

Cross-Party Group Annual Report.

2022/23

Saving Futures: Cross Party Group on Preventing Child Sexual Abuse.

1. Group membership and office holders.

Chair: Jayne Bryant MS

The Secretariat is jointly provided by NSPCC Cymru, Stop it Now! Wales, Survivors' Trust Cymru, Stepping Stones North Wales and RASASC NW

2. Previous Group Meetings since the last AGM.

Meeting 1.

Meeting date: 26th September 2022

Summary of issues discussed:

Key points from speakers

Rhiannon Faye McDonald Marie Collins Foundation and Swansea University Project Dragon-Shield Lived Experience Expert Group (LEEG) - Why and How to Mainstream Lived Experience Expertise in O-CSEA and launch of 'Strong at the Broken Places' Animation and Report

- Lived experience expert groups need to be mainstreamed in policy development. MCF call on Welsh Government to set up a lived experience advocacy group alongside the planned young people advocacy group.
- Its important that the voices of survivors are heard as they have so much to teach policy makers.
- Participation work must ensure no more harm is done to survivors in the process of them supporting policy development.
- It is essential that there is a constant feedback loop from policy makers with expert by experience groups on how their experiences are being used and making an impact.
- Dragon Shield and the Lived Experience Expert Group launched an animation 'Strong at the Broken Places' and an accompany report. Contact Dragon-S directly for more information project.dragons@swansea.ac.uk

Youth Solutions – Fore-fronting young people's experiences – UK Youth Parliament

- 'Anyone can be a perpetrator, from strangers to the people we trust the most'
- We have to challenge the normalisation of peer-on-peer sexual abuse and challenge terms such as 'take no notice' 'boys will be boys'.
- The group called for the following solutions:
- Consent must be taught in schools to all learners
- Training for school staff should be provided on how to notice the harms young people are experiencing

- The stigma of experiencing abuse must be challenged
- Young people should be provided with better online and app support
- It should be mandatory that apps provide support to young people who experience harms
- There must be mandatory co-operative working across departments and sectors to create strategies to tackle the issues of online and peer-on-peer abuse.

Jeremy Miles MS, Minister for Education and the Welsh Language

- These issues are a cross-government priority for Welsh Government and young people's voices are needed to challenge the normalisation of peer-on-peer abuse.
- It was difficult to accept from the [Estyn report](#) what children and young people have been through.
- The Minister spoke to the importance of communication: that young people feel confident to report and that the importance of safe, equal relationships are communicated to young people in return. Pan Wales research is planned to understand how young people prefer to be communicated with. It is Welsh Government's duty to listen and act
- These harms should not be expected in online spaces and education plays a vital role here. Welsh Government appreciates the challenge presented by online harms in schools, but staff should deal with online harms as any other safeguarding concern.
- Welsh Government are developing training for school staff on online sexual harassment
- A children and young people advisory panel for digital resilience will shape and inform the direction of Welsh Government work in this area.
- Planned changes to anti-bullying guidance to reflect peer-on-peer harassment, including bullying of LGBTQ+ children and young people. This will include robust recording of peer-on-peer harassment and LGBTQ+ bullying.
- Welsh Government is working on transgender guidance for schools

Meeting 2.

Meeting date: 15th December 2022

Attendees:

Deputy Minister for Social Services, Julie Morgan MS
 Jayne Bryant MS (Chair)
 Elinor Puzey, NSPCC Cymru
 Claire Sharp, Children in Wales
 Claire Short, Stop it Now! Wales
 Sarah Cooper Social Services & Integration – Welsh Government
 Ross Walmsley, NSPCC Cymru
 Sarah Walton-Jones, Stop it Now! Wales
 Cecile Gwilym, NSPCC Cymru
 Philip Walker, Survivors Trust
 Daisy Williams, Stop it Now! Wales
 Gillian Jones, Stop it Now! Wales
 Nici Evans, Centre of Expertise on CSA
 Linda Grace (Guest)
 Saul Cooke-Black, NSPCC Cymru

