

Senedd Cymru
Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg

Welsh Parliament
Children, Young People and Education Committee

Ymchwiliad i effaith argyfwng Covid-19
ar blant a phobl ifanc yng Nghymru

Inquiry into the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak
on children and young people in Wales

COV 44
Ymateb gan: Bwrdd Diogelu Plant
Gogledd Cymru

COV 44
Response from: North Wales Safeguarding
Children's Board

On behalf of the North Wales Safeguarding Childrens Board we have listed below some of the key themes in following the request from the committee around the impact of Covid-19 on children and young people.

Reduction in Safeguarding Children's reports.

All six local authorities have highlighted a drop in safeguarding reports around 50% drop in some authorities. – CID 16 reports from the North Wales Police remain constant.

Where the drop has been identified – Schools / School Nurses due to the restrictions regarding school attendance. Third sector –NSPCC and Barnardos are saying that “lack of face to face meeting has led to a fall in disclosures.

Limited attendance from vulnerable children at schools

Not all families whose children have been offered a place at schools during Covid 19 have taken up this opportunity. A number of families with children on the child protection register are unwilling to send children to school. In response a real focus in Education –around ensuring schools officers/ ESW are particularly targeting those children are most vulnerable are being contacted / children who have accessed support around emotional wellbeing – regularly keeping in touch with that cohort.

One long term impact may well be that we start to see a further increase of children who are home educated.

Online Abuse

Online abuse – the risks of online abuse has been an area where North Wales Police have reported on-gong concern particularly in relation to

children at risk of exploitation. During this lockdown period where children have attempted to go missing, we note that children and young people are becoming more creative around avoiding CCTV / Transport Police

Mental Health / Wellbeing

In North Wales, we have focused around raising awareness on promoting the child's/young person's wellbeing. We did note the key messages from Public Health Wales around the recent PRUDiC themes following a teenage suicide which may have been linked to issues around lockdown. It is also important to consider the impact of lockdown in particular in relation to young parents who have history of emotional wellbeing issues.

Engagement at Child Protection Conferences

Conferences are happening "virtually". On a positive note – engagement with families through T/C / Skype is good. A number of examples where children/young people have spoken at the case conference via Skype. Going forward this approach using technology may increase children's engagement at safeguarding meetings.

Children not known to services

A focus has been on ensuring that visits take place to see children on the child protection register / looked after children. The concern is that children who were not known to services prior to lockdown – may not be visible to services / able to access support. A lot of awareness raising work has taken place across Wales around ensure the message that services are still open..

Employment opportunities

The economic impact of Covid-19 will impact young people's employment opportunities and going forward this will particularly impact care leavers. It will be an area that will need to be considered going forward.

Support available for the workforce

We are having to adapt so that training will be delivered via on-line / video. For example a suite of **virtual training resources** for the North Wales Safeguarding Board to support learning and development in relation to the All Wales Procedures