

# PRESS RELEASE:

## *'How Should Jersey Address the Past Abuse Crisis?'*



24<sup>th</sup> July 2008

On Saturday, 26th July 2008, the Jersey Care Leavers' Association will hold a public meeting in St Helier, Jersey (1) with the aim of drawing Jersey care leavers, health and welfare professionals and the Jersey public to address how Jersey can ensure that the Jersey care leavers get the support that they need and to discuss how to ensure that Jersey can learn from the past abuse crisis.

The meeting will be addressed by three UK based experts on abuse in the looked after children's system and safeguarding procedures:

Liz Davies (2), child protection expert, said:

"The police investigation into historic child abuse in Jersey has progressed further than many previous inquiries because of the unprecedented involvement of care leavers and survivors. It is very difficult for children to speak about crimes perpetrated against them but when they work with an investigation as adults they increase the probability of seeking and obtaining justice. The determination of the police in this case and their willingness to listen to the voices of care leavers and survivors sets an example for all future organised abuse investigations."

"Children from England were sent to Haut de la Garenne. The UK government must urgently instruct local authorities in England and Wales to provide full details of the children they placed in Jersey during the relevant time period. This will require a parallel police and social work investigation in England and Wales to work with the Jersey police. There may be connections to be made with previous organised and institutional abuse investigations and it is important that all the children who suffered abuse on the island have an opportunity to both inform the inquiries and to access support services."

Fay Maxted, Chief Executive of The Survivors Trust (3) said

"The Survivors Trust recognizes the unique factor in being abused by someone who is paid to take care of you and the impact this can have throughout someone's life. We know the urgent need for support services so that people who have been affected by abuse can move forward with their lives with dignity, and can be supported through the process of giving evidence and seeking redress.

The authorities need to move swiftly to ensure that appropriate services are established alongside the investigation. Many people may have felt that all the cases of institutional abuse had been uncovered. The reality is that we can never rest on our laurels when providing care for children and the only way we will learn how to build successful children's homes and places where children can be looked after is by listening to those who have experienced children's homes at their worst."

Dr Valerie Sinason (4) said

"Coming out of silence is a brave and frightening moment and it is so good that Jersey has welcomed the steps the Jersey Care Leavers Association have made and that there is such a positive response to the hard work of the police. That is a rare and precious resource in any community. It is only very recently that some countries, only a few, sadly, have had enough strength to recognise the extent of abuse that exists. Only by acknowledging the experience of survivors can a country move on. Otherwise there is a delusional idea of how safe childhood is."

ENDS

For further details please note the following two numbers:

Contact Will McMahon on 07968 950223 until Friday Xpm (UK mobile)  
Contact Will McMahon on from Friday Xpm (Jersey mobile)

Editors Notes

(1) 'How Should Jersey Address the Past Abuse Crisis?' Open Meeting, will take place on 26th July 2008, 12.30-2.30pm at The Don Theatre, Fort Regent Jersey.

(2) Liz Davies is a senior lecturer at London Metropolitan University. She exposed the child abuse scandal in Islington in the 90's and has written widely on the subject of protecting children.

(3) The Survivors Trust is an umbrella agency for rape and childhood sexual abuse crisis and support services in the UK and Ireland representing 130 member agencies. The Survivors Trust membership includes support services set up following investigations in Merseyside, Lancashire, North Wales and Manchester.

(4) Dr Valerie Sinason Phd MACP M Inst Psychoanalysis is a child and adult psychotherapist and an adult psychoanalyst. She has worked with abuse in children's homes, including those for children with learning disability, in the UK as well as on the island of Leros.