

**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 51**

**Ymateb gan: Sally Holland, Comisiynydd Plant Cymru**

**Response from: Sally Holland, Children's Commissioner for Wales**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

**Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

**Addysgu Gartref**

Yn dilyn marwolaeth drasig Dylan Seabridge ddegawd yn ôl, mae llywodraethau olynol wedi gwneud ymrwymïadau i ddiogelu hawliau plant sy'n cael eu haddysgu gartref yn well, ond hyd yma does dim wedi newid. Roedd hwn yn faes pwysig iawn i'r pwyllgor blaenorol, ac ni allwn weld rhagor o gyfleoedd yn cael eu colli yn y maes polisi hwn. Daeth fy [adolygiad statudol](#) o'r Llywodraeth yn 2021 i'r casgliad bod rhaid cyflwyno deddfwriaeth sylfaenol er mwyn osgoi'r peryglon o ran canfod, gweld a siarad â phlant y bu'r Llywodraeth yn ymdrechu'n aflwyddiannus i fynd i'r afael â nhw yn ystod y Tymor Senedd diwethaf. Mae ymateb y Llywodraeth yn dangos y byddant yn ystyried cynlluniau ar gyfer deddfwriaeth eilaidd yn unig; ni fydd hynny'n ddigonol, ac mae angen llais dylanwadol y Pwyllgor i gefnogi'r newidiadau deddfwriaethol angenrheidiol.

**Diogelu mewn Ysgolion Annibynnol**

Dangosodd fy [adolygiad statudol](#) hefyd fod rhaid i'r Llywodraeth ddiweddarau'r sefyllfa reoliadol yn sylweddol mewn perthynas ag ysgolion annibynnol, a sicrhau bod gofyn i bob athro gofrestru gyda Chyngor y Gweithlu Addysg. Mae modd gwneud y naill beth trwy ddeddfwriaeth eilaidd, ond mae'n dal yn aneglur a oes angen deddfwriaeth sylfaenol er mwyn i staff ysgolion annibynnol gofrestru gyda Chyngor y Gweithlu Addysg. O ganlyniad, rhaid i'r Llywodraeth sicrhau eglurder



ynghylch y sefyllfa gyfreithiol fel mater o flaenoriaeth, fel bod modd dod â newidiadau i rym yn gynnar yn y chweched tymor. Sicrhaodd y Pwyllgor ymrwymadau i hyn yn ôl yn 2014, pan oedd Deddf Addysg (Cymru) 2014 yn cael ei chreu, ond ni chyflawnwyd y rheiny. Efallai bydd y Pwyllgor am fynd ar ôl yr ymrwymadau blaenorol hynny.

Gallai craffu ar rolau Estyn a Chyngor y Gweithlu Addysg ganiatáu i'r Pwyllgor fynd ar ôl hyn hefyd yn ystod y Tymor.

### Addysg heblaw yn yr Ysgol (EOTAS)

Rhaid sicrhau momentwm wrth fwrw ymlaen gyda chymau gweithredu tymor canolig a hir fframwaith gweithredu EOTAS. Mae'r rhain yn angenrheidiol i gyflawni newid ar gyfer pobl ifanc yn y ddarpariaeth EOTAS. Gwaetha'r modd, bu oedi yn ymchwiliad y Pwyllgor blaenorol ar EOTAS oherwydd effaith pandemig COVID-19. Fodd bynnag, mae'r ymchwiliad hwn yn darparu corff cyfoethog o wybodaeth, y cododd nifer o [egwyddorion allweddol](#) yn eu sgîl. Dylid defnyddio'r dystiolaeth hon yn ystod y Chweched Senedd i ystyried sut mae modd gwella'r trefniadau ar gyfer y rhai sy'n cael eu haddysgu mewn mannau heblaw'r ysgol.

### Gwahardd plant ifanc

Amlygodd fy [adroddiad Blociau Adeiladu](#) yn 2020 i ba raddau mae plant Cyfnod Sylfaen yng Nghymru yn cael gwaharddiadau, gan gynnwys plant ifanc iawn. Dylai'r Llywodraeth bennu nod polisi clir o atal cyflwyno gwaharddiadau i blant o dan 8 oed, a chefnogi hynny â chynllun gweithredu ar gyfer cymorth cynnar. Dylid adolygu'r ddeddfwriaeth sylfaenol a'r canllawiau statudol sy'n ymwneud â gwahardd plant a phobl ifanc o bob oed. Efallai bydd y Pwyllgor yn dymuno mynd ar ôl hyn gyda'r Gweinidog ac Estyn, er mwyn deall sut mae'r Llywodraeth yn bwriadu ymateb i'r adroddiad hwnnw.

### Deddf y Cwricwlwm ac Asesu (Cymru) 2021

Ni ddylai fod oedi wrth sicrhau'r hawliau a geir yn y cwricwlwm newydd. Y plant sydd ym Mlwyddyn 5 ar hyn o bryd fydd y garfan hynaf i brofi'r hawliau hyn ar hyd eu haddysg uwchradd, a chyhoeddwyd Dyfodol Llwyddiannus pan oedd y plant hyn yn 2 neu'n 3 oed, a chyn iddyn nhw gychwyn mewn addysg orfodol. Rhaid i'r cyfnod helaeth hwn o ddiwygio'r cwricwlwm gael ei drosi'n awr yn hawliau y bydd plant yn eu derbyn. Yn arbennig, mae angen sicrhau ar frys bod plant yn profi hawliau sy'n ymwneud ag Addysg Iechyd a Llesiant a Chydberthynas a Rhywioldeb. Os bydd oedi'n codi yn ystod y flwyddyn nesaf, byddai'n berthnasol i'r Pwyllgor ddod yn ôl at hyn fel y pwyllgor sy'n craffu ar y Bil. (*Gweler argymhelliad 61 o adroddiad Cyfnod 1*).

Efallai bydd y Pwyllgor am ystyried hefyd i ba raddau mae'r newidiadau sylfaenol i'r cwricwlwm ac asesu yn cael eu symud ymlaen wrth ddatblygu cymwysterau newydd, a gallai craffu ar waith Cymwysterau Cymru yn y maes hwn fod yn fodd i fynd ar ôl hyn yn effeithiol.



## Hawliau Digidol

Mae angen bod gan bob disgybl oed ysgol uwchradd eu dyfais eu hunain i gael mynediad i'w hawliau addysgol. Mae hyn yn dal yn wir nawr bod dysgwyr yn ôl yn eu hystafelloedd dosbarth, gan fod mynediad at ddysgu annibynnol, ymchwil a thasgau gwaith cartref yn galw am fynediad digidol parhaus a dibynadwy. Croesawyd cynlluniau'r Llywodraeth a roddwyd ar waith yn ystod y pandemig, ond rydyn ni'n dal heb sicrhau darlun clir o lefelau angen parhaus. Gallai'r Pwyllgor gynnwys pobl ifanc wrth ddylunio a chyflwyno darn o waith o'r math hwn, er mwyn gweld beth yw eu barn ynghylch y pethau y dylen nhw allu eu hawlio a mynediad at y gwasanaethau mae arnyn nhw eu hangen i hybu eu haddysg.

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## Home Education

Following the tragic death of Dylan Seabridge a decade ago, successive governments have made commitments to better protect the rights of home educated children, but to date, nothing has changed. This was an area of high importance to the predecessor committee, and there can be no further missed opportunities in relation to this policy area. My 2021 [statutory review](#) of the Government concluded that primary legislation must be introduced in order to avoid the pitfalls around identifying, seeing and speaking to children that the Government unsuccessfully grappled with last Senedd Term. The Government's response indicates that they will consider with plans for secondary legislation only; this will not be sufficient and the influential voice of the Committee is needed to support the necessary legislative changes.

## Safeguarding in Independent Schools

My [statutory review](#) also showed that the Government must substantially update the regulatory position in respect of independent schools, and ensure that all teachers are required to register with the Education Workforce Council. The former can be done through secondary legislation but it remains unclear if primary legislation is needed for independent school staff to register with the EWC. The Government must therefore clarify the legal position as a matter of priority so that changes can be enacted early in the sixth term. The Committee obtained commitments to this back in 2014 during the passage of the Education (Wales) Act 2014 but these have not been delivered. The Committee may wish to follow up those previous commitments.

Scrutiny of the roles of Estyn and Education Workforce Council may also allow for this to be pursued by the Committee during the Term.



## Education other than at School (EOTAS)

Momentum must be gained on driving forward the medium and long term actions of the EOTAS framework for action. These are necessary to achieve change for young people in EOTAS provision. The predecessor Committee's inquiry on EOTAS was unfortunately paused due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. However this inquiry provides a rich body of information through which a number of [key principles](#) arose. This evidence should be drawn upon during the Sixth Senedd to consider how arrangements for those educated otherwise than at school can be improved.

## Exclusion of young children

My 2020 [Building Blocks report](#) highlighted the extent of exclusion of Foundation Phase children in Wales including very young children. Government should set a clear policy aim to prevent exclusions being issued to children under 8 years old, and support this with an action plan for early support. Primary legislation and statutory guidance relating to exclusion of children and young people at all ages should be reviewed. The Committee may wish to pursue this with the Minister and Estyn, to understand how the Government intends to respond to that report.

## Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021

There should be no delay to ensuring the entitlements of the new curriculum. Children currently in Year 5 will be the oldest cohort that will experience these entitlements throughout their secondary education and Successful Futures was published when these children were 2 or 3 years old, and before they had started compulsory education. This extensive period of curriculum reform must now translate into entitlements that children will receive. In particular there is a pressing need for children to experience entitlements related to Health and Wellbeing and Relationships and Sexuality Education. Should there be delays arising during the course of the next year, it would be relevant for the Committee to revisit this as the scrutiny committee for the Bill. (*See recommendation 61 of the Stage 1 report*).

The Committee may also wish to consider how far the fundamental changes to curriculum and assessment are being taken forward in the development of new qualifications, and scrutiny of the work of Qualifications Wales in this area may enable this to be effectively pursued.

## Digital Entitlement

All pupils of secondary school age need to have their own device to access their educational rights. This continues to be the case with learners back in their classrooms, as access to independent learning, research and homework tasks requires ongoing and reliable digital access. Government schemes implemented during the pandemic have been welcome but there is still not a clear picture of ongoing levels of need. This could be a piece of work that the Committee could



involve young people in designing and delivering, to see what their views are on entitlements and access to the services that they need to further their education.

## **Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

### **Cymwysterau ôl-16**

Bydd y garfan gyntaf o blant sy'n profi'r cwricwlwm newydd fel hawl statudol yn cael eu pen-blwydd yn 16 yn 2026. O ganlyniad, mae angen gwaith yn fuan iawn i sicrhau pontio cydlynus ar gyfer y garfan hon i ddysgu ôl-16. Rhaid i hynny gynnwys cyfleoedd hyblyg i gyflawni ystod o gymwysterau sydd â gwerth cyfartal, heb anghysondebau rhwng cymwysterau galwedigaethol a chyffredinol.

### **Teithio gan Ddysgwyr**

Yn gysylltiedig â hyn mae adolygiad y Llywodraeth o Deithio gan Ddysgwyr, a gafodd ei estyn i gynnwys addysg ôl-16. Wrth i'r Ddeddf Anghenion Dysgu Ychwanegol fynd trwy'r senedd, sicrhaodd y Pwyllgor ymrwymadau gweinidogol i adolygu'r Côt ADY, mewn ymateb i'r argymhelliad i ystyried sut mae modd ymgorffori anghenion teithio dysgwyr mewn CDU. Nododd y Gweinidog ar y pryd y bydd *'darparu trafnidiaeth yn elfen allweddol wrth hwyluso cyfranogiad rhai plant a phobl ifanc sydd ag anghenion dysgu ychwanegol mewn addysg'*. Nid yw'r Llywodraeth wedi adrodd ar yr Adolygiad o'r Mesur Teithio gan Ddysgwyr a gynhaliwyd ganddynt yn ystod tymor diwethaf y Senedd, a nodwyd bwriad i wneud gwaith pellach ar hyn, ond heb unrhyw fanylion na therfynau amser. Bydd gweithredu'r ddeddfwriaeth ADY yn cychwyn heb i'r Llywodraeth gyflawni'r ymrwymiad hwn.

### **Cymwysterau galwedigaethol**

Ar ben hynny, nid yw pobl ifanc sy'n astudio ar gyfer cymwysterau galwedigaethol wedi cael eu trin yn gyfartal yn ystod y pandemig, ac mae anawsterau strwythurol ynghylch cefnogaeth deg i fyfyrwyr galwedigaethol yng Nghymru. Mae angen datblygu cymwysterau newydd ar gyfer pobl ifanc 16-18 ochr yn ochr ag archwilio i ganfod sut mae modd cefnogi'n well fuddiannau pobl ifanc sy'n dilyn cyrsiau galwedigaethol. Efallai bydd y Pwyllgor yn dymuno craffu ar Cymwysterau Cymru ynghylch yr agwedd benodol hon.



## Post-16 Qualifications

The first cohort of children experiencing the new curriculum as a statutory entitlement will turn 16 in 2026. Therefore, work is needed imminently to ensure a coherent transition for this cohort into post-16 learning. This must include flexible opportunities to take a range of qualifications that are equally valued, with no disparities between vocational and general qualifications.

