

# Cross-Party Group Annual Report

2024/2025

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

### 1. Group membership and office holders.

**Chair:** Buffy Williams MS (elected 1<sup>st</sup> May 2024)

**Secretariat:** The Secretariat is jointly provided by NSPCC Cymru, Lucy Faithfull Foundation, Survivors' Trust Cymru, Stepping Stones North Wales and RASASC NW, We Stand.

### 2. Context/Overview of Work

This report provides an overview of the Cross Party's work and ongoing priorities in tackling Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) in Wales during 2024/2025. It reflects our collaborative efforts to ensure that reflections from frontline practitioners, leading organisations and children and young people's voices remain central to the development and delivery of national strategies and actions.

As we look ahead to the publication of the Welsh Government's new 10-Year CSA Strategy and Action Plan, the CPG and membership is proud to have fed into its development—identifying critical gaps and proposing actions required to strengthen the national response to CSA. We welcome the Welsh Government's continued focus on Peer-on-Peer Sexual Harassment and have worked to ensure that the lived experiences and perspectives of children and young people are embedded in all aspects of policy and implementation.

In addition, this year, the CPG has explored the next steps for the realisation of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) recommendations in Wales, particularly around the recommendation on Mandatory Reporting recognising the importance of sustained and coordinated action.

The CPG has also hosted meetings to encourage the intersections between CSA, Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), and Online Safety, highlighting the need for a coherent, cross-cutting approach with safeguarding at its core and that takes an intersectional lens to the risks, harms and solutions to keeping children safer online

We welcome the appointment of Mabon ap Gwynfor MS as Deputy Chair of the CPG. The CPG represents a cross-party commitment to tackling CSA and we look forward to continuing this work into next year and the 7<sup>th</sup> Senedd Term.

### 3. CPG Meetings since the last AGM

#### Meeting 1

**Meeting Date:** 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2024

**Title:** Early Intervention Working with People who Pose a Sexual Risk to Children as Part of a Public Health Approach

**Location:** Virtual

#### **Speakers**

- Buffy Williams MS – CPG Chair (BW)
- Sarah Smith – Lucy Faithfull Foundation (SS)
- Sharron Wareham – Barnardo’s Cymru (SW)
- Ruth Mullineux-Morgan - NSPCC Cymru (RMM)

#### **Attendees**

- Ryan Evans (RW)- Senior Researcher and Communications Officer
- Buffy Williams MS (BW)
- Ruth Mullineux-Morgan, CPG Secretary – Senior Policy Officer, NSPCC Cymru (RMM)
- Claire Short – Manager, Lucy Faithful Foundation Wales (CS)
- Phil Walker - UK National Dev manager, Survivors Trust (PW)
- Becky Booth - Chief Executive, We Stand (BB)
- Gill Jones - Lucy Faithfull Foundation Wales (GJ)
- Flur Emlyn - RASASC North Wales (FE)
- Sarah Smith - Innovation Lead, Lucy Faithful Foundation (LFF)
- Sharron Wareham - Programme Manager, Better Futures, Barnardo’s Cymru (SW)
- Debbie Woodroffe - New Pathways (DW)
- Sian Bibey - Children in Wales (SB)
- Hayley Fry - Crime Stoppers (HF)
- Kirsty Hudson - Cardiff University (KH)
- Elise - Valleys Kids
- Jan Pickles - National Independent Safeguarding Board (JP)
- Amy Bainton – Barnardo's (AB)
- Nicola Cowan - Welsh Government (?) (NC)
- Sarah Walton-Jones - Lucy Faithfull (SWJ)
- Fay Maxted - The Survivors Trust (FM)
- CEO Stepping Stones North Wales
- Melissa Wood - We Stand (MW)
- Becky Booth - We Stand (BB)
- Anna Stockdale – NSPCC (AS)

