

South East Wales Safeguarding Children Board  
Bwrdd Diogelu Plant De Ddwyrain Cymru



Working Together For Children - Gweithio'n Gytân Ar Gyfer Plant

Report on consultations undertaken  
with young people across the Region  
**Spring Term 2016**



# South East Wales Safeguarding Children Board

## Working Together For Children

### Background

Since its inception in 2013, the South East Wales Safeguarding Children Board (SEWSCB) have actively sought the views of children and young people to inform their work and in doing so have responded to their responsibilities, under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 12, to ensure that children have a right to a say on matters that affect them. Participation and consultation with children, young people, parents / carers and professionals is co-ordinated through the SEWSCB Engagement and Communication Group.

### Introduction

In the Autumn term of 2015, the SEWSCB set out to undertake consultations, due to take place in the spring term of 2016, with young people across the region to inform its Strategic plan and future priorities. This engagement activity is in recognition of the new 'Social Services and Well Being Act Wales' which places an emphasis on Children's engagement and the mandate to hold at least one event to inform the Boards work:

"12.1 Section 135(4) (c) indicates that Regulations must specify when and how children or adults who are, or may be, affected by the exercise of a Safeguarding Board's functions must be given the opportunity to participate in the Board's work. Regulation 69 provides that at least once a year Safeguarding Boards must give children or adults the opportunity to participate in one or more events of the boards work."

With the support of the SEWSCB Business Unit, the Engagement and Communication subgroup planned 5 'locality' consultation events within the local authorities that make up the region.

<b>Monmouthshire</b> event -	<b>County Hall Usk</b> on 29th January
<b>Torfaen</b> event -	<b>Pontypool Active Living Centre</b> on 2nd February 2016
<b>Caerphilly</b> event -	<b>Llancaiach Fawr</b> on 4th February 2016
<b>Blaenau Gwent</b> event -	<b>Llanhilleth Institute</b> on 9th February 2016
<b>Newport</b> event -	<b>Rodney Parade</b> on 24 <sup>th</sup> February 2016

The timing of this engagement activity was planned to set a precedent for forthcoming years to comply with the Act's requirement to engage with children and young people prior to writing its Annual Report.

"12.2 Engagement will be required to take place each year with sufficient time to enable the Board to report on the outcomes of that engagement to publish its plan before the beginning of each financial year (in order to fulfil the requirement under section 136(1) of the Act)."

The themes for the events were chosen from the SEWSCB strategy key priority 2 which looks at adolescent behaviours and safeguarding risks. For the purposes of the day these were then themed into 4 topics:

- Substance misuse
- E-safety
- 'All About me'
- Healthy relationships

*In addition to these topics, the young people were also provided opportunity to put forward other safeguarding themes that they felt the SEWSCB should address.*



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### Methodology

The events were co-ordinated by the Board Development Officer from the SEWSCB Business Unit who liaised with the Safeguarding in Education Leads in each of the respective localities to facilitate the attendance of young people at the events, chaperones and facilitators.

Whilst there were 5 separate events held, each event followed the same timetable with the same workshops and activities. With a target of 60 young people for each locality event, schools and youth groups were invited to send young people aged 12-13 years old (school year 8). Invitations made it very clear that that schools and youth groups were to send a 'fair representation of young people from across their 12/13yr band and not just 'A grade' students'.

Workshops were facilitated by a range of practitioners from a variety of organisations who have direct contact with children and young people either in a locality or across the region. These included staff from: Education, Youth Service, Social Services, Police (School Liaison Officers), Health Safeguarding, Play Therapy, Sexual Health, VAWDASV team, Inclusion and Education from the Voluntary Sector, Substance Misuse projects.

During the course of the events, the young people attended all themed workshops facilitated by 'experts' in that subject. Each group had a mixed representation of schools from across the locality and were supported by a chaperone whose role was to encourage participation and involvement.

Each event ended with a voting exercise involving all of the young people to determine the key issues that they felt the SEWSCB should address.

### Findings from the workshops

#### Substance misuse workshop

- Topics covered in schools need to be offered earlier
- Parents need to be given information on substance misuse
- Young people want to know about all drugs, their effects and impact / consequences for all involved

#### E-safety Workshop

- Young people want parents to have a much greater knowledge of E-safety and for parents to be able to support them in keeping safe online
- Young people want to know how to deal with issues with social media
- Young people need to be informed of the full consequences and understand the effects of risky behaviour with technology

#### All About Me Workshop

- Parents are less influential as young people get older however young people still have a preference to go to them over anyone else for advice.
- Social media messages, celebrities and their behaviours provide influence and pressure for young people to conform and peers exacerbate this.
- When young people have made 'wrong' or 'risky' and are dealing with the repercussions of their actions they stated that they need adults to: be understanding, non-judgemental and not shout; be respectful, reassuring and



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empathetic (without saying “I know how you feel!”) and offer motivation rewards to help the learning process and reduce future risky behaviour.

### Healthy Relationships workshop

- Many young people wouldn't confide in a teacher if there was something wrong. Young people felt that teachers need to listen more, be respectful to young people and be trustworthy
- Young people need to be better informed about sex and relationships
- Within school, young people need to be taught what makes a 'good relationship' and this needs to be reinforced at different ages
- Young people struggle with who to trust including peers and adults

### Group voting - Feeling Safe, unsafe and barriers to disclosing about risk taking behaviour

- Young people feel safe in familiar surroundings, with people they know and trust and when they are aware of future plans.
- Young people feel unsafe with people they don't know well, in places they are unfamiliar with and when they don't know what is going to happen.
- Young people often do not share their concerns about risky behaviour as they often do not know who to trust as they are worried about the repercussions for others or fear that they will be judged.

### Young people's Prioritised Safeguarding themes for the SEWSCB to address

The young people's top three safeguarding themes / issues for the SEWSCB to address were

1. Social Media and E-safety – *issues of bullying and staying safe online*
2. Substance Misuse – *greater awareness on all substance and their effects*
3. Sex Education – *better quality and more detailed and 'broader' information provided by non teachers*

Other issues raised by young people include: *Safe places-young people need to feel safe in school and in the community, physical and mental health, bullying from school to home, racism, schools made less public access.*

### Summary of key messages from the young people consulted:

- Adults, including parents, need to become more knowledgeable about the world of social media and staying safe online so that children and young people can go to them for support and advice.
- Parents need to be provided with substance misuse information so that they can educate their children and help to keep them safe
- Information on substance misuse, safety with technology, sex education needs to be provided in schools in greater depth and earlier than at present; by expert professionals in those topics in a non judgemental way
- In order for children and young people to feel comfortable to share their issues and trust in adults, they need to have built up a rapport with them and have a relationship that includes mutual trust

### Young people's feedback from the day:

“My opinion was valued”, “Not enough time to discuss things fully”, “We got to share opinions”, “I made new friends”  
“I had an opportunity to express my feelings”, “we were listened to”, “very interactive”, “had fun”, “very organised”