## Learner Travel

Related to this is the Government's review of Learner Travel, which was extended to include Post-16 education. The Committee obtained ministerial commitments during the passage of the Additional Learning Needs Act to review the ALN Code, in response to the recommendation for consideration as to how travel needs of learners can be incorporated into an IDP. The then Minister noted that the *'provision of transport will be a key element in facilitating the participation in education of some children and young people with additional learning needs'*. The Government has not reported on the Review of the Learner Travel Measure it undertook during the last Senedd term and has indicated an intention to undertake further work on this but without any detail or timescales. The implementation of the ALN legislation will commence without this commitment having been followed through by the Government.

## Vocational qualifications

In addition, young people taking vocational qualifications have not been treated equally during the pandemic, and there are structural issues with equitably supporting vocational students in Wales. The development of new qualifications for 16-18 needs to be undertaken alongside exploration to ascertain how the interests of young people taking vocational courses can be better supported. The Committee may wish to scrutinise Qualifications Wales on this particular aspect.

## **Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

### Iechyd a Llesiant

Mae'r Comisiynydd wedi bod yn rhoi pwysau ar Fyrddau Partneriaeth Rhanbarthol i roi ymatebion amlasiantaeth ar waith mewn ymateb i ddiffygion yn y system gyfredol o gefnogaeth i blant ag anghenion cymhleth, a materion iechyd meddwl, ymddygiad neu emosiynol sy'n dod i'r amlwg. Gan gymryd i ystyriaeth lawer o'r themâu a nodwyd yn adroddiad Cadernid Meddwl y Pwyllgor blaenorol, mae'r Comisiynydd wedi gweithio ar y cyd â'r rhaglen Law yn Llaw at Blant a Phobl Ifanc, yr ydyn ni'n falch o ddweud eu bod wedi datblygu'r fframwaith NYTH. Bydd gwireddu'r



fframwaith hwn yn heriol, ac yn galw am gefnogaeth gynaliadwy gan Lywodraeth Cymru. Rydyn ni'n credu bod gan y fframwaith botensial i fynd gryn dipyn o'r ffordd at gyflawni dull gweithredu Dim Drws Anghywir, ond bydd angen monitro'n fanwl o hyd.

Efen fawr o ddull gweithredu 'dim drws agored' yw cydnabod angen pob plentyn sy'n profi trallod dwys, ym mha ffurf bynnag, a bod gwasanaethau'n ymateb mewn modd sy'n diwallu anghenion y plentyn. Yn rhy aml, mae mynediad at unrhyw gefnogaeth yn cael ei seilio ar ddiagnosis. Mae angen gwneud mwy i gydnabod niwroamrywiaeth, ac er na fydd gan rai plant gyflwr y gellir darparu diagnosis ar ei gyfer, bydd arnynt angen cefnogaeth gwasanaethau niwroddatblygiadol ac eraill serch hynny. Mae angen cydnabod y ffaith bod niwroamrywiaeth a phroblemau iechyd meddwl yn cyd-ddigwydd yn rheolaidd, a gwneud hynny ar ffurf llwybrau ac ymateb cydlynus. Mae perygl y bydd cynigion ar gyfer Côt Ymarfer penodol i Awtistiaeth yn colli golwg ar anghenion y plant a'r teuluoedd hyn, neu yn eu gwthio i'r cyrion. Gallai'r Pwyllgor ddymuno archwilio gweithio ar y cyd â'r Pwyllgor Iechyd a Gofal Cymdeithasol yn y maes hwn.

### Eiriolaeth Iechyd

Mae'r Pwyllgor wedi cynnal nifer o ymchwiliadau ar eiriolaeth statudol ym maes gofal cymdeithasol i blant, gan arwain at weithredu Dull Cenedlaethol o ymdrin ag Eiriolaeth Statudol. Mae eiriolaeth yn fesur diogelu hanfodol i blant a phobl ifanc, ac yn angenrheidiol mewn rhai achosion i helpu pobl ifanc i ddeall a chyfranogi mewn penderfyniadau sy'n cael eu gwneud am eu gofal, yn unol â'u hawl.

Mae mynediad cyfyngedig at eiriolaeth mewn lleoliadau iechyd ar gyfer y rhai nad ydynt yn gymwys i dderbyn eiriolaeth iechyd meddwl neu ofal cymdeithasol. Ymrwymodd y Llywodraeth i weithio ar ganllawiau fyddai'n sicrhau mynediad at eiriolaeth i'r plant a'r bobl ifanc sydd angen hynny mewn lleoliadau iechyd, ond mae gwaith ar hynny wedi dod i ben yn sydyn yn ystod y pandemig. Gallai'r Pwyllgor weld hyn fel y cam nesaf wrth sicrhau mynediad plant at eu hawliau trwy'r gefnogaeth angenrheidiol, gan adeiladu ar waith cryf presennol y Pwyllgor blaenorol ym maes gofal cymdeithasol.

### Gofal Parhaus i Blant a Phobl Ifanc

Lle mae plentyn neu berson ifanc yn gymwys i dderbyn gofal parhaus i blant a phobl ifanc (CYP CC), rhaid i asiantaethau fel iechyd, addysg a gofal cymdeithasol gydweithio i sicrhau nad oes bylchau wrth ddiwallu'r anghenion a aseswyd. Mae Gofal Parhaus i Blant a Phobl Ifanc yn galw am waith cryf mewn partneriaeth rhwng asiantaethau. Fodd bynnag, trwy ein gwaith achosion rydyn ni wedi canfod bod cyfathrebu'n dal yn broblem benodol y mae teuluoedd yn ei hamlygu wrthyn ni yn rheolaidd, gwaetha'r modd, yn ogystal â dadleuon rhwng asiantaethau ynghylch cyllid.



Er bod canllawiau 2019 yn eu lle, mae ein trafodaethau gyda gweithwyr proffesiynol a theuluoedd yn awgrymu nad yw hynny wedi creu'r newidiadau gofynnol yn ymarferol. Mae canfyddiad bod penderfyniadau'n aml yn dal i gael eu harwain gan adnoddau, yn hytrach nag angen, ac mae diffyg tryloywder yn y prosesau, gan gynnwys yng nghyswllt apeliadau. Mae cyffordd yn y system yn 18 oed, pan fydd pobl ifanc yn symud i mewn i Ofal Iechyd Parhaus y GIG, a gall hynny greu newid o ran cymhwysedd a'r angen am ailgychwyn y broses o ganfod, asesu a diwallu anghenion.

Nid yw'r canllawiau diwygiedig wedi rhoi sylw i hyn. Fel rhan o'r craffu ynghylch diwygio ehangach ar ofal cymdeithasol, gan gynnwys beth bynnag a gyflwynir o'r papur gwyn diweddar ar ddiwygio gofal cymdeithasol, mae angen mwy o ffocws ar weithio priodol ar y cyd rhwng asiantaethau. Efallai bydd y Pwyllgor yn dymuno derbyn tystiolaeth ar hyn gan asiantaethau perthnasol a hefyd gan deuluoedd, er mwyn trafod y rhwystrau a'r heriau presennol a gwneud argymhellion i'r Llywodraeth eu hymgorffori mewn unrhyw becynnau dilynol o ddiwygiadau.

#### [Llety heb ei reoleiddio i rai o dan 18 oed](#)

Mae hwn yn faes sy'n derbyn sylw trwy newid rheoliadol yn Lloegr, ond y bu llai o graffu arno yng Nghymru hyd yma.

Mae'r newidiadau yn Lloegr wedi arwain at lawer o drafodaeth, a bydden ni'n dadlau o blaid archwiliad pellach o'r ffyrdd gorau o sicrhau bod pob plentyn sy'n derbyn gofal yn cael y gofal hwnnw mewn lleoliadau diogel sy'n diwallu eu hanghenion. Rydyn ni wedi gofyn i'r Llywodraeth sicrhau bod ganddyn nhw'r data cywir ynghylch unrhyw ddefnydd o ofal heb ei reoleiddio i rai o dan 18 oed yng Nghymru, ac i ystyried pa newidiadau sy'n angenrheidiol i Ddeddf Rheoleiddio ac Arolygu Gofal Cymdeithasol (Cymru) i gryfhau'r arolygu a'r rheoleiddio ar leoliadau nad ydynt yn cael eu cwmpasu gan y Ddeddf ar hyn o bryd.

Mae fy Swyddfa wedi bod yn gwthio am ddatblygu opsiynau llety ar gyfer plant ag anghenion cymhleth, sy'n aml yn methu cael hyd i leoliadau, yn agos at eu cartrefi, sy'n gallu darparu'r cymorth therapiwtig mae arnyn nhw ei angen. Rydyn ni wedi galw hefyd am datblygu mwy o opsiynau llety ar gyfer ymadawyr gofal.

Byddai ymchwiliad gan y Pwyllgor yn helpu i ganfod gwahanol arlliwiau'r maes hwn ac yn ceisio cyflwyno argymhellion ynghylch sut gellid gwella digonolrwydd a thirlun y ddarpariaeth yng Nghymru, er mwyn sicrhau bod llety addas a diogel ar gael i bob plentyn ar hyd eu cyfnod mewn gofal ac wrth adael gofal. Dylai geisio archwilio hefyd pam a pha mor aml mae opsiynau gofal heb eu rheoleiddio yn cael eu defnyddio ar gyfer plant a phobl ifanc.





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## Health and Well-being

The Commissioner has been pushing Regional Partnership Boards to implement multiagency responses to flaws in the current system of support for children with complex needs, and emerging mental health, behavioural or emotional issues. Taking account of many of the themes identified in the predecessor Committee's Mind Over Matter report, the Commissioner has worked with the Together for Children and Young People programme who we are pleased to say have developed the NEST / NYTH framework. Turning this framework into a reality will be challenging and require sustainable support from Welsh Government. We believe the framework has the potential to go a long way towards achieving a No Wrong Door approach but close monitoring will still be required.

A large part of a 'no wrong door' approach is to recognise the need for all children experiencing severe distress, in whatever form that takes, and for services to respond in a way which meets the needs of the child. Too often, access to any support is based upon a diagnosis. More needs to be done to recognise neurodiversity and that while some children may not have a diagnosable condition they may still need the support of neurodevelopmental services and others. The regular co-occurrence of neurodiversity and mental health problems needs to be recognised in coherent pathways and a joined-up response. Proposals for an Autism specific Code of practice potential risks overlooking or sidelining these children and families' needs. The Committee may wish to explore joint working with the Health and Social Care Committee in this field.

## Health Advocacy

The Committee has undertaken a number of inquiries on statutory advocacy in children's social care, resulting in the implementation of a National Approach to Statutory Advocacy. Advocacy is a vital safeguard for children and young people, and is necessary in some cases to help young people understand and participate in decisions being made about their care, as is their right.

There is limited access to advocacy in health settings for those not eligible for social care or mental health advocacy. The Government committed to working on guidance to ensure access to advocacy for those children and young people who need it in health settings but work on this has stalled during the pandemic. The Committee may see this as the next step in ensuring children's access to their rights through the necessary support, building on the existing strong work of the previous Committee in the social care field.



## Children and Young People's Continuing Care

Where a child or young person is eligible for children and young people's continuing care (CYP CC), agencies such as health, education and social care must work together to ensure that there are no gaps in meeting the assessed needs. CYP Continuing Care requires strong partnership working between agencies. However, through our casework we've found that communication remains a particular issue that families unfortunately regularly highlight to us, as well as arguments between agencies over funding.

Whilst there is 2019 guidance in place, our discussions with professionals and families suggest that this has not resulted in the required changes in practice. Decision making is still often perceived as being led by resource and not need, and there is a lack of transparency in the processes, including around appeals. There is a junction in the system at age 18 when young people move into NHS Continuing Healthcare and this can result in a change in eligibility and the need to restart the process of identifying, assessing and meeting needs.

The revised guidance has not addressed this. As part of scrutiny around wider reforms to social care, including whatever is brought forward from the recent white paper on reforming social care, more focus is needed on proper joint working between agencies. The Committee may wish to take evidence on this from relevant agencies and also families, in order to air the current barriers and challenges and make recommendations to the Government to incorporate into any subsequent package of reforms.

## Unregulated accommodation for under 18s

This is an area that is being addressed through regulatory change in England but which has had less scrutiny in Wales to date.

The changes in England have given rise to much debate and we would advocate further examination of the best ways to ensure that all children who are looked after are cared for in safe settings that meet their needs. We've asked the government to ensure it has the correct data on any use of unregulated care in Wales for under 18s and to consider which amends are necessary to the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act to strengthen inspection and regulation of settings not currently within the remit of the Act.

My Office has been pushing for the development of accommodation options for children with complex needs, who often fail to find placements, close to home, that can provide the therapeutic support they require. We have also called for more accommodation options to be developed for care leavers.



An inquiry by the Committee would help to draw out the nuances of this area and seek to make recommendations as to how the sufficiency and landscape of provision in Wales could be improved to ensure all children have suitable and safe accommodation available to them throughout their time in and upon leaving care. It should also seek to explore why and how often unregulated care options are used for children and young people.

## **Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**

### [Incwm Sylfaenol Cyffredinol \(UBI\)](#)

Er nad mater penodol i blant a phobl ifanc yw hwn, efallai bydd y Pwyllgor am fynd ar ôl ymchwiliad ar y cyd â Phwyllgorau eraill perthnasol i archwilio manteision peilot UBI yng Nghymru. Rhaid sicrhau bod taclo tlodi plant yn nod clir i fuddsoddiadau megis UBI a byddai archwilio'r gwahanol fodolau a buddion i'w groesawu wrth ffurfio'r prosiect hwn, a allai fod yn gyffrous, yn benodol yng nghyswllt anghenion teuluoedd a chymunedau yng Nghymru.

