

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymchwiliad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg ynghylch aflonyddu rhywiol rhwng cyfoedion ymysg dysgwyr](#)

This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee inquiry into Peer on peer sexual harassment among learners](#)

PPSH 17

Ymateb gan: Heddlu Dyfed Powys

Response from: Dyfed Powys Police

This paper is provided in response to the below action raised at the Children, Young People and Education Committee, held on the 10th March 2022, in which Deputy Chief Constable Claire Parmenter from the Dyfed Powys Police Force attended and provided evidence in her role as Police Schools Lead.

Action

DCC Claire Parmenter agreed to provide the Committee with statistics from other forces regarding reporting levels and case studies of positive relationships with school officers and young people.

From an initial data gathering exercise that has been conducted in response to this action, it is evident that there are challenges in respect of obtaining specific "statistics" from all forces to indicate accurate levels of peer-on-peer harassment cases, due to the complexities of the national crime recording standards and the categorisation of offences set out by the Home Office Counting Rules. Some of the complexities are highlighted below,

1. Given that Sexual Harassment is not an absolute offence, there will be statistics concerning harassment cases solely involving young people which have a sexual element and wider harassment offences involving young people.
2. As any harassment offence will require a course of conduct to have been made out. There may be offences such as Malicious communications, sexual touching which are peer on peer but do not constitute harassment due to it being the first instance.
3. Offences take place on and off school premises and as such each crime would need to be reviewed individually.



Sexual Harassment – There is no specific Sexual Harassment law, and any such behaviour would be classed as harassment in general. A comprehensive analysis of data held on police systems would be required to ascertain exact numbers of peer-on-peer harassment made even more difficult as **two recording systems currently exist, education and police**. Police only data would not be a true representation of Peer-on-Peer Harassment cases reported.

DCC Parmenter has written to all Secondary schools to encourage reporting to Police to ensure an accurate picture across Wales. As the Estyn Report evidences, having Police Officers in schools delivering on sensitive topics does afford children and staff the opportunity to highlight concerns.

The below case studies highlight the impact the Schools Police Officers are having on improved relations and confidence in police with youths reporting incidents.

Case Study 1

A student at a high school disclosed that a year 11 boy in her class had put his hand up her skirt in the classroom and touched her inappropriately through underwear and had also done this in a car and at a sleepover. The teacher had not seen this, and she felt scared to report it. There was a strategy meeting with joint agencies, police, social services, and a Detective Sergeant. The outcome of the meeting was that the Schools Police Officer would provide 'safer relationships' lesson input and workshops for the students. The sexual consent lesson had already been completed for the year group but will be refreshed again.

Case Study 2

Two girls came forward separately (known friends) and made allegations of sexual assault over clothing about the same boy on different occasions. The school had recently upgraded their CCTV and the Schools Police Officer was called in to review. A meeting with the students and safeguarding lead occurred after the footage was reviewed. The Schools Police Officer clarified what constitutes a sexual offence which on this occasion had not occurred. Both girls were spoken to in relation to making false accusations with one girl stating that her dad had 'put words in her mouth' and the other said she had felt uncomfortable with the boy. Schools Police Officer discussed personal boundaries with the boy separately to ensure he was aware of others' personal space.

Case 3

A year 9 girl approached the School Police Officer after the 'Hidden Hurt' (Domestic Abuse lesson) whereby she stated that she had been kissed in the school toilet by another girl who was once her girlfriend. She wouldn't provide any further detail



including the identity of the other female. The incident was recorded on the Police system and appraised by the Detective Sergeant. The case was closed as the girl did not want any further action but felt comfortable and confident enough to talk to the SPO.

Case Study 4

The Schools Police Officer had been dealing with a crime of sexual harassment whereby two Year 11 boys were blowing kisses at a girl in the same year group. At first, the female stated she liked the attention, but this escalated to them shouting at her to show them her chest area on several occasions whilst walking home from school. They started making extremely degrading and derogatory comments which she took as them stating they wanted to have sex with her and one of the boys said he would choke her whilst doing this. The school submitted a MARF. The SPO recorded a crime, and the boys were spoken to by the SPO. The two boys stated that they only did it as a joke and they thought she liked the attention; despite her telling them to stop. Both sets of parents were very supportive of the police intervention and expressed disgust at their children's behaviour.

The police are involved in incidents if they are reported and procedures are in place for this. Schools will decide on the requirement to report by following the All-Wales Schools Policy and will submit a **Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF)** to children services. Children services would review the information and decide if it meets the **Regional Safeguarding Board** threshold and **Wales Safeguarding Procedures** if they need to inform the police and have a strategy discussion.

Noteworthy Comments received from School Police Officers

- Most Schools Police Officers commented to say that they have not noticed any obvious increases but still see incidents where sharing of nudes or semi nudes continues to feature.
- When looking at peer on peer incidents the majority of reports directly from schools relate to online bullying, hate incidents and body shaming. Hearing of peers saying "go and kill yourself" seems to be coming to notice more.
- Most low-level incidents are dealt with at school level. If the incident occurs outside of the school and is reported to police, it will lead to a crime being



recorded. More often than not, these incidents will be outcomed appropriately by the School Police Officer.

- Some officers have commented that they have seen a particular increase in girl on girl bullying with friendship breakdown viewed as an aggravating factor, coupled with social media often being the facilitator.
- Across Wales there is a focus on respect as a core value, Dyfed Powys Police (DPP) have developed a resource; **Respecting Each Other** for year 6 learners, exploring and discussing peer on peer harassment in age-appropriate language.
- DPP have developed a session suitable for Secondary Schools named '**Speak up Stand up**' in collaboration with ChildNet.
- **Stalking Resource for Secondary Schools** – This is being developed with Alice Ruggles trust and has Welsh Government funding.

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