in turn ruin the lives of their children and so on.....* (survey respondent, male, 15)

*Improve support for single-parent families. People are having to work more than 1 job and do long hours to keep their families afloat, so their parenting suffers and consequently so do their kids.* (survey respondent, male, 15)

Many children's life stories included accounts of close relationships, with family life filled with happy memories of quality time with parents and siblings, both in their daily routines on the island and in many family holidays, sometimes to quite exotic places. A number of children described a *really good relationship* (Anna, 16) with caring parents who would *always help me with anything* (Victoria, 10), to whom they could tell *everything* and with whom they felt *safe* (Freya, 10). A number of children told stories of parental separation, the formation of new families and acquiring step-parents, brothers and sisters. Most children continued to have contact with the parent no longer living at home, others not wanting continued contact due to family conflict. For some, a parent's new relationship could have a *settling* effect (Sophie, 16) after significant upheaval. Some of the children reported difficulties in establishing strong bonds (Freya, 11) with half- and step- siblings, particularly if there was an age gap. In contrast, Eleanor who was close to her half-sister was struggling with the thought of her moving out of the home to be with her mother.

*I'm worried about different things... my big sister might be moving out soon... She doesn't exactly live with us, she lives with her Mum and us... between the two houses... Sometimes it's a bit annoying when I want to see her... but recently she's been spending more time with her Mum because she could live with whoever she wants when she's sixteen.* (Eleanor, 9).

Those whose parents were born in Jersey were more likely to describe families who enjoyed the *supportive* (William, 14) extended family living close by. This support could be social, like Elliott's family who

enjoyed the company of up to twenty or thirty relatives in their *huge garden* which he thought *great*. The support from extended family was also practical. Luke's (15) family, for example, moved into his grandmother's house after her death while others described regular contact with grandparents who were able to assist with childcare.

*Yeah, I see my grandparents at least once a week... And they look after me quite a lot. I sleep at theirs sometimes. And my cousins, we meet up with them quite a bit* (Victoria, 10).

Elliott's grandparents also assisted with childcare as they picked him up every day from school, until he got his scooter, as both his parents worked full time. Such support wasn't typically available to families who had moved to Jersey. Oscar was born in Jersey but his parents had moved to Jersey separately *like 30 years ago*. He described the struggle of having no wider network of support in the island.

*There's literally just my mum and my dad. Like we've got no other family in Jersey... we don't have the whole family like, everywhere. Em... I know they found it difficult in the beginning cause obviously raising two kids.* (Oscar, 15)

A parent's job was often an important aspect of family life and children frequently referred to their employment in their stories. Elliott thought that his mother working long hours did not *hugely* impact him, nevertheless there were periods when he did not see her.

*Sometimes she is working until 1/2/3 o'clock in the morning. Which means I don't see her. The worst was last week I didn't see her Monday until Thursday. I go early in the morning before she gets up... I just stick my head in the door and say hello but that's it. And then you don't see her in the evenings ... so for the last 3 years that has been a real problem.* (Elliott, 16)

Even though Leo described a close relationship with his father involving a number of pastimes, he suggested that he would like this to happen more often.

*We can't all the time because my Dad sometimes has to work, which is really annoying. He usually takes like only the special days off... He usually takes like the Saturday off, so that we can go and watch the Jersey Bulls together and... we do take walks but it's not that often I don't... it's not that often.* (Leo, 10)

For those whose parents were born off-island, employment and wanting a *better life* (Reuben, 14) were the most common reasons for moving to Jersey: *they knew they'd have a better life, they'd have more changes to get a job and everything* (Leo, 10). The initial move sometimes meant time separated from a parent, perhaps for a short period like Charlotte's family or up to three years as was the case for Freya, whose story is recounted below. As families made the

move to Jersey, life could be unsettled for children, partly linked to a desire to maintain ties back home, particularly with grandparents. Whilst most did recount travelling home or visits from grandparents, settling back to Jersey life after these trips was often difficult, as was maintaining contact between visits. Jaya, for example, noted that she struggled to stay close to her grandma given restrictions on communicating with her in a different time zone.

*No because calling her is a bit hard because the time zones are a bit different. When we are still awake she might be sleeping, so sometimes calling her is a bit difficult.* (Jaya, 13)

Charlotte, who is described elsewhere in the report as struggling with settling into life in Jersey initially, and periods of anxiety during times of upheaval, also depicts the disruption of repeated trips to her home country after she finishes school, four years after the family's move to the island.

*So, after graduating from [school] the other big change of not having the routine, I was travelling back and forth from [home country] to see family. Em, my grandfather ... was ill for a very long- three years during my studies - and then we went to visit him, came back, and then a couple of weeks later he passed away. So, we had to go back so it was just a lot of jumping back and forth to [home country] and to other planned holidays that our family did. Em, so there wasn't really a chance to settle into the lifestyle after school...* (Charlotte, 18)

For others, illness and death had a significant impact on family life, not only emotionally but financially and practically. Sarah's (16) grandmother's death *affected me quite a lot* as she described not only the *guilt* she felt for not visiting her at the nursing home, but also the *fear* she associated with any kind of illness, *worried that it was something more severe*, which was exacerbated by her diagnosed OCD and anxiety. The emotional impact of such life events could sometimes go unnoticed by professionals, Sophie (16) noting the lack of support after her father's death - *I went through it on my own. Very much. It was me and my mum against the world a little bit*. The effects of parental illness and death were felt economically in reduced household income and struggles to pay the rent. A number of children also described the confusion and pain of separation from one or both parents as an ill parent sought medical treatment outside of Jersey. Victoria described the impact of her father's illness, staying with her grandma for a *couple of months* while he was treated in England, her mum returning to Jersey periodically.

*I was quite worried, but I was a bit confused because I was so young, I didn't know what was going on. My mum, she dropped us off at school in the morning, and then my grandma picked us up from school cause she was already in England.* (Victoria, 10)

Joe's (15) father also had to receive treatment outside of Jersey for a brain dementia problem he suffered alongside two strokes, a result of which he has changed from someone who *must've been important* as he wore a suit, to being retired, no longer being able to drive and his *emotional side had stopped working*. In addition to the financial impact - *we've not been having as much money... my Dad used to own a fast [car], he had to sell that - Joe's dad started drinking a fair amount of beer' since his illness*. He also described changes in his father's personality, something which causes more issues for his two older sisters who annoy his dad.