### [Cymhwysedd i dderbyn Prydau Ysgol am ddim \(e-FSM\)](#)

Yn gysylltiedig â'r pwyntiau uchod ar daclo tlodi plant, byddai cymharu ag awdurdodaethau eraill y Deyrnas Unedig ynghylch dangosyddion cymhwysedd prydau ysgol am ddim hefyd yn golygu craffu ar drosolion datganoledig i liniaru effeithiau tlodi i blant. Mae'r Llywodraeth wedi cynnig adolygu cymhwysedd a throthwyon, ond nid oes manylion yn dod i'r amlwg hyd yma. Mae'n debygol y bydd angen mewnbwn y Pwyllgor i symud hyn ymlaen i'r graddau llawnaf sy'n angenrheidiol.

### [Cefnogaeth ar gyfer Craffu gan y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#)

Roedd y **Senedd Ieuentid** yn ychwanegiad pwysig i'r tirlun craffu yn ystod y Tymor diwethaf. Efallai bydd y Pwyllgor yn dymuno archwilio sut mae alinio a mwyafu'r prosesau craffu trwy gydweithio â'r Senedd Ieuentid; byddwn i'n fodlon i'm rôl innau, er enghraifft, fod yn destun craffu mewn modd o'r fath, er mwyn bod yn uniongyrchol atebol i blant a phobl ifanc.

### [Argyfwng yr Hinsawdd](#)

Yn fy nogfen maniffesto '[Hapus, Iach a Diogel](#)' ar gyfer etholiad Senedd 2021, fe wnes i gynnwys galwad am gynnwys pobl ifanc yn weithredol mewn cynlluniau i fynd i'r afael ag argyfwng yr hinsawdd. Gallai hyn fod yn gyfle pellach i'r Pwyllgor ymgymryd â darn o waith dan arweiniad plant a phobl ifanc, a'u cynnwys yn llawn.

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### Universal Basic Income

Whilst this is not an issue specific to children and young people, the Committee may wish to pursue a joint inquiry with other relevant Committees to explore the benefits of a UBI pilot in Wales. Tackling child poverty much be a clear goal of investments such as UBI and an exploration of the different models and benefits would be welcome in shaping this potentially exciting project, specific to the needs of families and communities in Wales.

### Eligibility for Free School Meals (e-FSM)

Related to the above points on tackling child poverty, comparison with other UK jurisdictions around the eligibility indicators for free school meals would also give scrutiny to devolved levers to allieviate the effects of poverty for children. The Government have proposed to review eligibility and thresholds but there are no details forthcoming to date. The input of the Committee is likely to be needed to progress this to the fullest extent necessary.

### Support for CYPE Committee scrutiny

The **Senedd Ieuenctid** was an important addition to the scrutiny landscape in the last Term. The Committee may wish to explore how to align and maximise the scrutiny proceses through collaboration with the Senedd Ieuenctid; I would be happy for my role for example to be subject to scrutiny in such a way in order to be directly accountable to children and young people.

### Climate crisis

In my '[Happy, Healthy and Safe](#)' manifesto document for the 2021 Senedd election, I included a call for young people to be actively involved in plans to tackle the climate crisis. This could present a further opportunity for the Committee to undertake a piece of work led by and fully involving children and young people.



**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 52**

**Ymateb gan: Anna Westall, Swyddog Polisi, Gweithredu yn y Blynyddoedd Cynnar**

**Response from: Anna Westall, Policy Officer, Early Years Action Group**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

Mae Grŵp Gweithredu'r Blynyddoedd Cynnar yn cynnwys cynrychiolwyr o BookTrust Cymru, Plant yng Nghymru, Blynyddoedd Cynnar Cymru, Home Start Cymru, Mudiad Meithrin, Achub y Plant, NSPCC Cymru/Wales, Chwarae Cymru, NYAS, NESTA a PACEY Cymru. Fe'i ffurfiwyd yn 2020 i ddod â sefydliadau'r trydydd sector sydd â ffocws ar y Blynyddoedd Cynnar ynghyd, a sefydlu llais ar y cyd i ysgogi ac ysgogi newid cadarnhaol i'r plant ieuengaf.

Mae'r grŵp yn cael ei gynnull gan Plant yng Nghymru.

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The Early Years Action Group includes representatives from BookTrust Cymru, Children in Wales, Early Years Wales, Home Start Cymru, Mudiad Meithrin, Save the Children, NSPCC Wales, Play Wales, NYAS, NESTA and PACEY Cymru. It was formed in 2020 to bring together third sector organisations who have a focus on Early Years, and to establish a collective voice to motivate and activate positive change for the youngest children.

**Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

**Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**



### **Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

### **Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**

Mae'r EYAG yn croesawu argymhelliad y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg blaenorol, y dylai babanod ac iechyd meddwl amenedigol eu rhieni a'u gofalwyr gael eu cefnogi a'u blaenoriaethu fel rhan o gynllunio adfer COVID-19<sup>1</sup>. Mae'r EYAG yn credu bod gan y Pwyllgor rôl bwysig wrth weithredu hyn, ac rydym yn argymhell yn gryf bod y blynyddoedd cynnar yn faes blaenoriaeth allweddol ar gyfer gwaith y Pwyllgor.

Galwodd ein maniffesto diweddar am gydnabyddiaeth o bwysigrwydd 1000 diwrnod cyntaf bywyd plentyn a'i fod yn cael ei roi wrth wraidd prosesau meddwl a gwneud penderfyniadau'r llywodraeth, fel blaenoriaeth allweddol ar draws llunio polisiau a buddsoddi.

Rydym yn argymhell bod y Pwyllgor yn canolbwyntio ar:

- Gwella cyfathrebu ac adrodd sy'n ymwneud â mentrau blynyddoedd cynnar ar draws y llywodraeth, gan gynnwys adolygiad o wariant
- Craffu ar ddatblygiadau mewn Addysg a Gofal Plentynod Cynnar, gan gynnwys datblygu'r gweithlu
- Blaenoriaethu'r blynyddoedd cynnar ac effaith yr anghydraddoldebau cynyddol sy'n effeithio ar ganlyniadau plant fel rhan o'r ymateb ar ôl y pandemig
- Adolygu'r cymorth ar gyfer iechyd meddwl babanod, iechyd meddwl amenedigol a lles plant a theuluoedd ifanc

### **Mae'r EYAG yn argymhell bod y Pwyllgor Plant a Phobl Ifanc yn blaenoriaethu'r canlynol yn ystod y chweched Senedd:**

**1. Archwilio i ba raddau y mae mentrau'r blynyddoedd cynnar ar draws adrannau'r llywodraeth wedi'u hintegreiddio'n effeithiol, ac yn cefnogi gwell cyd-ddealltwriaeth a chyfathrebu ar draws sectorau i hwyluso cydweithio, gan gynnwys drwy ddiweddariadau cynnydd tryloyw rheolaidd ac adrodd yn erbyn mesurau a cherrig milltir allweddol**

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<sup>1</sup> Children, Young People and Education Committee (2021) The impact of COVID-19 on children and young people. Final report. Welsh Parliament



**2. Craffu ar ddyrannu'r gyllideb ar draws gwasanaethau a chymorth y blynyddoedd cynnar. Dylai hyn gynnwys asesiad o fuddsoddiad ar wahanol oeddrannau a chyfnodau (h.y. cyn geni, 0-12 mis, 1-2 oed, 3-4 oed). Dylai hefyd gynnwys ffocws ar wariant ar gyfer plant sy'n wynebu Profiadau Niweidiol yn ystod Plentyndod (ACEs) (gan gynnwys ond heb fod yn gyfyngedig i dlodi). Dylid defnyddio hyn i nodi bylchau mewn cymorth, ac asesu gwariant mewn perthynas ag effaith.**

Mae'r blynyddoedd cynnar wedi bod yn flaenoriaeth i Lywodraeth Cymru ers peth amser, ac mae nifer o fentrau addawol ar waith. Fodd bynnag, nid yw cyfathrebu am y gweithgareddau hyn bob amser yn glir a gall llif gwybodaeth gyfyngu ar ymgysylltiad ehangach ac effaith bosibl. Mae gan gyfathrebu cliriach ac adrodd rheolaidd y potensial i wella cydweithredu ar draws sectorau, gwneud defnydd o arbenigedd ehangach, osgoi dyblygu a chynyddu cyfrifoldeb ac atebolrwydd cyfunol.

Dylai hyn gael ei gefnogi gan fwy o dryloywder o ran dyrannu'r gyllideb i gefnogi'r blynyddoedd cynnar, a mwy o graffu ar sut mae'r dyraniad hwnnw'n cefnogi effaith ar wahanol gamau ac mewn gwahanol feysydd.

**3. Ymrwymiad llawn i'r dull Addysg a Gofal Plentyndod Cynnar a dod o hyd i atebion ar lefel genedlaethol a lleol i oresgyn y rhwystrau sy'n hirdymor ac wedi'u gwreiddio mewn rheoleiddio a deddfwriaeth.**

Mae'r gwaith a wnaed hyd yma gan swyddogion Llywodraeth Cymru wedi archwilio nifer o faterion allweddol ac wedi darparu gwybodaeth am rai o'r rhwystrau i ysgolion a lleoliadau gofal plant wrth gynnig addysg a gofal plentyndod cynnar. Mae rhai o'r rhwystrau hyn yn rhai hirdymor ac wedi'u gwreiddio mewn rheoleiddio a deddfwriaeth. Mae Llywodraeth Cymru wedi ei gwneud yn glir bod angen i Lywodraeth Cymru archwilio a nodi atebion ar lefel genedlaethol cyn y gall darpariaeth ECEC ddechrau. Yn dilyn y penderfyniad i atal y cynllun peilot ECEC diweddar ym Mhen-y-bont ar Ogwr, hoffem weld y pwyllgor yn craffu ar yr ymrwymiad i ddull ECEC a'r rhwystrau y mae angen eu goresgyn i weithredu ECEC ledled Cymru ar gyfer pob plentyn. Rydym am weld atgyfnerthiad o'r ymrwymiad i symud at y dull hwn a chynlluniau ac amserlenni diwygiedig ar gyfer hyn.

Bydd datblygu dull ECEC yng Nghymru yn allweddol i ehangu'r cyfleoedd sydd ar gael i ofal plant; darparwyr y flwyddyn gynnar a grwpiau trydydd sector yng Nghymru; mewn perthynas â darparu gwasanaethau a ariennir gan gynnwys Cynnig Gofal Plant i Gymru, lleoedd a ariennir gan Dechrau'n Deg a Meithrinfa'r Cyfnod Sylfaen/Cwricwlwm Newydd ac ymyriadau penodol wedi'u targedu (ymgysylltu â



rhieni, pontio, sgiliau SLC cynnar). Bydd hefyd yn cefnogi'r sector i adfer COVID-19 tra'n cefnogi anghenion plant a'u teuluoedd.

Dim ond gydag ymrwymiad clir i broffesiynoli'r gofal plant y gellir cyflawni ECEC; gwaith chwarae a'r gweithlu rhianta fel yr amlinellir yng nghynllun y Gweithlu Gofal Plant, Chwarae a'r Blynyddoedd Cynnar<sup>2</sup>. Hoffem weld y Pwyllgor yn ymrwymo i graffu ar statws cyflogedig a chanfyddiedig gweithwyr yn y sector hwn, gan wneud argymhellion ynghylch camau tuag at weithlu a gydnabyddir yn broffesiynol gyda statws nad yw'n llai gwerthfawr na statws addysgwyr a staff cymorth ysgolion.

**4. Sicrhau bod dysgu o'r pandemig (cadarnhaol a negyddol) yn cael ei ddefnyddio i adeiladu'n ôl yn well, gan ganolbwyntio'n glir ac yn benodol ar ddi-ddordebau a phrofiadau byw babanod a phlant ifanc yn y blynyddoedd cynnar. Dylai'r Pwyllgor graffu ar dystiolaeth yn deillio o COVID-19, gan gydnabod bod y pandemig wedi gwaethygu anghydraddoldebau presennol i raddau helaeth, a sicrhau bod cynlluniau adfer yn canolbwyntio'n glir ar fynd i'r afael ag annhegwch sy'n effeithio ar ganlyniadau plant.**

Ychydig iawn o gyfeiriad a gafwyd at fabanod a phlant ifanc yn adroddiad diwethaf y Pwyllgor Plant a Phobl Ifanc ar 'Effaith COVID-19'. Wrth i'r babanod cyntaf a ganed yn ystod y cyfnod cloi nesáu at eu hail ben-blwydd, mae gennym gyfle i ddysgu o'r pandemig a bod yn fentrus wrth fynd i'r afael â rhwystrau strwythurol y mae llawer o blant a theuluoedd yn eu hwynebu. Mae angen i blant fod wrth wraidd adferiad ac mae angen clywed profiadau a lleisiau byw eu rhieni.

Mae ymchwil yn dangos nad yw effeithiau COVID-19 wedi'u teimlo'n gyfartal. Mae dystiolaeth yn awgrymu bod COVID-19 wedi gwaethygu anghydraddoldebau presennol, yn enwedig anghydraddoldebau incwm ac anghydraddoldebau sy'n ymwneud ag ethnigrwydd<sup>3</sup>.

