



**Every child will have the best possible  
opportunities in life**

**STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

**2015 – 2020**

# INTRODUCTION

This strategy sets out a vision for the Isle of Man's children and young people aged 0 – 18 years. It is a vision shared by all the partner agencies providing services for children, young people and their families. It sets out the joint priorities for the next five years in line with the objectives of the Policy for Children (2014) and will address the key areas for action following the independent review of children services in 2013, including improving early identification and intervention, improving support for children with complex needs and developing creativity and innovation through strong collaborative leadership. The scope of the document reflects the continued development of joint working across all services, partners and providers making provision for the children and young people of the Isle of Man. The centre piece of the Strategy will be the development of a coherent 'Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy'. This will ultimately support our ambition towards targeted seamless services which cut across departmental, organisational and population profile barriers.

The Strategy builds on the strengths of the previous Children's Plan and is aimed at developing a fully integrated approach to delivering outcomes that make a real difference to the lives of children and their families. This new plan for 2015-20 focuses on joint activity which extends beyond departmental and agency boundaries and is underpinned by the following key principles:

- Provision of high quality services with clearly defined outcomes for children and young people
- To work in partnership with families to help them achieve the best they can for their children
- Ensuring children and young people are safe from harm and are able to build resilience to overcome inequalities
- Promote the wellbeing of children and young people

For some children and young people, the outcomes they experience are different to the outcomes experienced by the majority of other children and young people. For some children and young people these experiences challenge efforts to get the best out of life's opportunities.

Resources will be targeted towards those that need it most and where there is a likely positive impact in the longer term for individuals and the wider community.

The Strategy for Children and Young People 2015/20 will be implemented during unprecedented change and economic challenge. We are meeting this challenge by refocusing our efforts towards prevention and early intervention in order to provide timely support before difficulties escalate.

**Failure** to provide early **help** is **costly** for the individual, in terms of greater **complexity** of problems and poorer **outcomes**, for the public purse in terms of service **intervention** costs, and the wider **community** in terms of higher **crime** rates and **poor** environments in which we live.



Earlier intervention means **investing** resources differently, whilst **balancing** the need to **respond** to the current and increasingly **complex** needs which our **vulnerable** families face today.

This document concentrates on the overall priorities, rather than the operational detail that will be required within an Implementation Plan.

# Strategy for Children and Young People 2015-2020

**Our Aim**

**Provision of high quality services with clearly defined outcomes for children and young people**

**Our People**

Children and Young People

Young Carers

Looked After Children

Children in Need of Protection

Children with Disabilities

Young People not in Education, Employment or Training

**Our Partners and Strategies**

Voluntary & Third Sector Organisations

Department of Health and Social Care

Department of Education and Children

Department of Home Affairs

Isle of Man Constabulary

Department of Economic Development

Agenda for Change

Tackling Childhood Obesity

Strategy for Sport

Policy for Children

Physical Activity Strategy

Carers Strategy

**Our Key Priorities**

Nurturing children and young people's healthy development, aspirations and achievement

Children and young people grow up resilient against adversity

Children and young people grow up safe from harm and abuse

Children and young people grow up to be engaged and contributing adults in supportive communities

**Outcomes**

Children and young people are healthy and achieving

Children and young people are resilient

Children and young people are safe

Children and young people are positively engaged in their community

**Our Vision**

**Every child will have the best possible opportunities in life**

# Vision and Values

**Respect:** Services are inclusive where difference is respected and mutual respect exists between organisations and professionals protecting children

**Professionalism:** High quality services are delivered with integrity by a competent and knowledgeable team working in partnership to keep children and young people safe

**Every child will have the best possible opportunities in life**

**Caring:** Services are delivered in partnership and are child focused, empathising with the feelings of children, young people and families, through the creation of a safe environment in which concerns can be shared

**Fairness:** Decisions are made openly, consistently and lawfully, always in the best interests of the child, young person or family and that any discretion is used appropriately

**Listening:** The child's or young person's voice is heard, their experience understood and responsibility taken to act in their best interests

**Curiosity:** There is a thirst for knowledge, analysing, understanding and sharing information appropriately and never missing out on an opportunity to find out more about the child or young person's experience