*[T]he difference between my memories of my Dad before he had dementia and now is that... We've all had to, well... not me mainly because I know my Dad likes me, but em... some of my other family members have to be a bit wary of him, like if he's having a bad day he can give a short, snappy, angry answer* (Joe, 15).

A number of other children's accounts told of conflict in the home which, in some cases, manifested in violence between family members. Max, aged 14, spoke of his relationship with his older half-brother - now living abroad - who *basically bullied him* when he was younger. They *don't really keep in contact* as Max doesn't *really like him to be honest*. Joshua, aged 10, also had a *lot of fights* with his brothers, particularly a brother two years older who *annoys me the most* and who once *smashed my head in on the trampoline*. Joshua also spoke of his eldest brother, aged 17, who he doesn't *pick a fight with* as he is a *lot stronger* and perhaps poses most risk at home when *violent and drunk*.

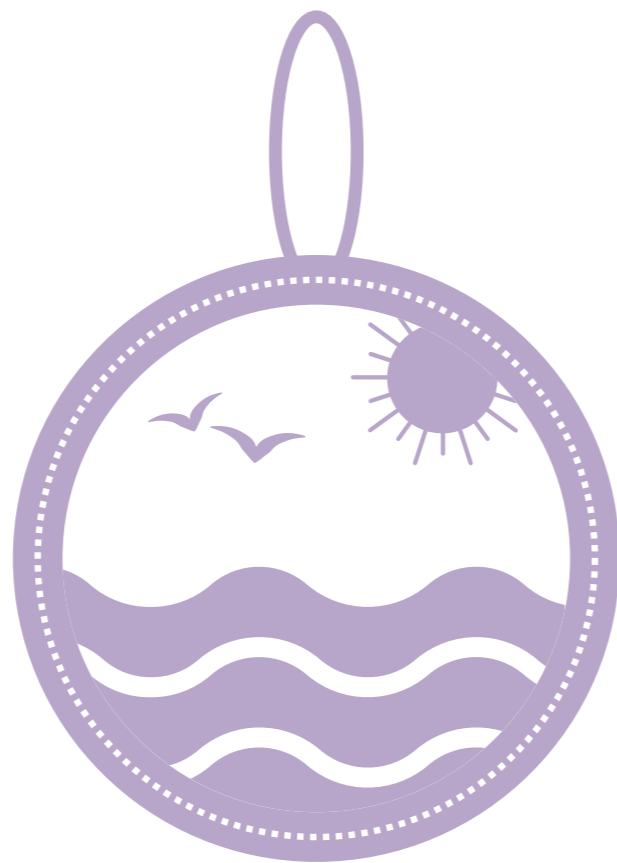
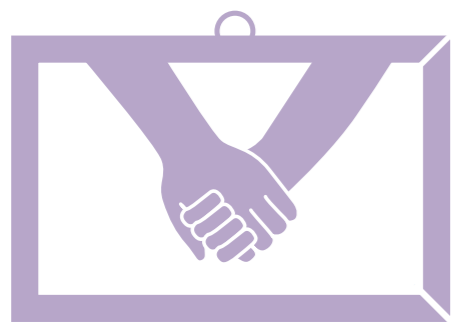
*If he's violent then he's really violent... If he's angry and stuff. You can make him really angry... Like he made bruise on my mum's arm because he was so annoyed that she took his phone away because- like [they] do really stupid things, like they get drunk a lot and they go to parties... His drunken friends are a problem.* (Joshua, 10)



A small number of children had also experienced violence from their parents. Jaya, aged 13, told how *dad wasn't really nice* to her and her brother as he *hit* them at the ages of four and five, Jaya remembering that *there was always something broken* in their home. Once her younger brother was born, things got worse and her dad *hit my mum* so Jaya, her brothers and her mother had to move out to a refuge. Oscar, aged 15, had also experienced violence from his father. He described that he wasn't close to his family, partly because they *don't really have like the same views on stuff* and because Oscar is *trans... they don't really accept that*. He explains that due to their *religious* upbringing in a *less inclusive* country, *they don't really understand it*. Described as a *clash* in personalities with his dad, the impact was quite severe in the violence Oscar experienced and being *kicked out of home*.

*I mean I got kicked out a couple of times cause of it [smiles]... I mean I think the first time, cause my dad used to like, em, hit me, so like, em... eh, he got arrested and I had to like go to my mate's house like all week. And it's happened like three or four times but it's all good now... I think it's just the way, again, he was brought up... But it got to the point where I would literally be like, I literally passed out so like yeah, it got really bad, so I kind of had enough, then he kicked me out. (Oscar, 15)*

The vignettes below further illustrate some of the unsettlement and risk faced by children within the family home. Lucy's account of sibling relationships and caring responsibilities raises some questions regarding her safety. Freya's story depicts some of the challenges faced by a family moving to Jersey and trying to make a life there, whilst also negotiating relationships in a blended family and the stress some of this appears to put on her parents' relationship.



## Lucy, 10

Lucy, aged 10, was born in Jersey and portrayed a happy picture of family life where she **used to play lots with my brothers and sisters**, enjoyed family trips to the beach, was happy to have lots of pet animals, live close to her grandma and that her stepdad – who lives in a separate house but who she **sometimes** visited – had proposed to her mother.

Having never left the island, she was looking forward to a holiday in a *different country* in the near future, as promised by her mother.

Lucy recounted that her mother had *lots of boyfriends... about 6 or 7* through which she has acquired *lots of stepbrothers and sisters*, so many she *forgot* about two brothers when telling her story. Among her siblings, Lucy told she had two *real brothers and sister* – those who shared the same mother and father as her but that *I don't really like them*. Life at home with her siblings was, she explained, *quite annoying*. She recounted a number of examples of sibling behaviour where they *bit me on the leg, fights me, attack me, or pulls my hair*. Once, she acquired some bruises when she was pushed down the stairs.

*Once I was lucky. I could have broken something because I was sitting on the stairs and someone closed the gate and [brother] pushed me down the stairs and I was like rolling. And it really hurt. And luckily the gate was closed, so it wasn't open so I wouldn't fall down.*

Lucy's mum always goes out and when her eldest sister goes out *the police bring her back or Sometimes just a lady that we know*. One night her sister went out and left Lucy home alone.