Mae cyfraddau tlodi plant yn codi yng Nghymru, gyda phlant rhwng 0 a 4 oed yn fwy tebygol o fyw mewn tlodi<sup>4</sup>. Mae'r cysylltiad rhwng tlodi a chanlyniadau plant, gan gynnwys cyrhaeddiad addysgol ond heb fod yn gyfyngedig iddo, yn parhau'n gryf yng Nghymru. Mae angen inni sicrhau bod ein hymateb i'r pandemig yn blaenoriaethu ac yn herio annhegwch newydd a phresennol i gefnogi lles a chyrhaeddiad pob plentyn yn y dyfodol, waeth beth fo'u cefndir economaidd-gymdeithasol, yn enwedig o ran iechyd ac addysg – ac yn arbennig wrth i ni ddiwygio addysg yng Nghymru.

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<sup>2</sup> Childcare, Play and Early Years Workforce plan, Welsh Government (Dec,2017)

<sup>3</sup> Academy, T. B., 2021. The COVID Decade: understanding the long-term societal impacts of COVID-19.

<sup>4</sup> <https://statswales.gov.wales/v/KQnw>





Mae'r pandemig hefyd wedi cael effaith anghymesur ar y rhai sy'n feichiog, yn rhoi genedigaeth neu gartref gyda babi ifanc. Mae rhieni wedi profi unigedd; straen; diffyg cefnogaeth a all effeithio ar eu hiechyd meddwl ac yn eu tro effeithio ar fondio ac ymlyniad gyda'u babanod.

Nid yw treulio cyfnodau hir yn y cartref wedi bod yn brofiad hapus ac iach i bob plentyn. Fodd bynnag, i blant eraill mae'r profiad o dreulio cyfnodau hir gartref wedi bod yn un cyfoethog a gwerth chweil gyda chyfleoedd a chanlyniadau cadarnhaol wedi'u nodi<sup>5</sup>. Hoffem i'r Pwyllgor gael rôl wrth ymchwilio i pam mae'r pandemig wedi bod yn gadarnhaol i rai teuluoedd a'r diffygion i deuluoedd eraill; cefnogi penderfyniadau a blaenoriaethau buddsoddi yn y dyfodol wrth i ni adeiladu'n ôl yn well.

## **5. Iechyd meddwl, gan sicrhau bod iechyd meddwl y blynyddoedd cynnar ac iechyd meddwl amenedigol a babanod yn benodol yn ymddangos fel blaenoriaethau allweddol wrth i strategaeth Llywodraeth Cymru ar gyfer iechyd meddwl nesaf ddod i'r amlwg.**

Gydag ymrwymiad newydd gan Lywodraeth Cymru i fuddsoddi mewn gwasanaethau iechyd meddwl, hoffem weld y Pwyllgor yn ymwneud â datblygu'r strategaeth newydd, ac yn chwarae rhan yn y gwaith o graffu ar fuddsoddiadau mewn cymorth iechyd meddwl, gan sicrhau yr eir i'r afael â bylchau mewn cymorth iechyd meddwl amenedigol a babanod.

Buddsoddi mewn ymyriadau cynnar sy'n helpu i ddiogelu a hyrwyddo iechyd meddwl babanod yw'r ffordd fwyaf effeithlon a chost-effeithiol o drawsnewid canlyniadau i blant. Er gwaethaf hyn, mae tystiolaeth yn awgrymu mai ychydig iawn o fuddsoddiad a fu mewn gwasanaethau sy'n cefnogi iechyd meddwl babanod o fewn y 1000 diwrnod cyntaf, ac nad yw'r gweithlu sy'n cefnogi teuluoedd wedi'i gyfarparu'n llawn i weithio'n effeithiol gyda'r plant ieuengaf<sup>6</sup>. Mae hyn yn arbennig o bryderus yng nghyd-destun COVID-19, lle mae tystiolaeth wedi dangos bod y pandemig wedi cael effaith negyddol ar iechyd meddwl babanod<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> First 1001 Days Movement; Saunders, B and Hogg, S (2020) [Babies in Lockdown: listening to parents to build back better](#). Best Beginnings, Home-Start UK, and the Parent-Infant Foundation

<sup>6</sup> See Parent-Infant Foundation (2021) [Where are the infants in children and young people's mental health?](#) Findings from a survey of mental health professionals; Hogg, S (2019) [Rare Jewels: Specialist parent-infant relationships teams in the UK](#). Parent-Infant Partnership UK

<sup>7</sup> Reed, H with Parish, N (2021) [Working for babies: Lockdown lessons from local systems](#). First 1001 Days Movement; Saunders, B and Hogg, S (2020) [Babies in Lockdown: listening to parents to build back better](#). Best Beginnings, Home-Start UK, and the Parent-Infant Foundation



Er mwyn helpu i sicrhau bod iechyd meddwl babanod yn flaenoriaeth allweddol ar draws llunio polisiau, buddsoddi a darparu gwasanaethau, awgrymwn fod y Pwyllgor yn cynnal ymchwiliad i'r cymorth sydd ar gael i fabanod a'u teuluoedd yn y 1000 diwrnod cyntaf. Awgrymwn y gallai hyn gynnwys mapio'r gwasanaethau a ddarperir sy'n cefnogi perthnasoedd rhwng rhieni a babanod; a chynnal archwiliad cymwyseddau'r gweithlu i bennu anghenion hyfforddiant a hyder o ran cefnogi iechyd meddwl y plant ieuengaf a'r rhieni/gofalwyr. Dylai'r gwaith hwn hefyd adolygu cymorth i rieni/gofalwyr na ddarparir gan arbenigwyr i sy'n sicrhau effeithiau ar les teuluol e.e. cymorth rhwng cyfoedion, cymorth yn y gymuned, gwasanaethau lles emosiynol a chymorth i deuluoedd. Mae pob un o'r uchod yn chwarae rhan yn y gwaith o gefnogi lles ac atal problemau rhag gwaethygu.

Gwyddom, wrth i rieni edrych i'r dyfodol, eu bod yn pryderu fwyfwy am eu hiechyd meddwl, ac nad yw'r rhai ar incwm isel yn arbennig yn optimistaidd am y dyfodol <sup>8</sup>. Wrth i ni symud ymlaen, bydd angen meddwl sut y bydd y cyfuniad o wasanaethau sydd ar gael a sut mae'r cyfuniadau o wasanaethau'n cydweithio i ddarparu pecyn cymorth cost-effeithiol a mwy cyfannol.

Gobeithiwn y bydd yr awgrymiadau a wnaed gan yr EYAG yn ddefnyddiol i'r Pwyllgor gan ei fod yn pennu ei flaenoriaethau allweddol. Ymateb ar y cyd yw hwn, ac mae sefydliad unigol wedi cyflwyno ymatebion pellach sy'n rhoi mwy o fanylion am feysydd penodol.

Byddem yn falch o drafod y meysydd yr ydym wedi'u hamlinellu'n fanylach pe bai hynny o gymorth i'r Pwyllgor. Os oes gennych unrhyw gwestiynau pellach, mae croeso i chi gysylltu â ni.

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Given the overlap between themes we have provided our response under theme 4 however much of this (in particular in relation to childcare) also needs to be considered against theme 3 given that childcare is part of the wider social care umbrella by definition

The EYAG welcomes the recommendation from the previous Children, Young People and Education Committee, that babies and the perinatal mental health of their parents and carers should be supported and prioritised as part of COVID-19 recovery planning<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> Home is Where We Start From



The EYAG believe that the Committee has an important role in actioning this, and we strongly recommend that the early years is a key priority area for the Committee's work.

Our recent manifesto called for both a recognition of the importance of the first 1000 days of a child's life and that it is placed at the heart of government thinking and decision making, running coherently as a key priority across policy making and investment.

We recommend that the Committee focuses on:

- Improving communication and reporting relating to early years initiatives across government, including a review of expenditure
- Scrutinising developments in Early Childhood Education and Care, including workforce development
- Prioritising the early years and the impact of increased inequities that affect children's outcomes as part of the post-pandemic response
- Reviewing support for infant mental health, perinatal mental health and the wellbeing of young children and families

**The EYAG recommends that the CYPE Committee prioritises the following during the sixth Senedd:**

- 1. Examine the extent to which early year's initiatives across government departments are effectively integrated, and support greater shared understanding and communication across sectors to facilitate collaboration, including through regular transparent progress updates and reporting against key measures and milestones**
- 2. Scrutiny of budget allocation across early year's services and support. This should include an assessment of investment at different ages and stages (i.e. ante-natal, 0-12 months, 1-2 years, 3-4 years). It should also include a focus on spending for children facing ACEs (including but not limited to poverty). This should be used to identify gaps in support, and assess expenditure in relation to impact.**

The early years has been a priority of the Welsh Government for some time, and a number of promising initiatives are in place. However, communication about these activities is not always clear and information flow can limit wider engagement and potential impact. Clearer communication and regular reporting has the potential to



improve collaboration across sectors, draw in wider expertise, avoid duplication and increase collective responsibility and accountability.

This should be supported by greater transparency in budget allocation to support the early years, and more scrutiny of how that allocation supports impact at different stages and in different areas.

### **3. Full commitment to the Early Childhood Education and Care approach and finding solutions at a national and local level to overcome the barriers that are long term and rooted in regulation and legislation.**

The work undertaken to date by Welsh Government officials has explored a number of key issues and provided intelligence on some of the barriers to both schools and childcare settings in offering both early childhood education and care. Some of these barriers are long term and rooted in regulation and legislation. Welsh Government have made it clear that solutions need to be explored and identified at a national level by Welsh Government before delivery of ECEC provision can commence. Following the decision to stop the recent ECEC pilot in Bridgend, we would like to see the committee scrutinise the commitment to the ECEC approach and the barriers needing to be overcome to implement ECEC across Wales for all children. We want to see the reinforcement of a commitment to moving to this approach and revised plans and timescales for this.

The development of an ECEC approach in Wales will be key to widening opportunities available to childcare; early year's providers and third sector groups in Wales; in relation to the delivery of funded services including Childcare Offer for Wales, Flying Start and Foundation Phase Nursery/New Curriculum funded places and specific targeted interventions (parental engagement, transition, early SLC skills). It will also support the sector in COVID-19 recovery while supporting the needs of children and their families.

ECEC can only be achieved with a clear commitment to the professionalisation of the childcare; playwork and parenting workforce as outlined in the Childcare, Play and Early Years Workforce plan<sup>ii</sup>. We would like to see the Committee commit to scrutinising the paid and perceived status of workers in this sector, making recommendations about steps towards a fully professionally recognised workforce with a status no less valued than that of educators and school support staff.



**4. Ensure that learning from the pandemic (both positive and negative) is used to build back better, with a clear and specific focus on the interests and lived experiences of babies and young children in the early years. The Committee should scrutinise evidence from COVID-19, recognising that the pandemic has largely exacerbated existing inequalities, and ensure that recovery plans have a clear focus on tackling inequities that affect child outcomes.**

There was very little reference to babies and young children in the last 'Impact of COVID-19 on children and young people's Committee's report. As the first 'lockdown babies' approach their second birthday, we have an opportunity to learn from the pandemic and be bold and tackle structural barriers many children and families face. Children need to be at the heart of recovery and their parents lived experiences and voices needs to be heard.

Research shows the impacts of COVID-19 have not been felt equally. Evidence suggests that COVID-19 has exacerbated existing inequalities, in particular income inequalities and inequalities relating to ethnicity<sup>iii</sup>

Child poverty rates are rising in Wales, with children aged between 0-4 more likely to live in poverty<sup>iv</sup>. The link between poverty and child outcomes, including but not limited to educational attainment, remains strong in Wales. We need to ensure that our response to the pandemic prioritises and challenges new and existing inequities to support the wellbeing and future attainment of all children, regardless of their socio-economic background, especially in relation to health and education – and in particular as we reform education in Wales.

The pandemic has also had a disproportionate impact on those who are pregnant, giving birth or at home with a young baby. Parents have experienced isolation; stress; lack of support all of which can affect their mental health and in turn impact bonding and attachment with their babies.

Spending prolonged periods of time at home has not been a happy and healthy experience for all children. However, for other children the experience of spending prolonged periods at home has been a rich and rewarding one with positive opportunities and outcomes cited.<sup>v</sup> We would like the Committee to have a role in investigating why the pandemic has been positive for some families and the deficits for others families; to support future investment decisions and priorities as we build back better.



## **5. Mental health, ensuring early years and specifically perinatal and infant mental health feature as key priorities in the next iteration of the Welsh Government's strategy for mental health.**

With a renewed Welsh Government commitment to investing in mental health services, we would like to see the Committee involved in the development of the new strategy, and play a role in scrutinising investments in mental health support, ensuring that gaps in perinatal and infant mental health support are addressed.

Investing in early interventions that help protect and promote babies' mental health is the most efficient and cost-effective way of transforming outcomes for children. Despite this, evidence suggests that there has been very little investment in services which support the mental health of infants within the first 1000 days, and that the workforce that supports families is not fully equipped to work effectively with the youngest children<sup>vi</sup>. This is particularly concerning in the context of COVID-19, where evidence has shown that the pandemic has had a negative impact on infant mental health<sup>vii</sup>.

To help ensure that infant mental health is a key priority across policy making, investment, and service delivery, we suggest that the Committee conducts an inquiry into the support available for babies and their families in the first 1000 days. We suggest this could include mapping out service provision which support parent-infant relationships; and carrying out a workforce competencies audit to determine training and confidence needs around supporting the mental health of the youngest children and parents/ carers. This work should also review non-specialist support for parent/carers that delivers impacts for family wellbeing e.g. peer-to-peer and community-based support, emotional well-being services; family support all of which play a role in supporting wellbeing and preventing escalation of problems.

