

CA 040 32126
24 February 2004

DP 609/03-07

Edwina Hart AM MBE
Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Our ref: OAQ32126

Peter Black AM
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10 March 2004

Dear Peter

The First Minister has asked me to respond to the question you posed at Plenary on 24 February, about how the Assembly Government were going to take forward the recommendation in the Audit Commission report "Youth Justice 2004", that there should be more accessible child-centred services.

Firstly, I want to say that I welcome this report, which I believe reinforces the work we are doing and have planned to help our young people. The Welsh Assembly Government's strategy "Tackling Substance Misuse in Wales" recognises that action to deal with drug and alcohol problems can have a positive impact on our objective to improve the health and well-being of our children and young people. As I said in the debate on substance misuse on 2 March, major child protection issues arise out of tackling substance misuse.

As you know, I transferred responsibility for tackling substance misuse issues to the Community Safety Partnerships in April 2003. This was in recognition that they are best placed to identify and address local need. I realise that though we have made real progress, there is still more to be done, but it is important to acknowledge what is already being done in Wales to help our young people. I have outlined in the attached annex, some of the main features of the Community Safety Partnerships' current activities, which shows they are all working hard towards improving and enhancing their services for children and young people.

Looking to the future, the Partnerships have been asked to develop three-year Business Plans for 2005 – 2008. These plans are to be based on a comprehensive assessment of local need and will include prevention strategies and treatment services that target vulnerable groups. As with the 04/05 Action Plans, the Partnerships will be asked to take account of key reports; in this context, documents such as "Hidden Harm" and "Youth Justice 2004".



BUDDSODDWR MEWN POBL
INVESTOR IN PEOPLE