

Huw Lewis AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau
Minister for Education and Skills



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Nick Ramsay AM
National Assembly for Wales
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA
Nicholas.ramsay@wales.gov.uk

9th December 2015

Dear Nick,

During plenary on 2 December I undertook to write to you to provide information about the Invisible Walls Wales (IWW) Project which operates at Parc Prison, Bridgend.

IWW is designed to support offenders and their families and to reduce levels of re-offending through greater family engagement. The project is supported financially by the Big Lottery Fund and key partners include Bridgend County Borough Council, Barnardo's Cymru, Gwalia, and the Welsh Centre for Crime and Social Justice and the prison.

This is the fourth year that the project has operated within Parc Prison and work begins with families a year before release from prison. The key strategic objectives that drive the project include Identified families are supported for up to a year before release from prison and core aims are:

- reduce the likelihood of reoffending and custody
- reduce the likelihood/escalation of intergenerational crime
- increase community inclusion for the whole family

Barnardo's Cymru has told us that local schools are engaging with the project to support those children affected by parental imprisonment. The project works with prisoners and their families through a package of intervention which includes specialist parenting and relationship programmes, advice about family debt, training and education, housing advice and support. Key education activities include:

- encouraging parents to inform the school when a child is absent at a prison visit, so that visits are not counted as unauthorised absent

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

English Enquiry Line 0300 0603300
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0300 0604400
Correspondence.Huw.Lewis@wales.gsi.gov.uk

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.

- development of the *Invisible Walls Accords* - a contract with schools which enables the school to receive advice and guidance on how to support children in these circumstances
- capacity building within schools to up-skill teachers to deliver a training pack to support children affected by parental imprisonment. Participating schools identify a single point of contact within the school to link in with the point of contact within the prison, and
- parent teacher meetings at the prison, and homework clubs at the visitor centre where children can bring their homework and spend an hour with their imprisoned parent. Through this, parents and children have a focus for the visit and the father has an opportunity to improve his own literacy.

More information about the Invisible Walls Wales project can be found on the Barnardo's i-HOP website.

http://www.i-hop.org.uk/app/answers/detail/a_id/233/~invisible-walls-wales

In our exchange at plenary I also mentioned the excellent schools handbook produced by colleagues at Barnardo's Cymru. A copy of that can also be found on the Barnardo's Cymru website at:

http://www.barnardos.org.uk/welsh_schools_handbook_english.pdf

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Huw Lewis', written in a cursive style.

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