

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

**Children, Young People
and Education Committee**

Mark Cox
Head of Oversight (Cymru), Youth Justice Boards (Wales)

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Inquiry into Children and Young People on the Margins

Dear Mark,

As you may know, we are currently gathering evidence as part of our inquiry 'children and young people on the margins'. The inquiry is focusing on missing children and criminalised children and young people. More detail about our inquiry, including its terms of reference, can be found on [our web pages](#).

The written consultation window for this inquiry closed on 23 January 2024. We are now in the process of gathering informal evidence from stakeholders via a series of stakeholder events and engagement visits. However, due to pressures to our forward work programme, we have decided to seek targeted written evidence from key stakeholders rather than holding formal oral evidence sessions. We will then hold a joint scrutiny session with the Cabinet Secretary for Culture and Social Justice and the Minister for Social Services on 19 September 2024.

We are therefore seeking your views on any aspect of the inquiry to bolster our written evidence. In addition to any general comments you wish to make that are relevant to the inquiry's terms of reference, we would appreciate your views on the following specific points:

- The interaction of youth justice services with children who go missing and who are victims of child criminal exploitation. What that can tell us about the nature and scale of the issue in Wales, including regional variations?
- How is the YJB working to prevent children from being exploited by criminal gangs and subsequently drawn into criminal behaviour?
- Could you provide information on any funding that the YJB has allocated to facilitate collaborative efforts among regions, specifically initiatives aimed at identifying and sharing



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emerging practices in youth justice that support children who are either experiencing criminal exploitation or are at risk of such exploitation? Additionally, could you confirm if any of these funded regions are located in Wales?

- Could you elaborate on the role of the YJB in addressing the concerns raised in Professor John Pitts' report, which highlighted that the responses to child criminal exploitation have often been inconsistent and poorly coordinated?
- Has the YJB considered the role of technology and online interactions in drawing children into criminal activity, particularly where they can be exploited by adults to carry out criminal activities?
- Has the YJB assessed the impact of the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in terms of access to education, on the risk of children going missing or becoming involved in criminal activities?
- Has the YJB has conducted any assessments to determine if children from disadvantaged backgrounds, particularly children from minoritised racial communities are at a higher risk of criminal exploitation?
- Any recommendations you would like the Committee to consider in this regard.

I would be grateful for your response no later than Friday 23 August 2024 so that we can take account of your views in advance of our scrutiny session with the Welsh Government.

Yours sincerely,



Buffy Williams MS
Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.