



Office of the
Children's Commissioner
for Jersey



Annual Report 2025



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Foreword



I am somewhat surprised that I am already presenting my second Annual Report as Commissioner for Children and Young People in Jersey. The past two years have rushed past, and I continue to learn from and about Jersey and its children and young people.

2025 was a challenging year for the OCCJ for a variety of reasons, both professional and personal. On the negative side (let's get it out of the way, shall we?), staff absences and vacancies resulted in the Office operating at 50% capacity for much of the year. This impacted on our capacity to deliver in the way and to the extent that I would have liked.

On the positive side, last year's Annual Report identified several key priorities for 2025, and I am happy to report that progress has been achieved in each of those areas. This has required us to look both internally at how the Office was structured, and externally, at how we meet and deliver on our public-facing duties and functions. The OCCJ has now been restructured, and vacancies filled to achieve greater efficiency in the longer-term. We commissioned an independent review of our Advice and Information policy and procedures, which have come into effect in 2026. We have trialled a new way of delivering children's rights awareness to professionals and continue to make changes to how we meet the needs of various professional groups in a more tailored way. We have successfully recruited new members to our Adult Advisory Panel who bring a wealth of experience and knowledge to an important internal governance structure.

In 2025, we commissioned several pieces of work relevant to our duties, functions and strategic themes. These include a redesign and updating of our website with a view to making it more accessible, informative and user-friendly. We also commissioned: legal opinion on the age of consent in various circumstances and how this impacts on our work with and for children; a review of Child Rights Impact Assessments (CRIAs); and participative research with children and young people about their rights and the impact that income has on their enjoyment of these. This work is ongoing and, while further details on the projects are contained in this report, they will not reach their conclusion until 2026.

A particular highlight of our work in 2025 was our submission to, and attendance at, the UN Committee's examination of the UK under the International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights. In submitting to this process, we focussed on three areas: child poverty, educational disadvantage and mental health. Having secured a meeting with a number of Committee Members and attended the full Committee hearing, we were gratified that the Committee's Concluding Observations included two recommendations specific to the Government of Jersey. These address the issues of child poverty and educational inequalities. As always, these recommendations are a starting point for further work, not an end in themselves. However, to have these acknowledged at international level as issues to be addressed by Government is a strong place to start.

As always, working directly with children and young people is close to the heart of the work that the OCCJ does. This, I believe, is where the magic happens, where children share their experience and views and adults learn and are offered different perspectives on things we think we know everything about. Our own Youth Advisory Group (YAG) is central in informing our work and raising awareness of children's rights. In 2025, we held our second World Children's Day event, bringing children and decision-makers together to have a constructive conversation about issues that matter to children. These discussions are essential in building decision-makers' understanding of the importance and value of hearing from and listening to children, and children's belief that their views matter and are considered in shaping decisions that affect them. To see dozens of children and adults come together to talk about children's right to be heard was a truly rewarding experience.

However, it is only fair to say that not everything went as planned during the year. Unfortunately, due to staff absences and vacancies, I did not get to visit many of Jersey's schools to talk with children and staff. This is very firmly in my plans for 2026. However, staff from the OCCJ visited various schools and youth groups in the lead-up to World Children's Day and actively engaged with groups of pupils about their right to be heard.

Some of the work begun in 2025 will reach fruition in the year ahead; other challenges will remain. Looking ahead to 2026, the Office will continue to focus on what matters most: listening to children and young people, using evidence and rights-based analysis to hold decision-makers to account, and strengthening the foundations needed to protect and promote children's rights in Jersey. That is, after all, our purpose and *raison d'être*.

Dr Carmel Corrigan
Children's Commissioner for Jersey

Introduction

The Background

The Office of the Children's Commissioner for Jersey (OCCJ) was established under the Commissioner for Children and Young People (Jersey) Law 2019. As an independent statutory body and Jersey's only human rights institution, the OCCJ's role is to protect and promote children's rights in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and other human rights treaties ratified by Jersey.

The Commissioner's remit covers all children under the age of 18 in Jersey, as well as certain groups of young people up to the age of 25, including care-experienced young adults, disabled young adults and young adults who are or have been involved with the youth justice system. That extended remit is set out in the Law and is important to the Office's work in areas such as leaving care, disability and youth justice.

How to Read This Report

This is intended to be a single, integrated annual report. It covers performance against the Strategic Plan, explains how the OCCJ has operated during the year, and reports on governance, risk and financial matters. The report is structured to meet the requirements of Article 23 of the Commissioner for Children and Young People (Jersey) Law 2019 and is organised around the seven pillars set out in the Strategic Plan 2024–2027 (see page 8).

The section on each pillar sets out what the OCCJ intended to do, what took place during the year, why this matters for children's rights, and what further work or recommendations arise from that activity. Together, these sections provide a review of the discharge of the Commissioner's statutory functions during the financial year, key issues affecting children and young people, and an overview of future priorities, including how children and young people will be involved in the Office's work.



Functions

The OCCJ's main functions are as follows:

- To make sure children, young people and adults know about and understand the rights of children and young people.
- To ensure that people in power and with influence in Jersey respect, protect and fulfil the rights of children and young people.
- To provide advice to the Government of Jersey on improvements to laws and policies to enhance the realisation of children's and young people's rights.
- To encourage adults to listen to and consider children's and young people's views when decisions are made that affect their lives.
- To monitor how Jersey laws comply with the UNCRC and other international human rights treaties and conventions, and to make recommendations that bring Jersey laws into line with them.
- To encourage the Government of Jersey to sign and implement any other European or international treaties or conventions that will protect the rights of children and young people.

Our work is about making sure every child and young person in Jersey has their rights respected, their voices heard, and their needs taken seriously.

Duties

The OCCJ's main duties are as follows:

- Using the UNCRC and other relevant human rights instruments, including those already signed up to by Jersey, as the basis for the Office's work.
- Involving children and young people and the people who work with them in the work of the OCCJ.
- Publishing a strategic plan explaining the work of the OCCJ at least every four years.
- Making sure children and young people know about the role of the Children's Commissioner and how to contact the OCCJ.
- Publishing an annual report every year that sets out what we have done to promote and protect the rights of children and young people.

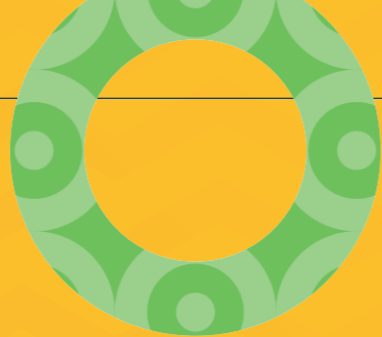
Powers

The OCCJ's main powers are as follows:

- Provide children and young people with information about their rights.
- Support children and young people to complain to the relevant organisation.
- Bring concerns and complaints to the attention of people and organisations who provide services to children, request relevant information and seek to help them solve problems or complaints.
- Investigate cases where the rights of children and young people have not or might not have been upheld and make recommendations about how things could be improved.
- Take legal cases to court on behalf of children and young people or, in certain circumstances, support children and young people who are going to court.

A range of factors must be considered before the Commissioner exercises many of these powers. When considering the most appropriate approach, the Commissioner also takes advice from staff, advisory panels and, where necessary, legal advice. While aiming to serve the best interests of the child and afford due process to all involved, the OCCJ seeks to support local, early resolution of concerns brought to it.





Our Values

In our Strategic Plan 2024-2027, we set out the following core organisational values for the OCCJ. These continue to reflect the Office's statutory obligations and the standards to which the OCCJ aspires in the delivery of all work and services.