Helen Gordon, Gwent
 May Baxter-Thornton (Guest)
 Debbie Woodroff, New Pathways
 Felicity Rushton, Police
 Amy Bainton, Barnardo's
 Katie Stott
 Naomi Evans, Police
 Amy Jones
 Berni Durham-Jones
 Fay Maxted, Survivors Trust
 Natasha Hankey, Police
 Paula Hardy, Police
 Kirsty Rees, Senedd support staff
 Sarah Keefe, Police
 Hannah Evans-Price, Police
 Catrin Simpson (Cardiff and Vale UHB - Child Health)
 Joanna Williams (NHS Wales Health)

Summary of issues discussed:

Key points from speakers

Julie Morgan MS, Deputy Minister for Social Services – Welsh Government reflections on the first action plan

- An opportunity to reflect on all the work achieved in Wales because of the first national action plan for CSA. Thanks to the CPG for influencing the first action plan.
- Thanks to the safeguarding boards and to all the charities involved in the public engagement work. Particular thanks offered to Dr Sam Clutton, who led the work on the first national action plan.
- Priority of the first action plan was under the three pillars of prevention, protection and support.
- Proud of the progress made and that this continued through the pandemic.
- As a result of the first action plan we have many more resources available and the public are better informed about CSA.
- Work has taken place to empower children themselves to spot online grooming or exploitation and be able to seek help.
- Data auditing is ongoing and this will inform planning of future services.
- While it is Important to celebrate the delivery of the action plan, we need a far-reaching new action plan. Work will be informed by the final delivery report and the IICSA recommendations published in October 2022. There are recommendations specifically within that final report for Welsh Government which are being considered.
- As part of the consultation process we will be speaking and consulting with people including young people.
- The work laid out in the first plan will continue in anticipation of the new plan.
- Many thanks to the CYP and adult survivors of CSA who have helped inform our work.

Elinor Puzey, NSPCC Cymru – launch of the CPGs legacy report into the first action plan
Legacy report is informed by the cross-party group meetings and a professional round-table in Spring 2022.

Key recommendations from the report include that:

- Training should be built into pre-qualifying courses.
- Data collection should be improved and holistic.
- CSA policy work should intersect with other violence prevention and equalities work.
- Online harms must be recognised as a significant and dynamic risk.
- Peer on peer sexual abuse must be tackled as a priority.
- Prevention work must be central, including interventions for young people using harmful behaviours
- Funding of response and support services must be sustainable.

Themes which have emerged from the legacy report include:

- Understanding of the impact of CSA on some cohorts of children is patchy – we would like to see an understanding of external biases which can prevent some children from seeking help.

- Services working with marginalised children should be resourced to support disclosures of CSA.
- Training should be mandatory. Findings suggest there is still a feeling of inconsistency amongst professionals when it comes to referring. The Ask and Act framework should include a mandatory session on CSA.
- We are concerned about a disconnect between leadership and those working on the ground because of inaccuracy in data collection. We want to see a more holistic approach to data which includes helpline and service data as well as child protection plans.
- Peer-on-peer sexual abuse has become normalised. We welcome work by Welsh Government to develop a stand alone plan to tackle this. But we want to see this speak to the broader work of CSA.
- The risk of online harms is ever changing, again future CSA work must be flexible to these risks.

Claire Sharp, Children in Wales - Stakeholder engagement – ‘what should the next phase of CSA work in Wales look like?’

- Children in Wales have been tasked with understanding what has worked well and what hasn't and is seeking views from people across sectors.
- Interested to know what emerging areas of concern might be for the sector
- Children in Wales will be holding focus groups in January and February. Please contact Claire on claire.sharp@childreninwales.org.uk

Meeting 3:

Meeting date: 6th March 2023

Attendees

Speakers

Jayne Bryant MS – Chair
Tanya Harrington – Stonewall Cymru
Fateha Ahmed – EYST
Zoe Williams – LD Wales
Elinor Puzey – NSPCC

Alex Perry – Welsh Government
Kate Rothwell - Welsh Government
Dearbhla Sloan - NSPCC
Kelly Turner - Monmouthshire
Ross Walmsley – NSPCC
Jan Pickles
Helen Middleton - CAVC
Heather Heaney – Monmouthshire
Faith McCready – South Wales Police
Catherine Lewis - South Wales Police
Sarah Keefe - Tarian
Sally Howells - Cyfannol Philip Walker - Survivors Trust

