

## **P-05-859 Provide Child Houses in Wales for Victims of Child Sexual Abuse**

This petition was submitted by Mayameen Meftahi, having collected 227 signatures.

### **Text of Petition**

The child house concept is based on best practice learned from the USA and Scandinavia. Recognising the vulnerability of the child victim and the harm caused to the child by multiple interviews, the child house uses a child-friendly response to child sexual abuse (CSA).

In the UK, 2 child houses are available in the city of London, in Wales there is none.

As a child, you do not know who and where to run to, you do not know that there is any support available, if we can offer Child Houses across the UK, we can save children.

Continuation of Refuges for Domestic Violence, there should be Child Houses for children suffering child sexual abuse.

We know that many children who are suffering child abuse will at some point try and escape, they will want to free themselves, but they have nowhere to go. They will be returned back home, back into the arms of their abuser.

Providing a safe house, that is child-friendly, that can open the way for disclosure and safeguarding.

In Iceland, the 'Barnahus' model has been in place since 1998, and offers in one place, forensic interviews, making court statements, medical examinations and access to therapeutic services. We should make this available like we do a domestic violence refuge. Since the Barnahus model was established in Iceland, the number of child victims of CSA coming forward for help has more than doubled per year, indictments have tripled, and convictions have doubled. This is enough evidence to show they are crucial.

Not only should we be providing child houses, but we should continue this

with educating children that these options are available. Please join us in the Campaign to address this issue and let's make a push for the Welsh Government to provide a Safe House in Wales, we surely cannot expect children to get to London, if they are even aware such houses exist. Sadly this is currently not the case.

### **Additional Information**

Our children need somewhere to run to, they need to be safe and they need to have access to the correct support to save themselves from the life sentence of child sexual abuse.

Please sign this petition and start to make movements!

### **Assembly Constituency and Region**

- Swansea East
- South Wales West