- 1 **Child-centred**
Children and young people are at the centre of all that we do. We will, at all times, seek to act in the best interests of the child. As part of achieving this, we will seek their views and their participation in our work.
- 2 **Accountable**
We are open, honest and responsible in everything we do. We will act with integrity at all times.
- 3 **Fair**
We treat everyone with respect, dignity and compassion. We will counter discrimination of any kind in our work.
- 4 **Authoritative**
We will always seek to be informed, confident and trustworthy in our views and opinions, thereby building and enhancing respect for the authority of the OCCJ.
- 5 **Dedicated**
We will use our powers and functions to protect and promote the rights of children and young people in Jersey, accepting the difficulties and challenges involved.
- 6 **Constructively Critical**
We will be constructively critical in our work for children and young people and welcoming of constructive challenges to our work. This will promote a solutions-focussed, reflective and continuous improvement approach in ourselves and others.
- 7 **Independent**
We will champion children's rights in all circumstances. We will not be unduly influenced by people in power, with influence in politics, the media or any other setting.

During 2025, these values shaped the Office's work in visible ways: the participation model adopted for Our Say, Our Right; the emphasis on transparency, fairness and due process during the organisational restructure; and the move to premises that better reflect our commitments to accessibility, dignity, confidentiality and independence

Strategic Plan 2024-2027

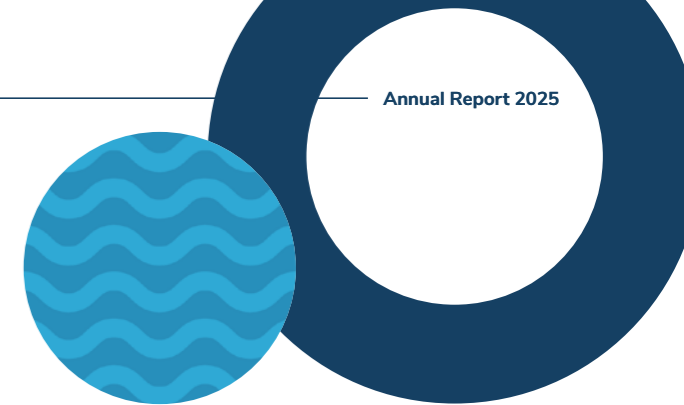
Following the appointment of the new Commissioner in 2024, the OCCJ developed and published a new Strategic Plan for the coming four-year period. That process was informed by the Your Island, Your Rights consultation, by the Office's prior casework, by input from advisory panels and stakeholders, and by the Concluding Observations of relevant UN treaty bodies.

The consultation identified six thematic priorities:

- Educational inequality
- Children experiencing poverty
- Play and leisure
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Children in care
- Children in the youth justice system

The Strategic Plan is structured around seven key pillars, rooted in the Office's statutory functions and duties. We have again used those seven pillars to organise this report. They are:

1. Promoting awareness of children's rights and the OCCJ
2. Demonstrating and promoting best practice in the involvement of children
3. Protecting children's rights
4. Monitoring and advising Government
5. Progressing incorporation of the UNCRC
6. Engaging at international level
7. Being an effective and efficient independent human rights institution in Jersey.



2025 at a Glance

2025 focused on strengthening participation, influencing policy, and ensuring the OCCJ is well placed to protect children's rights in Jersey.

1. Children's Participation

What happened:

Our Say, Our Right project put children's voices at the centre of our work.

Youth Advisory Group influenced messaging and priorities, and presented to Jersey's decision-makers.

Why it matters:

Young people actively used their voice to contribute to decisions that may affect them (UNCRC Article 12 in practice).

Our Say, Our Right provided a strong local example of how meaningful participation can work when children are given time, support and real influence.

3. International Accountability

What happened:

Represented Jersey at United Nations International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) examination in Geneva.

Raised issues of poverty, educational inequality, mental health.

Triggered UN recommendations for Jersey.

Why it matters:

Connects local children's experiences to international accountability standards.

2. Policy and Scrutiny

What happened:

Contributions to Scrutiny panels and policy development.

Ongoing behind-the-scenes engagement.

Why it matters:

Providing the children's rights perspective on live issues and policy and practice in development.

4. Institutional Effectiveness

What happened:

Organisational restructure and relocation.

New website and rebrand underway.

Improved accessibility and independence.

Why it matters:

Ensures OCCJ is accessible, independent and effective in its role.

Influence and Outcomes

How we understand influence

As an independent human rights institution, the OCCJ does not control services, budgets or legislation. The effect of our work is therefore not best understood through service-delivery outcomes or short-term change alone.

Instead, we understand our role primarily in terms of influence and contribution: how the OCCJ uses its statutory functions to shape the conditions in which children's rights can be understood, respected and fulfilled over time.

This includes:

- Increasing the visibility and understanding of children's rights,
- Ensuring children's voices are present in decisions that affect them,
- Improving the quality of policymaking and scrutiny through rights-based analysis,
- Strengthening accountability through international and domestic reporting, and
- Maintaining an independent, accessible and effective institution.

This approach aligns with the OCCJ's duties under Article 23 of the Commissioner for Children and Young People (Jersey) Law 2019, which requires the Annual Report to review the discharge of functions and the issues arising from that work, rather than to demonstrate outcomes beyond the Commissioner's direct control.



The work of the OCCJ is not only about activity; it is about helping to create the conditions in which children's rights are more fully understood, respected and progressively realised in Jersey. This is not a short-term process, as what we are seeking is sustained and sustainable social and cultural change. In reviewing the year's work, the focus is therefore on how the Office has used its statutory powers, duties and functions to influence participation, law, policy, accountability and institutional practice. While many of the effects of this work are long-term and will continue to emerge over time, the review that follows demonstrates how the Commissioner has sought to influence issues affecting children and young people, promote accountability, and strengthen the foundations necessary for the ongoing realisation of children's rights.

One area that the Office seeks to influence over the long term is the normalisation of meaningful children's participation, while a key objective for us is to show what good practice in this area looks like. Through Our Say, Our Right and the work of the Youth Advisory Group, the OCCJ demonstrated how children can be supported to engage with rights-based discussions in an informed, structured and influential way. The project did not simply amplify children's voices; it showed decision-makers what effective participation looks like when children are given time, information and genuine ownership of content and delivery. This contributes to reinforcing participation as a rights-based entitlement and expectation rather than a discretionary engagement exercise.

Seeking to influence legislation, policy and practice is a further key function of the Office. Throughout 2025, the OCCJ brought children's rights standards into public decision-making through Scrutiny submissions, advisory work and detailed engagement with policy-makers. This included rights-based analysis of online harms, public spending and service reform. The influence of this work is often not directly visible, as in many instances it operates to shape thinking, strengthen approaches, or prevent the progress of measures that do not further and protect children's rights. It is also often incremental and long-term. Nonetheless, such engagement remains one of the primary ways in which the Commissioner can shape law, policy and practice in children's interests, particularly for children who most need or are the focus of state intervention.

Sometimes, the influence of our work is more evident, such as in the OCCJ's international engagement and evidence building. The Commissioner's participation in the examination of the United Kingdom under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) ensured that children's experiences in Jersey were visible within an international accountability process. This engagement strengthened the link between international standards and local practice and directly informed the commissioning of independent research into the lived experiences of children and young people living in poverty in Jersey, enhancing the quality and depth of the evidence available to inform future advocacy and policy debate.

Finally, increasing our influence over both the short and longer term required critical institutional strengthening during 2025. The organisational restructure, relocation to accessible and visibly independent premises, and progress on digital communications were not children's rights campaigns in and of themselves, but they underpin the OCCJ's ability to discharge its statutory functions effectively and to exert influence with credibility and authority. The OCCJ is now better placed to engage children, support families, advise Government and speak with authority on children's rights.

Taken together, the work undertaken and influence developed in 2025 are best understood not as isolated changes, but as cumulative progress: embedding participation practice, sustaining rights-based policy influence, strengthening international accountability, and ensuring that the OCCJ itself is equipped to protect and promote children's rights over the longer term.



1.

Promoting awareness of children's rights and the OCCJ

All children and young people should be able to enjoy all their rights, but some find this more difficult, for a variety of reasons. These include not knowing about their rights, not having an adult in their life who knows that they have rights and how they can be upheld, and a lack of understanding of, and attention to, rights in the services and systems that support them.

