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Datganiad i'r Wasg o Lywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru

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Minister schooled on safe surfing hopes

Jane Hutt, Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Schools, today met with young people from Butetown, Cardiff to hear their views about internet safety issues.

The event is one of a number of events across the UK and internationally marking European Safer Internet Day. It was organised in partnership with The Buzz in Grangetown, the Butetown Youth Pavilion and WISE KIDS, who promote innovative, positive and safe internet use.

WISEkids worked with the young people of Butetown Youth Pavillion in a digital media awareness workshop to help them formulate a 10-point plan on the issues they saw as most important to ensure safety online. This plan was presented to the Minister at today's event.

The Welsh Assembly Government is a member of the UK Council on Child Internet Safety and the input from the young people at today's event will help inform the development of a UK-wide strategy for child Internet safety.

The Minister said, "The internet is a tremendous resource for education. However, the benefits of technology have not arrived without risk. As parents, and as a Government, we have a responsibility to ensure that children and young people can explore the internet safely, just as we would want them to be safe in the physical world."

"We want to make sure that the voices of young people are heard at every level of policy making in Wales. It is clearly right that young people should speak up and be listened to on the issues that affect them. And especially on issues such as internet safety when we know that young people are often well ahead of the game with technology."

Sangeet Bhullar, Executive Director of WISE KIDS said, "WISE KIDS is delighted to be supporting the Welsh Assembly Government in its European Safer Internet Day activities. Working with professionals and young people across Wales, we see how critical it is that young people should have access to Internet technologies. They have told us that the Internet is important for them for education and for socialising with their friends. Our work also highlights the importance of informed use, and the need to engage young people themselves in understanding and managing Internet risks. Digital/Internet technologies present huge opportunities, and we need to ensure that our young people are equipped to take advantages of these opportunities."

“I decided to take part in today’s project because I think that internet training and ICT needs to be improved in schools” said 17 year old Benjamin Al-Mun from Butetown Youth Pavilion. “ICT classes need to be made more relevant for young people, we should have more education about social networking sites for one, at the moment we learn how to use them independently. If we learnt at school, we’d be supervised and would get internet training on how to stay safe online and how to protect our digital identities.”

Notes for Editors

European Safer Internet Day is an annual event which is held in February to promote safer and more responsible use of online technology and mobile phones, especially amongst children and young people across the world

In 2008 over 120 organisations in 56 countries took part in Safer Internet Day celebrations, organising local, national and pan-European events ranging from safety sessions in schools and competitions for young people to public meetings and conferences.

Events across the UK are coordinated by the CEOP (the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre) and include online activities and resources supported by Childnet and Microsoft and school activities making positive use of social networking. The Welsh Assembly Government is also taking part this year, as a member of the UK Council on Child Internet Safety.