#### **Minutes**

##### **1. Agenda Item 1: [Buffy Williams MS] Opening Remarks**

Buffy Williams MS opened the meeting by welcoming all to the meeting of the Saving Futures, Preventing Child Sexual Abuse Cross-Party Group focused on work with offenders of CSA and those who pose a sexual risk to children as part of a holistic public health approach to prevention. BW set the context that child sexual abuse is a major public health problem affecting more than a million children under the age of 16 in the UK. All available evidence indicates that the risk to children has grown during the Covid-19 pandemic. It is for this reason we must be stronger, bolder and more

innovative. BW outlined how the Cross-Party Group has, since its inception has advocated a public health approach to preventing CSA. A public health model for prevention distinguishes between primary (or universal), secondary (or selected), and tertiary (or indicated) prevention. The approach is built around the possibility that interventions may be directed to preventing sexual violence before it would otherwise first occur (primary or secondary prevention); as well as after its occurrence, to prevent further offending and victimisation (tertiary prevention). Addressing Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) from a public health perspective therefore involves understanding the root causes, risk factors, and broader societal impacts, and then developing comprehensive strategies for prevention and intervention. The Cross-Party Group welcomed the publication of Welsh Government's first National Action Plan for Preventing and responding to child sexual abuse in 2019 and we are pleased that the 2nd Action Plan is in the process of development. It was outlined that it was therefore timely for the meeting will discuss how work with CSA offenders forms a critical component of a public health approach. BW also stated that this meeting served as the 2024 Annual General Meeting (AGM) and moved to put forward and approve our 2023-2024 Annual Report.

## **2. Agenda Item 2: AGM and Annual Report**

Annual Report put forward by BW/RMM and seconded by CS. BW outlined that the Annual Report would be tabled on the CPG website.

## **3. Agenda Item 3: Project Intercept – Sarah Smith, Lucy Faithfull Foundation**

BW introduced Sarah Smith (SS) from the Lucy Faithfull Foundation (LFF) and highlighted that organisations like LFF have shown, not least via the helplines they provide, that people are often concerned about their sexual interest or behaviour towards children. This concern provides us with a window of opportunity to prevent abuse from occurring in the first place or being repeated. BW outlined that organisations like the Lucy Faithfull Foundation, Barnardo's and RASASC North Wales (Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Centre, North Wales) all of whom we will hear from today are leaders in delivering interventions designed to protect children by working with people who pose a sexual risk and diverting them from causing harm. Many of the 5 organisations also work with individuals and families who have been affected by abuse. And they help professionals who work with families to create safer environments for children. The Lucy Faithfull Foundation delivers a range of interventions and support services aimed to protect children through work with people who pose a sexual risk, including the confidential Stop It Now helpline and Shore, a website for teenagers. SS, LFF Innovation Lead provided a presentation about Project Intercept, a ground-breaking initiative that is tackling the huge and growing crime of online child sexual abuse by disrupting and deterring people from offending and instead driving them towards confidential help to change their behaviour.

## **4. Agenda Item 4: Sharron Wareham, Gobaith Project – Barnardos Cymru**

BW introduced Sharron Wareham (SW), Children's Services Manager for Barnardo's Cymru. SW manages is called Better Futures, who support children, young people and families impacted by child sexual abuse. The service has a particular focus on assessment and longer-term intervention with children who display harmful sexual behaviour and or child sexual exploitation. The service is a partnership between 6 Local Authorities in South Wales and Swansea Bay Health Board. SW provided a presentation outlining the Gobaith Project developed in collaboration with children, families and practitioners across the social care workforce, to develop a harmful sexual behaviour pathway and to provide proportionate responses to children and young people where harmful sexual behaviour is of concern.

## **5. Agenda Item 5: Presentation on Don't Steal My Future Programme, Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Centre, North Wales (RASASC), Fflur Emlyn.**

Fflur Emlyn (FE) provided an overview of the Don't Steal My Future programme. In 2022, North Wales Police (NWP) in response to Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) 16+ initiative funded RASASC NW to develop our existing educational training programme to meet NWP objectives to address VAWG. RASASC NW secured the expertise of TACTA/Rachel Curtis to co-develop the Don't Steal My Future programme. Don't Steal My Future is an impact driven training workshop, describing the widespread prevalence of sexual violence and how we can begin to change attitudes and behaviours towards women, girls and sexual violence. It is offender focused and aims to reduce violence particularly towards women and girls who make up the large proportion of the population affected by these crimes. It has been delivered to schools, colleges, universities and rugby clubs across North Wales FREE of charge. Delivered in Welsh, English or Bilingual – all are resources bilingual. There was not much time remaining for Q&A at the end of the meeting but attendees were asked to consider what other interventions and work is needed in this space? What role should this work play in a National Prevention approach. What, if anything is missing?

