

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

Deputy Catherine Curtis
Chair, Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel
BY EMAIL

10 June 2025

Dear Chair,

Re: Follow-up matters from the Public Hearing “What protection do children in Jersey have from online harms?”

Thank you for your letter dated 2 June 2025 with requests for additional information, following our public hearing on 23 May 2025. Further to my letter dated 9 June 2025, please see below further responses to your questions.

- 1. Please confirm if data specific to online harms experienced by children and young people will be included within the centralised database developed as part of the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) initiative. If not, explain why and detail alternative approaches for effectively capturing this information.**

Recorded offences against women and girls that have an online or tech facilitated flag (component) are earmarked for inclusion in the centralised dataset, in line with the UK's Home Office definition of VAWG which is: *“The term ‘violence against women and girls’ refers to acts of violence or abuse that we know disproportionately affect women and girls. Crimes and behaviour covered by this term include rape and other sexual offences, domestic abuse, stalking, ‘honour’-based abuse (including female genital mutilation forced marriage, and ‘honour’ killings), as well as many others, including offences committed online.”*

To facilitate analysis of VAWG, the UK's NPCC VAWG Taskforce have produced a data guidance document which explicitly outlines the criteria for offences to be considered within the scope of VAWG. In summary, in scope principals of VAWG offences include the following:

- At least one victim is female
- Victim (s) can be aged over 10 years with girls classed as under 18 (using UN definition of a child)
- Gender of perpetrator is not a determining factor of whether something is included as VAWG.
- In VAWG offences, perpetrator can be of any gender or age.
- Offences where gender of perpetrator is unknown should be included.

Crime types within VAWG include:

- All domestic abuse offences
- Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
- Honour based; Forced marriage; FGM
- Nondomestic homicide; Rape; Other sexual offences; Violence with injury
- Nondomestic exploitation of prostitution; stalking and harassment; modern slavery.

2. Could you clarify your position on whether an Island-wide strategy to protect children from various forms of online harm is necessary? Provide your reasoning and outline potential benefits or limitations of implementing such a strategy.

Children's lives today are increasingly shaped by their digital experiences. Whether it's social media, gaming, or online learning, the online world is now a fundamental part of childhood. That brings opportunities, but also significant risks, ranging from exposure to harmful content and cyberbullying to exploitation and online addiction.

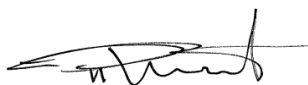
As outlined above, a cross-ministerial group has been established to shape the approach to this matter across government, including any considerations arising from the Panel's review. This is an evolving area of policy development, and with only a year left in this current political term, my focus will be to ensure families are effectively supported to navigate these challenges, rather than working on strategy development.

Any future strategy must avoid duplication of existing work and be agile enough to keep pace with rapidly evolving technology. It must also balance child protection with young people's rights to freedom, expression, and digital access.

I recognise that there are other challenges to overcome in this space; barriers such as limited accessibility to play spaces, safety concerns, and the increasing influence of digital content mean that children today may not experience the same freedoms to play as previous generations did. I hope that the Play Strategy, which as you know is currently in development, will address these concerns by outlining tangible actions to ensure that play is positioned as a positive and productive alternative to screentime, is accessible to all, and that our communities are built with play in mind.

I hope that the above is of assistance to the Panel.

Yours sincerely,



Connétable Richard Vibert, Minister for Children and Families

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