

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, YOUTH & INFORMATION

**STRATEGIC REVIEW OF RESIDENTIAL CARE FOR CHILDREN IN  
STATE CARE**

**INTRODUCTION**

Members are being asked to note that the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information, through the Child Development Agency (CDA), has identified the need to conduct a general review and assessment of the residential child protection sector. This exercise is aimed at determining and documenting the programmatic options being offered, the types and classification of institutions operating within the sector to determine if the programmes that are being offered are structured to meet the basic needs of a “well looked after” child, as well as to ensure that services are being delivered to the children in their best interest. A well looked after child is one who should:

1. Expect to have the same opportunities as other children, including being healthy and safe; and
2. Be provided with the opportunities needed to help them move successfully through the different stages of their development to adulthood and thrive to be the best they can be. That is, their physical and mental health, social, educational and emotional wellbeing, religious liberty, safety and involvement are influenced by the care they receive and services delivered to them.

**BACKGROUND**

The establishment of the CDA in 2004 was preceded by a strategic review conducted by KPMG resulting in the preparation of the following guiding documents for the first phase of the modernization process:

- Modernization Plan;
- Medium Term Financing Plan; and
- Framework Document.

The Modernization Plan envisioned the transfer of responsibility for operation and management of the Government - operated residential child protection sector to

other entities, while maintaining support to the existing privately operated ones. The proviso was that, specific standards for children including, data management, financial management and skill development would be agreed and instituted and the CDA would perform such regulatory and monitoring functions so as to ensure adherence to such standards.

Unfortunately, the Modernization Plan did not incorporate any strategic or operational blueprint for the modernization of the residential child protection sector at the time. To address this gap, the Child Development Agency have been utilizing the recommendation from the Children's Home and Places of Safety Review, aka "The Keating Report" that was done in 2003, as a general guide in addressing the issues affecting the residential sector.

Other efforts to improve the service delivery were also guided by provisions outlined in its corporate strategic plan, the findings emanating from the monthly/quarterly monitoring of the institutions and most recently, the findings coming out of the 2013 comprehensive audit and inspection of the residential sector.

## **ISSUES**

In recent times, increasingly the operators and managers of privately operated homes in the residential child protection sector, have been voicing their concerns regarding the viability of their operations due to: (1) the downturn in the economy, which has affected their stream of funding at both the local and international level and (2) their inability to treat with some of the challenges being posed by the children placed in their care. These concerns are usually accompanied by requests for an increase in the subvention being paid to them to care for each child.

In response to this appeal, the Government of Jamaica, in September 2013, commenced the payment of a 20% increase moving the grant from five thousand (J\$5,000.00) to six thousand (J\$6,000.00) per child per week. However, despite this increase, many homes continue to express levels of dissatisfaction with the amount, citing spiraling economic cost to care for a child. Attempts by the Government to ascertain the true cost of care for a child, has been met with lukewarm response as most of the privately operated homes have failed to or refused to provide financial reports and audited statements, despite this

requirement being a provision under the Child Care and Protection Act (CCPA), Children's Home Regulations, 2007.

Consequently, the Strategic Review to be conducted seeks to create a blueprint. This will outline the structural and operational changes necessary to facilitate an effective system of residential care that will ensure that children who are placed in this setting, receive the care and protection appropriate to their needs through programmes that promote their development and wellbeing at all times.

## **INITIATIVE**

The strategic review of the residential child protection sector was conceptualized during the period to achieve the following core objectives:

- i. Perform a detailed and strategic review of the residential child protection sector that will identify enablers that seeks to effectively transform the service delivery mechanism benchmarked against national, regional and international best practices in residential care; and
- ii. Provide a framework that enables the CDA and by extension the Government of Jamaica to deliver and maintain high class and modern services that are in harmony with the CCPA and national policy, regional and international frameworks, protocols and conventions such as the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child and other human rights instruments that are specific to the population served by the child protection sector.

## **PROJECTIONS**

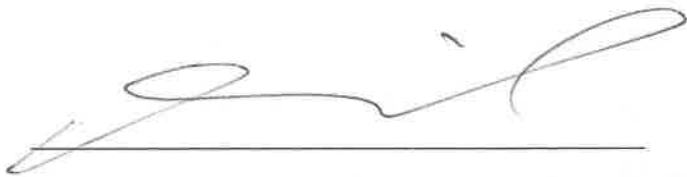
The Terms of Reference have been developed and received approval for the services of a consultant to be engaged to under this exercise. The procurement process for this initiative has commenced.

It is expected the project will be for an initial period of six (6) months commencing in August 2016, with the final report submitted in December 2016.

The review, when completed, will provide an outline of the gaps and other factors affecting the sector and the resources needed to ensure that there is an effective, efficient and modernized residential sector. These inputs will inform a strategic response framework and implementation plan directed at modernizing the sector and improving the outcomes for all children served on a consistent basis.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

This project is estimated to cost approximately \$6.8M and is to be funded from the Government of Jamaica (GoJ) budgetary allocations of the Child Development Agency.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ruel Reid', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Senator the Hon. Ruel Reid, CD, JP  
Minister  
June 7, 2016  
File No.