## **6. Agenda Item 6: AOB**

No AOB but BW outlined the date of the next meeting as Thursday 3rd October 13.00–14.00 the proposed topic will be an update on the Peer-on-Peer Abuse Action Plan from Welsh Government. BW draws meeting to a close at 13.00.

### **Meeting 2:**

**Meeting Date:** 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2024

**Title:** Proposed Mandatory Reporting Duty for Child Sexual Abuse: Implications for Wales. Considerations, Opportunities and Next Steps

**Location:** Virtual

### **Attendees**

- Buffy Williams MS – Chair (BW)
- Ruth Mullineux-Morgan – CPG Secretariat, NSPCC Cymru (RMM)
- Cecile Gwilym - NSPCC Cymru (CG)
- Jonathan West - CEO Mandate Now (JW)
- Joseph Kiff - University of Central Bedfordshire (JK)
- Philip Walker - CPG Secretariat, Survivors Trust (PW)
- Fflur Emlyn – CPG Secretariat, RASASC North Wales (FE)
- Sharron Wareham - CPG Member, Barnardo's Cymru (SW)
- Fay Maxted - CPG Secretariat, Survivors Trust (FM)
- Amy Bainton (AB)
- Dr Kirsty Hudson – CPG Member, Cardiff University (KH)

### **Meeting Minutes/Key points from speakers**

Buffy Williams MS opened the meeting, highlighting that now is a timely moment to consider Mandatory Reporting off the back of the IICSA recommendation and Welsh Government's response

as well as the Welsh Government's ongoing development of the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Action Plan on Preventing and Responding to CSA. Buffy Williams MS began by introducing Cecile Gwilym, Policy and Public Affairs Manager, NSPCC Cymru.

**Cecile Gwilym, NSPCC Cymru** outlined key considerations that are crucial for ensuring reporting is one part of a wider and cohesive child protection response:

1. Reporting must be part of a **child centred response** which results in children receiving the right support to recover from abuse.
2. **Lack of resources should never prevent children who are being abused being identified by the authorities**, protected and accessing the support they need.
3. **Everyone should be clear on their role in protecting children.**
4. Those covered by a duty to report should have **training** that enables them to confidently and accurately **identify signs of abuse or neglect**, as well as the **barriers children face to reporting**. This includes building their skills of working relationally with children including an understanding of trauma and the impacts of grooming on the ability of children to rationalise and disclose their experiences.
5. **Consequences for failing to act** need to be **proportional**, including professional and regulatory sanctions, with separate criminal offences for **intentionally covering up or concealing abuse**.
6. **Institutions must be responsible** for failures to protect children made by those with a responsibility to report who work for or with them, and for their own **organisational failure** to implement appropriate safeguarding, policies, processes and training.
7. Children must have **opportunities to engage with support in safe spaces** without the fear of always being reported to the authorities.

The priority must be to prevent children experiencing abuse, for action to be taken to protect them, and where abuse and neglect has occurred, to stop further harm and trauma. Any amendment to the current regime of mandatory reporting in Wales or decision to extend it to a wider range of individuals must occur in the context of further support and investment in the child protection system.

**Buffy Williams MS** thanked Cecile Gwilym and introduced Jonathan West, CEO of [Mandate Now](#):

**Jonathan West, Mandate Now** provided key positions, beginning by highlighting some of the main reasons that people don't report voluntarily. These included a lack of confidence or self-censorship and tending to ask: "what if I'm wrong" rather than "what if I'm right?". Pressure from leadership and protecting the institution's reputation were also cited as reasons people may not report suspected child abuse.

