



NSPCC and States of Jersey launch innovative new service for sexually abused children

A ground-breaking therapeutic service for children who have been sexually abused will be launched in Jersey by the NSPCC.

Working in partnership with the Children's Service in the States of Jersey, the children's charity will begin delivering a specially designed programme in Spring 2017.

"Letting the Future In" focuses on creative therapies such as painting, drawing and storytelling, giving children an opportunity to talk about their experiences and to express themselves creatively. Delivered by social work professionals, individual sessions enable children to work through past events and understand and move on from what has happened.

The landmark partnership between the NSPCC and the States of Jersey will enable the service to be delivered in the island for the first time. Investment funding in new health and social care services which was agreed by the States Assembly in 2012 (P82/2012) from Health and Social Services (£50,000 a year for three years) and the money will fund a social worker post for the specialist role.

Ongoing fundraising for the NSPCC in Jersey will continue to be a vital element in order to maintain the Gower Centre, in Stopford Road, where the programme will be based, and to help meet other associated costs and services.

The launch of the new service has been welcomed by Ministers, States departments and partner agencies.

Recruitment of a suitably qualified social worker to the post is now underway with interviews scheduled for early March, and subject to recruitment, and it is hoped that the service will be operating by May.

"Letting the Future In" is a programme created by the NSPCC and is already in use in a number of locations across the UK. It is available to children aged four to 17.

Parents and carers are also offered support to move on from the impact of finding out about the sexual abuse and to help their children feel safe.

Child sexual abuse can be perpetrated by relatives, other trusted adults or strangers and child sexual abuse can happen both online and offline. Last year Childline received more than 10,000 calls and online contacts from children and young people across the UK and Channel Islands who had been forced to take part in sexual activity.

Child sexual abuse can affect victims in a number of different ways throughout childhood and life as an adult. Effects include anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress, problematic sexual behaviour and, in some cases, suicide.

Letting the Future In has been independently evaluated by the University of Bristol and Durham University in the largest ever randomised controlled trial of a service for children affected by sexual abuse.

It found that children who completed the programme - and their carers - talked about:

- improved mood
- better confidence
- reduction in guilt and self-blame
- reduced depression, anxiety and anger
- improved sleep patterns
- better understanding of appropriate sexual behaviour

It also concluded that almost three-quarters (73%) of children aged eight and over who completed six months of Letting the Future In had severe emotional difficulties at the start. After six months this dropped to less than half (46%).

The NSPCC's partnership with the States of Jersey follows the recent conclusion of the Independent Jersey Care Inquiry, which investigated the abuse of children in Jersey's care system over many years. Its final report is expected to make a number of recommendations later this year.

Senator Andrew Green, Minister for Health and Social Services said: "My colleagues in the Council of Ministers and beyond all warmly welcome the start of this essential programme in Jersey. No child should have to suffer sexual abuse, any other kind of abuse, or the devastating consequences it can have, both on the child and their family. The distress is overwhelming, and we have a duty to do all we can to help those who have survived child sexual abuse.

"A programme such as this can only help children in Jersey. The hard work that professionals do in any agency with vulnerable children is some of the most valuable we do. I am determined, as are my colleagues, that we do all we can to ensure that child sexual abuse does not occur. But when it sadly does, there is help available. It is particularly pertinent for me that as we await the findings from the Independent Jersey Care Inquiry, that this service will be available. I'd like to thank everyone involved in bringing this essential programme to fruition."

Head of the NSPCC's Service Centre in Jersey, Jacky Moon, said: "We are delighted to be working with the States of Jersey on the introduction of this innovative service. 'Letting the Future In' delivers specially designed therapeutic support for four to 17 year olds who have experienced sexual abuse. By taking part in creative activities and play, children and young people can safely work through past experiences and receive the help they need to rebuild their lives.

“Sexual abuse can have devastating effects that last long into adulthood. Our programme gives children and their parents or carers a chance to express themselves, understand and move on from what has happened.”

NSPCC Jersey Team Manager Selina Winter added: “The final report from the Independent Jersey Care Inquiry is expected to make a number of recommendations in coming weeks. Where we can, NSPCC Jersey will work with the States to ensure they are met and that improvements are made.”

Notes to Editors:

For interviews with Senator Andrew Green please call Lou Journeaux/Tom Innes: 442358/444971

For interviews with NSPCC colleagues in Jersey at the Gower Centre please call Mike Jackson on 07843 238587

Further information on Letting the Future In is available here:

NSPCC Jersey is based at the Gower Centre, Stopford Rd, St Helier

- The NSPCC is the leading children's charity fighting to end child abuse in Jersey
- Our helpline is a place adults can contact by phone - or online - to get advice or share their concerns about a child, anonymously if they wish. It's staffed by professional practitioners with backgrounds in jobs like teaching, healthcare and social work, who know how to spot the signs of abuse and what to do to help. When people are concerned, and feel they need to speak to someone, they can be reassured they will be listened to and taken seriously.
- Whatever the issue, the helpline is available 24/7 across the Channel Islands to keep children safe, on 0808 800 5000. Find out more at: www.nspccjersey.org
- Our trained Childline counsellors are also there for young people 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Talking to Childline can be the first step that gets a child's life back on track. And young people can get help and support with any issue they're going through, no matter how big or small. Last year our volunteers undertook more than 300,000 counselling sessions across the UK and Channel Islands. Whatever the issue, children and young people can contact ChildLine on 0800 1111 or via childline.org.uk.
- In Jersey, the NSPCC also delivers services directly to children and their families at the Gower Centre, in St Helier. We help potentially vulnerable parents cope with the pressures of having a child, we support children with parents with mental health issues and our schools service has already spoken to hundreds of primary school pupils about speaking out and staying safe from abuse. The first of these services, known as Baby Steps, is to be extended to a universal service which will be supported and eventually taken over by the States to become an integral part of the 1001 Days programme
- With your help, we're working to prevent child abuse across the Channel Islands – and help young people

Example case studies:

In the example case studies below, both Tia and Angela's names have been changed in order to protect identity.

Tia* was referred to the service when she was 16, after suffering sexual abuse:

"I started seeing a counsellor called Angela* from the NSPCC's *Letting the Future In* service. She was great and she changed my life. She just made me see everything differently, see myself differently. She helped me to start thinking of myself as a young woman who has the right to say no rather than a vulnerable little girl.

"Angela gave my life some worth. If I hadn't had her support I wouldn't be where I am now. I've got a much better relationship with my mum now too and it's all down to her. She made me realise that my mum can't give me everything I need. That was the hardest thing for me to accept. Angela helped me to accept the things that I can't change and do what I need to do to make it ok."

Speaking to the NSPCC-run helpline, one 13 year old girl said:

"I have never told anyone about this until now. My dad touches me and it's been happening for a while now. I can't tell anybody else about what's happening because he will hurt me and make sure that people don't believe me. I don't have many friends so I have no-one to turn to."

This is part of another call received by Childline:

"I've been speaking to men online who ask me to send them sexy pictures and videos and get me to do stuff over webcam. I usually chat to these guys when I'm feeling down and want to feel better about myself, but then I end up doing things that make me feel even worse. I feel ashamed because I know that there are images of me that I don't want people to see on the internet now. I just feel so used and when I feel like this it makes me want to self-harm. I am getting some help now but I'm worried that I won't ever feel better."