

Children and Young People on the Margins Evidence Session

NYAS Cymru Questions for Consideration

19th September 2024

1. In response to the Children, Young People and Education's Committee *'If not now, then when'* report in 2023, Welsh Government accepted recommendation 21 from the Committee which recommended for Welsh Government to: "respond to the concerns raised by NYAS Cymru in oral evidence on 15 February 2023, and by the Children's Society in their written response to our consultation, in relation to incidents of children missing from care. In doing so, it should set out clearly its expectations of local authorities, the police, and other statutory partners in their response to incidents of missing children, and its views on their calls for statutory return home interviews."
 - What steps have Welsh Government taken since accepting recommendation 21 to set out their clear expectations of local authorities, the police, and other statutory partners in their response to incidents of missing children?
2. In England, care-experienced children have a statutory right to the offer of an independent return interview after a missing incident. In the remainder of the current Programme of Government, will Welsh Government make the offer of an independent return interview a statutory right for care-experienced children in Wales?
3. Access to return interview services in Wales remain unequal, with not all regions commissioning independent return interview services. What is Welsh Government going to do to make sure all care-experienced children in Wales can access return interview services if they wish to?
4. Can Welsh Government provide an update on what it is doing to improve data collection and availability regarding children missing from care and children at risk of or victims of exploitation?
5. Do Welsh Government have a timeline for when they plan to update the All-Wales Practice Guides for safeguarding children missing from home or care?
6. Will Welsh Government create a national strategy to tackle the issue of child criminal exploitation in Wales, including the introduction of a statutory definition of child criminal exploitation and a funding plan to support intervention services?
7. Out of area placements often mean that children moved away from their friends, family and support network and as a result, they may 'go missing' to return to be among their

support network within their home local authorities. NYAS Cymru is concerned that the Part 1 of the Health and Social Care (Wales) Bill may result in more children being placed outside of their local areas and lead to an increase in missing incidents:

- What steps will Welsh Government to take ensure that there is not an increase of children moved out of area as a result of the introduction of the Bill?
- What steps will Welsh Government take to make sure there is not an increase in missing incidents amongst care-experienced children as a result of the Health and Social Care (Wales) Bill?
- Would Welsh Government consider making the offer of an independent return interview a statutory right under Part 1 of the Health and Social Care (Wales) Bill as a safeguarding tool to mitigate against any unintended negative consequences of the elimination of profit from children's social care?