

Jane Hutt AS/MS
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyfiawnder Cymdeithasol, y Trefnydd a'r
Prif Chwip
Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip



Dawn Bowden AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Plant a Gofal Cymdeithasol
Minister for Children and Social Care

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Buffy WilliamsMS
Chair
Children, Young People and Education Committee
Welsh Parliament

9 October 2024

Dear Buffy,

Following our appearance at the Children and Young People's Committee on 19 September please see the below further evidence to inform the Committee's enquiry on 'Children on the Margins'.

We agreed to write to you to answer the following queries:

1. Provide further information on whether there are any regional variations in relation to criminal exploitation referrals.
2. 2024 figures on the number of social workers registered with Social Care Wales
3. 2024 figures on the numbers going through social work training
4. How often safeguarding boards meet; *[on this point it would be useful to know for both the national board and the 6 regional boards how often they have met]*
5. Outcomes of discussions with the UK Safeguarding Minister on 23 October 2024 about the recommendations of the Jay Review.

1. Provide further information on whether there are any regional variations in relation to criminal exploitation referrals.

Over 2022-23 there were a total of 28,256 Initial Strategy Meetings for children suspected of being at risk of abuse or neglect. Over that same period, 1,471 reports of suspected abuse included child sexual exploitation as a factor. This suggests that approximately 5% of reports included child sexual exploitation as a factor.

However, this varies between regions, with the proportion in Cardiff and Vale being 2.3% of reports including child sexual exploitation as a factor and 6.4% in North Wales. However, it

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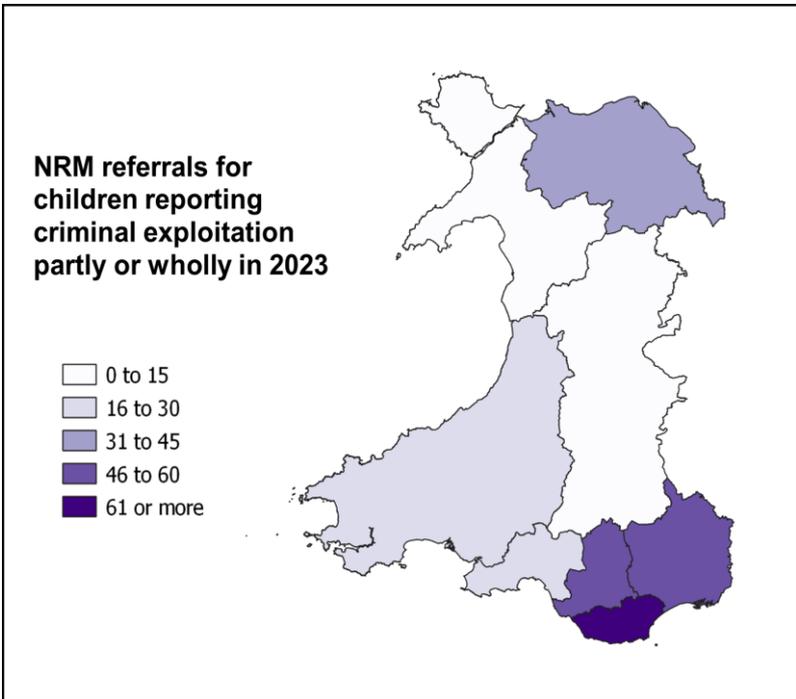
Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

should be noted that there are some concerns with the way in which local authorities are recording and reporting this data. Further work is ongoing to make sure this data is captured reliably and consistently across all regions.

The Home Office records data on referrals to the National Referral Mechanism for potential victims of modern slavery. This includes potential victims of child criminal exploitation. The table below shows the number of referrals for child criminal exploitation in Welsh preserved counties in 2023:

Preserved county	Referrals of children to the National Referral Mechanism in which criminal exploitation was reported
South Glamorgan	75
Mid Glamorgan	47
Gwent	47
Clwyd	40
West Glamorgan	28
Dyfed	17
Gwynedd	13
Powys	12



Please note these statistics including referrals in which additional forms of exploitation were also reported. These statistics should not be combined as people can report exploitation in multiple areas.

Criminal exploitation in Wales is linked to the distribution of illicit drugs through local criminal gangs and County Lines networks. Criminal exploitation is linked to cuckooing and other forms of crime. The largest number of potential victims identified are male British nationals aged 13 to 17 years. Other nationalities identified include Albanian nationals.

2. 2024 figures on the number of social workers registered with Social Care Wales

As at 30 September 2024 there are currently 6,774 social workers registered with Social Care Wales. This compares to 6,736 who were registered in September 2023.

3. 2024 figures on the numbers going through social work training

As at September 2024 there are 655 students currently enrolled with social worker training. These will include traditional students, those accessing our Welsh Government social worker bursary and Local Authority Grow your own scheme, as well as open university courses.

4. How often safeguarding boards meet; [on this point it would be useful to know for both the national board and the 6 regional boards how often they have met]

Regional Safeguarding Boards meet on a quarterly basis though they have substantial sub structures that meet in between for specific issues e.g. training and development, protocols and procedures and quality assurance and performance.

The National Independent Safeguarding Board meets monthly. Members also attend Regional Safeguarding Board meetings in their role of supporting development.

Welsh Government facilitates meetings between the Regional Safeguarding Board Chairs and members of the National Independent Safeguarding Board in which the Chairs and Members provide updates, and we provide an update from Welsh Government.

These meetings are held on a quarterly basis and between those meeting Welsh Government representatives also meet with the Regional Safeguarding Board Business Managers.

5. Outcomes of discussions with the UK Safeguarding Minister on 23 October 2024 about the recommendations of the Jay Review.

The meeting regarding this is scheduled to take place on October 23rd so we will provide an update to the Committee once this has taken place via letter.

Yours sincerely,



Jane Hutt AS/MS

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