

## **Summary of Consultation Responses**

### **Introduction/Summary**

This document presents the results of the consultation on the document 'Guidance on Safeguarding Children and Child Protection for Managers and Drama Teachers.' This guidance was one of the recommendations made by the Children's Commissioner for Wales in his report on the Clwyd Inquiry allegations of sexual abuse in a school setting.

### **Analysis of Responses**

The draft was issued on 10 February 2006, with responses required by 7 April. 49 responses were received from various organisations including schools, Local Education Authorities and teachers' Unions. The consultation asked 12 questions and respondents had a choice of 'yes' or 'no' answer. Respondents could also comment on any of the questions or make general comments. Five respondents submitted a free standing response without answering the specific questions set out in the consultation document. Comments from these responses have, however, been considered in this summary.

A full list of respondents is at Annex 1 and a table showing the breakdown of answers to the 12 consultation questions is at Annex 2

Due to the volume of comments received it has not been possible to include them all in this summary, however they have all been considered and will be taken into account in the final text of the guidance.

### **Q1. Do you think the guidance will be helpful in protecting young people in drama activities?**

41 of the respondents answered Yes (95%) and 2 (5%) said No.

By far, the majority of respondents welcomed the guidance and felt that it contained practical helpful advice and that it rightly focused on the safety of the child. The NUT Cymru 'welcomes the publication of this document and its content' and states 'It is a sensible document that has clearly drawn on best practice guidelines....and created from them a cohesive whole.' The Deputy Children's Commissioner for Wales, Maria Battle said 'I am delighted to see that this is a practical commonsense, child centred approach to safeguarding children in the field of drama and thoroughly addresses the different concerns raised in the evidence of children, young people and professionals at the Public Inquiry.' Those that answered no felt that the guidance was simply common sense and, therefore, unnecessary or felt that guidance was already in place which covered this area. Gary Nicholas of Ysgol y Strade said he found it 'sad that the actions of one drama teacher cast a cloud over the work of every other drama teacher'. Another respondent felt that the 'code of practice was patronising and insulting.'

**Q2. Do you think the guidance will be helpful to managers and drama teachers?**

41 of the respondents answered Yes (95%) and 2 (5%) said No. Again most of the respondents felt that this would be a useful reference guide and of benefit to both students and teachers. Barry Slack of Whitchurch High School said 'It is welcome as a statement of good practice'

Those who disagreed again felt that such guidance was unnecessary and that in their experience they had never encountered any problems. The Drama Department at St Julian's School in Newport felt that it was 'taking a sledgehammer to crack a nut' and that drama teachers were being made scapegoats for the actions of one man.

**Q3. Does the guidance provide too much detail?**

14 of the respondents said Yes (33%), whereas 29 (67%) felt that the guidance contained the right amount of detail. Vivienne Whitecross of Maesteg Comprehensive School was concerned that the detail was 'quite daunting' and must not be seen to be restricting the interests/ideas of pupils. John Ashton and Kay Davies of Alun School, Mold felt that a summary report should be available for teachers' John Mitson of the Pupil Inclusion Service at Powys County Council described the guidance as 'A clear and helpful set of guidelines appropriately addressing a complex topic.'

**Q4. In relation to safeguarding children in drama activities, do you think the guidance covers most of the relevant aspects of drama work?**

42(98%) of the respondents said Yes, and 1 (2%) said No. Pauline Crossley of the National Youth Theatre of Wales agreed with the statement but added 'in some sections the guidance focuses exclusively upon performance rather than the drama experience as a whole' One respondent suggested that it would be helpful to have a section on residential courses/workshops' Catrin Jones of Ysgol y Creuddyn thought the guidance should be broadened to cover theatre trips-including the safety aspect of the child and also the quality of productions.

**Q5. Do you think the guidance on drama texts strikes an appropriate balance between undue censorship and the need to protect young people?**

40(93%) respondents said Yes and 3 (7%) said No. Mr. B Phillips of Fitzalan High school said that censorship should apply 'to all texts in all subjects, if at all' Miss Vivienne Whitecross of Maesteg Comprehensive School said that deleting strong language from texts could actually draw more attention to the vocabulary than would otherwise be the case, and we must be careful that we do not patronise the children by taking away responsibility and independence from them.

