

**P-05-859 Provide Child Houses in Wales for victims of child sexual abuse,
Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 16.08.19**

I would like to thank Julie Morgan, the Deputy for her statement and the commitment made to listen to the position where children in Wales feel listened to, benefit from child-centred practice and can realise their right to be safe. However, the whole reason for my petition, is because there are no places for this to happen.

The commitment is lovely, but what is the action to provide this place. SARC centres have waiting lists of up to 18 months, and a SARC centre that deals with adults is not always appropriate to deal with children. The point is being missed along these discussion, that there is not an adequate centre/centres in Wales to provide this commitment.

I address the concern again, whilst you wait for the Child Houses in London to be reviewed, what happens to the children in Wales who are currently being sexually abused and assaulted. Can they wait, years down the line for a Child House concept to be in place.

There is, appropriate research and evidence in to the module to date, that can show its success and there should be similar across the United Kingdom.

Safe places can be provided alongside existing frameworks, just as Womens Refuges have been provided alongside existing frameworks. To say, that there would be concerns of a child refuge being a target for perpetrators, is the same as saying Womens Refuges is a target for perpetrators. Quite clearly, Womens Refuges have proven they are a necessity and a not a risk factor.

New Pathways is a SARC, and is not wholly children centred. It would not take a great deal of provision, to provide a focused child centre wholly for children, as is the Lighthouse in London.

My apologies for lack of response previously, I was not aware a lack of response interfered with the petition, this has never been explained and I have discussed this in detail with Ross, and secondly it was because there was nothing to say in reply. As is my response above, the commitment and responses that they are acknowledging and updating legislations, is not dealing with the actual issue the petition was for. To provide the child house concept in Wales, and to make sure there are child focus centres across Wales, where children can access themselves, without needing to be referred.

The Lighthouse in London, has an open door policy, children can walk in and speak to someone.

If a Child Refuge is not an option at this time, then the above is certainly doable.

With regards

Mayameen Meftahi