

Isle of Man Safeguarding Forum: Friday 19th February 2016 Draft Speech for Minister Crookall

I am delighted to have been asked to speak at this, the third Isle of Man Safeguarding Forum. As many of you will know my fellow Ministers, Minister Quayle and Minister Watterson have spoken at previous Forums. This reflects our political commitment to this important event and to the work that is being undertaken to ensure safeguarding is everyone's business.

Safeguarding Forums are becoming an established part of life here on the Isle of Man. I am delighted that one year after we started this initiative we continue to be over-subscribed with people wishing to attend. Once again we have had to disappoint some due to pressure on places.

It is equally positive that we have delegates from across our safeguarding partnership – from Government departments, from schools and from voluntary, community and private sectors providers. This illustrates a real commitment from those working with children and adults to the safeguarding agenda and to our goal in ensuring safeguarding is everyone's business.

One of our key strategic priorities as a Government is to protect the vulnerable – to protect those people at risk of harm and to ensure that our reforms take account of vulnerable people's needs. The two safeguarding boards play a key role in delivering this important priority for the Isle of Man.

As many of you will know I am the Minister for Education and Children. I am particularly pleased that in the last year we have made significant progress in engaging our schools in the safeguarding agenda. Two headteachers – Rob Coole from Anagh Coar and Keith Winstanley from Castle Rushen High School - now sit on the Action and Implementation Group which I am told is the 'engine room' of the Safeguarding Children Board. All our schools have recently completed a safeguarding audit in which they have self-assessed their performance against a range of safeguarding standards. We had 100% return on this audit – which the Independent Chair has advised me is the first time he has experienced such a result. This provides a very clear baseline from which we can plan and deliver improvement in the future and we are already in discussion with heads and staff in schools about the action we will take on the back of the recommendations – these actions will obviously be a key part of our Safeguarding Business Plans for 2016/17. All Departments represented on the SCB have also completed safeguarding audits and we are about to undertake similar audits in adult services. Additionally the Third Sector has formulated an audit that they will pilot before rolling out across the island. All this will provide us with a clear picture of:

- What we are good at
- What we need to improve
- Where we need to focus our action in our Safeguarding Business Plans for 2016/17

Safeguarding Forums are bi-annual events. They are intended to ensure we engage front-line staff and managers in the work of the two safeguarding boards.

This morning you will have been able to attend workshops on some of the key issues that the two Boards are currently focusing on: Hoarding, Self-Neglect, Homelessness, Child Sexual Exploitation and Signs of Safety. I hope you found these interesting and stimulating. They are all issues that we anticipate will be priorities next year.

A key priority for both the SCB and SAP is to ensure that we hear the voice of the service user. At our last Forum our Voices in Participation group of young people delivered a workshop. Today they are speaking to the whole conference about how we can work more effectively in partnership with young people.

In addition we have a session on the new Domestic Abuse Pathway. This too features as a workshop at the last Forum but many delegates expressed disappointment that they had been unable to secure a place for that so we are featuring this as a keynote this afternoon.

The final session this afternoon will focus on the future – starting to build our business plans for 2016/17. This will include:

- Looking back at what we have achieved in 2015/16
- Considering priorities for 2016/17
- Securing improved co-ordination and collaboration between services in delivering safeguarding
- Considering ways of ensuring effective communication between the safeguarding boards and staff working at the front-line so that the SCB and SAP can have maximum impact.

The views expressed at our Safeguarding Forum in February 2015 had a significant influence on the framing of our Safeguarding Business Plans. We intend to ensure this happens again for 2016/17.

The Safeguarding Children Board and the Safeguarding Adults Partnership have signalled that a key priority in our safeguarding agenda is to enable people to safeguard themselves. With the right education, information, advice and guidance the significant majority of our population can build resilience and safeguard themselves from risk. A minority will require support and intervention to ensure that they are protected from harm. Our two safeguarding boards have a role in both these agendas. They need to ensure that the majority of our population, whether they be children, young people or adults, are enabled to safeguard themselves and that we have robust and rigorous collective arrangements in place to support those that require support in avoiding the risk of harm.

To achieve our goals we rely on all services individually delivering robust safeguarding arrangements and working effectively together to share information and deliver joined up services to secure the best outcomes for our children, young

people and adults. This is particularly important at a time when we face economic and financial challenge.

Both services and the wider community have a role in achieving our goals and this is why our first safeguarding business plans have been entitled 'Safeguarding is Everyone's Business'. Safeguarding Forums provide you with an opportunity to shape our direction of travel. I hope you will embrace this opportunity not just today but in the future.

I would like to thank you for attending today and hope that you find the rest of the conference enjoyable, stimulating and worthwhile. Most importantly I hope you and your colleagues that were not able to secure a place will make safeguarding your business so that when we gather again in the future we will be celebrating improvements in our impact and outcomes for the children, young people and adults of the Isle of Man.