**Q6. The guidance limits certain dramatic techniques at specific age ranges. Do you think these age limits are appropriate?**

37 (86%) respondents said Yes, and 6 (14%) said No.

The 6 were concerned with the appropriateness of method acting for 11-18 year olds and felt that it was important to take into account the level of maturity as well as the chronological age of a child. The concern was that method acting in its extreme form could involve intense emotional immersion and might be upsetting to the child. Mr B Phillips of Fitzalan High School says 'Stanislavski technique is essential for developing character depth in GCSE performances and should not be confused with Strasberg's emotional memory technique. There was a request for clarification of what is meant by method acting.

**Q7. Do you think the guidance on nudity is appropriate?**

41(95%) of the respondents said Yes and 2 (5%) said No. Comments in favour of the statement felt that there was no place for nudity at this age and Mr. B Phillips of Fitzalan High School felt that this should apply across all lessons and not just drama. Rachel Seal, Head of Drama at Pontardulais Comprehensive said 'any nudity is totally inappropriate at GCSE level or under.' The two respondents who disagreed with this statement made no further comment.

**Q8. Do you think the guidance on intimate physical contact is appropriate?**

38 (93%) said Yes and 3 (7%) said No. It was widely acknowledged that some physical contact is part of drama and care should be exercised in determining what is appropriate, the fundamental consideration being the safety of the child and what the child is comfortable with. One respondent felt that the proviso of teacher's common sense may not cover all possible scenarios and even if the issues were dealt with sensitively could still upset children. Barry Slack, Head of Drama at Whitchurch High School felt that it was naïve to suggest that a peck on the cheek would communicate the emotions of the lover in Romeo and Juliet, but that a well directed tender but sensitive kiss on the lips that was true to the text was acceptable. He emphasized that the teacher should allow students time to perform the kiss in their own time. There were concerns that intimate physical contact may be defined in different ways. Rachel Seal, head of Drama at Pontardulais Comprehensive felt that the maturity of the student was paramount in determining what was acceptable. Jeremy Turner of Cwmni Theatr Arad Goch said that 'physical work is part of theatre work....and physical group work should not be prevented-within reason'

**Q9. Do you think the guidance on strong language is appropriate?**

36 (88%) said Yes and 5 (12%) said No.

There were concerns that removing strong language from texts could detract from the pathos. Nevertheless this guidance was generally strongly supported. Again it was felt that students maturity should be taken into account , this time in determining what language might be appropriate..

**Q10. Do you think the guidance on the use of video recording is appropriate?**

39 (93%) said Yes and 3 (7%) said No. Even amongst those who agreed with this guidance, there was some concern over the administrative issues involved with gaining parental consent and what would happen in the event where a parent refused permission for this and it was a condition of the examining body as part of the syllabus. It was also noted that video recording is used in other areas of the curriculum, thus consent should be sought in all affected subjects. A common suggestion was that a letter be sent to all parents at the beginning of the year explaining that video recording of class work would take place and that they should contact the school if they had any concerns.

**Q11. Do you foresee significant difficulties in implementing the guidance in your particular setting?**

7(17%) said Yes and 35 (83%) said No. The main causes for concern were practicalities. John Ashton and Kay Davies of Alun School in Mold said 'Difficulties may arise where senior managers are required to visit rehearsals in evenings and on weekends-however they firmly agreed with 'the spirit of the proposal.' The Drama department at St Julian's school in Newport was concerned about the cost of 'any necessary changes to drama facilities to achieve the openness and ending of isolation of some drama departments.' Erian Jones of Ysgol Maes Garmon said that she was not comfortable with the complaints procedure to drama singularly being made available to all students and teachers, but that this should apply to all subjects. Jeremy Turner of Cwmni Theatr Arad Goch saw difficulties in implementing the guidance in less formal settings such as amateur drama groups and informal groups.