We know that as parents look to the future they are increasingly concerned about their mental health, and those on low incomes in particular are not optimistic about the future<sup>viii</sup>. As we move forward, there is going to be a need to think about how the combination of services available and how the combinations of service collaborate and work together to provide a cost effective and more holistic package of support is going to be key.

We hope the suggestions made by the EYAG will be useful to the Committee as it determines its key priorities. This is a collective response, individual organisation have submitted further responses which provide more detail on specific areas.



We would be pleased to discuss the areas we have outlined in further detail if that would be helpful to the Committee. If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to contact us.

*(References at bottom of this document)*



## USE OF YOUR INFORMATION

In order to enable us to handle your information in accordance with our [privacy notice](#), please complete the questions below. We will be unable to process your response if these questions are not completed.

**6. We have stated our intention to engage meaningfully with children and young people, in tailored and appropriate ways, in the autumn. However, if you are responding using this proforma and are under 13 years old, we will only be able to accept your response if your parent or guardian has confirmed that you can participate.** They can do this by sending us an email to [SeneddChildren@senedd.wales](mailto:SeneddChildren@senedd.wales).

**Are you under 13 years old?**

I am under 13 years old	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am 13 or over	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**7. Please choose one of the following options to confirm whether you would prefer that your name is not published alongside your evidence.**

We will not publish the names of people under the age of 18.

I am aged 18 or over and I am content for you to publish my name alongside my evidence	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I am aged 18 or over and I would prefer that you did not publish my name alongside my evidence.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am under the age of 18	<input type="checkbox"/>

**8. Please choose one of the following options to confirm whether you have agreement from any third parties referred to in your evidence that you can share information that may be used to identify them and that they understand that it may be published.**

I confirm that any third party I have referred to in my evidence has agreed that I can share information that may be used to identify them, and that they understand that it may be published.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I do not have the agreement of one or more of the third parties I have referred to in my evidence.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have not referred to any third parties in my evidence.	<input type="checkbox"/>





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- <sup>i</sup> Children, Young People and Education Committee (2021) The impact of COVID-19 on children and young people. Final report. Welsh Parliament
- <sup>ii</sup> Childcare, Play and Early Years Workforce plan, Welsh Government (Dec,2017)
- <sup>iii</sup> Academy, T. B., 2021. The COVID Decade: understanding the long-term societal impacts of COVID-19.
- <sup>iv</sup> <https://statswales.gov.wales/v/KQnw>
- <sup>v</sup> First 1001 Days Movement; Saunders, B and Hogg, S (2020) [Babies in Lockdown: listening to parents to build back better](#). Best Beginnings, Home-Start UK, and the Parent-Infant Foundation
- <sup>vi</sup> See Parent-Infant Foundation (2021) [Where are the infants in children and young people’s mental health?](#) Findings from a survey of mental health professionals; Hogg, S (2019) [Rare Jewels: Specialist parent-infant relationships teams in the UK](#). Parent-Infant Partnership UK
- <sup>vii</sup> Reed, H with Parish, N (2021) [Working for babies: Lockdown lessons from local systems](#). First 1001 Days Movement; Saunders, B and Hogg, S (2020) [Babies in Lockdown: listening to parents to build back better](#). Best Beginnings, Home-Start UK, and the Parent-Infant Foundation
- <sup>viii</sup> Home is Where We Start From



**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 53**

**Ymateb gan: Platfform**

**Response from: Platfform**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

Platfform is the charity for mental health and social change.

We are a platform for connection, transformation and social change. We're driven by the belief that a strengths-based approach is the foundation to sustainable wellbeing for everyone. We do not believe that people or communities are "broken" or in need of fixing.

Our work takes a trauma informed approach to understanding mental health and emotional distress, and we see the current mental health, and wider health, social care and public sector systems as no longer fit for purpose. Based on illness and deficit models, they deny people the hope and agency to heal.

**Thematic concerns for the committee to consider in all enquiries**

Rather than list a series of specific issues of concern to us, we feel that it would be more useful for the committee to consider several themes that stretch across our work and the concerns we have. We suggest that these themes are explored in their own right in each inquiry the committee undertakes, as they appear to us to be relevant to a whole host of issues likely to be of interest to the C+YP committee;



(a) The over-medicalisation of stress, trauma, and responses to it within Education and young people's services

The links between trauma, the wider social environment, and Mental Health are well established now but have not yet resulted in the paradigm shift we want to see within some public services. Whilst it is obvious that many young people have suffered a great deal during the pandemic, as illustrated by statistics showing increases in referrals to services such as CAMHs and Eating Disorders, we would caution about the over-use of psychiatric labels. Many of the feelings, emotions, and behaviours that could be labelled as 'disorders' are in fact often understandable reactions to an extremely stressful and difficult time experienced by many.

Instead of medicalising the collective trauma that many have experienced, we would prefer the committee to examine how educational institutions can become trauma informed and offer genuine therapeutic environments for Children and Young People in which the experiences of the pandemic can be explored in a non-judgemental way.

(b) Crisis Provision for Young People and support for their families

Despite a lot of focus on early help and intervention, in the time that it will take to see changes in this area take effect, young people and their families are still receiving really poor responses when in a crisis or when they reach out for support.

We have recently run a session for parents with experience of crisis services, which highlighted several themes stretching across public services. These themes included; An absence of compassion, with judgmental labels applied; added distress caused by interactions with inadequate services that led to families spending energy and emotion un-necessarily navigating services; lack of support for families to have rest – with the health of those caring/supporting young people harmed by the lack of support and consideration, the lack of ability to accompany the child/young person in different care environments, and the lack of communication and involvement in care that sometimes happened. We think these are themes that carry across many settings

(c) Therapeutic environments, particularly for looked after children.

Given the well-documented links between Trauma and Mental Health, we would encourage the committee – in all relevant inquiries – to consider the extent to which public services are providing a therapeutic environment for Children and Young people.



Too often, this has not been the case, for example: the 'market' for residential social care has led to vulnerable children being placed in inadequate and trauma uninformed residential homes. This is why Platform supports the intention of the Welsh Government to phase out the profit motive in these homes. However, we believe that the committee should also look more widely at the environments that are created by institutions – be they schools, colleges, universities, psychiatric units, care homes or whatever – and examine whether they are safe environments that help heal, or whether they have processes and procedures that re-traumatise people.

We think this is a question worth considering in the majority of inquiries that will be undertaken by the committee.

(d) The financial rules and culture within public services

It has been a common theme across numerous areas of public policy that financial decisions are often based on short termism, reactive rather than pro-active, and practices of commissioning services too often involve an excessive focus on cost rather than seeing the bigger picture of how a service can contribute towards a system in both positive and negative ways. An example of this could be the historic problems parents of children with additional learning needs have faced in obtaining support. Penny pinching and denying those parents support through gatekeeping and excessive bureaucracy has only led to other public services and social security spending money as those Children have become Adults, and the failure of the 'system' as a whole to understand this is very frustrating.

It would be interesting if the committee could consider this common theme across all of its priorities, to identify the reasons why this occurs, and what the barriers to change are. It could also consider what policies could shift finance departments into thinking long term, thinking about individual services as being part of an eco-system, and valuing preventative/early intervention services more than they currently do.

(e) Equalities

The pandemic has highlighted many existing inequalities in society, and sometimes the responses to the pandemic haven't been equalities proofed. We thus believe that all committee inquiries should examine the extent to which relevant equalities issues are taken seriously and addressed within service plans rather than regarded as a tick-box exercise. Furthermore there is often a lack of an acknowledgement that racism/sexism/ableism and other forms of discrimination can themselves be traumatic, and that many children experiencing discrimination will have challenges with their Mental Health as a result.



(f) Silo thinking

It is obvious that the education system does not exist in a vacuum, and that to ensure every child achieves what they are capable of doing requires other services to support the education system. Social Services and the NHS are obvious examples of public services that contribute towards the well-being of children, but there are also other less obvious services that play a role and often make decisions that can be detrimental to the well-being of children. For example, the Planning Department of a Local Authority can make decisions that increase air pollution near schools.

We would suggest that the committee examines the extent to which existing partnerships, legislation such as the Well-Being of Future Generations act, and other policies aimed at addressing silo thinking have had the desired effect in improving matters. We think this would be a good angle for all the themes identified by the committee. Furthermore, we feel the committee would benefit from examining systems thinking in the abstract and the extent it can be used to help formulate recommendations for improvements.



## **Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg ar Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd**

**This response was submitted to the Children, Young People and Education Committee consultation on Sixth Senedd Priorities**

**CYPE SP 54**

**Ymateb gan: Rhian Thomas Turner**

**Response from: Rhian Thomas Turner, Noah's Ark Children's Hospital for Wales, Children and Young Adults' Research Unit.**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

**Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

**Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

**Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

Within paediatrics one of the main priorities is ensuring that children can access evidence-based innovation in health. Historically, children have faced challenges in accessing research to develop treatments essential for their healthcare needs. A team from the Noah's Ark Children's Hospital for Wales highlighted the Wales specific issues during the Children's Rights Inquiry held by the previous Children, Young People and Education Committee in 2019 -

<https://business.senedd.wales/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?lId=25724>.



Although discussions have begun with Welsh Government officials because of the CYPE Committee Inquiry there is still a big disparity in the clinical research infrastructure available to adults in Wales and to children. Whilst some progress has been made, the early phase paediatric oncology infrastructure in Wales for example, is still funded by charity funding, whilst the adult services are able to access statutory funding to offer life prolonging trials to patients in one of three centres in Wales. For children, early phase trials are often the last treatment option available to them, they are life prolonging rather than curative, but children in Wales for the majority of studies, will need to leave Wales to participate.

Wales also lacks a young people's advisory group that is able to input into clinical research in Wales, opportunities available to children and young people in both England and Scotland ([Generation R](#)).

The pandemic has highlighted the importance of clinical research and the importance of having an infrastructure to support it ([Saving and Improving Lives: The Future of UK Clinical Research Delivery - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)). We would like to ask the CYPE Committee to undertake a one-day inquiry into paediatric research in Wales, as a piece of follow-up to the issues identified by its predecessor committee and consider at that point whether further recommendations should be made to the Welsh Government and/or whether there should be a debate on this in the Senedd.

#### **Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**



**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 55**

**Ymateb gan:**

**Response from: Ellie Harwood, Wales Development Manager (UK Cost of the School Day), Child Poverty Action Group**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

**Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

[Our research](#) with children, families and schools throughout 2020/21 has shown that children in poverty face significant barriers to accessing education, even without the effects of the pandemic. We have found that:

- Many low-income families in Wales lack all the resources children need to participate in remote or blended learning. As well as a lack of equipment, many homes lack the furniture or space to allow academic learning to take place.
- Digital exclusion remains a significant issue, with many children sharing a single device between family members, and some unable to get online at all.
- Cost barriers in education have a profound impact on children's ability to take part and be happy at school. [Our analysis](#) shows there are 55000 school-aged children in poverty who don't qualify for FSM and PDG support with costs and equipment. Our research with families shows this can lead to considerable hardship for children who cannot access help with the costs of going to school.

With these issues in mind, we believe that it would be worthwhile for the CYPE Committee to investigate the potential challenges child poverty poses to the success of the new curriculum.





Questions could include:

- How will schools work to remove or reduce costs associated with the new curriculum? [There are concerns](#) that some aspects of the new curriculum may exacerbate inequality for certain groups, in part by requiring greater out-of-school learning. What steps need to be taken to reduce or remove this potential inequality?
- What steps need to be taken to ensure full digital inclusion for every learner?
- How could the Pupil Development Grant be re-imagined to offer support to all children in poverty (bearing in mind that 42% of children in poverty don't currently qualify for this support?)

We note with interest that the [Programme for Government](#) also includes a commitment to “invest in the learning environment of community schools, co-locating key services, and securing stronger engagement with parents and carers outside traditional hours”. There are various models of community schools operating across Wales, and it would be helpful to have scrutiny of what works well, and what barriers exist to all schools adopting this model. The Committee may also wish to consider the scope for the provision of welfare rights advice in community schools.

We also note that the programme for Government commits to exploring reform of the school day and the school year. Such change could be beneficial to children in poverty, but there are significant implications to consider. Scrutiny from the CYPE committee could be fundamental to understanding what the potential costs, benefits, and different models of reforms such as extending the school day might be for a wide range of communities of interest, including children and young people themselves.

**Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

**Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

**Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**



Along with members of the End Child Poverty Network Cymru, we remain concerned that Wales does not have a multi-year child poverty strategy in place. We believe that the Welsh Government should build on the statutory child poverty duties prescribed through the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010, in order to publish a revised Child Poverty Strategy with Delivery Plan, with clear measurable and ambitious milestones, supported by transparent monitoring arrangements.

In addition, the Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015) allowed public bodies who had previously been required to prepare statutory child poverty strategies to instead discharge their duties via objectives in their Well-being plans. We are concerned that, to date, many well-being plans have not lead to child poverty being given the priority it deserves. The CYPE committee could look at whether existing statutory duties placed upon relevant public bodies to tackle child poverty through the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act are being sufficiently delivered, and whether robust monitoring arrangements are in place to assess the quality and implementation of local Well-being Plans.

The childcare offer in Wales continues to be piecemeal, with early years access restricted to children living in certain postcodes and in certain households. Overall, the system is not fulfilling its full potential, with barriers prevailing in relation to sufficiency, accessibility, quality and cost. The Committee should investigate what change is needed to ensure that all children have access to high quality childcare, as part of a coherent and integrated system. In particular, whether the eligibility criteria for the Childcare Offer and Flying Start childcare need to be widened to ensure that all children in poverty can access free childcare, in the early years, before and after school, and during the school holidays.



