

Deputy Richard Renouf
Minister for Health
19-21 Broad Street | St Helier
Jersey | JE2 3RR

28 May 2020

Dear Minister

I am writing on behalf of the UK office of the United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF, to congratulate you on your recent measures in response to the Covid-19 emergency. Deborah McMillan, the Children's Commissioner for Jersey, has kindly informed us that you had announced a temporary GP contract for the duration of the emergency within which GP services for all children under 5 will be provided free of charge with a flat fee of £10 for children and young people aged 5 to 17. We understand that childhood immunisations remain free as they have been for some time.

We warmly welcome your decision and would respectfully suggest to you to consider to continue with it beyond the Covid-19 emergency but to also extend it to all children. Such a decision would be a huge element of your government support for children and a great step forward in implementing your Common Strategic Policy within which you pledged to "put children first".

Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child recognises "*the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health*" and obliges States Parties "... to strive to ensure that no child is deprived of his or her right of access to such health care services". Paragraph 2 provides a non-exhaustive list of appropriate measures that States must take in pursuing full implementation of the right, including "*to ensure the provision of necessary medical assistance and health care to all children with emphasis on the development of primary health care*".

As with other economic, social and cultural rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child requires States Parties to implement article 24 "*to the maximum extent of their available resources*". There is no obligation on States Parties, including Jersey, to provide free primary health care but there is a duty to apply all appropriate measure and to move towards full implementation of child rights expeditiously and effectively. Indeed, The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child frequently expresses general concern at lack of access, and lack of free access, to health services, in particular for disadvantaged groups.

UNICEF calls on the Jersey Government to evaluate the extent of the realisation of the right to the highest attainable standards of health and to devise strategies and programmes for their promotion, are not in any way eliminated as a result of resource constraints." Now is the good moment: in January 2021 the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child is going to look into implementation of the Convention in Jersey.

**FOR EVERY CHILD
IN DANGER**



UNICEF very much hopes that Jersey Government will continue its already impressive pace of realising child rights. The forthcoming reporting process is the perfect opportunity for Jersey to keep momentum. Let's celebrate another important progress and achievement by Jersey by introducing free primary health care for all children!

Yours sincerely,

Sophie Galois
Deputy Executive Director
UNICEF UK