

**Jeremy Miles AS/MS**  
**Gweinidog y Gymraeg ac Addysg**  
**Minister for Education and Welsh Language**



**Llywodraeth Cymru**  
**Welsh Government**

Eich cyf/Your ref WQ85119

Buffy Williams MS  
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26 May 2022

Dear Buffy,

Thank you for your Written Question asking what discussions have been had with the UK Government regarding what the UK Parliament Online Safety Bill means for children and young people in Wales.

The online safety of children and young people is one of my key priorities as Minister for Education and Welsh Language. The Welsh Government is firmly committed to engaging closely with the UK Government on the online harms agenda.

In principle, I welcome the enhanced protection and safeguarding of children and young people that the Online Safety Bill proposes and the duties placed upon online providers to remove harmful content.

My officials have worked closely with counterparts in the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) prior to and since the introduction of the UK Government's Online Safety Bill. This included detailed discussions in the development of an exemption for Welsh education institutions and childcare providers.

Safeguarding requirements related to online safety and protecting children from harm already form part of inspection and regulation under Estyn and Care Inspectorate Wales. Therefore, the Bill will make practical and important changes to online safety regulation across the UK while ensuring this does not lead to additional, unnecessary and disproportionate regulation of education and childcare providers in Wales.

Notably, the Bill confers powers to Welsh Ministers who can, by statutory instrument, amend the list of providers to be included within the exemption. This power will ensure the exemptions remain appropriate for Wales in the future.

On 30 March the Welsh Government laid a Legislative Consent Memorandum before the Senedd in respect of the Online Safety Bill with regard to devolved matters of education and childcare. The Business Committee agreed, in accordance with Standing Order 29.4(i), to invite the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee and the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee to consider and report on the Legislative Consent Memorandum, to the Senedd, by 21 July 2022.

We will continue to engage directly with the UK Government, as well as through the UK Council for Internet Safety, as the Bill progresses through Parliament.

Whilst we acknowledge that a UK-wide Bill is the most effective and proportionate legislative vehicle to deliver consistent regulation of online platforms, the safety and wellbeing of children and young people is a shared responsibility. This is a duty that falls to both the UK Government and the Welsh Government, and undoubtedly education plays a key role in keeping our children and young people safe online.

The Welsh Government articulates our commitment to enhancing online safety in our [National Digital Resilience Action plan for children and young people](#). The plan sets out the actions we are undertaking to support children and young people, as well as their families and school communities to stay safe online. The plan, first published in 2018 as the Online safety action plan for children and young people, has been updated annually and has developed year on year, providing a summary of progress against each action, and adding new actions as the digital world evolves. There are over 70 actions in the plan for delivery this year.

A collaborative approach is essential to delivering our action plan. We are committed to working across government and with expert partners including the National Crime Agency, Internet Watch Foundation, UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS), the NSPCC, Internet Matters and Childnet.

At the heart of the action plan is '[Keeping safe online](#)' - an area of Hwb which provides children and young people, families, education practitioners, professionals and governors with the latest resources, information, training and guidance on online safety.

The area includes:

- '[Online issues and worries](#)' area, which was co-developed with children and young people, providing practical advice on online issues, including how to report and where to go to get further support.
- Over [200 online safety learning and teaching resources](#) to support practitioners in the classroom and training modules to support Continual Professional Development.
- '[In the know](#)' - detailed guides for parents and carers on the most popular apps, social media and games young people currently use, recognising the key role families play in helping to keep their children safe online.
- [Guidance](#) for schools on online safety, including [360 safe Cymru](#), a self-evaluation tool schools can use to review and progress their online safety practice and provision.
- '[Views from the experts](#)' – a feature which includes articles on various online issues from expert organisations working in the field of online safety.
- Support services to report online harm and signposting to further sources of support.

We recognise the central role that social media plays in the behaviour highlighted by Estyn's 'We don't tell our teachers' report. Our new multi-agency action plan to tackle peer-on-peer sexual harassment will adopt a similar approach to the digital resilience in education action plan and will be published as a sister action plan, cross-referencing the ongoing work to

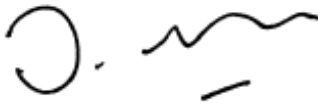
support young people to use social media safely and responsibly as part of our online safety programme of work.

The plan will outline the commitments the Welsh Government will take forward, and critically, it will address how we are going to tackle the role social media plays in these behaviours.

The action plan will be published in the autumn but work in this area is already underway. We are currently collaborating with the Football Association of Wales to develop a campaign to challenge behaviours that lead to online sexual harassment. This builds upon our previous joint campaign to highlight and tackle online misogyny.

The internet plays an integral role in the lives of our children and young people and we will continue to work at pace, in collaboration with partners and experts to support our collective ambition of making the internet a safer place.

Yours sincerely,



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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.