**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 56**

**Ymateb gan:**

**Response from: [Together for Children and Young People \(2\) Programme](#)**

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Whilst we acknowledge that the headings listed in the consultation proforma may help organise your priorities, for the purposes of setting out our vision of a whole system response, it was more straight forward to put the information together. One of the principles of the T4CYP Programme is to put the babies, children, young person, parents, carers and wider family at the centre of a Whole Systems Approach, which includes education, health, social care and the third sector co-producing, collaborating and designing support that moves away from silo thinking, planning and delivery of services. We have attached our three documents and animation which outlines the principles of the **NYTH/NEST Framework**. The Neurodevelopmental Workstream fits within this Whole System Approach, recognising a holistic view of the child throughout their development and moving to **a strengths based, 'difference not disorder'** way of offering support.

The T4CYP Programme is in its second phase, following an initial four year term which focused on enhancing specialist services. Phase 2 has been developed to focus on the Whole System Approach and in particular the creation of three workstreams: Early Help and Enhanced Support, Neurodevelopmental and Partnership Implementation. This work has been heavily influenced by the Committee's landmark report Mind Over Matter and subsequent review document. It is also influenced by the No Wrong Door Report and the Whole School Approach Framework. T4CYP has worked alongside the Ministerial Task and Finish Group which has been instrumental in supporting these developments and how they fit with the NYTH/NEST Framework.

At the 11<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Ministerial Task and Finish Group, the T4CYP Team updated members on how we can work as a whole system to improve outcomes for our children and young people in Wales. The narrative related to T4CYP high level strategic approaches and how these will translate into concrete actions. We also demonstrated the close and interconnected relationship between the three workstreams within T4CYP.

A child is a child first and foremost regardless of their mental health needs and or neurodiversity, many of whom will have additional and overlapping complexities, i.e., neurodevelopmental disorders, Autism, ALN/Education and ACES/Trauma. They will all benefit from the NYTH/NEST approach across every aspect of their lives and may also require a thoughtful interface and timely access to a range of specialist support.

The NYTH/NEST Framework promotes evidence informed cultural shift in the approach to wellbeing support, with the concrete offer for neurodiversity being a digital assessment platform that supports the timely delivery of assessment in line with the National standards for ND assessment. The programme is now in its implementation phase and is encouraging a partnership based delivery of the framework via Regional Partnership Boards (RPBs).

With this in mind, we would appreciate the Committee considering the following as priorities in terms of scrutinising how Welsh government consider and address these themes:

- **Policy Alignment** - The development of a lifespan Whole System Approach that reflects our increasing understanding of the interaction between factors that are internal and external to the individual. This alignment would support both the evidence regarding the interaction between our genetic risk and our environment in terms of lifetime outcomes and provide a unified approach to workforce, training and delivery.
- **The steps taken to address resources required to sustain current provision and emerging long-term demand** – this relates to delivery beyond discussion relating to funding formulas for immediate and longer-term delivery of services across Wales. The approach for neurodevelopmental differences would require a **balanced investment** in both the universal NYTH/NEST modelled approaches and the specialist elements of assessment and intervention - both are essential and impact each other. The concrete enablers to this work include the ND Digital Platform that will provide a mechanism to support the implementation of the national ND standards, thereby addressing access, quality, consistency, efficiency, and experience, with the longer-term goal of improving outcomes.
- **Communication** – to facilitate communication and provide an opportunity to share information and evidence relating to NEST and Neurodiversity that will allow for informed future discussion and planning.
- **New informed approaches** – for the committee to embrace the complexity of the interaction between environment and neurodiversity and unify approaches by scrutinising opportunities to mandate for a strength based "difference not disorder" approach to children's mental health and wellbeing. This mandate would reflect an understanding of neurodivergence, complexity and trauma. The opportunities provided by a Whole System Approach with cross sector access to information, training, early support and intervention are key to progress. This approach is critical in a situation where the high prevalence of ND traits are driving an unsustainable number of individuals onto a waiting list to seek a diagnosis as this is seen as the main gateway to support.

We look forward to continuing our close working relationship with the Committee throughout the term of the Programme which concludes in March 2022.

For more information on the NYTH/NEST Framework, you can watch our animation here:

### [What is NEST \(Welsh\)](#)

### [What is NEST \(English\)](#)

Alternatively, can get more detail from our three documents:

- A Birds Eye View



NEST Framework A  
Birds Eye View Final V



Framwaith NYTH  
Trosolwg Llygaid Ada

- What You Need to Know



NEST Framework  
What You Need To Know



Framwaith NYTH  
Beth Sydd Angen I Chi

- If You Need to Know More



NEST Framework If  
You Need To Know More



Fframwaith NYTH Os  
Oes Angen Gwybod Mwy

In terms of Neurodevelopmental information, you can watch Dr Catherine Norton's video called [Difference Not Disorder - YouTube](#) or alternatively see the below documents:



A Vision for ND  
(Welsh).PDF



A Vision for ND  
(English).PDF

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Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)

This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)

**CYPE SP 57**

**Ymateb gan: Dave Goodger**

**Response from: Dave Goodger, Chief Executive Officer, Early Years Wales**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

**Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

Not directly applicable to our organisation

**Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

Not directly applicable to our organisation

**Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

**Acknowledging that the impacts from the pandemic have exacerbated existing inequalities, we call upon the panel to ensure that the evidence and lived experiences of children and parents/ carers are robustly scrutinised to learn lessons (positive and negative). We would ask that this learning is utilised to ensure that the best opportunities for babies and children in the early years are embedded for future generations.**

Evidence<sup>1</sup> about the pandemic and related health outcomes<sup>2</sup> suggests that existing inequalities, notably linked to Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic populations and

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<sup>1</sup> Academy, T. B., 2021. The COVID Decade: understanding the long-term societal impacts of COVID-19.

<sup>2</sup> <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-01/chief-medical-officer-for-wales-special-report.pdf>



families living in deprivation were widened. The pandemic affected the health and mental health of some population groups disproportionately. Additionally, long-standing evidence demonstrates that systemic inequality places challenges upon babies and children in early years. These can and often do result in issues or delays in cognitive functioning, health issues and present socialisation challenges that set-up barriers to future well-being and opportunity. We call on the panel to capitalise on the extensive data available and use this to help ensure our future policy developments in Wales are informed by evidence and contribute to breaking down barriers created by inequity. In so doing, the panel can be assured that following the pandemic and the lockdowns to date all policies related to babies and children in the early years promote opportunity for all and contribute to providing a more cohesive and equitable start for all children in Wales.

**We ask the Panel to ensure that the importance of the first 1000 days of a child's life is recognised in policy and action; making commitments to ensuring that across all policy areas, the impact on a child's first 1000 days (and the related impacts on parents/ carers) are integral to the Rights-based approach and supports the best provision for a positive start in life.**

Recent advances in brain development and over 30 years of research in this field demonstrates that the early education and care that is provided to children in the first 1000 days, and a positive home environment is pivotal in establishing children's life chances, and mental health into adulthood. In the UK it is estimated that the cost of late intervention is £17bn<sup>3</sup>. Across all policy areas in Welsh Government, consideration should be made about how decisions impact on children in the first 1000 days. We would call on the scrutiny panel to be the guardians of children's Rights and opportunities ensuring that policies directly related to children promote a positive start. Beyond this Panel and across Welsh Government, we call on the Panel and Panel members to be the advocates for children ensuring that policies that impact on families and young people indirectly, such as travel, and infrastructure are focused on promoting positive opportunities and experiences for children. We also ask that the Panel recognise the role all experiences (particularly if less than positive) potentially have on children in their formative years. Through recognition of the importance of these 1000 days, we ask the Panel to advocate for early intervention policies and funding to support babies, children, and their families; and recognise that one of the biggest safeguards is professional, regulated childcare universally available and locally accessible for all.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://royalfoundation.com/early-years/>





**We would call on the Panel to hold all stakeholders to account for building upon the effective use of outdoors advocated for during the pandemic and incorporating evidence-based well-being actions into all policy and strategy decisions. actions that were promoted during the pandemic and which should continue into the 'new normal' for all children.**

The evidence during the pandemic that health and activity are intertwined has increased. It was noted that the mental health and physical health benefits for young children through outdoor play were a priority<sup>4</sup>, and that removing or limiting play and outdoor experiences has a detrimental effect on children's mental and physical health. Daily physical activity, high-quality play opportunities, cultural experiences, and mental wellbeing activities all have been proven to support children's development and are strong evidence-based interventions to prevent mental health issues developing. Therefore, building these experiences into our normal daily lives would be a positive outcome for future generations following the pandemic. To do this, we call on the scrutiny panel to ensure that policies and strategies normalise and promote play and the use of outdoor spaces. In so doing, the Panel will help contribute to increasing the number of children who get closer to meeting the Chief Medical Officer's recommendations of 180 minutes of daily physical activity<sup>5</sup>.

### **Scrutiny of the impact of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act and Scrutiny of the impact of the Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Act 2020**

The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 provides the framework for a new system to support children with additional learning needs in Wales which will be phased in from September 2021. This aims to ensure that all learners with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) are supported to overcome barriers to learning and can achieve their full potential, which is to be valued and is welcomed.

The abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment (Wales) Act 2020, also welcomed by Early Years Wales closes a legal loophole and further enshrines protections on children from unnecessary physical punishments.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://senedd.wales/media/ixzpwqr5/cr-ld14286-e.pdf>

<sup>5</sup>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/832868/uk-chief-medical-officers-physical-activity-guidelines.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/832868/uk-chief-medical-officers-physical-activity-guidelines.pdf)



We are fully committed to both Acts, however, we would call on the Panel to be the group in the Senedd that oversees these legal changes and ensures that any unintended consequences, such as increases in workloads and pressure on staff in the early years sector are avoided. We are aware that there are inconsistencies in approaches between Local Authorities in training linked to the ALN Act, and these could lead to perceptions that new legal frameworks require certain workshop/training attendances whereas, in fact they do not and following guidance suffices for all staff in the sector.

#### **Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**

**We ask the Panel to demonstrate support for the commitment to a full implementation of the ECEC policy; advocating for ECEC throughout Government; and identifying and overcoming national and local barriers to establish a coherent ECEC pathway for all babies and children.**

In 2019 the First Minister committed to ECEC stating the new approach would build on the excellent childcare provision and well-regarded early education offer to ensure that;

‘all children will have a high-quality stimulating learning and care experience in any education and care setting they attend – in Welsh, English or bilingually. The type of setting they attend is irrelevant if they are being supported and nurtured as they need.

Putting child development at the heart of early childhood education and care means we must ensure the principle of quality is clear to all who work with children and underpins provision in every setting in Wales.’<sup>6</sup>

During the pandemic, some work has continued to develop a Quality Framework and a platform to develop ECEC in Wales and attempt a pilot, however, there are still challenges in local and national policy and tensions between the education and care aspects of the framework where these interface for young children.

We call on the scrutiny panel to explore progress to date, establish a timeline for full implementation of an ECEC approach that is cohesive and consistent across Wales, and ensure that where this approach sits across Ministerial portfolios there is a clear understanding about the role of each Ministerial brief in facilitating the successful implementation of the ECEC approach. Alternatively, we call on the Senedd to

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<sup>6</sup> <https://gov.wales/written-statement-launch-early-childhood-education-and-care-ecec-approach>



identify a strategic driver in terms of Ministerial responsibility for ECEC; an approach that crosses social care, health, and early education portfolios.

This ECEC approach aspires to and can provide all children in Wales with a coherent pathway from baby, through their early years and into formal education. It also acknowledges the role care providers play in educating and socialising children in their formative years; and the role early education providers (and education in general) play in contributing to social childcare allowing parents to pursue career and learning opportunities. Both sectors and contributions are equally valued by the parents of children in their formative years; and the approach would be welcomed from an early years perspective. Early Years Wales fears that the structural processes, barriers and wide variety of stakeholders and stakeholder priorities might see ECEC drift.

**That the panel ensures the commitments made in the Childcare, Play and Early Years workforce plan (2017) are continued beyond the pandemic.**

We would want to seek assurances that commitments to recognising the professional status of staff are delivered; making the professions attractive to work in and rewarding staff appropriately in terms of pay and conditions. Our experience during the pandemic is that staff working in the childcare sector have felt undervalued and poorly rewarded for their hard work. Recent figures from England indicate that pay in the early years sector is still an ongoing challenge<sup>7</sup>. Additionally, our own recruitment pages demonstrate that the staff in the early years are paid at the lower end of the pay scales, many earning minimum wage or salaries just above this; and that settings are finding it difficult to recruit sufficiently qualified staff to fulfil vacant jobs. By committing to recognising the childcare workforce as professionally qualified and competent; treating the staff as professionals and not the low-paid unskilled workers they perceive to be. This could make the career and pathway for lifelong work in the sector can be more attractive and prevent a transient culture where the workforce is short term, attracting staff whose employment is based around family commitments rather than a career choice. It is important to note there are many in the workforce who have proven to be committed and have stayed in the profession for numerous years, or whole careers. These committed and valued staff often comment about the lack of recognition in comparison to educators but are retained in the profession due to their passion and commitment for working with children<sup>8</sup>. Addressing these issues through monitoring

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.cache.org.uk/news-media/the-real-impact-of-underfunding-in-early-years>

<sup>8</sup> <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0022185618800351>



closely pay, working conditions and the workforce plan's delivery would enhance the workforces' perception of being valued.

