

CYPA 2001 s.22(1) & 23(1)(3)

Children Act 1989 s.17(1) Schedule 2

CHAPTER 3 RANGE OF SERVICES

- 1 The Department is given a general duty to promote the upbringing of children by their families. In support of this duty it is given the power to provide support services. They include:
 - a. day care,
 - b. accommodation,
 - c. advice, guidance and counselling,
 - d. occupational, social, cultural or recreational facilities,
 - e. home help,
 - f. assistance with travel to access a service.
- 2 The Department must take the steps it deems appropriate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. Its power to provide services will form part of its strategy to achieve that.

DAY CARE SERVICES

- 3 Later chapters in this volume deal with:
 - the development of services,
 - standards to be met in different types of services,
 - registration, inspection and review.Here we consider the particular relevance of day care to children in need.
- 4 The Department will develop and promote its policy for the provision of day care for children in need in the wider context of the services used by all children, so that children in need have similar opportunities for developing skills and interests. It will facilitate the use by children in need of quality services provided by voluntary bodies and the private sector.
- 5 As far as possible the services offered to individuals will reflect the preferences of parents and children. The Act gives the Department a duty to give them full consideration in the case of children looked after. Good practice demands that the same should apply to children in need living at home.
- 6 The Department will encourage a variety of day care facilities on the Island from a range of providers. A broad range will enable children to attend a resource which best meets their needs and is close to their own community.

Day nurseries

- 7 Day nursery provides opportunities for children in need to take part

	<p>in group activity with their peers. Activities and learning experiences planned by skilled staff will help to develop children's skills.</p> <p>8 They are not generally appropriate for children in need who are under two, for whom a child-minder is usually better, but there may be exceptions. For example an older sibling may already be attending a day nursery. A place for a younger child may occasionally be in his or her best interests if it helps the parents to develop their parenting skills.</p> <p>Playgroups</p> <p>9 Attendance at playgroup may give children in need opportunities to take part in group activity with their peers from the same neighbourhood. They are not generally suitable for children under two.</p> <p>10 A playgroup place for a child in need may offer a means of helping parents to improve their parenting skills. This involvement may demonstrate how parents can contribute to their child's development. In some cases it will need careful planning and introduction. The playgroup organisers may need considerable support in order to provide an appropriate service for example to a severely disabled child.</p> <p>11 The Department will explore the possibility of sponsoring some places in existing playgroups. It will also consider facilitating the development of new groups in areas of the Island which are less well served.</p> <p>Child-minding</p> <p>12 Good child-minders are a valuable resource for working families with young children. They can also be extremely helpful in looking after pre-school children from families with serious health or social difficulties. To exploit these benefits for children in need the Department will consider child-minding schemes for sponsorship. It will also employ child-minders directly when that appears the best way to meet a need.</p> <p>13 To facilitate this it will also provide support including training opportunities, access to specialised equipment, regular visits from social services staff and a counselling service.</p> <p>14 Any package of family support which includes placing children in need with child-minders should also recognise the importance of group activities.</p> <p>15 Close liaison between a day nursery and a group of childminders can be helpful. It can provide young children with valuable experience of group activity within a safe environment. It can also provide staff with mutual support and another perspective. The Department will</p>
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facilitate and encourage such relationships whenever possible.

ACCOMMODATION

The Department's duty

CYPA 2001 s.25(1)

Children Act 1989
s.20

16 The Department has a duty to provide accommodation for a child in need when the criteria set out in s.25(1) are met and may provide accommodation in other circumstances under s.23 and when it considers that to do so will safeguard or promote his or her welfare. Accommodation may be for a day or two or longer term.

17 In the case of younger children this service can only be provided with ongoing parental agreement and consent, which they can withdraw at any time (unless a Care Order, an Interim Care Order or Emergency Protection Order has been granted or the child is the subject of police protection).

CYPA 2001 s.25(6)

18 Once the young person has reached the age of 16 years the parents' agreement and consent is no longer necessary, provided the child him or herself agrees. That remains true even if he or she "has a home to go to". The test for the Department is that providing accommodation for the child will safeguard or promote his or her welfare.

CYPA 2001 s.25(5)

19 The existence of alternative accommodation does not prevent the Department providing accommodation in one other circumstance. It does not apply if a person in whose favour a residence order has been made or a person who has care of the child under an order made in the exercise of the High Court's inherent jurisdiction agrees to the provision of accommodation.

20 This may occur when someone else asks for accommodation to be provided. This might be the child or the Department itself. If more than one person has the benefit of a residence order or has care of the child under an inherent jurisdiction order, they must all agree to the child being looked after by the Department. A parent without the residence order cannot object to accommodation being provided or remove the child. If he or she wishes to do so the residence order must first be revoked.

Planning

21 The decisions to look after a child and the most suitable placement to do it are major issues. Careful planning and negotiation of agreement with parents and children about immediate decisions and their consequences is essential.

22 The plan itself will set out:
a. the reasons for the decision,
b. the purpose of the accommodation,

CYPA 2001 s.26 (2) & (3)
Children Act 1989 s.23(6) & (7)

Children Act 1989
Schedule 2
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- c. the anticipated length of stay and move on,
- d. the plan for the return termination of the arrangement.

Reunification

- 23 Looking after as a service to a child in need or at risk carries with it the concept of eventual reunification with the family. So the Department will try to make arrangements for the child to live with a member of his or her family or a relative, friend or other significant person.
- 24 It will seek to provide accommodation near the family home and to keep brothers and sisters together. These responsibilities are not overriding. Practicality and consistency with each child's welfare need to be borne in mind. But they are important principles in the Act, not to be discarded lightly.

Other volumes in this series cover accommodation in residential care and in alternative family care in detail.