During 2025, the OCCJ continued to promote awareness of children's rights through meetings and events, public commentary, digital communication and direct engagement with children, young people and professionals. The scoping and commissioning of the website redesign project formed an important part of this work, as did ongoing efforts to clarify the Office's role and functions to stakeholders. Our survey work in 2024 identified weak public understanding of the OCCJ's purpose and functions as a continuing risk; our communication and website redevelopment work in 2025 was a direct strategic response to that risk.



Rebranding and commissioning of a new website

In 2024 the OCCJ continued to maintain a regular public profile through print and broadcast media. However, feedback gathered during the Your Island, Your Rights consultation for the Strategic Plan 2024-2027 indicated that this visibility was not being consistently translated into public understanding or accessible engagement. Among the more than 1,300 responses received, a number of Islanders identified the OCCJ's website as a weak link in how the Office communicates its role, functions and advice.

This feedback mattered. Making sure that children, young people and adults know about children's rights, understand the role of the Children's Commissioner and can access information and support are core statutory duties of the Office. A digital presence that is hard to navigate, inaccessible or insufficiently child centred presents a real barrier to those duties being fulfilled effectively.

During 2025, the OCCJ therefore prioritised the commissioning of a new website and an updated visual identity as part of a wider programme of institutional strengthening and improved awareness and greater accessibility (see page 26 Section 7: Being an effective and efficient independent human rights institution in Jersey). Resources were allocated to run two formal procurement processes: one for visual identity and design services; another for website design and development. Both projects were deliberately framed as interlinked, to ensure that the Office's public facing communications would be coherent, recognisable and fit for purpose across digital and print platforms.

The tendering processes were conducted in accordance with the Government of Jersey's Public Finances Manual. Detailed service specifications were developed, setting out clear expectations around accessibility, co design, value for money and alignment with the Strategic Plan 2024-2027. Particular emphasis was placed on the ability of potential suppliers to work in a child centred way, to be responsive to feedback, and to involve children and young people meaningfully at appropriate stages of the work.

A feature of both commissioning exercises was the involvement of children and young people through the OCCJ's Youth Advisory Group (YAG) (see page 14, Pillar 2: Demonstrating and promoting best practice in the involvement of children). YAG members contributed to early discussions about what was not working with the existing website, what information felt most important to children and young people, and what would help make the OCCJ better understood, more approachable and more trustworthy. Their views helped shape the briefs issued to prospective suppliers and informed how bids were assessed. This approach reflected the Office's statutory duty to involve children and young people in its work, and its commitment to modelling best practice in participation rather than treating engagement as an add on.

Following a competitive tender process, applications from multiple agencies were assessed against criteria including quality, approach, experience, accessibility considerations and cost. Three strong proposals were received and evaluated. At the conclusion of that process, and on the basis of comparative evaluation, the OCCJ selected The Refinery to deliver both the rebrand and the new website. The rebranding work was delivered during 2025, resulting in a refreshed and extended visual identity designed to support clearer communication across reports, digital channels, presentations and public materials. A new brand identity for the YAG was developed, visually marking the growth and maturity of the group as an OCCJ entity in its own right. The website project progressed through discovery, planning and design stages during 2025, including stakeholder engagement and preparatory work with the YAG. While the delivery of the redesigned website itself sits outside the reporting period covered by this report, the commissioning, briefing, participation and governance of the project formed an important part of the OCCJ's 2025 activity.

Taken together, this work represents a strategic response to identified communication risks highlighted in the 2024 Annual Report and during consultation on the Strategic Plan. It also reflects the Office's broader focus during 2025 on strong governance, meaningful participation and building durable foundations to support the protection and promotion of children's rights in Jersey.

Why we commissioned the new website

Our aim was to follow the feedback we had received and commission a new website that would deliver the following key outcomes for children and young people:

- **Clearer information about rights**
The commissioning work focused on making information easier to understand, navigate and trust, particularly for children and young people accessing it independently.
- **Usability shaped by young people's views**
Usability (UX) testing was conducted with the Youth Advisory Group, helping us to understand users' priorities, desired language/tones and content delivery.
- **Better digital accessibility**
UNICEF-approved World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) accessibility standards and user testing were built into the brief from the outset, helping to remove barriers for children with disabilities or additional needs.
- **A more recognisable office**
The refreshed visual identity supports stronger recognition of the OCCJ and clearer understanding of its role as an independent place to turn for rights based information and support.

Meetings and visits

In parallel to work supporting the growth of the OCCJ's online presence, in-person meetings and visits continued to play an important part in the Commissioner's 2025 calendar. Throughout the year, the Commissioner attended 136 meetings with external individuals and bodies, including meetings with Government Ministers, Scrutiny members and panels, Government officials, service leads, other Arm's Length Bodies, voluntary organisations and, of course, the OCCJ advisory panels. These meetings provide key opportunities for the OCCJ to promote and protect children's rights through focussed discussions with those who make legal and policy decisions and deliver services directly. They also provide an important means of gathering information, allowing the OCCJ to remain updated on issues from a range of perspectives, thereby contributing to our monitoring of children's rights.

2.

Demonstrating and promoting best practice in the involvement of children

A fundamental right of every child is to have their views heard and considered in decisions that affect them. This is true in every sphere of their lives, including in their family, at school, through support services and at government level. Not all adults are comfortable with, or know how to involve, children in their work; nor do all children know how to access the OCCJ or other avenues through which their views can be heard.

The Youth Advisory Group (YAG) remains central to the Children's Commissioner's work. It is the cornerstone of the Office's participation function and helps ensure that the OCCJ is not merely speaking about children's rights but working with children and young people in a way that reflects those rights. During 2025 the YAG contributed directly to *Our Say, Our Right*, to website and branding discussions, and to wider conversations about the Office's priorities and messaging.

In 2024 the OCCJ learned both what worked well in child-led event design and where outreach strategies had fallen short. The 2025 World Children's Day project shows that the Office did not ignore those lessons; instead, it adapted, using a small but committed group and supplementing their views with wider engagement activity.

Beyond its own projects, the OCCJ continued to encourage other organisations to involve children and young people meaningfully. Ongoing work with the Jersey Family Justice Council Working Group on Children's Voice is an example of the Office using its influence over time to encourage participation in other systems.

World Children's Day 2025 *Our Say, Our Right*

World Children's Day is a day of global action for children, by children. On 20 November every year, it marks the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and provides an opportunity to celebrate and promote children's rights.

In planning for World Children's Day 2025, the OCCJ reflected on the strengths and lessons of the 2024 event, *Together@10*. Feedback from young people indicated that they wanted more young people involved in designing and shaping the next event. In response, the Office developed a project centred on Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which focuses on a child's right to be heard and to have their views respected in matters affecting them. The idea quickly emerged that the 2025 event should combine a film with an in-person launch event that would bring children, young people and decision-makers together in the same space.

A project-specific advisory group of young people was formed to guide the work. Some members came from the standing Youth Advisory Group (YAG), while others were sought through outreach to schools and the wider community. The response to formal invitations was lower than hoped, echoing some of the recruitment difficulties noted during planning for *Together@10* in 2024, but a small, committed group came together and led the project with energy and purpose.

Before embarking on the creative work, the group spent time building its understanding of Article 12 and the wider children's rights framework. This was important. Children and young people cannot participate meaningfully in decision-making unless they have the information and understanding needed to form and express a view. That principle underpinned the project throughout.

Recognising that the project group was relatively small, OCCJ staff also visited schools and youth groups, and with the support of the Children, Young People, Education and Skills Department, participated in Student Council Network meetings to gather wider views and experiences.

Children and young people were asked where they felt listened to, where they did not, what got in the way, and what would improve matters. Their views were fed back into the creative process, helping the YAG to deepen and refine the script.

