

Government of Jersey  
Union Street | St Helier | Jersey | JE2 3DN

Deputy Catherine Curtis  
Chair of the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel  
**Via email only**

10 March 2025

Dear Catherine

Thank you for your letter dated 24 February 2025 regarding protection to children in Jersey from online harms. Please see responses to the questions outlined in your letter below.

1. Answers to a) - e) included in confidential appendix due to potential for identification of victims.
2. Answers to a) - e) included in confidential appendix due to potential for identification of victims.
3. **At the public hearing on 4th October 2024 the Panel heard that Jersey would develop its own legislation relating to aspects of online safety. What can you tell us about Government progress to pursue legislation for online safety in Jersey?**

Currently, my officers are working on a number of legislative changes intended to address aspects of online safety by bringing our laws into line with other jurisdictions. Although these are not specifically targeted at the protection of children, the greater exposure of young people to online activity will mean that new protections will be particularly relevant to them.

The most relevant parts of the current suite of legislation will be to address-

- The retention and distribution of revenge pornography
  - The unsolicited transmission of indecent images (cyberflashing)
  - The creation and soliciting of deepfake images
  - Cyberstalking, as part of the wider work on addressing stalking and related behaviours
4. **Please can you tell us about any work that has been done to assess how new legislation to protect against online harms would be enforced?**

As with any criminal law, enforcement action would be through the criminal courts as normal. Where an offender is outside Jersey, the normal arrangements for addressing remote offences will apply, and they would still be liable to the usual sanctions.

However, I am acutely aware of the difficulties that arise in dealing with online offences. Firstly, it is significantly more difficult to identify a perpetrator, especially those with a high level of technological knowledge. Secondly, once identified, there may be no way to bring the individual to justice in Jersey. Thirdly, the harm that emerges from distribution of online material occurs much more quickly

than any justice system can respond. Taken together, this means that these offences require a more joined-up and sophisticated approach to address than most off-line criminal activity.

Takedown and data management of on-line material relies on the arrangements and discussion with service providers, which is within the purview of the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development (MSED), and our officers are in regular discussions on this subject which will feed into legal development.

**5. Please can you tell us more about the work commissioned to the Refuge Technology Facilitated Abuse Team that you referenced in the public hearing on 4th October 2024?**

The intention is to work with Refuge UK to set up a training programme to bring government and support services up to the highest level of awareness in the management of technology-facilitated abuse. This would consist of full day training sessions (tech and economic) for each service category, followed by 'lunch and learn' style sessions covering specific topics, like location tracking, coerced debt, stalkerware, social media etc.

After the initial training phase, resources and step by step guides will be developed for future use, and I hope to engage with the Safeguarding Partnership Board (SPB) to participate in 'internalising' ongoing training for the future.

**6. What work, if any, have you undertaken with other Ministers, or within Justice and Home Affairs, to ensure that the Government of Jersey will provide due regard to the protection of children who may be at risk of, or subjected to, online harms? Please provide details about this, where applicable.**

The legislative work detailed above will, as suggested, significantly relate to younger people and children. In addition, co-ordination with officers supporting the MSED should allow a more flexible and responsive approach to on-line harms than simply developing new offences.

I am also supporting the SPB Domestic Abuse Sub-Group in rolling out training for parents and schools in respect of self-generated images by children aged 9-11.

All decisions in the space are made with consideration of the welfare of all citizens, including children in line with duties under the Children Jersey Law 2022, and in specific reference to the 'due regard' aspect, all legislative propositions will consider that matter in detail by way of the associated Children's Rights Impact Assessment.

**7. You have Ministerial responsibility for 'Justice policy' and 'Criminal justice and community safety policy'. Please could you describe how, or if, the protection of children from online harms is considered within, or coordinated into any policy work you are responsible for? (a) If relevant, how does the department keep pace with developments in other jurisdictions relating to online safety for children?**

The Building a Safer Community Framework provides the framework under which coordination would take place in this area however specific policy work in this area has to date been provided by the Safeguarding Partnership Board.

The Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (CSAE) Strategy aims to reduce CSAE and create a safer environment for children and young people in Jersey. A key objective of this strategy, which prioritises prevention and identification, is to raise public awareness of CSAE. To support this goal, a campaign steering group was established in November 2023, bringing together representatives from more than 11 services across the Government of Jersey and the charitable sector. Through a series of workshops, the group explored various awareness-raising initiatives, focusing on developing a behavioural change campaign. A recurring theme emerged—the growing complexity of online harms faced by children and young people at school, at home, and within the wider community.

To date an outcome of this strategy has been a joint Safeguarding Partnership and NSPCC Jersey conference bringing together more than 250 professionals from 98 services across the Government of Jersey, private, and charitable sectors. The event focused on safeguarding children in the digital world, featuring national experts who shared critical insights on emerging risks, data trends, and the unique vulnerabilities faced by neurodivergent children.

The Safeguarding Partnership and NSPCC will be launching the "Reel Life" Public Awareness Campaign designed to support parents, carers, and professionals working with 9-11-year-olds.

Key Initiatives of this campaign are:

For Professionals:

- Education Sub-group Collaboration – This group was formed in July 2024 and includes Primary School Headteachers who will drive the campaign's progress. Developing curriculum guidance and educational resources, a key messaging framework for professionals and establishing a condensed training model for school staff.
- Primary School Hub – A central platform offering best practices on language, curriculum integration, and safeguarding strategies.
- Sustainable Training Programmes – Providing multi-agency professionals with tailored in-person and online training sessions.
- Theatre & Workshop Roadshow – Engaging Year 5/6 pupils with interactive sessions on image sharing and online risks. Efforts are underway to secure a Jersey-based theatre company to deliver this initiative in primary schools from September 2025.

For Parents & Carers:

- Co-Creation Group – Established in November 2024, this group consists of engaged parents collaborating to design effective resources.

Throughout all this work, both the SPB and NSPCC continue to monitor and actively seek out developments in other jurisdictions.

- 8. As Minister for Justice and Home Affairs, what is your opinion about balancing the need for individual freedom of speech and expression with increasing legislation or regulations that impose restrictions around content that is shared online?**

This is a perennial issue within the justice system, which goes much wider than online harms to children. In terms of this specific area, the work does not cross over too far into questions about freedom of speech as the treatment of intimate images primarily relies on the rights of a person to their own images, and offences concerning cyberflashing and stalking behaviours rest on the targeted actions of a person against another person, not in general online statements or behaviours.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. R. Heggart". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**Deputy Mary Le Hegarat**  
**Minister for Justice and Home Affairs**