

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymchwiliad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg ynghylch aflonyddu rhywiol rhwng cyfoedion ymysg dysgwyr](#)

This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee inquiry into Peer on peer sexual harassment among learners](#)

**PPSH 07**

**Ymateb gan: Ysgol Uwchradd Fitzalan**

**Response from: Fitzalan High School**

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Nodwch eich barn mewn perthynas â chylch gorchwyl yr ymchwiliad, sydd wedi'u grwpio'n 5 thema: | Record your views against the inquiry's terms of reference, which have been grouped into 5 themes:

1. Maint | Scale
2. Effaith | Impact
3. Effeithiolrwydd ymyriadau | Effectiveness of interventions
4. Y cyd-destun ehangach | Wider context
5. Arall | Other

### **1. Maint | Scale**

The issue is widespread. Focus groups held in school suggest that pupils in lower years tend to be unwilling recipients of sexual imagery through their access to online gaming. More girls than boys say they have received unsolicited images. As pupils get older, girls say that this happens regularly. Most of the pupils in the focus group had developed robust ways to address this but too few were aware of how to report this to the online platforms or had confidence that this would make a difference.

The issue largely occurs outside the formal education setting and often online.

The LA has recently revised its method for collecting information. There are concerns about how this will be used effectively.

### **2. Effaith | Impact**

The impact on learning, mental health and wellbeing is hard to measure in general- nearly all pupils accessing emotional support in school do not identify this as an issue. However, where there have been specific incidents, it has a deleterious effect on the individuals and often their peer groups. One particular incident of a serious



nature has had significant impact in a group of older pupils in terms of the cohesive nature of the group, their general wellbeing and the academic attainment of those most closely involved.

### **3. Effeithiolrwydd ymyriadau | Effectiveness of interventions**

Existing policies are partially effective in addressing this issue. Restorative approaches and a school culture which promotes respect are effective.

The VAWDASV training is useful in raising awareness although specific training tailored to education settings would be beneficial.

That this is an area of concern on a multiagency level is true although there is inconsistency in approach at times which makes it difficult to feel confident about dealing with issues when they arise and being able to support young people most effectively.

It is not always evidence that all agencies (those listed above) are dealing with the issues in the same way. In some ways, because so many agencies are involved, this means that there are all too many voices with different perspectives.

It can also be hard to find appropriate support/ interventions to address issues that have arisen. For example, some agencies only work with young people who have been referred through the justice system whereas others will not work with others once there is an issue. Clear pathways for therapeutic interventions would be helpful.

### **4. Y cyd-destun ehangach | Wider context**

It is very difficult to fully understand the impact of online content and influences on the attitudes of young people. Where is the definitive research? Young people are still influenced by their families, friends, religious beliefs, other sources of media, school... as well and online. For some their device and their access to social media in particular are of concern- not just in terms of this agenda but as a source of news and advice generally- arguably leaving them vulnerable to exploitation/ radicalisation/ influence. For others, online is just another venue.

Online safety and potential legislation is a tricky area. However, clearly understood, well-communicated standards, simple and effective means of reporting inappropriate content that are well understood by all (the equivalent to a 999 or 101 type response) which has the power to act swiftly would be useful.



Better co-ordination of multiagency responses would be helpful- sometimes schools are reliant on communication from other agencies/ sometimes via parents. It could be simplified and clarified.

Is there scope for strengthening the responsibilities parents/ carers have in terms of protecting their children/ young people? Social media platforms usually have a minimum age but lots of parents allow their children access before this. Is this something that could be addressed through public information campaigns?

Parents and carers have a huge role to play. Models of respectful behaviour are learned early. Parenting support is not an area to be skimmed on. In addition, parents need to know how to monitor online activity and to talk to their children about respectful relationships.

Is meaningful, effective support given to foster carers to help monitor online activity? How easy do parents find it to access information? In some ways there are almost too many sources of support and initiatives- one simple reporting/ information seeking platform would be useful.

This is not solely the role of education.

However, the CfW has the potential to address many of these issues. The mandatory content of the RSE code clearly addresses much that is pertinent to this issue. Again, there is a role for WG to inform parents/ carers about what is going on nationally and the consortia and local authorities to support schools to share with parents more locally. There is also the need to ensure that teachers are properly equipped to deliver high quality lessons. Sometimes organisations/ agencies have funding to provide input for one issue for a year or maybe two and then this goes or they only have capacity to deliver to one class or one year group which means that provision can be inconsistent. It would be useful to address this centrally.

## **5. Arall | Other**