*[T]hey [sister and friend] thought I was asleep but I wasn't and then they went out for a walk and then they left me home alone and they're not allowed to. Em, and then [sister] came back and I thought it was someone knocking the door and I was so scared and, she was speaking through the letterbox and I tried to open the door. And then it was [sister and friend] coming in... and then they got really told off by my mum for leaving me home alone.*

There was some professional involvement with Lucy's family – *a woman ... that comes round and sometimes at school there's this lady that comes around*. Lucy talks to the woman in school about what we do at home but whilst she likes talking to her, she hasn't asked her for help. The woman who visits the house *only talks to my mum* and sometimes gives Lucy *some boxes to tick*.

## Freya, 11

Although born in Jersey, Freya only spent three days in hospital before she went to stay with her grandma in her mother's home country, returning to Jersey when she was three. During these first three years of Freya's life, she and her sister lived with her grandma while her mother commuted from their home country to Jersey to work as she had a **good job** there – she was unsure if her father visited them at any point during this time.

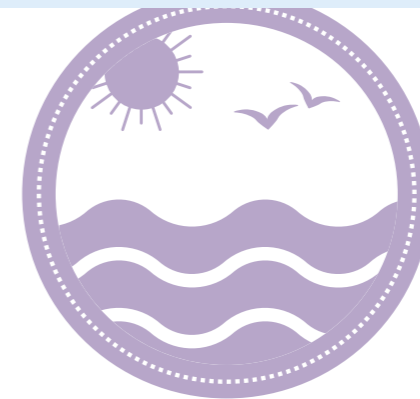
Freya and her two older sisters returned to Jersey when she was three, her mother thinking this better for the relationship between parents and the children. This move was unsettling for Freya who has a *really strong bond with my grandma* whom she calls every day. She and her sister, aged 12, found the initial move to Jersey as being really hard as they do leaving their grandma each time they visit their home country – the two girls often sharing a bed for comfort on the return to Jersey: *Every time we come back from [home country] it's harder for me because I sleep with my grandma and I have to get used to not having her.*

The two sisters do, however, have a really strong bond and they are enjoying spending time and playing games together as well as regular family outings based on a range of activities. Freya spends less time with her three half-siblings who she sees at birthday and *doesn't really have a good relationship with them* – her mum explaining they are *jealous* to have their dad stolen from them. Freya, however, does not see a lot of her father because *he's away... a lot on business*. He also has his own flat in Jersey as her parents sometimes get into *little fights* where her *mum cries* and *dad goes home*. Her older sister tries to offer some protection from these fights, taking her younger sisters upstairs to the TV, worried that *dad will flip out and start shouting* but the girls have learnt that *when parents get mad we just know that you leave them alone*.

Freya describes a closer relationship with her mother where she can tell her everything including concerns about bullying of others in school – to which her dad would advise *get some guts* – and safety concerns after a recent rape on the island – concerns her father has dismissed as *silly*. Only *sometimes* feeling safe with her father, Freya feels safe *every time* with her mother and grandma, also noting her wish to return to her mother's home country: *I'd love to move away because even though I have friends here, I'd like to spend my life with grandma.*

## CAG's Key Messages: Family Life

- Some children in Jersey are experiencing violence and bullying at home and at school. While teachers and the police need to know about this, younger children in particular might not seek help because they are scared, do not want to add to the family troubles, and do not know what will happen to them and others if they tell.
- Primary school aged children need more information on identifying and reporting abuse, particularly around what will happen when they disclose.
- Primary School is a safe environment to receive this information, which must be delivered in a creative, age-appropriate way, such as a real life drama scene, which goes through the journey from a child telling what happened to helping them get it sorted.
- There are many diverse and blended families on the island. For some children this brings complications such as custody and other parenting issues.
- Children need to be included in conversations about their welfare and parenting experience. Younger children in particular may not fully understand what is happening to them and may feel sad and lonely. While they need someone to talk to about this, schools could do more to address relationships and family-type interventions to raise awareness of various family situations. These could be delivered in schools, so that children can understand more about what is happening to them and others.
- There is a culture in Jersey for parents to work long hours and work away from home which impacts on family relationships. The demanding work culture creates additional worries and responsibilities for children as they may miss out on quality time spent with parents.
- Some children have less parental monitoring and may find themselves in risky situations while others may have additional chores to do at home. Children are aware the work culture pays for the family lifestyle but they would like to spend more quality time together as a family.
- If a family needs to leave the island so the parent can get work or if an older child needs to go away to university to better their lives, it can be daunting moving to a new place if you come from a small place like Jersey.
- Young people should be encouraged to maintain intergenerational relationships and the internet can be a good way for them to communicate. However, older relatives may not be able to use modern technology and high international call and wifi tariffs can get in the way of this.



# The Future

Children not only have diverse lives and experiences, but they also have diverse hopes and aspirations. For some, the plan is to stay in Jersey. For others, it is to go for education and come back to raise a family. And for a few, it is to never return. Their future plans in some respects reflect their past and current experiences of Life on the Rock.

Anna (16), who was born in the island wants to stay and run a nursery or set up a mental health charity.

*Yeah. I mean, personally I don't - I don't want to or need to go to university because em... there's place over in Jersey. I think I've always been a very home bird person. Like, I love my home and that's like- someone ask me my favourite place it would be my home [laughs] in my bedroom!*

Sarah (15) wants to go Brighton University to do a teaching degree and return after travelling round the world.

*Probably want to have like a house but I know that's probably not going to be possible at 25! [laughs] Considering price rate- housing rates in Jersey but em... And because, yeah. It's just- it's so so expensive because we don't have any universities over here you have to go away. Probably study... probably study Psychology or, like a teaching degree. Definitely a teaching degree. Maybe even an international teaching degree because I really want to teach in different countries as well. Like I'm going to travel when I'm older that's like top of my bucket list to travel.*

Sophie (16) wants to go to university on the South Coast to study Psychiatry. She is worried about the environment.

*I don't want to be living here I don't think. ... Yeah. I don't think it's too happy a place for me. [laughs]. Em, in fact, I kinda want to live in Brighton. I really like Brighton, it's a cool city.*

*I'm hopeful. Scared a little bit. Just because I see how things are going a little bit and it worries me how things sort of... look to be going. Especially with stuff like the governments just ignore our views entirely. They don't like to think about what the people that have to live with the consequences of their decisions think. Because it's people that aren't going to be here in 30 years. And I'm the one that's going to have to live with the fact that you decided that polar bears - don't need them! Great. [laughs] It just- yeah. That scares me a bit.*

Olivia (16) wants to go to university and come back and start up a business. She is concerned about the cost of housing becoming even more challenging.

