

P-06-1278 Introduce parenting lessons and basic life skills for High School pupils – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 07 June 2022

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1278
Ein cyf/Our ref JMEWL/00917/22

Danielle Diver

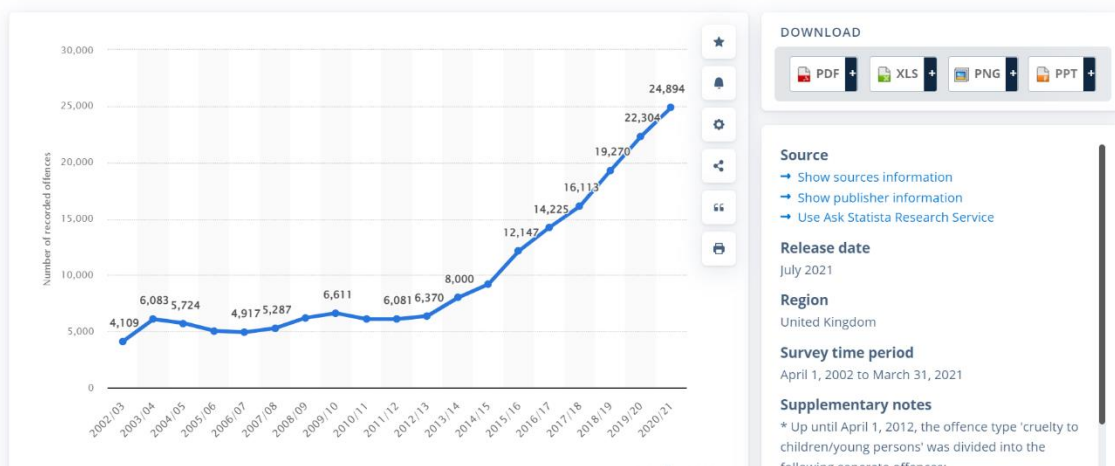
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07/06/2022

Thank you for your response to my petition. I am aware of the new curriculum for Wales and agree this is a step in the right direction in trying to prepare our children to become responsible young adults. I am also aware of the many services available to young children and families however these are not always signposted or consistent. I work in the education sector and know my school are making a concerted effort to implement strategies to support our children including providing enrichment activities and evening meals after school.

The reason for my petition was to help raise awareness of some of the recent failings in preventing child abuse. I realise there has been mounting pressures due to the pandemic, but this cruelty is happening too often, and I am continuing to see an increase in serious reports.

Number of cruelty to children/young persons offences recored in England and Wales from 2002/03 to 2020/21



In 2020/21, there were over 24.8 thousand child abuse offences recorded by the police in England and Wales, an increase of 2.9 thousand offences when compared with the previous reporting year, and a peak for this type of offence.

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/303514/child-cruelty-abuse-in-england-and-wales-uk-y-on-y/>

The government's 2020-21 data on serious incident notifications found that from April to September 2020, there was a 31% rise in incidents of death or serious harm to children under 1 when compared with the same period in 2019 (Child Safeguarding Incident Notification System, 2021)⁸.

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/news?type=1162>

As a mother of two and a human being I was absolutely heart broken by the tragic death of a young boy Arthur Labinjo-Hughes. I struggled to sleep thinking about how this vulnerable boy was tortured and made to suffer before he was cruelly taken away by two people he depended on. His mother was in prison for killing her partner, his stepmother had her own children previously removed. His extended family alerted social services two months before. His death could have been prevented if flags had been raised sooner.