## DID YOU KNOW?

### Some basic facts about our children and young people:

#### ALL CHILDREN

Total children and young people population of 17090  
2013 /14 School roll: primary (6262 pupils), secondary (4513 pupils)  
In 2013 /14 114 School Children required English as an Additional Language support  
85% of a child's waking hours are spent outside formal education  
In 2013, 50.8% of pupils achieved 5 + 'A\* - C' GCSE's including English and Maths  
70% of young people aged 11 - 19 are engaged in positive activities (62% in UK)  
96.8% of children feel safe or quite safe in the area where they live  
(Youth Survey 2013)

#### CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

1 in 10 children may have a mental health problem (2013 UK figs)  
25% of young people are unhappy or worried, 400 children are bullied most or  
everyday (Youth Survey 2013)  
In 2013, children were present at over 50% of reported domestic violence  
incidents.  
In 2013, 34 children were reported as repeatedly missing from home  
There are approx. 413 young people (16-24 year olds) not in education,  
employment or training (NEET) (July 2014)  
There were 412 referrals to the Youth Justice team, 11.5 % reoffended in 2013/14  
There are an estimated 304 young carers  
1 young person a week becomes estranged from their parents  
20% of children have identified Special Educational Needs  
1 in 5 children are overweight or obese when they reach reception class  
3 out of 10 children experience poor dental health (IOM Oral Health report, 2013)

#### CHILDREN WITH COMPLEX NEEDS, REQUIRING STATUTORY INTERVENTION

89 (5/1000) children are Looked After  
34 (2/1000) children are subject to a Child  
Protection Plan  
In 2013-14 there were 195 children with  
disabilities accessing Special Unit provision in  
schools  
There are 5 'off island' placements where highly  
specialist services are required  
(2013 /14)

Further details on these  
figures can be obtained  
from the Children's  
Services Partnership

## Our Priorities 2015 -20

### Priority 1

**Nurturing children and young people's healthy development, aspirations and achievement .**



#### **What a good outcome looks like:**

- a. Children with identified additional and complex needs receive an appropriate and timely service.
- b. Children are not overweight or obese on entry to reception class
- c. Children and young people who have special educational needs or leaving care are supported to participate in Education, Employment or Training.
- d. Parents know where to seek advice and support, and report their identified needs have been met.
- e. Children and young people are ready for school and achieving well.
- f. Young people aspire to enter meaningful paid employment when they complete education and training.

#### **Why is this priority important?**

Every child and young person deserves to be supported to achieve their ambitions and contribute to society and realise their potential especially those that may face difficulties in reaching their expected developmental milestones and aspirations. Preventing delayed development early on in a child's life is more cost effective in the longer term and prevents any potential for widening of health inequalities, attainment and achievement gaps which have a bearing on longer term life chances for certain groups in society. Early intervention will provide children with the best life chances as issues and difficulties are identified. Every child and young person deserves to be supported to achieve their ambitions and contribute to society.

## **The story for our children and young people in 2015**

Most children and young people are nurtured, engaged, aspiring, achieving and keeping out of trouble. However for minorities of children and young people this is not happening and we need to focus on these groups of children. Reviews have informed us that there is room for improvement in, planning, commissioning and communication between agencies. There is currently limited dedicated spend on preventative services. There is a vibrant voluntary and community sector, which provides an opportunity to build strong communities.

### **Key Actions**

- a. Children and young people's developmental needs will be met through a developed multi agency, early intervention and preventative strategy
- b. Scope the requirements, and implement a comprehensive integrated service for children with disabilities (including fair access, eligibility criteria, system wide definitions and charging policy).
- c. A Joint Strategic Needs Assessment will be undertaken
- d. Ensure additional support is available for 16 – 18 year olds especially those leaving care and education including preparing them for entry into the workplace



## Our Priorities 2015 -20

### Priority 2

**Children and young people grow up resilient against adversity.**



#### **What a good outcome looks like:**

- a. Children and young people with identified need are supported when leaving care and education.
- b. Children and young people influence services which affect them.
- d. Children and young people develop skills for independent living. Children and young people know how to manage appropriate risk themselves and understand the potential consequences.
- e. Children and young people report that they feel safe.