*So, I know that - in the UK it's quite... successful businesses start there and all that whereas here it would be quite a good point because it's quite a small - you can like make money and then like, kind of expand over to different places. I think em... in the future, Jersey should be quite a good start up point... and em... I also think that housing should be- I reckon though, in like 10 years' time, because of the way the houses are like increasing in price, most people will be living in like a little garden shed so I hope that there will be a bit more affordable housing cause everyone needs like somewhere to live and like shelter. It's like one of our like necessities of life so... if it's more affordable people can have like a life that's worth living cause like living in their like cardboard box like because you can't afford like a nice, functional house, it makes you feel very down and it makes you feel very like negative about yourself so I reckon like if everyone has, like, access to what they want, then it would be making people more happy because it feels like they're getting what they want, like they're making it their life, and like their island rather than the government's island.*

Lucy (10) would like to leave Jersey and give money to the poor and move to Ireland.

*Give money to the poor. Cause some people go round and give the poor like £20,000 or something. Like, and then this man said to the poor: if you can do anything your whole life what would you want to do? And he said go to Disneyland so he took him to Disneyland.*

*... I think Ireland people are really nice cause there's a man on the estate that's from Ireland and he plays like hockey or something like that for Ireland.*

Joshua (10) would like a job in McDonald's in the short term but then wants to get an electric car and go to university but isn't sure what he will study.

*Em... when I'm 20. If I'm going to get a job... I don't know- I'll probably be in university.... Yeah. So yeah, I'm going to go to university. I don't know what I'm going to study there, cause I don't know what I want my job to be, cause I don't really plan out my future most of the time. [laughs] I don't really know what I want my job to be.*

Noah (9) is happy living in Jersey and hasn't thought about what to do in the future.

Victoria (10) wants to travel the world then come back to Jersey to be a marine biologist or a teacher.

*I think I want to do what my mum did. She went to university and then when she finished university she travelled. To, like places... like Australia and things. And I think I want to do that, and I think some of my friends would want to do that as well. Cause she had some friends that she knew. And then she met her brother. Because he was a year younger, so he finished university a year younger. And I think I want to have a job or something in like Singapore or Australia, like a small job, not like a main job that I'm gonna have for my life, like a little like working in a shop or something...*

*Either be a teacher, or even a marine biologist. But if I was a marine biologist I would travel. I would travel to places like the Philippines and like, em, Australia....Cause I love surfing in the sea so I wanted something to do with the water, but I thought a swimmer, I didn't really... feel too... I felt like I didn't really want to do swimming... so I thought what else? And em I love sea animals and things and then I thought I didn't really want to be a diver or anything and then marine biologist just came to me and then I really really wanted to be that. And then some of the teachers... em, em... things that's made me really want to be a teacher.*

*I think I do want to go to university because I think for both of those jobs you do need... to have the extra level of em, thing, and I think em, like, if you did it you would have to- like if I wanted to be a marine biologist I'd go to university and maybe study marine biology. If I wanted to be a teacher, I'd have to do like stuff, but I would come to do the training and things like- quite a lot of it in Jersey. Even if some has to be in England, I'd like most of it- as much as I can to be in Jersey.*

Freya (11) wants a good job and a house. She would like to open a restaurant and might like to live in a European country so she can be with her grandma.

*I would probably like my life to look like a good job for myself and a good house to myself – not with mum and dad – able to pay for myself. I want to have my own restaurant. I was wondering if I could do art to design my own logo. Dad says I'd have to do business. ...I'd love to move away because even though I have friends here, I'd like to spend my life with grandma. Mum as asked all 3 of us whether or not we want to go back to [country]. [Older sister] says stay because she would miss her friends, [sister] doesn't know [I'm] like 'let's go', leave Jersey and go to my grandma.*

Leo (10) would like to be a professional footballer but is worried that he won't have the same chance to be scouted living in Jersey.

*Oh...em....it's always been my dream just to be a footballer. I've been scouted for a couple of clubs but then I couldn't go because it was in England. My Dad said that when you're at least ten, we'll let you have trials at whatever clubs come to you. So yeah.... (when asked if he would stay in Jersey) No cause I know that in Jersey there's none really, real clubs, there's only one and that's in the very lowest league. So, I don't want to stay in Jersey, I want to move on to be professional and play, like say in the Premier League, which is in the UK. That's like my goal.*

*I think that Jersey isn't really the best, cause my friend, he's in the UK and he's not that good at football, but he's been scouted by a club and he always says, Jersey doesn't have the same opportunities as say UK people, cause say clubs only scout the ones in their country, they don't scout people in Jersey, only like this club called Fulham, they come over, but they don't come over very often.*

Oscar (15) wants to be leave but come back and be a youth worker.

*I mean mine is pretty set anyway but just like go to uni, come back, be a youth worker.*

William (14) hasn't thought about the future.

*I haven't really thought about future wise, cause for me I find I'd rather focusing on what's happening now. So I haven't really thought like a lot into detail about the future. I've thought about big things but...*

Max (14), doesn't want to go to university (*Don't think that's for me*), wants to study media studies and plans to come back to Jersey because his mum's family is here.

Joe (15) wants to get a house and be a mechanic.

Charlotte (18) wants to go to university to study Neuroscience.

Eleanor (9) is not sure what he wants to study or do but wants to go to Bristol University and then come back to Jersey.

Reuben (14) isn't sure but mentioned taking part in Trident.

*I still don't know what to do in the future. I want to like live a life by myself in a flat and just have a good job. I am really not sure what I want to do. So ... Trident is where you... it's made by the Jersey skills and you choose six jobs, and you get to work all of them for two weeks.*

Luke (15) was not positive about his future. He hoped that it would be better than how it is probably going to turn out.

*To be honest I am probably... oh just going to be homeless... Mainly because I have no aspirations whatsoever. ... Partially apathy, partially because I have no motivation but like... mostly apathy yeah.*

Jackson (14) doesn't know what he wants to do for a job but would definitely like to be still doing golf.

Elliott (16) wants to go to Exeter University to study Politics with International Relations. He is not sure if he will come back.

*I don't know. It is not that there is nothing to do over here but I would like to try something new, I think. Whether just being at uni for 3 years is something new and you are quite happy with trying something new and you want to come back straight away. You have got to look.... Say you have a Politics degree, what essentially can you do with that in Jersey? I mean, I don't know. I am not sure; I am not quite sure yet. I still have to see how it goes. I might end up doing something else. Something similar or something quite different really at uni which might mean you come back here, or you don't come back here. I don't know. I am not sure.*

Jaya (13) wants to go to university and become a doctor.