The YAG then worked with a filmmaker to develop the film's tone, structure and message. They reviewed other short films and documentaries, discussed how they wanted their own piece to feel, and planned the main narrative. The resulting film, *Our Say, Our Right*, was then launched at a World Children's Day event attended by the Bailiff of Jersey, Government of Jersey Ministers, key public and third sector decision-makers, and a wide variety of young people. Designed to keep children's voices central and adult speeches to a minimum, the event centred around a screening of the film and short speeches by the YAG members. Activities and discussions were then led and chaired by the young people, with the opinions and conclusions fed back. The event concluded with all guests committing to how they could make a change or an improvement that will allow incorporating children's voices more meaningfully in their work. These commitments were recorded by OCCJ as a means of assisting the YAG to keep track of how their project might translate into any future public policies and initiatives.

This project sits naturally across Pillars 1, 2 and 4 of the OCCJ's Strategic Plan: awareness, participation and influencing decision-makers.

Working with the Jersey Office of the Information Commissioner (JOIC)

In 2025, the OCCJ worked with the Jersey Office of the Information Commissioner (JOIC) on children's privacy, data protection and online safety, and to explore how children's rights can be better reflected in the design of digital services used by children and young people. The collaboration was grounded in Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (the right to be heard) and Article 16 (the right to privacy). Building on earlier discussions, the OCCJ and JOIC agreed that developing a practical checklist for local app and website developers would be a timely and proportionate response in Jersey's context. To inform this work, the OCCJ hosted and facilitated a workshop with the Youth Advisory Group. The JOIC led the conversation, which focused on how the young people use digital services, where they feel uncertain or unsafe, and how much control they feel they have over their personal information. Feedback from the JOIC stated that it had gleaned invaluable insights which helped to shape their strategic priorities for 2026-2028. From the OCCJ's perspective, this ensured that children's views helped shape adult understanding of risk and responsibility, in line with Article 12. Additionally, learning from this engagement is being used by the JOIC to raise awareness among developers and designers of their responsibilities toward children's privacy.



World Children's Day 2025

Our Say, Our Right



3.

Protecting children's rights

Every year the OCCJ receives requests for information and advice in cases where either a child themselves or an adult is concerned that a child's rights have not been upheld. In all cases, the Office offers advice and information, while some more complex matters require further attention and longer involvement.

During 2025, the OCCJ's Advice and Information (A&I) service was significantly affected by staff capacity constraints. As noted elsewhere in this report, a period of vacancies coincided with increasing demands across the Office's wider statutory functions. As a result, the decision was taken to close the A&I service to new enquiries for a substantial part of the year, in order to prioritise existing cases and maintain the quality and integrity of the support provided.

This was not a decision taken lightly. The A&I function is an important means through which children, young people and those supporting them can access information, advice and assistance in relation to their rights. However, ensuring that such support is delivered safely, consistently and to an appropriate standard is essential.

In 2025 the Office received 29 enquiries and took on 17 new cases. Most enquiries were raised by adults on behalf of children, and the top areas of concern were children's social care and education. The OCCJ also received six notifications that a young person had either been remanded in custody at Greenfields secure children's home or placed there under the terms of a Secure Accommodation Order.

Building on work in 2024 to represent the rights of young people either through the juvenile justice or care systems, the OCCJ visited children in secure settings (including HMP La Moye). Deprivation of liberty is one of the most serious measures impacting children's rights that a government can take and should only be used as a measure of last resort and for the shortest possible time: this tenet was at the heart of our advice and involvement concerning any case involving the detention of young people in 2025, especially in the adult prison.



4.

Monitoring and advising Government

As an independent human rights institution, one of the OCCJ's central functions is to monitor how effectively children's and young people's rights are respected, protected and fulfilled in Jersey. This is done through monitoring of laws, policies, practice and public spending; through advice to Ministers and officials; and through engagement with Scrutiny Panels and other accountability mechanisms of the States Assembly. Much of this work is not highly visible and often involves sustained engagement, technical analysis and behind-the-scenes discussion. However, on the occasions when it is appropriate for this aspect of our work to be published and circulated more widely (as with Scrutiny submissions and hearings, for example), we make sure that everything is available and fully accessible on our website.

Scrutiny submissions

Engagement with Scrutiny Panels remained an important part of the OCCJ's monitoring and advisory role during 2025. Scrutiny submissions provide a formal, on the record opportunity for the Commissioner to bring children's rights standards, evidence and longer term considerations into public decision-making, and to support States Members in understanding the potential implications of proposals for children and young people.

During the year, the OCCJ gave evidence, both in writing and in person, to Scrutiny Panels. These included evidence to the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel on protections for children from online harms, drawing on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and General Comment No. 25 on children's rights in the digital environment. The OCCJ also made submissions on the Proposed Government Plan and Budget 2026-2029, focusing on the role of public spending in giving effect to children's rights, the cumulative impact of budgetary pressures on services affecting children, and the importance of using Children's Rights Impact Assessments to inform financial decision-making. A supplementary submission later in the year addressed the potential impact of a proposed reduction in the OCCJ's own budget on the Office's capacity and independence (see page 30).

Other policy and legislative engagement

Alongside Scrutiny work, the OCCJ provided advice and policy input across a range of other legislative and operational areas during 2025. This included engagement on proposed amendments to the Young Offenders Law; feedback to the Family Justice Council on a proposed practice direction relating to the use of the Court's deprivation of liberty orders; and the raising of concerns regarding the sufficiency and resilience of the children's social care residential estate. The Office also provided feedback on proposed legislative amendments to the Mental Health Law.

Contributing to wider policy development

The OCCJ also contributed to wider policy development during the year through feedback on draft strategies and proposals affecting children's everyday lives. This included comments on the draft Play Strategy, focusing on children's rights to play, leisure and participation, and on the importance of ensuring that strategic policy in this area reflects children's lived experience as well as international children's rights standards. The OCCJ also provided feedback on the Youth Justice Roadmap, with an emphasis on ensuring that this is underpinned by a robust Child Rights Impact Assessment and includes measures to strengthen its human rights basis and child-friendly juvenile justice provisions.

Limits of influence

In undertaking this work, the OCCJ is conscious of the limits of its role and powers. As stated above, the Commissioner does not make policy or set budgets, nor can the OCCJ force the Government to follow a specific direction. Influence is therefore indirect and often incremental, and advice is not always reflected in final outcomes. Nevertheless, monitoring, advising and engaging through formal and informal channels remains an essential means by which children's rights standards can be introduced into public decision-making, risks can be identified early, and accountability can be strengthened over time.

Commissioned research on the lived experience of child poverty in Jersey

Child poverty is a significant and longstanding concern in Jersey. With around one in four children living in relative low income households, the scale and seriousness of the issue is, in itself, a clear warning sign requiring sustained attention, scrutiny and action. Over the past two years, the OCCJ has consistently highlighted child poverty as a priority area, drawing attention to its impact on children's rights and lived experiences and raising these concerns directly with Government and, where appropriate, in international forums.

The Office's engagement with the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) process in 2025 (see page 25) therefore built on this existing focus, providing an additional lever for accountability and reinforcing the need to strengthen the evidence base through children's own accounts.

This work forms part of the OCCJ's monitoring and advisory function, strengthening the evidence used to scrutinise Government policy and to support informed, rights based advice on tackling child poverty.

While official data indicates that a significant proportion of children in Jersey live in relative low income households, the ICESCR process highlighted clear limitations in the availability, timeliness and depth of local data. The Commissioner therefore identified a need to strengthen the evidence base by capturing how poverty is experienced by children and young people themselves, and how it affects their enjoyment of rights protected under the UNCRC, including rights to an adequate standard of living, development and education, healthcare, participation and social inclusion.

In response, the OCCJ commissioned independent qualitative research from the Centre for Children and Young People's Participation at the University of Lancashire. The research focuses on the lived experiences of children and young people living in poverty in Jersey and adopts a participatory, child centred approach that actively involves children as co researchers. This approach reflects the OCCJ's statutory duty to involve children in its work and aligns with international best practice in children's rights research.