**That, in alignment with the First Minister's words on ECEC (see above) and in support of parental choice, we call on the Panel to ensure the full spectrum of childcare providers is supported equitably.**

During the pandemic there have been unprecedented challenges for childcare settings, resulting in significant temporary closures noted through CIW data. The pattern of reopening is appearing to support the larger providers (full day care) over the smaller providers (childminders and voluntary managed settings). We call on the Panel to explore the data available from CIW (tracking records and SASS) alongside working with umbrella organisations and Local Authorities to ensure that changes in work patterns, and economies of scale do not disadvantage the smaller providers. Significantly, the continued demise of childminders and smaller local settings impacts Wales' rural and less-populous communities disproportionately. Once closed, these settings frequently do not get replaced and lead to local childcare being lost to the community.

Additionally, we would advocate for the full range of services being available to any provider, including the opportunity to offer early education now or in the future, wherever they are located in Wales. Currently there are barriers to settings including local policies that make it harder to offer the full range of services to parents in the non-maintained education provision. The longer the inequity in service opportunity exists, the less likely it is that settings not currently offering early education will be able to in the future. Exploring the opportunities and challenges faced by the non-maintained settings in the opportunities that are funded through Welsh Government and assessing whether the inconsistencies are satisfactory and promote free choice for parents equitably would enable the Panel to be assured that across all local areas the First Minister's words are the reality for parents.

In examining the data, trends in re-opening and remaining closed and equity of provision the Panel are ensuring that for all families there is local, affordable childcare, promoting high-quality opportunities for children. We would ask the Panel to ensure that there is sufficient opportunities including wrap-around school care to meet the needs of children and families. We additionally ask that the benefits of regulated childcare are recognised and advocated for at all levels to support early years childcare and to provide continuity for children from 3-12 years old too.



Finally, although we recognise the impact of Flying Start, we call on the panel to explore the mechanism for accessing this provision. As this is largely demarcated through residential postcodes there is evidence that some families in need of these services miss out, whereas some families in receipt of these services do not require all the additional benefits in terms of childcare provision. Currently, there are increasing pressures on social care services with child poverty rates in Wales above 30%. Maximising the impact of the provision, and recognising the challenges faced by families with in-work poverty is important, alongside postcode of residence.



## USE OF YOUR INFORMATION

In order to enable us to handle your information in accordance with our [privacy notice](#), please complete the questions below. We will be unable to process your response if these questions are not completed.

**6. We have stated our intention to engage meaningfully with children and young people, in tailored and appropriate ways, in the autumn. However, if you are responding using this proforma and are under 13 years old, we will only be able to accept your response if your parent or guardian has confirmed that you can participate.** They can do this by sending us an email to [SeneddChildren@senedd.wales](mailto:SeneddChildren@senedd.wales).

**Are you under 13 years old?**

I am under 13 years old	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am 13 or over	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**7. Please choose one of the following options to confirm whether you would prefer that your name is not published alongside your evidence.**

We will not publish the names of people under the age of 18.

I am aged 18 or over and I am content for you to publish my name alongside my evidence	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I am aged 18 or over and I would prefer that you did not publish my name alongside my evidence.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am under the age of 18	<input type="checkbox"/>

**8. Please choose one of the following options to confirm whether you have agreement from any third parties referred to in your evidence that you can share information that may be used to identify them and that they understand that it may be published.**

I confirm that any third party I have referred to in my evidence has agreed that I can share information that may be used to identify them, and that they understand that it may be published.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I do not have the agreement of one or more of the third parties I have referred to in my evidence.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have not referred to any third parties in my evidence.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

### **CYPE SP 58**

**Ymateb gan: Kathy Riddick, Wales Humanists**

**Response from: Kathy Riddick, Wales Humanists**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

### **ABOUT WALES HUMANISTS**

Wales Humanists is a part of Humanists UK. We want a tolerant world where rational thinking and kindness prevail. We work to support lasting change for a better society, championing ideas for the one life we have. Our work helps people be happier and more fulfilled, and by bringing non-religious people together we help them develop their own views and an understanding of the world around them. Founded in 1896, Humanists UK is trusted to promote humanism by over 85,000 members and supporters and over 100 members of the All Party Parliamentary Humanist Group. Through our ceremonies, pastoral support, education services, and campaigning work, we advance free thinking and freedom of choice so everyone can live in a fair and equal society.

We have a long history of work in education, children's rights, and equality, with expertise in the 'religion or belief' strand. We have been involved in policy development around the school and the curriculum for over 60 years. We also provide materials and advice to parents, governors, students, teachers and academics, for example through our Understanding Humanism website (<https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/>) and our school speakers programme. We have made detailed responses to all recent reviews of the school curriculum in Wales (and the rest of the UK), and submit memoranda of evidence to MPs, civil servants and parliamentary select committees on a range of education issues.



We are an active member of many organisations working in education in the UK, including the Religious Education Council for England and Wales (REC), of which we are a founding member, and our Wales Coordinator is a board member; the Welsh Association of Standing Advisory Councils on RE (WASACRE), of which our Wales Coordinator is an executive committee member; and, in England, the Sex Education Forum (which for many recent years our Education Campaigns Manager was on the steering group of), the PSHE Association, and the Children's Rights Alliance for England (CRAE). We have been on all Welsh and UK government steering groups that have reviewed RE in recent years.

Our primary interests in children's rights relate to issues surrounding education (in particular RE, PSE/RSE, citizenship, and science), collective worship/school assemblies, state-funded religious schools, and the removal of the defence of 'reasonable punishment' in cases of physical assault against children.

## **Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

### **Collective Worship**

Despite the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's recommendation that the requirement be repealed,<sup>1</sup> schools in Wales are still legally mandated to carry out a daily act of collective worship. For church schools this must be in line with the denomination of the school, but even in schools with no religious character, this must be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'.<sup>2</sup>

That this requirement even applies to schools with no religious character undermines the new curriculum and will impair the implementation of Religion, Values, and Ethics (RVE), which is required to be objective, critical, and pluralistic.

Although schools can opt – through a process called 'determination' – to have worship that aligns with a faith other than Christianity, they are not permitted to opt out of delivering worship altogether. Parents have a legal right to withdraw their children from collective worship, and, since 2009, sixth-form pupils have been

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<sup>1</sup> UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland* (July 2016) <<http://docstore.ohchr.org/SelfServices/FilesHandler.ashx?enc=6QkG1d%2FPPRiCAqhKb7yhskHOj6VpDS%2F%2FJqg2Jxb9gncnUyUgbnuttBweOlyfyYPkBbwffitW2JurgBRuMMxZqnGgerUdpjxij3uZ0bjQBOLNTNvQ9fUIEOvA5LtW0GL>> [accessed 14 September 2021]. The Committee also pressed UK Governments on this issue in its recent List of Issues Prior to Reporting, which will inform its next set of Concluding Observations on the UK (see

UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *List of issues prior to submission of the combined sixth and seventh reports of United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland*, 9 February 2021, para. 17(a) <[https://tbinterne.t.ohchr.org/Treaties/CRC/Shared%20Documents/GBR/CRC\\_C\\_GBR\\_QPR\\_6-7\\_44382\\_E.pdf](https://tbinterne.t.ohchr.org/Treaties/CRC/Shared%20Documents/GBR/CRC_C_GBR_QPR_6-7_44382_E.pdf)> [accessed 14 September 2021].

<sup>2</sup> School Standards and Framework Act 1998, Schedule 20, Section 3(2) <<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/31/schedule/20>> [accessed 14 September 2021].





permitted to withdraw themselves from these sessions under the Education and Inspections Bill 2006. However, this ignores the fact that, under the UNCRC and the Human Rights Act, children who are not yet at sixth-form age still must be given a legal right to freedom of religion or belief that extends to being able to determine for themselves if they participate in worship. This issue is particularly pertinent for young people in the latter stages of secondary education who may even have reached the age of 16 but, because they have not yet begun sixth-form, may still not be able to opt-out of worship.

What's more, withdrawal can be a difficult process (not least because the law is often poorly understood by schools) and isolates children from their classmates. Children who have been removed from worship are rarely given a meaningful alternative of equal educational value during the time their peers are attending worship. Indeed, in 2019 two non-religious parents, Lee and Lizanne Harris (supported by Humanists UK), took a legal challenge against their children's school in England because it refused to provide just such an alternative.<sup>3</sup> When the Trust that runs the school eventually backed down after the HARRISES won permission to have their case heard at the High Court, the school agreed to provide an inclusive alternative to the Harris children and any other withdrawn children whose parents wished them to receive it.

As the law is identical in England and Wales, this logically ought to mean that similar arrangements to that secured by the HARRISES are possible at other schools in both countries. However, most parents who would like to see a meaningful alternative to collective worship in their child's school won't be in a position to mount time-consuming legal proceedings. What's more, such action may risk alienating the family from the school. For this reason, this is clearly not the most desirable means by which to ensure that children get the kind of non-discriminatory provision to which they are entitled under Article 2 of the UNCRC. Instead, this aim would be far better met by a change to the law.

By not acting on this issue, Wales will continue to fail to meet its obligations on children's rights. This is clearly problematic as the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 rightly places a duty on schools to 'promote knowledge and understanding of the UN Conventions on the rights of children and persons with disabilities.'<sup>4</sup> No single religion should be given such privilege in schools without a religious character and assemblies should become inclusive of all religions and beliefs.

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<sup>3</sup> Humanists UK, 'School concedes in collective worship case – will provide alternative assemblies', 20 November 2019 <<https://humanism.org.uk/2019/11/20/school-concedes-in-collective-worship-legal-case-will-provide-alternative-assemblies/>> [accessed 14 September 2021].

<sup>4</sup> Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asc/2021/4/enacted> [accessed 17 September 2021]



Schools without a religious character currently make up 86% of schools in Wales<sup>5</sup>. These serve a population whose parents, according to the latest British Social Attitudes Survey, are overwhelmingly non-Christian. 67% say they belong to no religion and 6% to non-Christian religions.<sup>6</sup> Whilst RVE will be taught in a critical, objective, and pluralistic manner, there is no such requirement for collective worship, where prayer, hymns, and religious stories are regularly presented as fact. This can often be a child's first introduction to Christian beliefs and having them presented by figures of authority in an educational setting as true can give even more weight to the messages, making worship a forceful form of indoctrination.

Collective worship should be replaced with inclusive assemblies where all children can fully participate whilst having their freedom of religion or belief respected. These inclusive assemblies would still consider issues relating to religion and belief – such as religious stories, festivals and other cultural practices – but would not be permitted to include religious worship or seek to promote one religion. They would allow the school community to come together on a daily basis and provide time and space for reflection, but in a manner that is suitable for all rather than biased towards one religion. With this in mind, inclusive assemblies would also involve celebrations of achievement, exploration of moral and ethical issues, and a wide range of other topics of relevance and interest to pupils. These may include (but are not limited to) relationships, mental health, the environment, human rights and equality, citizenship, and so on.<sup>7</sup>

We note that a Private Members' Bill seeking to replace collective worship with inclusive assemblies following the model above in England is currently being considered in the House of Lords,<sup>8</sup> with peers from across the political spectrum speaking in favour of the change.<sup>9</sup> During the Bill's second reading, Labour's education spokesperson in the Lords, Lord Watson of Invergowrie, also called on the Government to run a public consultation on the issue.<sup>10</sup> This is something which former Welsh Education Minister Kirsty Williams similarly told the Senedd's Petitions Committee would be necessary to amend the law, which she acknowledged raises human rights concerns. At the same meeting, Ms Williams said that if she were

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<sup>5</sup>Pupil level schools census - Welsh Government reporting [Pupil Level Annual School Census \(PLASC\)](#) [accessed 17 September 2021]

<sup>6</sup>British Social Attitudes Survey 2019 edition [2019 Edition Editors:](#) [accessed 17 September 2021]

<sup>7</sup> To support teachers in the delivery of such assemblies, Humanists UK recently launched a free resource called 'Assemblies for All' which features hundreds of interactive, meaningful assemblies made by education professionals from charities like Amnesty, Oxfam and Unicef, to organisations such as the UK Parliament and the BBC. <https://assembliesforall.org.uk/> [accessed 17 September 2021].

<sup>8</sup> Education (Assemblies) Bill [HL] <<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2579>> [accessed 14 September 2021].

<sup>9</sup> Humanists UK, 'Peers come out strongly in favour of Inclusive Assemblies Bill', 10 September 2021 <<https://humanists.uk/2021/09/10/peers-come-out-strongly-in-favour-of-inclusive-assemblies-bill/>> [accessed 14 September 2021].

<sup>10</sup> Hansard HL Deb 10 September 2021, Vol 814, Col 1092 <[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2021-09-10/debates/1F8305FD-63BA-4E38-99C4-774928DED5AA/Education\(Assemblies\)Bill\(HL\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2021-09-10/debates/1F8305FD-63BA-4E38-99C4-774928DED5AA/Education(Assemblies)Bill(HL))> [accessed 14 September 2021].



‘starting from a blank sheet of paper’ she would be ‘unlikely to enshrine the law in the way it currently is.’

