



SAFEGUARDING BOARD
ISLE OF MAN

The Isle of Man Vulnerable Adolescents Strategy

2022 – 2024



Introduction

Protecting children and young people from exploitation is a key priority of the Isle of Man Safeguarding Board. The term exploitation includes:

- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Child Criminal Exploitation
- Child Trafficking and Modern Day Slavery
- Children missing

Traditional concepts of protecting children and young people have focussed on harm that occurs to children caused by adults within families, or those that are close to or known well.

“Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people’s experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighborhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse. Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and young people’s experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships. Therefore, children’s social care practitioners, child protection systems and wider safeguarding partnerships need to engage with individuals and sectors who do have influence over/within extrafamilial contexts, and recognise that assessment of, and intervention with, these spaces are a critical part of safeguarding practices”.

Contextual Safeguarding, therefore, expands the objectives of child protection systems in recognition that young people are vulnerable to abuse beyond their front doors”¹.

We know from the Serious Case Management Review Child J² and from current cases that children on the Island are vulnerable to contextual harm. The review found that there were reachable moments for Child J. Findings of the review showed that improved multi-agency working, working in a more co-ordinated way, early intervention and effective information sharing, could have better protected this young person from the harm they experienced.

¹ [Contextual Safeguarding Network – The Contextual Safeguarding programme, and the team who deliver it, are part of the International Centre: Researching child sexual exploitation, violence and trafficking \(IC\) at the University of Bedfordshire](#)

² [20211110-child-j-final-learning-summary.pdf \(gov.im\)](#)

Our Vision

This 2-year strategy sets out the ambition of the Isle of Man Safeguarding Board to deliver our vision for children and young people on the Island, to be free from risk and harm from:



These are challenging ambitions, which we will only achieve by working together, by having the commitment to transparent information sharing and an unrelenting focus on the needs and lived experiences of children and young people.

Purpose of the Strategy

- To set out the ambitions of the Safeguarding Board and the values, approach and expectations we have of one another.
- To provide the basis for a detailed work plan for the Board, setting out how we will work together to improve practice, systems and our understanding of exploitation and harm.
- To improve outcomes for children and young people.

The Board's Vulnerable Adolescent Group have developed a "[Safeguarding Procedural Protocol for Children and Young People who are at risk of, or Experiencing Exploitation](#)". It sets out how we share information, identify children and young people at risk, assess risk, work collectively to safety plan for children and disrupt the activity of criminals.

The procedural protocol also sets out how we will work together to gather a better understanding of the prevalence of harm and exploitation on the Island and take strategic steps to prevent contextual risks.

This Vulnerable Adolescent Strategy sets out the strategic overarching commitment and drive to safeguard children and young people at risk and shows the collective sign up to the approach which is underpinned by:

- transparent information sharing.

- improved interface and collaboration between agencies and the local community.
- A relentless focus on improving outcomes for adolescents.

What do we hope to achieve through this Strategy?

This strategy forms the basis for the next two years of planning which aims to:

- Enhance outcomes for children and young people at risk.
- Make space to hear children and young people’s voices and ensure that these shape what we do.
- Embed the new Isle of Man Safeguarding Procedural Protocol for Children and Young People at risk of Exploitation.
- Develop and enhance our local understanding of the profile of children and young people at risk, those that seek to harm children, locations where our children are at particular risk and themes.
- Support front line practitioners with the knowledge, expertise, tools and confidence to assess and respond to risk.
- Create a model of working that promotes transparent sharing of information to identify risks and strengths for children and communities.
- Give parents and carers the confidence that the Board is working with families and communities to help protect children and young people.
- Create a comprehensive approach to preventing and reducing risk.
- Establish and embed cohesive and effective inter-agency working.

Who is this Strategy for?

The strategy focusses on how agencies and all sectors including the voluntary sector and communities must work together to safeguard children and young people who are aged from 10 to 18 years old who may be at risk of sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, county lines, gangs and those missing from home, care or education.

This strategy is applicable to all professionals that work with children and young people and their families on the Island, as well as professionals that come into contact with the public, e.g. taxi drivers, Manx ferry port employees, licensed establishments managers, fast food chains.

What are our Strategic Objectives?

Our multi-agency work to intervene for children and young people is based around four pillars, namely:

To prevent	To prevent children and young people experiencing exploitation, modern day slavery and going missing; and to ensure children and adolescents, and their families and their communities are
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	supported to build resilience against exploitation.
To pursue	To successfully prosecute those who perpetrate or facilitate the exploitation of children and young adults. Robust offender management post-conviction and/or effective intervention strategies to reduce the risk presented by identified abusers.
To protect	To provide appropriate support, protection, intervention, information and services to children, parents, carers, friends and communities via a multi-agency whole family approach, including safe exit planning where statutory interventions cease.
To disrupt	Divert, disrupt and actively pursue those intent on exploiting children and adults. Those who seek to exploit children and vulnerable adults are identified, disrupted and convicted.