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

Family centres

- 25 The 1989 Act of Parliament gave local authorities a specific duty 'to provide such family centres as they consider appropriate in relation to children within their area'. The Act describes them as places where a child and his or her parents may go for occupational, social, cultural, or recreational activities or advice, guidance or counselling or the person may be accommodated whilst he is receiving advice, guidance and counselling.
- 26 No such specific duty is contained in the Manx Act but the Department has three such centres in operation. Their use is not confined to children in need but they do provide a valuable resource for this group. The Department will review the potential for extending their use by:
- integrating them further with other, perhaps newly developing, day care services for children in need on the Island,
 - extending the scope of therapeutic work with families experiencing severe difficulties using the centres as a base.

Befriending services

- 27 Befriending schemes aim to recruit and train volunteers to help a families under stress by providing support and advice (mostly) about coping with young children. Typically the volunteer visits the family home for an agreed period. This kind of service has not been strongly developed on the Island in the past and the Department is anxious to talk to any voluntary group with a strong interest in promoting its growth in any of the following areas.

- Home-Start: There are autonomous local schemes in many parts of the United Kingdom and in continental Europe. The (UK based) Home-Start Consultancy has built up considerable expertise in developing this type of service.
- NEWPIN offers opportunities for parents under stress to take part in group activities to reduce isolation, develop skills and learn coping mechanisms.
- Portage schemes focus specifically on helping parents bring up children with disabilities.
- Educational home visiting services attached to schools provide support to parents in difficulty.
- Other befriending schemes, almost all run by voluntary bodies and depend on the time and support of volunteers provide a range of specialist support functions

Parent/toddler groups

28 Parent/toddlers group typically meet once or twice a week for an hour or two. They usually run on a self-help basis, sometimes attached to a playgroup. The parent or carer stays with the child, but some groups also have paid staff. They provide opportunities for parents and carers to meet others with children of a similar age and share experiences.

29 Children can take part in play activities such as painting, water play, messy play, use of construction toys, climbing equipment and trundle toys. Such groups have considerable potential as resources for children in need. They can:

- a. provide opportunities for parents to meet others in their community,
- b. help them to become more confident about their ability to cope as parents,
- c. build up their general confidence and self-esteem,
- d. extend the capacity of the children to widen their experience and learn through play,
- e. help them to relate to other children and adults.

30 The major difficulty lies in encouraging parents who face these problems to participate. The paradox is that the issues which create the greatest obstacles to attendance are the very problems which participation itself would help to overcome. The Department would welcome an active debate about this, involving parents, groups and interested professionals.

Toy libraries

31 Toy Libraries may be run by professional groups providing services to children, by schools or by voluntary groups. Some provide toys specially designed to help children with disabilities or learning

Children Act 1989
s.18(3)

difficulties. They are often able to advise parents about the right type of toy to develop a particular skill and the most suitable toys for different ages and stages. They are open typically once or twice a week and some make a small charge for borrowing the toys.

32 There is usually a play area where children can experiment with the toys before taking them home. Some toy libraries also offer play sessions. There are a few mobile toy libraries in the UK and in some areas the toy librarian will visit families in their homes. Part of the service is to offer advice about play, toys and child development.

33 The people who run them are usually committed and knowledgeable enthusiasts about the value of play and the development potential of different toys. They are of course a valuable resource as part of a range of services available to children in need.

Drop-in centres

34 These provide an informal open door for parents and children. Some may be targeted on particular types of family, for example particular ethnic groups, those living in temporary accommodation, or lone parents. Others may be neighbourhood based. They are usually managed by self-help groups or voluntary bodies. They may be combined with other attractions like a playgroup or keep fit class and they inevitably take part in a resource with other functions such as a village hall or one of the family centres.

Play buses

35 Play buses are a particularly useful resource in sparsely populated rural areas or, for example, estates with few community resources. They can be single function facilities providing effectively a mobile playgroup or mother and toddler group; or they can be part of a more extensive community resource offering, for example library services, internet access, meeting places and other group activities. They are usually managed by voluntary groups.

Support services for workers and parents

36 Many aspects of local authority responsibility for day care, covered in Sections 18 and 19 of the Children Act of Parliament in particular, are provided for under the general powers and duties in sections 22 and 23 of the Manx Act. Good practice demands that the Department exercise these powers including backup support for parents and carers.

37 It will consult with parents, providers and other Departments, especially the Department of Education, to identify and prioritise support facilities for parents and people working in a day and other forms of care.

38 The overriding objective is to raise standards of care and to help parents and others looking after children to improve their parenting

skills. The means will include a mix of:

- training,
- advice,
- guidance,
- counseling,
- practical support.

OCCUPATIONAL, SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Out-of-school clubs and holiday schemes

- 39 These services have an important preventive function. They look after children who might otherwise become isolated, at risk of harm or troublesome to the community. The Department will consider proposals for support to new or existing clubs and schemes sympathetically especially in isolated or less affluent communities.
- 40 As with all schemes for children the Department will require adequate safety and quality assurance including proper support for workers. And it will contribute where necessary by regular visits, access to training, specialised equipment and counselling.
- 41 It will do this in collaboration with the Department of Education and with the local community. Apart from its preventive role, attendance at a club or holiday scheme provides opportunities for children to develop leisure interests.
- 42 From time to time it will be appropriate to refer, sponsor or otherwise financially support individual children in need to attend a club or a holiday scheme.

Supervised activities

- 43 This term describes a host of ways to engage children and young people in constructive activity. Youth groups, sports clubs, supervised interest activities, (from model railways to the St. John's Ambulance Brigade) and homework groups all fall within its scope.
- 44 Such activities are strongly represented on the Island and participation may help children in need to develop skills, enhance confidence and self-esteem and broaden their horizons. The Department will explore these possibilities with organisers as part of their strategy for children in need.