*Well, one of my aunties is a midwife and she said that I could do triple science, and then if I did Home Economics, I would be able to cook for myself, and French also so I could help for the World Health Organisations.*





# Being Respected

Just over one third (35%) of survey respondents (11 to 18 year olds) thought that adults in Jersey generally respected the rights of children and young people. Younger children (11 to 13 year olds) were more likely than their older peers (14+ years) to think that adults respected their rights (48% and 27% respectively). Children aged 7 to 11 years were asked whether they thought their school was a Rights Respecting School and 63% thought it was. More females (70%) than males (56%) thought their school was a Rights Respecting School. Approximately one in five (21%) children and young people aged between 7 and 18+ years know what rights they have under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

*I would make sure that all children know what the UN rights mean and what it means for them and how to exercise your rights*

(survey respondent, female aged 8 years).

*Educate adults on what the children's rights are and make sure they help to keep it that way*

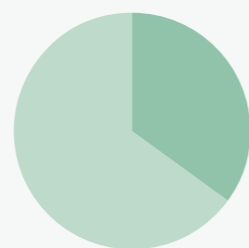
(survey respondent, male aged 11 years).

*Make sure we're heard, and adults respect us, not treat us badly because of our age"*

(survey respondent, female aged 16 years).

*Give them a say, and stop making things so expensive like uni, buses and places to go, also stop adults treating young people badly and thinking that young people don't deserve respect when they do*

(survey respondent, female aged 17 years).



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Traversing young people's experiences of Life on the Rock, emerged the theme of respect. Young people's experiences of life in Jersey demonstrated both respect and disrespect from both adults and their peers. As an underpinning value of human rights, and therefore of children's rights, this theme was sometimes referenced explicitly, but frequently transpired implicitly in young people's experiences as one which pervaded their relationships. As Sophie explained, *she felt respected by some staff, and not by others, and by some students and not by others*. This theme will focus on the areas of children's lives where respect was found lacking, but acknowledges that this was not all children's experience, nor all adult's treatment of young people in Jersey.

The theme of respect was highlighted when young people spoke about their experiences with the adults in their lives; one of the most obvious relationships in this regard was teachers. Olivia relayed an experience of getting into trouble at school where she got the blame for another student's actions.

Olivia spoke about the teacher who handled the exchange who did not want to hear her explanation that the other student was recording her on a device, telling her *I don't care... you were on your phone*. Unable to be heard, Olivia went to another teacher she trusted, and they dealt with it... *I needed like someone to back me up*. This was not an isolated occurrence; Joshua, who was in primary school, recounted an experience of getting in trouble at school where a peer had continuously pinched him in lesson. *Joshua pinched her back one time, and then she called the teacher, so I got all the blame*. He tried to tell the teacher what had happened, *but after she had already told me off, she just said it doesn't matter anymore...* and so Joshua's account was dismissed in not being given the space to give his perspective. For Leo, who was in primary school, the way he was spoken to when he got in trouble was disrespectful for him: *She doesn't say, oh don't do it next time please and so on. She just says, why did you do that, and she shouts*. On another occasion, this teacher showed a piece of art Leo had completed in front of the whole class, and she was like *this is reception work and she just ripped it*, which left Leo feeling embarrassed.

Other manifestations of respect in the lives of young people included their wishes being ignored, or not sought, in interactions that involved sensitive personal information. For example, Oscar, after a violent family incident in which the police were called, told the police he did not want to know if his father was arrested, *but then they told me anyway. That's the only thing that really annoyed me*. Charlotte described an incident at school in which a *guy I don't know takes me into a room alone and drops a bomb kind of thing*, prompted by another student's disclosure. She described how she did not know *if you're supposed to ask if I wanted to hear about it, but he didn't*. This member of staff did not introduce himself and did not give her the opportunity to consider if she wanted... *to talk about it*. She described how she *didn't want to tell this guy anything but, I just started talking because... I don't know, he told me to, I guess*.

A further manifestation of respect in relationships with adults was in not being given information. Anna began seeing her first guidance counsellor with CAMHS when she was eight years old, but when her counsellor left, she wasn't told in advance and did not get to say goodbye. Anna subsequently had many more changes of counsellor which she found frustrating because there was no continuity, and it was *really hard having to tell my story every time*. This, perhaps, equated to 'not being heard', even though she was retelling her story. For Sarah, initial pressure from her parents on her school to test Sarah for dyslexia, resulted in nothing happening. Whilst she had orange paper supplied by school, it didn't work, and they subsequently *shrugged it off as if nothing was wrong*. Later, when Sarah was tested for an auditory processing disorder, she described how she was frustrated because *she knew there was like something, but they didn't tell me what. And they weren't helping me with anything*. Sarah was not told the outcome of the tests, but a year later, was put in a different room for exams with no explanation. Similarly, Olivia's wasn't told anything following x-rays because her doctors couldn't access results from a different hospital department. Olivia described her frustration *when they don't give you the results and, because it related to her health, felt strongly that they can't really keep it just between the doctors, like they have to share it with you... and tell you like what's happening...* This underlined the significance of, when medical professionals do give medical information, *they kind of just give it in like doctors' language, and they don't really translate it for you*. Alternatively, as in William's experience, they speak through an adult but not to young people directly: *They told my Mum and my Mum told me. So, I thought it would be a bit better... I understand I was younger, but I thought it would be a bit better if they told me personally*.