The project is designed to complement official statistics by providing rich, rights based evidence about the realities of poverty in children's everyday lives, including the impacts on education, housing, food security, mental health, social participation and future aspirations. It will also examine how existing anti poverty measures are experienced by children and where gaps remain between policy intent and lived reality.

This commissioned research directly supports follow up to Jersey's inclusion in the ICESCR process and is intended to inform future advocacy, policy advice and scrutiny engagement at both local and international levels. By linking international human rights obligations to children's lived experience on the Island, the OCCJ aims to strengthen accountability for progress on child poverty and to ensure that children's voices remain central to efforts to reduce inequality in Jersey.

5.

Progressing incorporation of the UNCRC

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) remains the foundational framework for the OCCJ's work. Incorporation of the UNCRC into Jersey law would mean moving beyond policy commitment toward a position where children's rights are systematically embedded in domestic legislation, decision-making and accountability mechanisms. This is an incremental process, requiring sustained political leadership, legal clarity and cultural change.

During 2025, there was no formal legislative step toward full incorporation of the UNCRC in Jersey. However, the OCCJ continued to play an active role in maintaining a focus on incorporation as both a legal objective and a practical standard against which laws, policies and decisions affecting children should be assessed.

Applying UNCRC Article 3: the best interests of the child

Article 3 of the UNCRC requires that the best interests of the child be a primary consideration in all actions concerning children. Throughout 2025, the OCCJ continued to use this principle as a core analytical lens when scrutinising policy proposals, budget decisions and service reforms.

This was particularly evident in the OCCJ's Scrutiny engagement on the Proposed Government Plan and Budget 2026–2029 and in its international advocacy under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). In both contexts, the OCCJ emphasised that decisions affecting public expenditure, service capacity and institutional resourcing should be assessed not only for financial efficiency, but for their likely short and long term impacts on children's rights, wellbeing and life chances. The Office's advice consistently reflected the position that economic constraints do not displace the obligation to treat children's best interests as a primary consideration.

Applying UNCRC Article 12: the child's right to be heard

Article 12, which protects every child's right to express their views and have those views given due weight in matters affecting them, remained central to the OCCJ's approach during 2025.

The Office continued to model Article 12 in practice through its Youth Advisory Group, participatory project work and international engagement. This included ensuring that children's views informed the World Children's Day project (see page 14), communications and digital commissioning work. The OCCJ also used Article 12 explicitly in its scrutiny and ICESCR submissions, highlighting the absence of routine structures for children's participation in areas such as budget setting and anti poverty policy.

By treating participation as a right rather than a charitable or voluntary exercise, the OCCJ sought to demonstrate how incorporation of Article 12 would change not only outcomes, but decision-making culture in Jersey.

Applying UNCRC Article 27: the right to an adequate standard of living

Article 27 of the UNCRC recognises every child's right to a standard of living adequate for their physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. Progress on this right was a major focus of the OCCJ's work in 2025.

The OCCJ raised concerns about child poverty, educational inequality and access to services through scrutiny submissions, international reporting and direct engagement with the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The Commissioner's participation in the ICESCR examination in Geneva brought Jersey-specific evidence into an international forum (see page 25).

In response to the gaps highlighted through both domestic scrutiny and international engagement, the OCCJ commissioned independent research into the lived experiences of children and young people and how money, or lack of it, impacts these experiences and their rights. This work is intended to strengthen understanding of how Article 27 is experienced in practice, beyond headline statistics, and to support future advocacy for structural and legal reforms that more fully realise children's economic and social rights. This work will be completed and published in 2026.

Children's Rights Impact Assessments and incorporation readiness

During 2025, the OCCJ continued to promote Children's Rights Impact Assessments (CRIAs) as a practical mechanism for advancing the principles of incorporation in the absence of legislative change. CRIAs provide a way to operationalise UNCRC articles – particularly Articles 3, 12 and 27 – by requiring decision-makers to consider best interests, participation and rights impacts systematically.

The OCCJ has continued to stress that CRIAs are not a substitute for incorporation, but they remain an important indicator of incorporation readiness. Their value depends on consistent application, early use in policy development, and genuine engagement with children's views. To assist

and inform practice in this area, the OCCJ commissioned a review of CRIAs undertaken since 2024, when the Children (Convention Rights) (Jersey) Law 2022 came into force. This work will also be completed and published during 2026.

Ongoing challenges and the case for renewed momentum As in previous years, progress toward incorporation of the UNCRC in Jersey during 2025 was limited by the absence of a clear Government roadmap or timetable. Incorporation would mean that children's rights are reflected in domestic laws and breaches can be brought before the courts, in the same way as adult human rights under the European Convention on Human Rights. The OCCJ remains concerned that, without renewed commitment at the highest levels, leadership and direction, incorporation risks remaining an aspirational commitment rather than a deliverable programme of reform.

The OCCJ continues to take the view that incorporation is not an end in itself, but a necessary means of ensuring that children's rights are treated with the same visibility, seriousness and enforceability as other human rights. The work undertaken during 2025 – particularly in relation to participation, poverty and international scrutiny – represents an important part of the groundwork needed to support future incorporation, when political conditions allow.

6.

Engaging at international level

The UNCRC is the most widely ratified international agreement in the world. As a consequence, there is a wealth of international knowledge and expertise which Jersey and the OCCJ can draw on, and contribute to, in the pursuit of children's rights. It is also essential that the OCCJ participates in relevant international human rights systems, including treaty reporting mechanisms, as a means of holding the Government of Jersey to account.

In practice, however, the extent of the OCCJ's international engagement during the reporting period was constrained by staff resource limitations. This meant that the OCCJ was not able to participate in international networks through the usual in person channels, including the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC) and the European Network of Young Advisors (ENYA), both of which play a key role in sharing best practice, influencing regional policy development and amplifying children's voices at a European level. ENOC brings together independent children's rights institutions to promote and protect the rights set out in the UNCRC, while ENYA provides a structured mechanism for young people to engage directly with European decision-makers on issues affecting their lives.

Notwithstanding these constraints, the Office sought to maintain international engagement. This included continued engagement with the British and Irish Network of Ombudsmen and Children's Commissioners (BINOCC), a forum for collaboration and mutual learning between children's commissioners and ombudspersons across the UK and Ireland. This enabled the OCCJ to remain connected to key developments in children's rights practice and standards, and to contribute to collective learning, within the financial constraints faced during the period.



Engagement with the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)

A significant highlight of the OCCJ's international work in 2025 was the Children's Commissioner's attendance in Geneva for the examination of the United Kingdom under the ICESCR. This marked the first time that the OCCJ had engaged directly with the ICESCR reporting process and the first occasion on which the Commissioner had participated in an economic, social and cultural rights examination at UN level on behalf of children in Jersey.

ICESCR is one of the core United Nations human rights treaties and protects rights that are central to children's everyday lives, including the rights to an adequate standard of living, social security, health, education, and participation in cultural life. Jersey, as a Crown Dependency, is not a State Party in its own right but forms part of the UK State Party for the purposes of international reporting and examination. As a result, Jersey's laws, policies and outcomes for children are scrutinised by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as part of the UK's periodic examination.

In February 2025, the Commissioner travelled to Geneva to observe the UK's formal examination by the Committee and to participate in an informal briefing with Committee members. The visit had a clear strategic purpose: to raise the visibility of Jersey within the ICESCR process and to ensure that the lived experiences of children on the Island were not obscured within UK wide reporting.

As part of this engagement, the OCCJ submitted a written statement to the Committee and provided oral briefing, focusing on three interlinked issues of particular relevance to children in Jersey: child poverty, educational inequality, and mental health. The Commissioner highlighted that the most recent official child poverty statistics for Jersey showed that almost one in four children were living in relative low income households, and that this data pre dated the cost of living crisis. The Office also drew attention to widening educational inequalities linked to income poverty, including concerns about the diminishing effectiveness of Jersey Premium over time, and to gaps in legal protections for children and young people subject to Jersey's mental health law.