Despite updates to guidance and numerous public campaigns it was highlighted that prevalence rates continue to represent an 'epidemic of abuse'.<sup>i</sup> It was emphasised that the key question is how to

change the behaviour of people who are reluctant to report? A series of studies in Australia point to an increase in children protected where Mandatory Reporting is in place.<sup>ii</sup> It was also highlighted that the UK is an outlier with most other countries having some form of mandatory reporting present although it was acknowledged that the way different models operate varies.

Mandate Now's position on what makes a good mandatory reporting law includes satisfying key principles of:

#### Clarity

- *What kinds of abuse that are in scope?*
  - Known child sexual abuse and reasonably grounded suspicions of CSA
  - Not other forms of abuse (physical, neglect etc.)
- *Who is mandated to report?*
  - Employees and volunteers of institutions in a position of trust working with children
  - Leadership of institutions caring for children
- *Who do they report to?*
  - Report to Local Authority Designated Officer or equivalent
  - Reporting upward in an institution is not sufficient

#### Proportionality

- Modest criminal sanctions (i.e. a fine) for non-reporting

#### Protection for reporters

- An offence to retaliate against those who report in good faith

Mandate Now also outlined a series of measures that they recommend increasing the effectiveness of Mandatory Reporting including:

- Standardised and accredited safeguarding training for people working with children;
- Standardised training scheme for designated safeguarding leads;
- Statutory guidance to include model safeguarding policies for schools, churches etc;
- Specialist body to inspect schools for safeguarding (not Ofsted/Estyn);
- Full inspection against DBS referrals;
- In due course, extend inspections to other settings (e.g. sports clubs, churches);
- Effective triaging of reports by trained Local Authority designated safeguarding leads;
- DBS to have authority to bring prosecutions for failure to make DBS referrals.

**Buffy Williams MS** introduced the final speaker, **Joseph Kiff, a research fellow at University of Bedfordshire and co-author of NSPCC commissioned research:** 'Listening to children and young people's experiences of disclosing child sexual abuse: Insights for the proposed mandatory reporting duty in England and Wales.'<sup>iii</sup>

The study was a scoping review (full methodology can be seen in an appendix in the report), which drew on multiple peer reviewed journal databases and additional supplementary searches including of grey literature (reports) by the NSPCC. 6121 studies were returned, 4,335 abstracts screened and 155 studies assessed for eligibility. This led to **42 studies** being included that met the inclusion criteria.<sup>1</sup>

The evidence review was carried out with the objective of understanding the existing evidence base about children and young people's views and experiences of disclosing child sexual abuse (CSA), to amplify their voices and consider the implications of this for the proposed mandatory duty in England and Wales. Key findings from the review were that:

- There is almost no published academic evidence that directly explores children and young people's views and experiences of mandatory reporting systems;<sup>iv</sup>
- The wider and more established literature on disclosure of CSA rarely<sup>v</sup> considers the system of reporting in terms of children and young people's needs.

These findings reveal a significant oversight and gap in existing evidence that would benefit from being explicitly explored in future research. As well as highlighting these important gaps in evidence, the review collated the existing evidence from children and young people about their wider experiences of the process of disclosure of CSA. This was structured around Collin-Vézina et al.'s (2015) ecological framework<sup>vi</sup> approach which helped to analyse and present the findings. This approach collated the available evidence about barriers to disclosure around three key themes, Barriers from Within, Barriers in Relation to Others and Barriers in Relation to the Social World as well as exploring key facilitators for disclosure.

### **Actions Agreed**

- Buffy Williams MS will write to the Deputy Minister to ask for an update and seek clarification on any plans to evaluate the impact of existing duties in Wales. She will ask for more details about Welsh Government's commitment to seek further views about the implications of placing duties to report children and adults at risk on individuals, as part of the conversation on next steps.
- The CPG Secretariat will circulate a briefing and table meeting minutes summing up key positions and recommendations for next steps in considering the implications of the IICSA recommendation on Mandatory Reporting for Wales.
- The CPG Secretariat will consider convening a follow up meeting or roundtable to allow further discussion of the range of points raised during this meeting.