<https://www.coventrytelegraph.net/news/local-news/heartbreaking-footage-arthur-labinjo-hughes-22258170>

Please take into consideration some other serious cases of abuse due to failures in systems:

- Logan Mgwangi – ‘mother, stepfather and teenager boy guilty of murdering 5-year-old’

<https://www.itv.com/news/wales/2022-04-21/mother-stepfather-and-teen-guilty-of-murdering-logan-mwangi>

- Star Hobson- ‘punched to death by Savannah Brockhill, 28, an amateur boxer and security guard who called herself the “number one psycho”

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/dec/14/star-hobson-murder-verdict-savannah-brockhill-frankie-smith>

- Leiland-James Corkill – ‘baby murdered by woman trying to adopt him’

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cumbria-61477675>

- Verphy Kudi: Mum left toddler to die to party for 6 days

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/northamptonshire-child-au-arms-taped-up-b2065554.html>

- Neglected toddler left in cot with ‘arms taped up’ as report finds significant failings in care. The report, published on Tuesday, noted “significant failings in care by professionals” who “failed to spot the warning signs that a vulnerable child was a victim of severe neglect”.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/coronavirus-child-abuse-domestic-violence-family-charity-a9519186.html>

- Neglect was the most common category of abuse for child protection plans (CPPs) in England (25,330 children at 31 March 2019) and the second most common for the child protection register (CPR) in Wales (1,005 children).

I have worked closely with Public Health Wales, Healthy Schools, Eco Schools, Police liaison team and many other outside agencies and have seen the positive impact of them working together with schools however I have also seen the implications of reduced funding to services. Some strategies seem to be a tick box exercise and are rarely embedded to show the full impact. I have friends who work in social care who are understaffed and overwhelmed with the amounts of caseloads. By the time social services are involved it is often too late for some families.

A group of the UK's largest children's organisations said years of under-investment by the government had left services overstretched, meaning more children may be taken away from their families. Analysis by The Children's Society, Barnardo's, Action for Children, [NSPCC](#) and the National Children's Bureau said that funding for children's services had fallen by £2.2bn in the past eight years, forcing many early intervention schemes to be dropped.

Working in education I have witnessed some of the following issues:

- Police liaison support is limited in schools due to funding cuts
- School nurses no longer a fixture in schools
- Information not shared correctly as too many systems being used
- Information not shared when there are staff changes, changes of schools
- There is more partnership working however less accountability
- Teachers taking on many well-being roles without the correct training and skills

I feel there is increased pressures on teachers and health professionals. The lack of support from some parents is leading to increased poor behaviour, mental health, and attitude of students in schools. These students then go on to have children and the same behaviour and attitudes continue.

'People who experience multiple adverse childhood experiences as children often raise their own children in households where adverse childhood experiences are more common. This cycle of childhood adversity can lock generations of families into poor health and anti-social behaviour'.

<https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/adverse-childhood-experiences/>

I realise this is an ongoing problem and a hard one to tackle, I am hoping by raising some of the issues there will be greater recognition and support from the government. More integrated healthcare and education that could help break this cycle through better communication and multi-agency working between education and public health professionals which are fully embedded.

As a starting point a tool kit could be created through regular meetings with education and public health professionals. (LLamau, Hafan Cymru, Show Racism the red Card, Families 1st, Police Liaison, Sexpressions, Brooke, school nurses, safeguarding leads, SHRN, Healthy schools, well-being coordinators) This would give an opportunity for professionals to look at a better system for sharing information. The toolkit would eventually save on time and repetition of information. The use of SHRN data in schools is a valuable tool which helps to identify the needs of children, this information could be shared and discussed in the meetings and actions could be implemented by all involved. There should be compulsory lessons for all pupils which prepare young people for becoming responsible adults. Use of reality babies have been recognised as an excellent resource to engage learners and teach them about the realities of becoming a parent, however there is no availability for them in the UK.

The toolkit could include some of the following:

- Money management
- Interview skills
- CV writing
- Why work?
- Basic first Aid
- Health and Nutrition for the family
- Differences between stress and mental health
- Coping strategies
- Parent responsibilities for boys and girls
- The importance of good hygiene, tooth brushing, dental checks.
- Acceptable forms of discipline for children
- Services- Where to get help?
- Healthy relationships
- Managing a home
- Respecting others and your environment
- Resilience
- Better use of systems for sharing information
- Ongoing staff training

Thank you for considering my petition for your discussions, I do not have all the answers but hope there will be more acknowledgement of the issues addressed.

Yours Sincerely

Danielle Diver