A further manifestation of this aspect of respect is where young people are not believed, or their perspectives are dismissed. Elliott suggested that, whilst his school council was invited to meet *the whole cabinet ministers, the deputy chief minister as part of Jersey's policy of 'putting children first'* strategy, it turned out *they just wanted us for a PR stunt which was a bit of a shame*, perhaps demonstrating some executive attitudes towards young people in Jersey as tokenistic and dismissive. At an individual level, young people relayed stories of being dismissed or not believed, such as Jaya, for example, who went to see the GP twice and the guy was saying *there was nothing wrong with me, it was just a cold*, for what later turned out to be pneumonia. Olivia's experience of emotional support at school demonstrated dismissal in the lack of consultation with young people to evaluate whether or not interventions were working because, for Olivia, *all the teachers just kind of think what they think rather than what the actual person feels is right for them*. This dismissal of young people's perspectives is perhaps summarised by Sophie who considered that teachers, in her experience:

*[L]ike to think we're students, not anything else. And they like to forget that we've got anything going on outside of this... If someone's upset, you don't tell them you don't care. And that's not trained staff, that's human. And that's have a little bit of empathy sometimes.*

Sometimes children described places where they were made to feel unwelcome, demonstrating a disrespect towards certain children and young people. When Jaya's family moved to Jersey, they struggled to attain housing qualifications and had to seek unqualified housing which said *no children*. Jaya's family *kept looking, but all the houses were saying no children allowed so that was also quite hard*. As a young person in St Helier with her friends, Jaya relayed that in New Look, *some of the assistant people say if you are not buying anything please can you leave, which was aimed at young people of Jaya's age*. Other young people described behaviours from others that may amount to disrespect of their cultures; Leo, who had Polish parents, described how a teacher who *doesn't respect people that nicely asked him are you sure that's how you spell your name?* Many people could not pronounce his name, and *I don't really want people not to say it properly, I'd rather just have a shorter name, opting to shorten his name to make it easier*. Jaya's experience of disrespect was similar: *Because I wasn't born in Jersey lots of people used to make fun of me and just say things about how I looked and about the colour of my skin*.

Different cultural conceptualisations of respect also emerged as a crucial feature of the values by which young people experienced life on the rock. For Charlotte, her cultural understanding of respect was one of *respect for elders whereby elders are always in the right, you don't question them, don't go against them... don't question your parents, you don't question the teacher... they're always right*. After she moved to Jersey with her family and began a relationship, she found that respect was conceptualised as something that was *earned*. Oscar made a similar comment about respect in the context of an interaction with a police officer who he described as not respecting him. He explained: *She didn't give me the respect, so I didn't give the respect back*. It is perhaps telling that young people often suggested that consultation with young people on their views and perspectives was crucial in Jersey's future; as Olivia suggested, *it would be quite nice if they kind of... asked the younger generations as well rather than just relying on adults. Because at the end of the day, it's our like future, it's not theirs*.

# Appendix

## How we carried out the study

The study was carried out by the Centre for Children's Rights at Queen's University, Belfast employing a unique children's rights-based approach to research developed by the Centre (Lundy & McEvoy 2012a and 2012b).

Central to the implementation of this approach are the dedicated children's rights standards contained in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which not only provide a framework for research aims and questions, but also a blueprint for the treatment of children generally, and in particular their participation in all aspects of the research process. Applying these principles to research with children means that in a children's rights-based approach to research:

- the research aims should be informed by the CRC standards.
- the research process should comply with the CRC standards; and
- the research outcomes should build the capacity of children, as rights-holders, to claim their rights and build the capacity of duty-bearers to fulfil their obligations.

Cutting across all of this is a requirement to ensure that the process furthers the realization of children's rights. The approach is based on the Lundy model of child participation (Lundy, 2007) and seeks to ensure that children's views inform the entire research process. This means that the methods used should ensure that children feel safe expressing their views freely (space and voice) and that those views are not just reported but used to build the understanding and capacity of duty-bearers to fulfil their obligations to respect children's rights (audience and influence). One way in which the approach is implemented in practice is by working with Children's Advisory Groups (CAGs) as co-researchers. The CAGs advise the research team on what to ask and how to ask it. They help give meaning to the data collected and they advise on dissemination and impact, including with children.

### Children's Advisory Group (CAG)

As part of our Child Rights-based Approach (Lundy & McEvoy, 2012a and 2012b) we recruited a CAG at the outset, to ensure representation from different groups and regions across the island, to help us plan, design and execute the study. Efforts to meet with the CAG were disrupted during the Covid19 lockdown of March 2020 but resumed in Oct and Nov 2020 when a second CAG was recruited when children returned to school. In total, we were able to include 25 children aged between 10-17 years in the study as advisors.

**CAG1** consisted of 10 children and young people, aged between 10-17 years (7 females and 3 males). They were,

- 2 young people from (Beaulieu Convent Catholic School) Cliona 17 and Leah 17.
- 3 young people from Mont L' Abbe (Additional Needs School) Elliana 14, Julia 14, Crystal 13; and
- 5 children from Janvrin (Primary School) Michael, Valentina, Sarah, Enzo, Amy all aged 10-11.

**CAG2** consisted of 15 children and young people aged between 10-16 years (9 females and 6 males). They were,

- 9 Young People aged 15-16 years (4 male 5 Female) from Haute Vallée (Secondary school) Kiara, Eva, Christiana, Victoria, Isabel, Jamie, Diego, Alex, Junior; and
- 6 children aged 10-11 years (2 male 4 female) from Janvrin (Primary school) Kela, Marianna, Nairaha, Aiden, Maria, Declan.

All the children and young people involved in the study were selected and recruited by the Commissioner's Office to represent a diverse group of children who were broadly representative of children living on the island. Due to Covid restrictions, schools were employing social bubble strategies within classrooms so CAG2 was recruited so they could work together in their social bubble groupings. Experienced Participation Officers from the Commissioner's Office liaised with their contacts to bring the opportunity to children and young people and their parents. Partner organisations (schools and other youth services) were invited to identify two children to nominate to join the CAG. This was so that children can become involved as a pair or a friendship group along with someone who is already known to them. Partner organisations shared the opportunity to take part in the CAG with the children and their parent/guardian in their respective schools/ organisations and forwarded the project information leaflets and consents forms to them.

## What we did

CAG1 met on four separate occasions face-to-face between October 2019 and Jan 2020 to help us plan the research, design research tools and content, and a project logo. Only then could we complete the interview process with the other children (research participants).

Face-to-face meetings were held in Jersey in the Commissioner's Office and at each school. A nominated support worker or other trusted adult from each organisation assisted during these meetings with Janvrin and Mont l'Abbe to support the children and manage the process according to their safeguarding procedures. Their teachers, Lara and Ms Lopez accompanied the two younger groups.

These sessions consisted of capacity building: designing the qualitative methods; interpreting the data; and pulling out key messages that are important to children. Aside from describing what life was like in Jersey for them and their friends, the CAG contributed to the following:

- Who should we talk to?
- Who's lives are more complicated?
- What about younger children?
- What's best thing to ask and how should we ask it?