### **Meeting 3:**

**Meeting Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> February 2025

**Title:** A Youth-Led Session on the Welsh Government's Peer on Peer Sexual Harassment in Education Settings Action Plan – One Year On

**Location:** In Person/Hybrid, Media Briefing Room, Senedd Cymru

## **Attendees**

### **In Person**

- Joyce Watson MS – Member of the Senedd for the Mid and West Wales (JW)
- Ruth Mullineux-Morgan – Senior Policy Officer, NSPCC Cymru (RMM)
- Cecile Gwilym – PAPA Manager, NSPCC Cymru (CG)
- Sarah Witcombe-Hayes – Senior Policy Researcher, NSPCC Cymru (SWH)
- Naomi White – Policy & Public Affairs Officer, NSPCC Cymru (NW)
- Zuzanna Gwozdz – Policy & Public Affairs Assistant, NSPCC Cymru (ZG)
- Saul Cooke - Media Liaison, NSPCC (SC)
- Rani Govender - CSO Regulatory Policy Manager, NSPCC (RG)
- Kathryn Lawrence - Better Futures Practitioner, Barnardo's (KL)
- Nicola Ward - Better Futures Practitioner, Barnardo's (NW)
- Lowri Williams - Better Futures Practitioner, Barnardo's (LW)
- Poppie Jones - Better Futures Service User, Barnardo's (PJ)
- Keegan Greenfield-Lewis - Better Futures Service User, Barnardo's (KGL)
- Robyn Jones - Better Futures Service User, Barnardo's (RJ)
- Bex Roots - Policy Assistant, Platform (BR)
- Natalie Lewis - CYP Project Lead, Platform (NL)
- Siobhan Parry – CEO, Platform (SP)
- Holly Swan - NSPCC/Platform Youth Voice Amplification Project (HS)
- Lana Smart - NSPCC/Platform Youth Voice Amplification Project (LS)
- Claire Hathaway - CYP Support, Young Wales (CH)
- Emily Ruck - CYP Support, Young Wales (ER)
- Charlie Lock - Member of the Young Wales Feeling Safe (Online and in Relationships) Advisory Group, Young Wales (CL)
- Khandi Jarvis - Member of the Young Wales Feeling Safe (Online and in Relationships) Advisory Group, Young Wales (KJ)
- Gillian Clarke - CPG Secretariat, RASAC Wales (GC)
- Claire Short - CPG Secretariat, Lucy Faithful Foundation Wales (CS)
- Susan Moore - CPG Secretariat, We Stand (SM)
- Lynne Neagle - Cabinet Secretary for Education and Member of the Senedd for Torfaen, Welsh Government (LN)
- Jason Pollard - Official to Cabinet Secretary for Education, Welsh Government (JP)
- Nicola Edwards - Deputy Director Equity in Education Division, Welsh Government (NE)
- Prof EJ Renold – Professor, Cardiff University (EJR)
- David Hopkins - Chair of Stop It Now Wales Action Group (DH)

### **Online**

- Sarah Cooper – CPG Member, Head of Digital Resilience Team, Welsh Government DRiES Team (SC)

- Janice Dent – CPG Member, Regional Lead Advisor – VAWDASV, Newport City Council (JD)
- Ryan Evans - (RE)
- Gillian Jones – CPG Secretariat, Assistant National Manager, Lucy Faithful Foundation (GJ)
- Lucia Goss - (LC)
- Carl Harris – CPG Member, Assistant Director for Wales, NSPCC Cymru (CH)
- Hayley Fry – Member, Wales National Manager of Crimestoppers (HF)
- Joshua Henley - (JH)
- Katy Smith - (KS)
- Kirrin Davidson- CPG Member, Policy Advisor for the Office of the Children's Commissioner for Wales (KD)
- Dr Kirsty Hudson – CPG Member, Reader in Criminology, Cardiff University (KH)
- Mark Devereux – CPG Member, Social Services Section Manager, Conwy Council (MD)
- Nicola Fitzpatrick - (NF)
- Kate Rothwell - Welsh Government DRiES Team (KR)
- Sarah Walton-Jones – CPG Member, Project Worker, Stop it Now! Wales (SWJ)
- Sharron Wareham – CPG Member, Services Manager, Barnardo's Cymru (SW)
- Siân Bibey - (SB)
- Philip Walker - CPG Secretariat, National Development Manager, Survivors Trust (PW)