This Strategy should be read alongside:

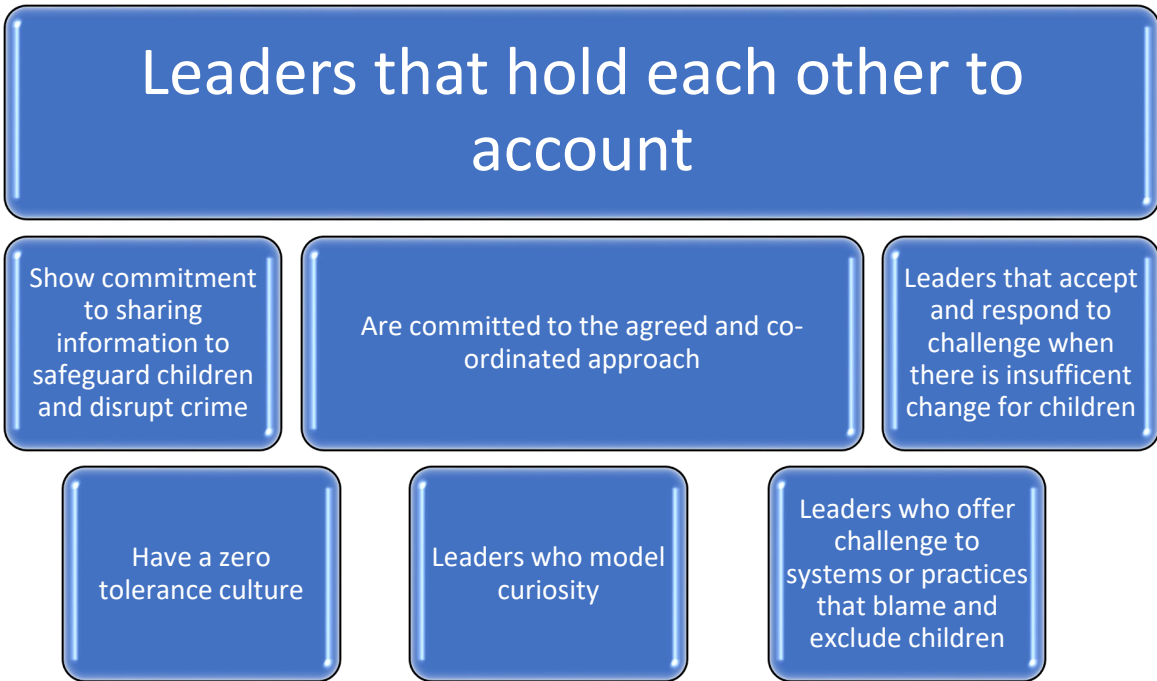
- [The Isle of Man Safeguarding Procedural Protocol for Children and Young People at Risk of Exploitation which is on the Board's website or by following this link](#)
- [The Isle of Man Information Sharing Guidance which can be found by following this link](#)
- [The Isle of Man Information Sharing Protocol which can be found here.](#)

Our Values:

1. Committed and focused Senior leaders and Children's

Champion: Our senior leaders must give the highest priority to identifying children and young people at risk, preventing harm, protecting and disrupting the activities and pursuing those that may pose a risk to children. Senior leaders will promote a culture where there is:

- A unified response to harm where we will always work from the premise that the response to risk in adolescence is underpinned by the belief that these are **safeguarding and child protection** concerns. Children cannot consent to their own abuse even where these look like 'choices'.
- A consistent child focussed, needs led approach to safeguarding which draws on evidence and good practice.
- A strong focus on prevention in communities and in schools.
- A robust and determined approach to the disruption and pursuit of those who may pose a risk to children or young people.
- A culture where information is shared to effectively safeguard children and young people and disruption activities.
- The workforce is supported to be confident and competent in recognising and responding to exploitation in its varying forms.
- Senior leaders that model the following behaviours:



2. Strategic planning and responses: We will use intelligence and information to help us understand the local picture of:

- our children and young people at risk.
- offender behaviours linked to children and young people.
- risky locations.
- themes.

Knowledge about our local profile will help to focus interventions for children on the edge of exploitation and those that are experiencing harm. It will assist in effectively directing resources on the Island. Lastly, a local profile will allow us to measure the impact of the work of the multi-agency partners to keep children and young people safe.