#### **Why is this priority important?**

Early intervention is critical for better long term outcomes, and preventative work can be more effective than providing support at a late stage, which tend to involve reactive input once issues have reached crisis point. It is crucial that services are useful, realistic and appropriate, providing specialist help where expert intervention is required. It is important that services are joined up and closely aligned to avoid duplication and deliver efficient and effective targeted care that is easily accessible. It is not always easy to measure progress as it is not always predictable or linear so it is important to be realistic and aware that there will not always be quick fixes to complex issues and children will often move in and out of support services. Individual and collective resilience contributes to stronger, safer confident and empowered communities.

## **The story for our children and young people in 2015**

Children and young people can be vulnerable and often require specific and timely intervention in order to enable their families and the wider community to provide appropriate care and access to services. Children, young people and their families often do not get help early enough and to address this, future provision needs to be helpful, sensitive, proportionate, professional, flexible and joined up. Whilst 'resilience' is seen as a vital component for a strong community, further work is required to better understand how this needs to be addressed and measured in a meaningful way. Vulnerable children and young people will sometimes require additional support throughout critical stages of their life in order to maximise the opportunities available to them.

### **Key Actions**

- a. Strengthen all transition pathways by mapping the roles and responsibilities of all partner agencies and re-aligning resources to address gaps
- b. Explore and develop the concept and meaning of 'Resilience'

## Our Priorities 2015 -20

### Priority 3

**Children and young people grow up safe from harm and abuse.**



#### What a good outcome looks like:

- a. Children and young people report they are safe from neglect, abuse, violence and exploitation and feel cared for and can live without fear.
- b. Children and young people needing support and protection are supported early.
- c. Child protection services work in partnership with families and children through clear thresholds and levels of intervention.
- d. Children, young people and their families are well advised on the risks posed by the internet and social media

#### Why is this priority important?

Identifying risks and signs of harm and abuse effectively and quickly can ensure children and young people are not left in unsafe environments. Responding to risks and abuse effectively ensures children and young people feel safe and have confidence in the services supporting and protecting them.

Children and young people not able to live with their birth families need to feel supported throughout their time in care and afterwards to ensure they have access to the same opportunities and support that children have from their parents in general.

## The story for our children and young people in 2015

Audits of practice, inspection and data information indicates that overall services are responding to concerns about risk but that the investigation and risk analysis process could be more robust to strengthen the response to children at risk of abuse.

The rate of children subject of a plan and looked after has been brought below the benchmark rates of the UK, in the past year, but there is a significant overrepresentation of older children. This would indicate that some families lack resilience during the teenage years and services often respond too late. There is no statutory requirement for 'Leaving Care' services, and currently 16 and 17 year olds cannot be identified as 'homeless' which, compounds the lack of appropriate social housing.

### Key Actions

- a. Review and strengthen the investigative process with children (Achieving Best Evidence, ABE)
- b. Develop and implement a Leaving Care Strategy
- c. Develop a clear understanding of thresholds and levels of intervention, and clarify roles and responsibilities in multi-agency working (linked to an early intervention strategy)
- d. Analyse, incorporate and take action on the views of children and young people about their safety

## Our Priorities 2015 -20

### Priority 4

**Children and young people grow up to be engaged and contributing adults in a safe and supportive community.**



#### **What a good outcome looks like:**

- a. Children and young people not involved / active become engaged in positive activities.
- b. Children and young people engage in Education, Employment and Training.
- c. Children who are in a 'bad place', are supported through opportunities to turn their life around.
- d. More young people are making a positive contribution and recognised for their efforts.
- e. Barriers to participation are understood and removed.

#### **Why is this priority important?**

Different groups will potentially experience barriers to engagement and attention must be focussed to support them. Young people not positively engaged in the community are more likely to not achieve in school, become unemployed, have poor health and social well-being and get involved in adverse risk taking and involvement in anti-social behaviour and therefore require greater and more long-term support in the future.

## **The story for our children and young people in 2015**

The majority of children and young people grow up in an environment which has low crime rates, a supportive community with a positive reputation as somewhere safe to live. These children are more often actively engaged and subsequently have good quality of life and it is important to recognise that this needs to be maintained. We need an active, healthy population of young people who will grow into healthy adults and more opportunities for young people and those not in education, employment and training to be engaged and contribute. Ensuring young people feel safe in their community and those that need help have access to services and support that sort things out quickly and effectively.

### **Key Actions**

- a. Identify those that are not engaged or involved and listen to their needs and requirements
- b. Find out and understand children and young people's barriers to engagement
- c. Establish localised, tailored services for young people in the areas which they live