The Committee's examination of the UK included specific recommendations to Jersey, which is significant. The OCCJ also invited the Committee to make clear that its Concluding Observations apply across all jurisdictions within the UK State Party, including Crown Dependencies such as Jersey. Concluding Observations are the Committee's formal findings and recommendations, issued after an examination, and they provide authoritative guidance on where States must improve their compliance with the Covenant.

The OCCJ's engagement with the ICESCR process directly informed its domestic work in 2025. In particular, concerns highlighted at UN level about poverty and inequality strengthened the Office's decision to commission independent research into the lived experiences of poverty among young people in Jersey. That research is intended to complement official statistics by capturing how economic hardship affects children's daily lives, choices and opportunities, and to ensure that future policy discussions are grounded in children's own voices. This work also positions the OCCJ to support effective follow up to the Committee's recommendations now that the Concluding Observations have been issued.

Through its engagement with ICESCR in 2025, the OCCJ reinforced the link between international human rights scrutiny and local accountability. Attending the examination in Geneva allowed the Commissioner to bring Jersey's children into an international forum from which they are often absent, while using international standards to support evidence based advocacy for change at home.

7. Being an effective and efficient independent human rights institution in Jersey

As Jersey's only human rights institution, the OCCJ is independent of Government but accountable to the States Assembly and to the public. It is important that the Office is effective, efficient and accountable, and that its internal processes support this. It is also important that the OCCJ continues to grow its knowledge and skills to deliver on its functions.

Independence of the Commissioner

The Children's Commissioner for Jersey operates as an independent statutory office established under the 2019 Law. Independence is essential to the effective protection and promotion of children's rights. The Law's Schedule expressly addresses the independence of the office, and Article 24 also requires publication practices that protect anonymity and accessibility. The Commissioner works collaboratively with Government and services, but must remain free to advise, criticise and advocate independently. The move to premises (see page 29) clearly separate and at greater physical distance from Government supports both the reality and the perception of that independence.

Safeguarding the OCCJ's independence

During 2025, the OCCJ raised concerns about the proposed reduction to its 2026 budget in the context of its independence as Jersey's sole human rights institution for children and young people. In line with the Paris Principles (see page 30), which require national human rights institutions to be adequately resourced and free from executive influence, the Commissioner emphasised that independence is not only structural but operational. While the OCCJ can continue to function at a basic level under a reduced budget, doing so would materially constrain its ability to act proactively, commission independent research, involve children meaningfully in its work, and respond to emerging issues as they arise. The Commissioner made clear that reliance on discretionary, post hoc funding arrangements would be incompatible with the statutory model established under the Commissioner for Children and Young People (Jersey) Law 2019, which places responsibility for adequate resourcing with the States Assembly as a whole, rather than individual Ministers. Ensuring secure, sufficient and transparent funding is therefore essential not only to the effectiveness of the OCCJ, but to its ability to operate independently, credibly and without constraint in promoting and protecting children's human rights across law, policy and practice.



Advisory panels

The OCCJ has three statutory advisory panels that form an important part of its governance. Statements from each of the panels can be found in Appendices 2-4. Here, meanwhile, is a summary of each of their functions and remits:

ADULT ADVISORY PANEL (AAP)

The Adult Advisory Panel provides the Children's Commissioner with independent advice and constructive challenge on matters affecting the discharge of the OCCJ's statutory functions. Its role is to bring a range of professional knowledge, experience and external perspective to the Office's work, helping to ensure that children's rights issues are considered rigorously and in context.

Members of the Panel are drawn from a variety of backgrounds relevant to children's lives and public decision-making in Jersey and children's rights experts from across the UK. The Panel does not direct the work of the OCCJ or substitute for the judgement of the Commissioner, but acts as a critical friend, supporting reflection, accountability and strategic thinking. Through its discussions and advice, the Panel contributes to the quality, credibility and robustness of the Commissioner's work.

AUDIT AND RISK ADVISORY PANEL (ARAP)

The Audit and Risk Advisory Panel supports the Commissioner in fulfilling responsibilities for good governance, financial stewardship and risk management. Its focus is on providing independent oversight in relation to the OCCJ's internal controls, financial management, risk register and organisational resilience.

The Panel plays an important role in helping the OCCJ operate to high standards as a small but independent public body. By scrutinising financial information, risk assessments and governance arrangements, the ARAP assists the Commissioner in identifying and managing risks that could affect the Office's ability to discharge its statutory remit effectively and independently. The Panel's work strengthens transparency, accountability and confidence in the OCCJ's organisational governance.

Recruiting to the Adult Advisory Panel

During 2025, the OCCJ undertook to recruit new members to the Adult Advisory Panel, as a number of long-standing members had reached the end of their tenure. This provided an opportunity to renew and broaden the Panel's collective expertise while retaining its core role as an independent source of advice and constructive challenge to the Commissioner.

Several new members were appointed, bringing a wide range of professional experience relevant to children's rights and public decision-making. This includes senior leadership experience from former children's commissioners, legal expertise spanning public, family and human rights law, and backgrounds in social care, safeguarding, health, education and regulatory oversight. The refreshed Panel reflects both Jersey specific knowledge and wider UK perspectives on children's rights practice.

Together, this mix of experience strengthens the Panel's ability to support robust scrutiny, strategic reflection and good governance, and helps ensure that the OCCJ continues to benefit from informed, independent advice as Jersey's sole human rights institution for children and young people.

YOUTH ADVISORY GROUP (YAG)

The YAG plays a central role in ensuring that children's and young people's views meaningfully inform the work of the OCCJ. The YAG supports the Commissioner in meeting the statutory duty to involve children and young people and provides a practical mechanism through which Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – the right to be heard – is put into effect.

Members of the YAG contribute to discussions about the Office's priorities, projects and communications, and provide insight into how children and young people experience rights issues in practice. The Group is not tokenistic or consultative in nature; rather, it is an active advisory body whose input helps shape thinking, challenge assumptions and improve the relevance and accessibility of the OCCJ's work. Through the YAG, the OCCJ seeks to model good participation practice and to demonstrate how children's involvement can strengthen decision-making.

7. (continued) Being an effective and efficient independent human rights institution in Jersey

Organisational Restructure

During 2025 the OCCJ undertook an organisational restructure. The purpose of this process was to ensure that the structure of the Office aligns with its statutory functions and with the priorities set out in the Strategic Plan 2024-2027.

The rationale for change was set out clearly and transparently at the outset of the consultation. The Children's Commissioner role had accumulated multiple direct reports over time, reducing strategic capacity and increasing operational escalation. The proposed structure introduced clearer operational leadership through a dedicated senior management role, creating the necessary time and space for the Commissioner to focus on strategic leadership, oversight and external influence. The proposals also sought to respond to a clear shift in demand since the Office was established, from predominantly casework-focused activity toward increased policy, legislative support and advisory work.

Importantly, the proposed changes were subject to governance oversight beyond the Children's Commissioner. Prior to staff consultation, the proposals were reviewed by a steering group that included the Office's Accounting Officer, one member of the Adult Advisory Panel and one member of the Audit and Risk Advisory Panel, who agreed that the case for change was justified and proportionate. The involvement of this steering group provided independent assurance that the proposals were aligned with good governance, risk management and the OCCJ's public accountability.

The restructure should not be understood as an end in itself. Rather, it was intended to place the OCCJ on a more sustainable and resilient footing, with clearer alignment between resources, management structures and the functions of the Office.

The organisational changes made during 2025 sit alongside other institutional strengthening work, including improvements to procurement, digital accessibility and communications, described elsewhere in this report (see page 30, Financial Performance and Risk, and page 12, Promoting awareness of children's rights and the OCCJ).

Relocation of the OCCJ Office

The decision to relocate the OCCJ was underpinned by several factors, all of them relevant to the Office's statutory purpose and values.