3. Practice: Work with our children will be underpinned by values such as:

- Always listening to children and young people and gaining an understanding of their lived experience.
- Understanding children’s contexts, for example: remembering that children are always children first and offender second, in the context of criminal justice and policing.
- ‘Stickability’: we will not give up on children and young people where there are obstacles to their engagement.
- Remembering the importance of the ‘trusted relationship’ with safe adults for adolescents that are being groomed and exploited.

- We will support families where possible and ensure that we are not ‘blaming’ parents or carers.
- Understanding the impact of intersecting factors such as race, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, identity and age – and how these might impact on how adolescents may perceive and access services.
- We will support the transition of young people moving into adult services.
- That learning from the local and national research, reviews and evidence based guidance is used to inform everything we do for children, young people and their families at risk of or experiencing exploitation.

4. A focus on outcomes:

Our new working arrangements will be scrutinised to ensure that we are not process, but outcomes focused. Many areas in the UK are struggling to find ways to intervene for children and young people that makes a difference to their lives. It is critical that we remain outcome focussed to take on learning from other jurisdictions and areas, where working arrangements have become so focussed on processes, that the impact of multi-agency work has been lost.

5. Appropriate language

It is important that we use language that does not judge or infer blame. Our language should be factual and truthful, which is used to balance risk and strengths to help develop a professional assessment. Where appropriate language isn’t used this can skew our assessment of risk and potentially made the child or young person feel in some way complicit in the abuse.

Inappropriate language should never be used as it can reinforce messages given by the perpetrator around shame or guilt. This is likely to prevent the child or young person from sharing details of their abuse and will impact on their trust of safe adults around them.

6. Training and Development

A training and development offer is being drawn up to ensure:

1. Basic awareness to enable participants to be able to recognise and respond to exploitation.
2. Appropriate training for professionals involved in high risk cases.

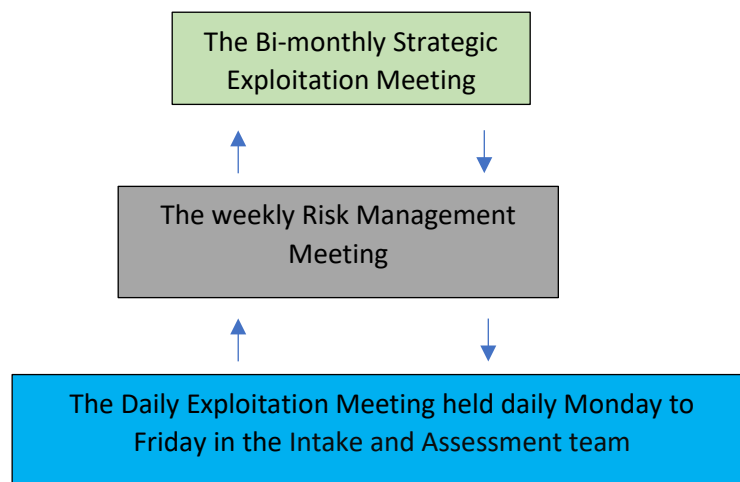
7. Governance and Scrutiny

The aims of this strategy are supported by a detailed work plan overseen by the Vulnerable Adolescents Working Group and the Action and Implementation Panel

(AIP), which are subgroups of the Isle of Man Safeguarding Children and Adults Board.

Our new working arrangements will become embedded over the next two years. To ensure a relentless focus on improving outcomes, there will be two reviews. These will focus on:

- Reviews of plans made for children and young people at risk and the effectiveness/impact of multi-agency actions.
- The effectiveness of the Daily Exploitation and Risk Management Meetings to build safety plans around children and young people and the extent to which the strategic steps of the Strategic Exploitation Meetings have made an impact on the local profile of need.



The findings from these reviews will be shared with members of the AIP, members of the main Board and included in the Annual Report of the Safeguarding Board.

8. Conclusion

Safeguarding adolescents is everybody's business and we have a collective responsibility to recognise and respond to our young people who are placed at risk due to contextual safeguarding.

This strategy sets out our vision and aims, in the context of the exciting next step of operationalising the new working arrangements, which include the adoption of the new CEAM tool to ensure effective risk assessment, as set out in the Procedural Protocol.

This strategy describes how we will work differently to respond to our adolescents' needs and stand by the agreed values that we have committed to. By doing so we hope to achieve a culture of zero tolerance, professional curiosity, child centred practice and a focus on disrupting those that may pose a risk to children.

We aspire to create this culture from the senior leaders to front line professionals and their communities.

The detailed work plan which has been developed to support the delivery of this strategy will be overseen by the Vulnerable Adolescent Working Group, who will report into AIP and the main Board, keeping leaders and managers up to date with progress against the plan and highlighting any barriers to driving through the required changes.