#### **Apologies**

- Fay Maxted - CPG Secretariat, Survivors Trust

#### **Meeting Minutes/Key points from speakers**

##### **1. Call to Order**

[Time: 13.00]

##### **2. Agenda Item 1: Open the meeting**

###### **Discussion**

- JW Introduced the topic of the event: A Youth-Led Session on the Welsh Government's Peer on Peer Sexual Harassment in Education Settings Action Plan – One Year On, marking one year since the publication of the Welsh Government's Action Plan.
- JW Introduced and welcomed young representatives from Young Wales' Feeling Safe (Online and in Relationships) Advisory Group and in the audience, Barnardo's Better Future Service and NSPCC/Platform's newly established Child Safety Online Youth Voice Amplification project.
- JW outlined the agenda for the event, thanking each speaker for attendance.
- JW explained the Welsh Government's definition of peer-on-peer sexual harassment, the public health approach advocated by the CPG, and the context and development of the Action Plan.
- JW highlighted the importance of the Senedd and Welsh Government centring the views and experiences of children and young people in the work towards tackling peer-on-peer

harassment and acknowledged the advocacy work of the young advocate speakers in the room – CL and KJ.

**Decisions:** N/A

**Actions:** N/A

### **3. Agenda Item 2: Young Wales members introduce themselves and give a view about (i) why the peer-on-peer action plan is important, (ii) their top wish for what the Action Plan will deliver**

#### **Discussion**

CL and KJ introduced themselves, shared their stories and motivations for becoming advocates on the issue of preventing peer-on-peer sexual harassment. They expressed their wishes and highlighted the thoughts and wishes provided by other young people who have contributed their views during a recent session. These insights were shown on a PowerPoint presentation throughout the event.

- CYP's experiences must be respected no matter their identity.
- Education must deliver change in behaviour and help people understand the consequences and impact of their actions on others.
- Need to normalise discussing sensitive topics so that they are not stigmatised.
- The hope is that the plan will provide support for people in need.
- Action plan is important for covering all types of harassment, including raising awareness of 'less dangerous' forms and understanding of their serious impact.
- Many types of sexual harassment become normalised from a young age; young children conditioned into think its ok to be treated in an inappropriate way.
- This can lead to guilt, self-blame, and children underplaying the impact harassment has had.
- Misogynistic influencers are impacting children's behaviour, normalising these dangerous views.
- Schools are often not equipped to deal with sexual harassment.

**Decisions:** N/A

**Actions:** N/A

### **4. Agenda Item 3: Cabinet Secretary Update**

#### **Discussion**

LN provided an overview and key updates of progress against the Action Plan.

- Action Plan sends a message that no place for sexual harassment in schools but know that it spills out into wider society and need to address it comprehensively.

- Everyone's Invited shone a spotlight on sexual harassment in society and raised great awareness. It enabled more conversations with CYP about their experiences and how to provide greater support - which led to the Action Plan.
- Update on each part of the AP:
- Prevention
  - Online resources available for teachers and learners
- Early intervention
  - Helplines essential, and continuing to fund two important helplines
  - Also providing other support services like the school counselling programme
- Wellbeing and support
  - Placed wellbeing at heart of education, through curriculum and ensuring schools adopt Whole School Approach; mandatory RSE
  - Statutory guidance has been in place from 2021 for schools on developing plans to support wellbeing - including poor wellbeing from sexual harassment
- Learning and leadership
  - School staff need to take non-stigmatising and inclusive approach to learners that face extra harassment e.g. LGBTQ children
  - WG has important role, providing support and resources, RSE curriculum etc to tackle as part of everyday teaching
- Parents, carers, community
  - Partnerships can lead to positive outcomes for all - WG are investing in promoting home-school relationship in Wales
  - Focusing on a number of campaigns and initiatives to support parent / community / school relationships, e.g. Schools and Family Engagement Officers
- Online
  - New tech can be fantastic but causes harm too
  - To support teachers and others to handle issue of deepfakes have published guidance that developed with UKSIC
  - Also worked with Football Wales regarding speaking out about harassment on social media
- Research
  - Latest report in October - reporting views of secondary schools, including on peer-to-peer sexual harassment
  - Noted supporting work with NSPCC and Cardiff University regarding how pre-teen CYP understand sexual dynamics and gender identity

