

Minutes for the Cross-Party Group on Violence against Women and Children

Date: 09/07/25

Attendees: Sioned Williams MS, Stephanie Grimshaw, Yashiba Sanil, Emma Rushton, Fflur Emlyn, Gillian Clark, Angharad Griffiths, Cecile Gwilym, Ioan Bellin

Apologies: Mark Isherwood MS, Sara Kirkpatrick, Laura Tomsa, Michele Wheelan, Simon Borja, Bernie Bowen-Thomson

12:15: Sioned welcomes all to the CPG and reminds members to refer to the Code of Conduct.

12:20: Gillian Clark and Fflur Emlyn from RASASC present in their “Don't Steal My Future” programme which is a powerful impact driven training project addressing the widespread prevalence of sexual violence, addressing how to begin change in attitudes and behaviours towards women, girls, and sexual violence.

It is delivered to schools, colleges, universities, rugby clubs, football clubs in North Wales, and is free of charge. Has been delivered to over 28,000 young people across North Wales.

Interactive format includes animations, real-life case studies, quizzes, and pledges. It is trauma-informed and responsive to local safeguarding concerns (e.g. spiking).

Topics covered include myths and facts around sexual violence, misogyny, pornography, sexting, peer pressure, coercive control and non-consensual image sharing, support pathways and barriers to reporting. Also includes training for school staff on managing disclosures.

Data from last quarter reflects that Ages 11 to 14 (years 7, 8 and 9) had an average pre session knowledge of 39% which increased to 69% after the workshop (some reaching 81%).

Ages 14+ arrived with an average knowledge of 60% which rose to 94% at the end of training quiz. After attending the sessions knowledge of Coercive Control reached an average of 73.5%.

RASASC's sexual violence surveys indicate that in the last 12 months: 59% of women and girls (from 12 and upwards) had experienced SV (23% of males) 71% of all respondents knew someone who had experienced SV. 62% did not get help. Reasons ranged from fear, shame, bad experience upon initial disclosure to knowing where to seek support.

12:35: Sioned thanks Gillian and Fflur for their presentation and asks if this program also happens in other part of Wales

12:36: Fflur answers that Gillian and she are working on developing the program and are planning to Pilot this in collaboration with another sexual violence in England first, and they plan to investigate taking this outside North Wales.

12:37: Sioned asks about funding needs for the program and Fflur highlights how crucial support for funding is for implementing the program in a wider scale across Wales and UK.

12:38: Sioned discusses how powerful interactivity in this program is and the need for this to also go out beyond school spaces, and she would be interested to push and see if Welsh Gov can fund this Wales wide.

12:39: Fflur highlighted how they have had a meeting with regional North Wales local authorities to see how students outside schools and colleges can be reached out to and they are also working with Football association Wales.

12:40: Cecille enquired if the program session covers content for LGBTQIA young individuals because it can be quite difficult to navigate consent in LGBTQ relationships. Gillian affirmed how inclusive the sessions are and how they provide non-judgemental space.

12:42: Stephanie talked about there not being enough support and children facing longer waiting to access support in comparison to the demand of people seeking support with increasing awareness. She raised the concern of funding not being there to meet this demand and what can we do to raise the issue.

12:43: Fflur seconded Stephanie's comment by providing evidence that since Don't Steal My Future was implemented in 2022, referrals from education have quadrupled to the organisation with last year there being 12086 referrals and this year in the first quarter alone, they are seeing a further increase. There needs to be a commitment from government to provide long term funding as with education training, long term impact is only measurable after years.

12:45: Sioned agreed that there needs to be a sustained approach with funding and awareness. Sioned also asked if the resources and animations available in schools only or if they are plugged in more generally in platforms across Wales.

12:46: Fflur says that they are now developing three specific programs that will be PSE session specific, they have put in an application to North Wales PCC for longer term funding for the program.

12:47: Sioned highlighted the CPG can support and endorse the program through letters of support for grants. Sioned also mentioned that it is critical that the program is also able to give education and understanding to education professionals in schools and have specialist services come in to help deliver this. It is heartening to see this work going on.

Sioned also introduces Cecile from NSPCC who is going to speak about NSPCC's Targeting Girls Online Report.

12:48: Cecille discussed research highlights how platform design features enable perpetrators to easily contact and groom girls online. Study involved fictitious 14-year-old profiles and analysis of 10 popular platforms to map user journeys.

Key issues: lack of preventative safe platform design and platforms do very little to prevent inappropriate and abusive contact, poor safety features, and inadequate moderation.

Strong call for action from government to legislate safer design, Ofcom for robust regulation, and tech companies to embed safety as a core element for their platforms and other researchers to centre girls' experiences in their work.

Recommendations include Implement safer design regulations through the UK Online Safety Act. Establishing youth voice representation in digital regulation. Urge Welsh Government to write to UK counterparts to push for action.

Highlighted the recommendation to understand girl's experience. Post the Cross-Party Group meeting on 17th July on Child Sexual Abuse there will be a follow up workshop on the 18th of September at the NSPCC Wales Hub to explore these issues through an intersectional lens. Please get in touch to attend.

Insights from the workshop will inform Ofcom and their VAWG guidance and input the same into the Welsh gov child sexual abuse strategy consultation and towards the new VAWDASW strategy as the current strategy does not mention online harm.

12:55: Sioned agreed that a lot of this harm takes place in spaces that are not very visible to us and so much goes under radar. Asks about if there is anything specifically, we can ask the Welsh government beyond the reviews mentioned. Is there anything to also ask Welsh gov to look into asking for priorities of colleagues in UK government as well regarding this report.

13:00: Cecille said that we can ask Welsh gov to write to UK government to ask them to prioritise implementation of the Online Safety Act. Suggested putting together a letter for the Welsh Government in terms of key calls to take moving forward. Key calls include listening to the voices of young people and prioritise their lived experience. Would be great to also highlight the gaps at Senedd for the CSA and VAWDASV strategy.

13:02: Yashiba asked in terms of engaging with young people what is NSPCC envisioning to ensure that young people are incorporated through the process.

13:03: Cecille spoke about the Youth Voice Amplification group as NSPCC is working together with an organisation called Platform to support young people to talk about key issues relating to online harms and meet decision makers and influence processes.

One of the wider NSPCC calls to the UK govt is to ask for a young people's user representative body to oversee the implementation of the Online Safety Act.

13:05: Sioned speaks about Wales having a child sensitive approach when it comes to listening to children. Both presentations highlighted the importance of young people's experiences. Also supports putting together the letter Cecille mentioned.

13:10: Sioned announces next meetings in September including the AGM for the Cross-Party Group. In the autumn as political parties will be putting out their manifestos, Sioned suggests that members of the CPG could potentially share priorities for the next Welsh Government in the next meeting and bring some asks to the group.

If you want to highlight what the group should also consider moving forward, please email and reach out to Yashiba.

Closes the meeting by thanking all speakers and participants. Will see everyone next in September.