In relation to the last question we discussed some ideas we might use to access children's views and described some research methods in child friendly language. The CAG thought that using a Life History approach would help us to capture similarities and differences, typical and not typical experiences of children. They also liked the idea of the Journey of Life Map showing a story of life in Jersey, a life story. Emojis, they thought, might be good for younger children as they understand emojis and the association with feelings and can help them express these when they may not have the language skills.

Composition of the group: The CAG for these meetings consisted of 10 children in total, aged 10 - 17 years from three schools in Jersey. QUB researchers, Participation Officer from the Commissioner's Office, and a trusted adult for, each school (if required) was also in attendance to ensure that the children's views are listened to and acted upon by people in a position of influence in the organisation.

**CAG2** met on 8 separate occasions (5 Janvrin & 3 HV) to help us interpret the data and provide meaningful and relevant suggestions to address the issues the participants raised. Travel restrictions were still in place due to Covid restrictions so QUB staff (MT) called into meetings online, while the Commissioner's Office staff were able to attend meetings face-to-face, respecting social distancing rules. A teacher from each school assisted during these meetings to support the children and manage the process according to their safeguarding procedures.

These sessions consisted of capacity building; interpreting the data from the composite narratives prepared by the QUB team; discussing issues that are important to the children and young people of Jersey and planning dissemination strategies and how they could be involved in the design and launch of the report. Drawing on the QUB



Figure 1. Some members of the advisory group at work

theme summaries and what life was like in Jersey for them and their friends the CAG contributed to the following:

- They chose a theme from the list of 10 that most interested them, broke into groups and read the social biographies of the participants' experiences around this theme.
- Used coloured post it notes to write down their thoughts and placed them on a large sheet of paper in answer to the following questions:

- Is this something you think many children in Jersey might experience? (write on the yellow post it note);
- Is there anything that surprised you? If so, why? (write on the pink post it note);
- Is there anything missing from the story that we wouldn't know? (write on the green post it note);
- Who needs to know about this?



## Summary of meetings

In Haute Vallée the CAG met in a board room style classroom (with MT virtually) and in Janvrin, the CAG met mostly in a corner of a large sports/assembly hall, so children had space to work. We had issues with technology at both schools as sound and video resolution were not good and school staff had trouble connecting to the meeting site, working speakers, microphones and video controls, which took some time at the start of each meeting to get right.

At each session the children and young people chose the themes they wanted to work on for that day and spent between 20-40 mins on the task. The groups self-selected to work in smaller groups based on their interest in each theme. Both age groups were very articulate and had lots to say about the issues. They were engaged in the task, enjoyed the discussions in their smaller groups (each group supported by an adult facilitator) and enjoyed feeding back their information to the larger group. Table 1 below shows the feedback from the CAG discussions on the theme Housing (with quotes) which summaries their key messages and recommendations. Following on from that are figures 2 (HV- older group) and 3 (Janvrin – younger group) which provide an example of the task materials produced for the Social Media theme.

### Secondary analysis of survey data

In 2018, the Office of the Children's Commissioner carried out a consultation with children and young people across Jersey in the form of three online surveys, each one targeted at a specific age group: 3-7 years, 7-11 years and 11+ years. The aim of the consultation was to ask children and young people for their views on what the Commissioner's priorities should be. Most of the questions were closed, which enabled the presentation of statistical data; however, there were also a number of open-ended questions so that the children and young people could respond in their own words. Over 1,700 children and young people completed the surveys and a full report of the findings has been published and can be accessed [here](#).

The Commissioner's report presents the overall results from the survey. One of the aims of this project was, therefore, to carry out further analysis of the data using the age and gender variables collected in the survey. To this end, the anonymised datasets were made available to the team from CCR and a brief report of the findings was presented to the Commissioner. The main advantage of carrying out secondary analysis is that the data have already been collected and cleaned and are ready for re-use saving time and resources. A disadvantage is that the secondary analyst has no control over the type or wording of the questions (Goodwin, 2012). Nonetheless, the survey carried out by the Office of the Children's Commissioner focused on issues that were relevant to children and young people in Jersey and link well to the subsequent qualitative research carried out by CCR.

This report focuses on key findings from the survey questions that were asked of respondents aged 7 to 18 years and

which relate specifically to the themes explored in the life histories recorded for the project. Where there were significant differences across age groups and gender these have been presented along with some quotes from the open-ended questions asked on the survey.

### Life History Interviews

The life history interview is defined as:

*...the story a person chooses to tell about the life he or she has lived, told as completely and honestly as possible, what the person remembers of it and what he or she wants others to know of it, usually as a result of a guided interview by another.... It includes the important events, experiences, and feelings of a lifetime (Atkinson, 2001: 125).*

An underlying assumption of the method is that each individual has a unique story to tell and a unique understanding of that experience, giving central place to the people who experience their personal biography. As a result, the understandings and significance that people give to their lives becomes the focus (Chaitin, 2004: 4), permitting an examination of children's lives from their own perspective. The approach recognises that each life story is embedded in particular social and cultural contexts and produces a 'social biography' (Goodey, 2000) which reveal insights into the social structures and dynamics and cultural values in which the individual lives (Chaitin, 2004: 3). During the life history interview, participants actively remember and reconstruct their lives through the telling of their stories. The researcher guides the participant through his or her life history, prompting memories and encouraging the participant's reflections, interpretations and insights (Haglund, 2004: 1309).

Twenty-one children, aged 9-18, took part in a life history interview. Interviews began with asking children 'please tell me the story of your life', advising that they could start at whatever point in their lives that they wish and talk about whatever they wanted. For some participants this can be a daunting task and a number of tools were used, in consultation with the CAG, to help facilitate the telling of their story. The CAG advised the QUB team on creating a Journey of Life Map which included a timeline where participants could map out key moments in their lives. This helped them to visualise the order of events in their lives. Accompanying the map, the CAG suggested we present children with a number of emoji cards which they could place on the map, to indicate how they felt at certain times in their life. They were also invited to bring objects or photos which spoke to things most important in their lives, to help prompt