**Decisions:** N/A

**Actions:** N/A

## **5. Agenda Item 4: Why the Peer-on-Peer Action Plan matters – Young people’s thoughts**

### **Discussion**

CL and KJ spoke about their overall priorities and thoughts on what concerns the Action Plan should address and how this could be achieved. They then invited comments from the floor or attendees online responding to updates and young people’s input.

- Education key to tackling misogyny and preventing risky behaviours early on.
- Need support for children outside mainstream education settings.
- Need better focus on prevention to keep safe online, including thinking about other measures for children e.g. age for smartphones being limited.
- Behaviours often carried out because seen others doing it or see it online - need to help children better understand the impact of these behaviours and follow through on consequences

LN response:

- Importance of RSE - teaching how to interact respectfully from a young age
  - Good basis in Wales - but need to ensure all CYP have access to high quality teaching
- WG are updating bullying guidance which will capture more on sexual harassment
- Phones a part of a YP's live, need to help YP use them in a way that benefits them and be mindful of risks - WG looking to do more on this
- Interested in focussing more on restorative approaches in behaviour
- School counselling - good access across Wales, but know there is variation in waiting times, offer on number of sessions etc. Looking to do more work to develop a guarantee for what CYP are getting.

**Decisions:** N/A

**Actions:** N/A

## **6. Agenda Item 5: The importance of hearing young people’s voices.**

### **Discussion**

- CG thanked CL and KJ for sharing their stories and reflections on the Action Plan, as well as the Young People and audience who attended, reassuring that their points will be considered in the next steps of the Action Plan.
- CG reiterated the value of bringing different groups of young people together and allowing them to share their experiences of peer-on-peer harassment in a safe, supportive and meaningful way. She acknowledged it is not possible for all young people to do so, recognising the importance of navigating this context in a sensitive and trauma-informed way.
- CG reflected on the milestones in developing the Action Plan over the previous 3 years, recounting youth-led events prepared by the CPG, the Time for Action’ briefing providing

recommendations to the Welsh Government as it finalised the Action Plan on peer-on-peer sexual harassment, extensive youth participation work with schools and youth groups, and NSPCC Cymru's research and policy development to increase our understanding of the nature and effects of peer-on-peer harassment and create effective solutions.

- CG discussed the plans to continue the progress of the Action Plan, including the proposed research project in partnership with Cardiff University and local schools. Also discussed was the idea to establish a children and young people's advisory board to co-design the Welsh Government's approach and to ensure that children's voices are central to the responses developed.
- CG closed the event, again emphasising the importance of giving voices to the young people who are particularly vulnerable and may struggle to share their experience of peer-on-peer harassment without the adequate support from trusted adults and professionals, paired with appropriate RSE. She emphasised the commitment of NSPCC Cymru and the Secretariat and Members of the CPG to this issue and thanked all audience for attending.

**Decisions:** N/A

**Actions:** The outputs and key discussion points during the meeting and raised by the CYP will be collated into a visual meeting output with input/feedback from CYP. This will be sent to the Cabinet Secretary and made available on the CPG website in due course.

**Date of Next Meeting:**

17<sup>th</sup> July 2025

## Annual Financial Statement.

### Cross Party Group on Preventing Child Sexual Abuse

Chair: Buffy Williams MS

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

<b>Group's Expenses.</b>	Senedd catering on 20/02/2025	£119.58
<b>Costs of all goods.</b>		

<b>Benefits received by the group or individual Members from outside bodies.</b>	No benefits received.	£0.00
<b>Any secretariat or other support.</b>	No financial support received.	£0.00
<b>Services provided to the Group such as hospitality.</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Description and name of provider</b>	<b>Cost</b>
20/02/2025	ESS Support Services Worldwide – Senedd catering provider for Welsh cakes	£119.58
<b>Total cost</b>		£119.58