The existing premises at Brunel House did not allow for disability access for either children or adults. There was no accessible entrance and no lift provision. For Jersey's only human rights institution, this was not a position that could be justified indefinitely. The new premises provide full disability access and facilities that better support inclusivity for children, adults and staff. In the same vein, the relocation also allowed the OCCJ to establish a dedicated 'sensory room', thereby providing, as a matter of course, a space for children with a wide variety of needs.

The old premises also lacked accessible confidential meeting space. The OCCJ had no suitable private room in which to meet children, adults or professionals bringing concerns on a confidential basis, and it had no large meeting room for advisory panels or larger meetings. The new premises provide both large and small meeting rooms and therefore better support casework confidentiality, governance and participation.

A further reason for relocation was independence and the public perception of that independence. It would have been inappropriate for the OCCJ to move into the new Government of Jersey's premises at Union Street, and yet, given the Government's move (and its effective 'neighbouring' of the original OCCJ premises), a solution had to be found. Entirely separate premises were therefore essential if the OCCJ was to continue to be trusted by the public as a safe place in which to raise concerns about statutory services.



Financial Performance and Risk

For the full 2025 Accounts, see Appendix 1. In 2025, the budget allocated to the Office was £1,090,668 and expenditure amounted to £926,163. This resulted in an underspend against budget of £83,505. This underspend occurred in staff costs and resulted from staff vacancies for several months of the year.

Staff remain the OCCJ's greatest and most important resource, and staffing costs continue to account for most of the Office's expenditure. This reflects the nature of the OCCJ's role as a small, specialist human rights institution whose effectiveness depends on professional expertise, judgement and capacity rather than on large-scale programme delivery.

During 2025, the OCCJ continued to operate within a context of constrained resources relative to the breadth of its statutory remit. Insufficient resourcing remains the most significant organisational risk faced by the Office and has implications across all our functions. While this may appear contrary to the underspend returned by the Office for 2025, given that the Office is now fully staffed, such an underspend is not anticipated for coming years. Therefore, the more limited budget available for operational costs remains a significant challenge.

Steps taken during the year to strengthen organisational structure, governance and communications have helped to manage these risks and improve resilience. However, the underlying challenge of resource sufficiency remains a live and material issue. Continued monitoring and management of these risks is essential to ensure that the OCCJ can discharge its statutory functions independently, effectively and to the standard required of a human rights institution.

As noted in Section 7 (see page 26), resource sufficiency is also directly linked to the OCCJ's independence.



Most significant risks in 2025

As in any organisation, the OCCJ's identification and management of risk is a constant and dynamic process, strongly supported and overseen by our Audit and Risk Advisory Panel (ARAP). As 2025 was a year of much change for the Office, risks arose, were managed and mitigated against on an ongoing basis. In addition, the management of risk has improved and, consequently, many risks were reduced and/or removed from the Risk Register throughout the year. Nonetheless, a small number of risks remained high at the end of 2025. These will be priorities for action into 2026.

Risk	Inherent Risk Score	Actions to Address the Risk 2025	Residual Risk Score after actions	Actions to Address the Risk 2025
Cuts to the OCCJ budget from 2026 onwards will result in more limited ability to deliver on its functions and duties.	5	Maintaining clear and good communication with Accountable Officer in Government. Raise with States Members, Scrutiny and Council of Ministers. Monitor expenditure against fulfilment of duties and functions.	4	Issue to be raised again with States Members, Scrutiny and the CoM, particularly post-Election 2026. Use, if necessary, of capacity to draw down additional project-specific funds in 2026. Review of Business Plan 2026 considering reduced resources, if necessary.
OCCJ and relevant organisations do not advise children and young people of their right to seek information and advice from, as well as to raise complaints with, the Office.	4	Information for children and professionals who work with them to be developed. Offer of rights awareness sessions made to several organisations who work with children and young people. Commission redesign of OCCJ website to improve accessibility.	4	Full programme of school visits to recommence in 2026. Launch and continue to improve new website, including child-friendly advice, information and complaints processes. Social media programme to be developed to promote greater awareness of the services of the OCCJ, specifically targeted at children and young people, and those who work with them. Continue to build relationships with key stakeholders who support children and young people.
Lack of an up-to-date business continuity plan and succession plan, meaning there is no clear map of the work to be prioritised during staff changes.	5	Engage with GoJ support to develop plans. Succession plan in development. Business continuity plan in development.	4	Succession and business continuity plans to be finalised and submitted to the ARAP.

Commissioner's Recommendations

Based on the work undertaken during 2025, and informed by both domestic monitoring and international engagement, the Commissioner made the following recommendations during the reporting period to strengthen the protection and realisation of children's rights in Jersey. These recommendations should be read in the context of the Government of Jersey's obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), particularly Articles 3 (best interests of the child), 12 (the right to be heard), 27 (an adequate standard of living), and 28 (the right to education), as well as the Concluding Observations of the International Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

1. Child Poverty

During 2025, the Commissioner highlighted the scale and impact of child poverty in Jersey and emphasised that Article 27 of the UNCRC places a clear obligation on Government to ensure that every child has an adequate standard of living necessary for their development. In this context, and in line with the ICESCR Committee's recommendations, the OCCJ recommended that the Council of Ministers adopt a strengthened and coordinated response to child poverty, including:

- The development and publication of a comprehensive child poverty reduction strategy, taking a whole of government approach, and setting out clear, measurable targets and timeframes for the reduction and, ultimately, eradication of child poverty in Jersey. The Commissioner emphasised that such a strategy should be grounded in children's rights and informed by children's lived experience, in line with Article 12.
- The systematic collection and publication of data on child poverty on a more regular and disaggregated basis, including data on its scale, characteristics and underlying causes. This included a recommendation for a commitment to regular income distribution analysis and the effective use of administrative data to support policy development, monitoring and accountability.
- The provision of adequate and sustained resourcing to Statistics Jersey, including within the 2026 Government Budget, to enable the commencement of the Living Costs and Household Income Survey in 2027 and to strengthen the development of administrative datasets. The Commissioner emphasised that robust and accessible data is essential to enable Government to assess the impact of policy interventions and to discharge its obligations under Article 4 of the UNCRC.

2. Educational Inequality and the Jersey Premium

During 2025, the Commissioner drew attention to evidence of a widening educational attainment gap linked to income, engaging children's rights under Articles 2, 28 and 29 of the UNCRC. In this context, the OCCJ recommended that Government strengthen its approach to addressing educational inequality, including:

- Undertaking a comprehensive review and evaluation of measures to address educational inequality, including detailed analysis of the factors contributing to differential outcomes, with particular attention to the experiences and needs of children living in poverty.
- Ensuring the timely resourcing and implementation of any reforms identified through this review, including adjustments to the Jersey Premium or the introduction of additional targeted measures, to ensure improved equality of access, participation and attainment.
- Requiring CYPES to collect, collate and publish consistent data across all schools on the use and impact of interventions aimed at addressing disadvantage, with regular public reporting to strengthen transparency and accountability. This was intended to ensure that outcomes for children most at risk of exclusion or underachievement are clearly understood and addressed.

3. Deprivation of Liberty and Legal Clarity

During 2025, the Commissioner also engaged with legal and policy developments concerning restrictions on children's liberty. In line with Articles 3 and 37 of the UNCRC, which require that deprivation of liberty is used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period, the OCCJ recommended that greater legal clarity be introduced, specifically:

- That the forthcoming Practice Direction governing the Court's inherent jurisdiction in cases involving restrictions on children's liberty should adopt clear and consistent language reflecting deprivation of liberty (DoL), rather than Significant Restriction of Liberty (SRoL), in order to ensure clarity, legal certainty and alignment with human rights standards.
- The Commissioner emphasised that clear terminology is essential to ensure that children's rights are properly identified, understood and safeguarded in practice, and that appropriate procedural protections are consistently applied.

