

## CYPE(5)-06-21 - Paper to note 1

Senedd Cymru

**Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg**

Welsh Parliament

**Children, Young People and Education Committee**

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Julie Morgan MS, Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services

Dyddiad | Date: 29 January 2021

Pwnc | Subject: **Safeguarding referrals and Looked After Children**

Dear Julie,

Thank you for attending Committee on 21 January 2021 as part of our scrutiny of the Draft Budget 2021-22.

During that session you were asked about safeguarding referrals and you told us that there is "...a weekly data collection process with the local authorities and that data shows how the local authorities are dealing and coping with the services". You also told us "...in the first lockdown, there was a drop in safeguarding referrals" but that you have been assured by the chairs of the safeguarding boards that they have "recovered" and that referrals are "more average now than they were before".

As part of our on-going scrutiny of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are writing to request some additional information from you in respect of the numbers of both safeguarding referrals and looked after children.

We note concerns expressed last week by the Children's Commissioner in England that vulnerable children have become "invisible" due to COVID-19. We further note that she reported a "significant fall" in referrals to children's services in England, of 10%, between the end of April and November 2020.

You will be aware that recent press coverage in Wales has reported comments made by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health suggesting that the number of child safeguarding referrals has dropped and concerns that vulnerable children may have "dropped off the radar".


In that context we would be grateful for an update on both of the following points:

- The position on the number of child safeguarding referrals in Wales since March 2020 and a comparison with the equivalent figures for the same time period for the previous year.
- The latest position on the numbers of looked after children in Wales, including information about whether the number of children entering the system remains stable and whether there has been a drop in the number of children leaving the system.



**Senedd Cymru**  
Bae Caerdydd, Caerdydd, CF99 1SN

 [SeneddPPIA@senedd.cymru](mailto:SeneddPPIA@senedd.cymru)

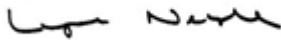
 0300 200 6565

**Welsh Parliament**  
Cardiff Bay, Cardiff, CF99 1SN

 [SeneddCYPE@senedd.wales](mailto:SeneddCYPE@senedd.wales)

 0300 200 6565

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lynne Neagle'.

**Lynne Neagle MS**  
**Chair**

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg | We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.