**Q12. The guidance focuses primarily on drama work in schools and further education colleges. Is the guidance appropriate for teachers working in other settings, such as Theatre in Education groups and youth clubs?**

38(95%) said Yes and 2 (5%) said No.

John Ashton and Kay Davies of Alun School, Mold said 'the guidelines may be appreciated by all staff in both primary and secondary schools.' Elaine Edwards of Undeb Cenedlaethol Anthrawn Cymru said 'The Guidance is...appropriate for anyone preparing young people for a performance in a show/drama in a school or in the wider

community.’ Jeremy Turner, artistic Director of Cwmni Theatr Arad Goch said that ‘while the guidance in general is suitable for theatre in Education companies, I believe this requires an additional separate section.’

The National Theatre of Wales stated that ‘the guidance is not easily applicable to some drama activity ‘in other settings’ due to the different line-management settings and environments. They suggest that the guidelines be expanded to take these into account or are restricted to schools and colleges and supplementary guidance for drama activity in other settings. Further, not all who work in theatre companies have professional qualifications thus may never have been introduced formally to child protection issues.

## Annex 1

### Organisations that responded to the Consultation;

Abersychan Comprehensive School;  
Acton Park Junior School;  
Alun School;  
Bishop Vaughn Catholic Comprehensive School;  
Bassaleg School;  
Brackla Infants;  
Brecon High School;  
Bryn Hafren;  
Cardiff High School;  
Coleg Gwent;  
Croesyceiliog School;  
CSIW;  
Cwmni Theatr Arad Goch;  
Deputy for CC of Wales;  
Fairwater High School;  
Fitzalan High School;  
Gowerton School;  
Holyhead High School;  
Leighton CP School;  
Maesteg Comprehensive School;  
Myrddin CP School;  
NAHT;  
Neath Port Talbot College;  
NPHS;  
NSPCC Wales;  
NUT Cymru;  
NYTW;  
Pontarddulais Comprehensive School;  
Pontllanfraith Comprehensive School;  
Pupil Inclusion Service;  
Rhosnesni High School;  
SQA;  
St Cenydd School;  
St Cyres School;  
St Illtyds Catholic High School;  
St Julian's School;  
Smith, Mark;  
Tonysguborian Primary School;  
Undeb Cenedlaethol Athrawon Cymru;  
Urdd Gobaith Cymru;  
Whitchurch High School;  
Woodlands High Special School;

Ysgol Addysg Prifysgol Cymru, Bangor;  
Ysgol Bryn Alyn;  
Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni;  
Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Glantaf;  
Ysgol Gyfun Rhydfelen;  
Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun;  
Ysgol Maes Garmon;  
Ysgol Ysgol Y Creuddyn, Fford Derwen;  
Ysgol Y Gader;  
Ysgol Y Strade;

## Annex 2

	Yes	No	Don't Know	No Answer	Ticked Both
1, Do you think the guidance will be helpful in protecting young people in drama activities?	41	2		1	
2. Do you think the guidance will be helpful to managers and drama teachers?	41	2		1	
3, Does the guidance provide too much detail?	14	29		1	
4, In relation to safeguarding children in drama activities, do you think the guidance covers most of the relevant aspects of drama work?	42	1		1	
5, Do you think the guidance on drama texts strikes an appropriate balance between undue censorship and the need to protect young people?	40	3		1	
6, The guidance limits certain dramatic techniques at specific age ranges. Do you think these age limits are appropriate?	37	6		1	
7, Do you think the guidance in nudity is appropriate?	41	2		1	
8, Do you think the guidance on intimate physical contact is appropriate?	38	3		3	
9, Do you think the guidance on strong language is appropriate?	36	5		2	1
10, Do you think the guidance on the use of video recording is appropriate?	39	3		1	1
11, Do you foresee significant difficulties in implementing the guidance in your particular setting?	7	35		2	
12, The guidance focuses primarily on drama work in schools and further education colleges. Is the guidance appropriate for teachers working in other settings, such as Theatre in Education groups and youth clubs.	38	2	1	3	