Attendees

Lucy Blackwood - Welsh Government
Catrin Simpson – SARC
Claire Sharp – Children in Wales
Damian Rees - Swansea
Fflur Emlyn – RASAC North Wales
Helen Gordon – Gwent
Joanna Williams – NHS Collaborative

Summary of issues discussed:

Key points from speakers

Tanya Harrington - Stonewall Cymru

- Risk factors for LGBTQ+ young people may be similar to other cohorts of children, but present differently
- A young person may feel they are being discriminated against because of their sexuality so may not want to tell a teacher or doctor about the abuse. This sense of isolation can be weaponised by abusers
- Increased risk of financial hardship and homelessness if difficult or no relationship with family
- LGBTQ+ young people do not have the same examples of good relationships which can lead to unsafe and abusive sexual relationships.
- Important services provide inclusive access to support and have training on how to be a safe person
- Take an intersectional lens, treating young people as individuals not part of a homogeneous LGBTQ+ group.

Fateha Ahmed – Ethnic Youth Support Team (EYST) Wales

- Fear of stigma, and loss of respect from the community if abuse is disclosed
- There is a blind spot in ‘mainstream’ services when it comes to understanding the stigma and cultural misunderstanding of CSA – which creates a barrier to accessing service provision

Language barriers

- Often disrespectful to discuss sex within some cultures, which can make it harder for CYP to disclose
- Practitioners who understand cultural barriers are essential within social services
- Particular risks and barriers for asylum seeking and refugee families who fear the ‘hostile environment’

Zoe Richards – Learning Disability Wales

- Parents with a learning disability feel under constant surveillance which can act as a barrier to seeking support on CSA
- Mothers with an LD are particularly vulnerable to predatory partners
- Information on CSA and online harms must be accessible for parents with an LD
- Children and young people with an LD are at increased risk when they are ‘desexualised’ and not taught about healthy relationships
- CYP with a disability will have more caregivers in their life, particularly those who need personal care, this creates an additional risk.

Discussion from the floor

Elinor Puzey from NSPCC Cymru led a discussion with meeting attendees. Key points and recommendations include:

Training

- Essential for specialist sexual violence services to have training on marginalised children's needs and unconscious bias
- Specialist services should be supported to have cultural competency training
- Grassroots organisations working with marginalised children should be given training on how to spot the signs of CSA, how to talk about it and what to do with a disclosure
- All training should have an intersectional lens over it. Avoiding grouping children but recognising them as individuals who may experience intersecting oppressions
- Online training for professionals is not enough, training on CSA should be delivered in person
- Training should be informed by people's lived experience

Multi agency working

- Specialist sector and grassroots organisations should be supported to work holistically with children
- Using the right interpreter is essential – ensure dialect as well as language is the same, consider if the interpreter is appropriate for the subject matter, is the survivor comfortable talking through an interpreter or have they built a relationship with a worker already who would be best placed to provide that service?

Workforce development

- Workforces should consider how they can be more culturally diverse to reduce barriers to access and improve visibility to marginalised communities
- Service standards from the Survivor's Trust can help specialist services evidence the knowledge they hold on supporting marginalised children. The process of assessment also supports the organisation to recognise gaps in knowledge

Data

- A national data set on CSA is essential to have a fuller picture of prevalence, but how this data is collected from children must be trauma informed
- The Violence Prevention Unit is creating a data collection hub for Welsh SARCs – consideration should be given to what other sources can be fed into this (schools, police, grassroots)

Annual Financial Statement.

Cross Party Group on Preventing Child Sexual Abuse

Chair: Jayne Bryant MS

Secretariat: NSPCC Cymru, Stop it Now! Wales, the Survivors' Trust Cymru.

Group's Expenses.	None.	£0.00
Costs of all goods.		
Benefits received by the group or individual Members from outside bodies.	No benefits received.	£0.00
Any secretariat or other support.	No financial support received.	£0.00
Services provided to the Group such as hospitality.		
Date	Description and name of provider	Cost
		0
Total cost		