Primary School Group (Age 9-10)	Secondary School Group (Age 15-16)
<p>The group agreed that parents and other people may move around a lot and they spoke about people they know who had to do this to find accommodation they could afford. "From my parents experience I know that a lot of people move houses. People really need a lot of support." They chatted about house prices, the private rental market, accommodation that comes with a job, and the pros and cons of each. They felt that landlord restrictions, such as not allowing pets, was harmful to people and not ideal if you need to ask permission for everything, "you may not have the right stuff in the house that you need, and its harder to settle because its not yours and if the landlord evicts you you have nowhere to go, you're homeless." In relation to house prices they were aware of how expensive it is to buy a property on the island and how much house you can get for your money, "I've heard Jersey is a very expensive place to live. Houses and flats can be small but expensive. I agree with this because my sister wants to move out but can't because of her experience, houses and flats are very expensive." "my brother keeps saying ohh I need to move out but stayed until 20 something cause its too expensive, he saves but its hard to get your own place, you need a bank mortgage and money and some people just don't have that." "Hard to get a house price big enough, mum took on extra jobs to pay the rent."</p> <p>They understood the importance for everyone to have their own space and one member of the group recounted a story of how her dad, "separated one room into 2 rooms and built a wall to give us (her and sibling) privacy". They chatted about how awful it must be to live in cramped and crowded accommodation and would be surprised that "an 18 year old shared a room with his parents but being a baby and sharing a room isnt surprising." They were also surprised to learn that it can take 10 years to live in Jersey before a person is able to purchase a home, and that a lot of 13-18 year olds are worried about housing, "they are too young to worry about stuff like that and evicted stuff. They need to shorten the time required to be able to buy a house take it to 5 years or where are people to sleep. Well; they might be able to get somewhere but what about bringing your pets."</p> <p>They wanted it known that some people have particular needs that must be paramount, "what about the boy trying to get wheelchair friendly places there's lots of issues to take into consideration. Other issues included location and noise levels, "Not everyone is privileged to live right next to the sea with a beautiful house, some people live in a few housing estates. St Helier is mostly flats then there's rural parishes, when you go out of parish its less green. My nan lives in a 2 level flat it was a good price I think but the noise in town, the roadworks, people, drunks, loud at night with teenagers shouting breaking windows, oh criminal activity and dog barking its not great. And issues around land sales and planning permissions for new developments, "when I walk to school there's 2 building sites and lots of flats being built, its crazy to put this beside a school cause with the noise I cant concentrate on your work. One days I came early to school and a man was naked in the window- right in front of school."</p> <p>Even though some of their parents were not born on the island, they were, and this is their home, they agreed it would be disruptive if they had to move away because their parents lost their jobs or couldn't afford their accommodation. While Jersey may be expensive, they all agreed that when they grow up they would like to stay. The government, landlords association, and the Minister for Children, need to change some things to make this possible, such as looking at house prices and rent regulations, waiting times to buy or be allocated a home, land sales and planning permissions need to be more explicit, so people can know what is going on in the area, and have a chance to say if they think this is a good thing or a bad thing.</p>	<p>The group agreed that 'houses and flats are very expensive in Jersey'. They spoke of the knock-on effect high housing costs may cause families who struggle to pay high rent such as 'homelessness or children being made to social services when it's not their (the parents) fault'. They felt issues around over population on some parts of the island were missing from the narrative, 'too much housing in some parts and half of the island is made up of housing, like St Helier is very densely populated in comparison to others'. This is important because, 'people may not wish to come cause its expensive or they may need to move outside St Helier to afford something, but then your further away to go to school and stuff'.</p> <p>They were aware that different housing markets operated on the island (state and private landlord) and queried the governments lack of regulation, particularly with private housing. They suggested governments should encourage private landlords to adjust prices that were more in line with what people could afford. In relation to social housing they were surprised to learn of the long waiting lists to secure a home, particularly when people were in dire need such as if they needed special adaptations for a disability/wheelchair user. They were aware of situations in which some families experienced 'overcrowding, while others who had smaller family have lots of room' and queried whether housing providers could improve the housing criteria or allocation system. Another suggestion was a need to modernise existing homes and build new homes with modern adaptations, 'so in every parish we could have a set number of accessible wheelchair homes'.</p> <p>An additional system of housing they were aware of was that provided by companies for people who come to the island specifically to work with a company. This was good if you worked as a professional or in hospitality and are provided with suitable, modern and clean accommodation. Not so good if you come to work in agriculture on a farm with a young family. The accommodation provided may not be up to standard and in some instances be hazardous. They thought the government should do more to regulate housing and ensure families have adequate and safe housing that meets their specific needs.</p>

Table 1: An example Theme (Housing) from the CAG's in depth discussions (with quotes)

them in the telling of their story. Some children used these tools, others simply told their story. Following the initial invitation to tell their life story, the researcher probed for more detail on what they already told, thus prioritising those life experiences children thought most important to share. After this, the researcher asked questions on other aspects of children's lives, if not already spontaneously referred to in their opening story, which may also speak to important moments in their biography. Whilst interviews varies across the children we spoke to, most did speak freely and at length of their experiences and appeared to value the opportunity to tell their 'story'.

#### Qualitative Data Analysis

Interviews were carried out by two members of the research team who audio-recorded (with the exception of two young people) young people's stories. These interviews were subsequently transcribed verbatim by the research team. The data was then coded by one researcher, using a coding framework agreed by the whole research team, which included initial categories and codes. Thematic analysis in the style of Braun and Clarke (2006, 2012) was used to explore the data and raise the codes and categories into themes because it provided a systematic way of approaching the large data set as a whole. The final stages of the thematic analysis and writing up of each theme incorporated researchers who had not participated in the coding stage and therefore facilitated further rigour in the analysis as they were able to proffer analysis from the perspective of outsiders – those who had not carried out interviews, or completed coding – as well as those who had.

In addition to a cross-sectional, thematic analysis, life history interviews also require analysis of individual accounts, that is, the individual life story of each participant. To facilitate this, researchers returned to the complete transcripts for each child which were read and reread as a whole and 'case summaries' were prepared to include information under each theme. Particular attention is given to identifying significant life moments in children's stories, that is, "interactional moments and experiences which leave marks on people's lives" (Denzin, 1989: 70) and the ways in which they relate to past and future events.

The findings in this report are presented thematically as established in the cross-sectional analysis, supported by children's own words and illustrated through a number of vignettes which aim to contextualise some children's experiences.



Figure 2: Image of the materials produced for the Social Media theme (HV – older group)



Figure 3: Image of the materials produced for the Social Media theme (Janvrin – younger group)



Figure 4: Example of work undertaken by students at Mont a L'Abbé School.

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All direct quotes are reproduced verbatim in this report, exactly as they were given by the children and young people who took part in this project and those who responded to our office's Island-wide survey.

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For advice, resources and information on all aspects of our work and on child rights more generally, visit our [website](#) or follow us on social media.



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