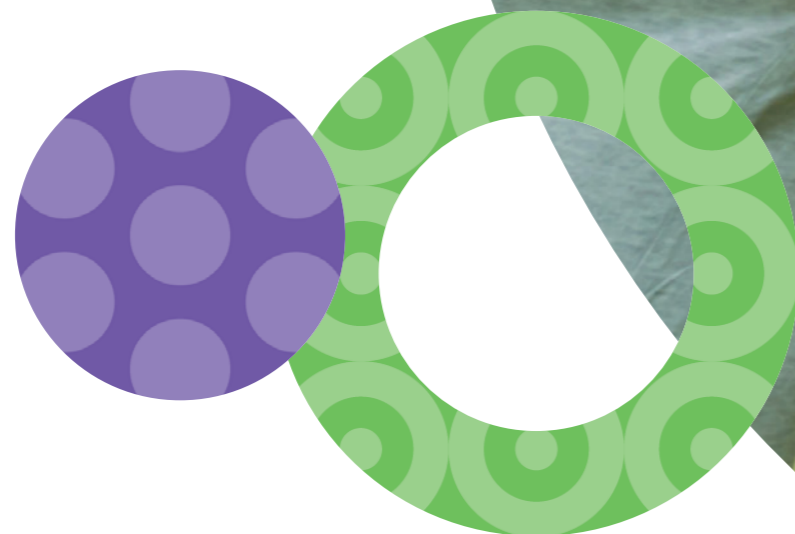
Taken together, these recommendations reflect the Commissioner's work during 2025 to strengthen accountability, improve the evidence base and ensure that children's rights are treated as a primary consideration in law, policy and practice.

Looking Ahead to 2026

In 2026, the OCCJ will continue to implement the Strategic Plan 2024-2027 and to focus on the six priority themes identified through consultation with children, young people and adults.

Delivery of major projects for 2026 will include:

- Launch of the new OCCJ website: this will mark a significant improvement in the accessibility of information about the OCCJ and children's and young people's rights. This will be launched in the first quarter of 2026.
- Completion and publication of research on children's experience of poverty, representing the first research of its kind in Jersey. Publication of this report is scheduled for quarter three of 2026.
- Completion and publication of a review into the use of Child Rights Impact Assessments in Jersey.
- Youth-led project and event for World Children's Day in November 2026.
- New policies and procedures to be put in place for the Advice & Information service.
- Engagement with new States Members and Ministers post-election 2026.



Appendices

Appendix 1

Non-Staff and Staff Expenditure 2024

Non-Staff Expenditure	£
Office Lease or Rent	£23,741.00
Building Maintenance and Repair	£3,696.00
Utilities including electricity, phones and water	£9,869.00
Business and Management Admin Services	£10,651.00
Cleaning and Waste Services and Supplies	£7,466.00
IT and Telecommunication Services	£406.00
Office Equipment, Supplies and Services	£15,379.00
Technology and Engineering Services	£25,605.00
Editorial, design and publications	£47,153.00
Legal Services	£26,300.00
Commissioned Services	£70,983.00
Public Order, Security and Safety Services	£2,524.00
Transportation, Storage and Mail	£2,177.00
Professional Subscriptions and Memberships	£3,255.00
Travel, Accommodation and Entertainment (staff and advisory panels)	£11,215.00
Health Care Services	£1,710.00
Total Non-Staff Expenditure	£262,130.00
Total Staff Expenditure	£664,033.00
Total Expenditure	£926,163.00

Appendix 2

Adult Advisory Panel 2025 Statement

The Adult Advisory Panel (AAP) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Office of the Children's Commissioner for Jersey (OCCJ) Annual Report 2025. Throughout the year, the Panel has continued its role as an independent source of advice, support and constructive challenge, reflecting on both the Office's achievements and the areas requiring ongoing attention.

The Panel recognises that 2025 was a challenging year operationally for the OCCJ, with staffing pressures and reduced capacity affecting some planned activity. Despite these constraints, we believe the Office continued to discharge its statutory functions with integrity and a clear commitment to children's rights. We were encouraged by the continued use of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as the foundation for the Office's work and by the consistent rights-based approach evident across its public commentary, policy engagement and strategic priorities.

The Panel considers the OCCJ's strategic direction to have remained clear and aligned with the Strategic Plan 2024–2027. We particularly welcomed the Office's focus on participation, child poverty, educational inequality and mental health, alongside efforts to strengthen its visibility and accessibility as Jersey's independent children's rights institution. The commissioning of a redesigned website and refreshed communications approach appeared to be a thoughtful response to concerns around public understanding and accessibility.

Meaningful participation has remained a particular strength of the Office's work. The Panel was especially impressed by the development of the Our Say, Our Right project and the role played by the Youth Advisory Group in shaping and delivering it. The project demonstrated a mature approach to participation, where children and young people were not simply consulted but actively involved in influencing discussions and engagement with decision-makers.

The Panel also welcomed the OCCJ's continued engagement at international level, particularly its contribution to the examination of the United Kingdom under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. We consider this important in ensuring that the experiences of children and young people in Jersey remain visible within wider human rights accountability frameworks.

As a Panel, we have sought to provide constructive challenge on governance, organisational resilience and strategic focus. Discussions during the year highlighted the importance of ensuring that the Office's growing public profile is matched by sustainable operational capacity and sufficient resources to maintain meaningful engagement with children, schools and stakeholders.

Looking ahead, the Panel believes the OCCJ should continue prioritising meaningful participation, evidence-based advocacy and strong independent scrutiny of policy and practice affecting children and young people. Overall, we consider that the OCCJ continued to operate during 2025 as an independent, principled and increasingly influential voice for children's rights in Jersey, while recognising that important challenges remain ahead.

Appendix 3

Audit and Risk Advisory Panel 2025 Statement

During 2025 the Panel focused on risk management and guided the Commissioner in reconfiguring the Risk Register to give improved focus to key risks and their current and required mitigants.

A regular review of budget to actual expenditure was maintained and consideration given to the extent to which the OCCJ can maintain its core function within the constraints of its budget.

One of the Panel's longstanding members stepped down at the end of the year and whilst the Panel remains quorate within its terms of reference, up to two additional members are sought.

Appendices

Appendix 4

Youth Advisory Group 2025 Statement

"The World Children's Day event where we showcased our film had an amazing turnout, and seeing all the young people in the room made it even more empowering. We got amazing feedback and I heard lots of young people talk about it after the event and congratulate us on how powerful our film was."

"The team at OCCJ always works hard to empower young voices, and have been the most welcoming, kind and thoughtful team throughout the whole time I've been part of YAG."

"Only young people spoke in the table discussions at the World Children's Day event – adults didn't speak so much. Next year, if we host a similar event, we'll need to encourage everyone (adults too!) to put their views forward."

"The World Children's Day event was my favourite thing because we got to show what we've been working on."

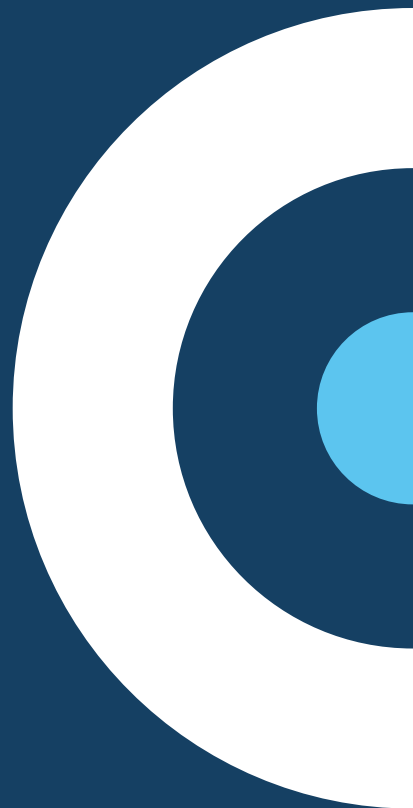
YAG

YOUTH ADVISORY GROUP

"I think OCCJ is a crucial part of the island, and 2025 had more people talking and recognising it."

"I was most proud of the Our Say, Our Right project, filming with other YAG members and having fun whilst sharing our voices."





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