Replacing compulsory worship in schools without a religious character with inclusive assemblies in keeping with RVE provision is likely to be popular with parents. In a 2019 YouGov poll of British parents, religious worship was ranked last in a list of 13 possible activities that might take place in a school assembly, with 51% of parents saying it was not an appropriate activity (and just 29% saying it was appropriate). By contrast, 76% of parents thought the environment and nature should feature in assemblies, 74% thought they should deal with equality and non-discrimination, and 73% thought they should cover physical and mental health, and the celebration of achievements.<sup>11</sup> Although the poll did provide data specifically for the views of parents in Wales, there was a small sample and this showed the views of Welsh parents to be broadly in line with Britain as a whole. Worship was still ranked last out of all the activities listed.<sup>12</sup>

A further YouGov poll, conducted in August 2021, found that just 24% of British parents thought the collective worship requirement should be enforced, while 60% thought it should not be enforced.<sup>13</sup> In Wales specifically, 65% of those surveyed thought the requirement should not be enforced. The poll also found that most parents weren’t aware of the law – 65% overall, and 56% in Wales. Setting aside the fact that the need to withdraw demonstrates a lack of inclusion in schools, if parents are not even aware that collective worship is happening, it is unlikely that they will be able to exercise their legal rights to withdraw or make an informed decision about whether they want to expose their children to the practice.

With all this in mind, we urge the Committee to take up the issue of collective worship and do all it can to urge Welsh Government to replace the outdated, unworkable law with a requirement for inclusive assemblies that fully support the rights of children and their families, and reflect the values and intentions that underpin the new curriculum.

### **Implementation of new RSE code and monitoring of appropriate teaching material**

The new version of the RSE guidance and code are currently under consideration following a public consultation. We think the drafts are in need of some changes, but

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<sup>11</sup> Humanists UK ‘Parents say religious worship is least appropriate activity for school assemblies, new poll reveals’, 9 August 2019 <<https://humanists.uk/2019/08/09/parents-say-religious-worship-is-least-appropriate-activity-for-school-assemblies-new-poll-reveals/>> [accessed 12 August 2021].

<sup>12</sup> The environment and nature was ranked first (77%), celebration of achievements second (76%) and physical and mental health third (75%).

<sup>13</sup> Humanists UK, ‘Majority of parents think compulsory worship law should not be enforced, new poll reveals, as Lords propose reform, 10 September 2021 <<https://humanists.uk/2021/09/10/majority-of-parents-think-compulsory-school-worship-law-should-not-be-enforced-new-poll-reveals-as-lords-propose-reform/>> [accessed 14 September 2021].



will be a significant improvement on the guidance currently in use from 2010.<sup>14</sup> However, in the absence of interim guidance (which was consulted on but seemingly scrapped in 2019<sup>15</sup>), the current guidance will remain in place for many years until as late as 2026. It makes no reference to LGBTQ+ people or relationships, nor does it mention the importance of consent. It is clearly untenable for pupils entering Year 8 in 2022 to go through the whole of secondary school without access to inclusive RSE, especially as (unlike some of the other areas of the new curriculum) this learning will have a direct impact on the lives of pupils while they are still at school. The recent peer on peer sexual abuse scandal uncovered by the survivor website Everyone's Invited starkly illustrates how important this aspect of education really is. On this basis, we believe the Committee must press the Welsh Government to bring forward the introduction of compulsory RSE so that no child in Wales leaves school without the information and skills they need to keep themselves and others healthy, happy, and safe.

A related issue that the Committee should consider is inappropriate RSE resources being used in some schools in Wales. One such resource, which we have brought to the attention of Welsh Government,<sup>16</sup> is called *A Fertile Heart*. The resource was produced by a group of Catholic priests and, at least until recently, the Archdiocese of Cardiff directed its use in all of its schools. Amongst other things, the resource states that contraception is a 'moral danger', and that gay and lesbian people cannot marry and must entirely abstain from sex. The material argues that hormones are a biological reason that women 'find it more difficult to enter uncommitted sexual relationships' and 'are prone to suffer mentally and emotionally if sexual relationships fail.' It goes on to maintain that these supposedly biological arguments show that 'man has been created to be the initiator in sexual relationships and woman the receiver-responder'. Suggested activities during a related Year 11 lesson involve discussing whether contraception has made women 'more "available" and vulnerable to being used'. In a section on same-sex attraction, pupils watch a video in which same-sex marriage is likened to polygamy.

These resources are shown as in use at a number of Catholic schools in Wales. Whilst the new RSE code will require all schools, including those with a religious character,

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<sup>14</sup> Welsh Assembly Government Circular No: 019/2010, *Sex and Relationships Education in Schools*, September 2010 <<https://hwb.gov.wales/api/storage/fb82a7b3-c88a-4473-a0b2-80fb2395b872/sex-and-relationships-education-in-schools.pdf>> [accessed 14 September 2021].

<sup>15</sup> ADD REFERENCE

<sup>16</sup> Humanists UK, 'Exposed: Catholic school resources say "man was created to be the initiator in sexual relationships", women "receiver-responders"', 24 January 2021 <<https://humanism.org.uk/2021/01/24/exposed-catholic-school-resources-say-man-was-created-to-be-the-initiator-in-sexual-relationships-women-receiver-responders/>>



to follow the statutory guidance – which states that the subject must be taught in ‘a neutral, factual way’<sup>17</sup> – that could still be five years away for some children.

We therefore ask that you support the call for the immediate ban of inappropriate resources, and call for the implementation of the new RSE code to be brought forward to September 2022 for all children in full-time education.

### **Summary**

Main priorities during the Sixth Senedd (2021-2026) need to focus on children’s rights, complying with the UNCRC concluding recommendations and ensuring equality in all education settings. The law on collective worship must be a priority to protect against the current discrimination and provide inclusive assemblies which promote social, moral, spiritual and cultural wellbeing for all children. Bringing forward the implementation of RSE code must also be a priority to address the current lack of suitable guidance, as must the quality assurance of RSE teaching resources to protect against unsuitable resources already in use.

**Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

**Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i’r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

**Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**

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<sup>17</sup> Welsh Government, *Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Statutory Guidance and Code*, 21 May 2021, p.8 <[https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2021-05/consultation-document-relationships-and-sexuality-education-guidance-and-code\\_0.pdf](https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2021-05/consultation-document-relationships-and-sexuality-education-guidance-and-code_0.pdf)> [accessed 14 September 2021].





## CYPE SP 59

Ymateb gan: **Helen Wales**

Response from: **Helen Wales, A Fairer Start Mission Manager, Wales, Nesta**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

### **Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

The sixth Senedd will be a period of major change for all those involved in education, from the earliest years onwards. The full introduction of the Curriculum for Wales and ongoing responses to the pandemic mean that this will be a period of challenges and opportunities and will require innovative solutions. These changes will be set against a backdrop of increasing child poverty, growing social inequality, and the existing disadvantage gap.

We therefore suggest that the Committee focuses on two key areas:

- Ensuring continued and focused attention on addressing the disadvantage gap for children and young people
- Enabling innovative responses to address current challenges and create impactful change

These priorities are relevant across the age range, from the perinatal period onwards (see Theme 4).

#### **1. Are education and curriculum reforms contributing to narrowing the outcome gap for children growing up in disadvantage, at all stages?**

**If they are not, how can we act quickly to change this?**



The current Programme for Government commits to ‘continu[ing] our long-term programme of education reform, and ensure educational inequalities narrow and standards rise’. However, we know that progress in this area is difficult and that the pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities.

Questions to consider:

- Are we learning from past experience of reform in Wales and reform elsewhere? E.g. Early experiences with the Foundation Phase and Scotland’s efforts to close the persistent attainment gap.
- Are we deliberately designing new structures and systems with the *intention* of closing the outcomes gap, and ensuring that changes and developments do not create unintended consequences for children who already face disadvantage (see section below on technology in education)?
- Are we making sure we address existing biases in the education system which may reinforce disadvantage e.g. wider issues linked to the cost of the school day, discrimination based on race and ethnicity?
- Are we using a range of measures that help us understand progress against the wider set of outcomes that support educational progress e.g. wellbeing and self-confidence?<sup>1</sup> Is this information available to all contributing stakeholders?

## **2. Are we creating the conditions for innovative responses within the education reform process, and other services that support children and young people’s development?**

We need to ensure that we are creating the conditions for the full range of education practitioners to be innovative in their work, and to sustain the creativity and responsiveness demonstrated through the pandemic.

The Committee has a key role to play in ensuring that the education system in Wales, and the wider system of services that support young people, nurture the conditions for innovation. This could usefully include:

- Supporting the process of identifying innovation challenges
- Scrutinising the conditions for innovation e.g. available time, access to expertise, access to financial resources, collaboration - including between sectors, ensuring that the system supports ‘constructive failure’ and learning,

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<sup>1</sup> This follows recommendations made by Audit Scotland in response to the persistent attainment gap <https://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/news/attainment-gap-remains-wide-and-better-education-data-needed>





enabling useful evaluation and dissemination of learning, developing and testing new initiatives

- Seeking ways to formalise innovation as a value within the system e.g. incorporating willingness to innovate in inspection criteria, through funding streams
- Prioritising high quality data and evidence to support decision-making

Innovation requires information. The Committee could usefully scrutinise the data and information needs of different stakeholders in the education system (from parents to practitioners to third party agencies), as well as access to existing data (including any data collected at national, regional and local levels but not published, and by private providers e.g. EdTech platforms), to enable collaboration and innovation that puts the holistic development of children and young people at its heart. This will be particularly important alongside new assessment arrangements.

Note: This section is also relevant in section 4 in relation to the early years.

### **3. How can we ensure technology improves outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, and avoids the risk of perpetuating existing inequalities?**

Technology presents opportunities for addressing existing educational disadvantages - not just in supporting learning, but in engaging families and supporting the collection and understanding of management and outcomes data. However, it is not inevitable that technology will impact educational disadvantages positively. Children's experiences of technology during the pandemic have varied considerably - most visibly through inequalities in access to hardware or connectivity to use EdTech tools.

Whilst research in this area is limited, Nesta/SchoolDash research in England during the first school closures in Spring 2020 showed usage of some maths platforms increasing by between 2 and 7 times.<sup>2</sup> However, this analysis of EdTech platform data also shows that even as access to devices became more equal, gaps in engagement between pupils from schools with more children eligible for FSM persisted. This was indicated by lower numbers of student and parent logins per teacher login in schools with higher levels of deprivation.<sup>3</sup> This demonstrates that we need to focus on the needs of disadvantaged children to ensure that digital innovations benefit all children. This should consider how the specific needs of some children inform good product design, the need for sensitive monitoring and evaluation, the need to

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nesta.org.uk/data-visualisation-and-interactive/levelling-maths-during-lockdown/>

<sup>3</sup> This analysis focused on schools in England: <https://www.nesta.org.uk/project-updates/edtech-usage-story-four-graphs/>



address technological innovations as part of the bigger picture of engagement, and guidance for teachers on how implementation and usage can be tailored to the needs of disadvantaged children.

We should also consider which areas of technology in education are the ones with most potential to close the disadvantage gap. Again, evidence is limited but two areas which show promise are online tuition and parental engagement in learning. The March 2021 [Beyond Covid, Learning in the Next Phase](#) report,<sup>4</sup> for example, highlights the opportunities for greater collaboration between learners and parents/carers presented by online teaching tools, and improved communication with school.

Nesta's recent work on data poverty in Wales and Scotland has identified that without specific action on data poverty at a Government level, the most vulnerable groups in society may be excluded from accessing public services, including education. We define data poverty as: *'those individuals, households or communities who cannot afford sufficient, private and secure mobile or broadband data to meet their essential needs'*.<sup>5</sup> The Committee could usefully explore the impact of the Digital Strategy for Wales with a specific view to identifying actions to rapidly address where technology in education could be exacerbating existing inequalities linked to data poverty.

## **Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

## **Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

Good physical and mental health are both key outcomes for children and young people and prerequisites for enabling children and young people to reach their full potential. We welcome the focus on mental health proposed for the sixth senedd, and the focus on health and wellbeing in the new curriculum.

The causes of ill-health are structural and societal and cannot be addressed at a purely individual level. This is particularly the case with obesity, where poor food environments (i.e. the availability, accessibility and affordability of healthy foods) are

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<sup>4</sup> <https://hwb.gov.wales/api/storage/ca47759a-2273-42fa-bc7e-50cc93c350d2/beyond-covid-learning-in-the-next-phase-analysis-of-conversations.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> [https://media.nesta.org.uk/documents/What\\_is\\_Data\\_Poverty.pdf](https://media.nesta.org.uk/documents/What_is_Data_Poverty.pdf)



rarely in the control of children and young people and have a greater impact on food choices than individual motivation.<sup>6</sup> The latest analysis from the WIMD makes the links between obesity, income deprivation and lower attainment in the Foundation Phase Indicator clear.<sup>7</sup>

While in general policies that aim at tackling obesity are well-supported by the public, interventions that focus on educating and supporting individual action are typically seen to be more acceptable than more impactful interventions that focus on improving food environments (e.g. by changing, disincentivizing or restricting food choices). This can be explained as stemming from the widely held, but false, belief that obesity is largely due to a lack of willpower by individuals; a viewpoint that also reinforces stigma.<sup>8</sup> This creates a potential barrier to the implementation of impactful policy and therefore changing of this narrative needs to be a high priority.

The focus of the Healthy Weight Health Wales Delivery Plan<sup>9</sup> on food environments rather than individual action is welcome. The high rates of obesity among children in Wales indicates that there needs to be even more of an emphasis on schools and early years settings both as food environments and potential agents of change (in attitudes as well as behaviour).

Our understanding of the negative impacts of loneliness on poor health outcomes is also increasing,<sup>10</sup> and we know that young people aged 16-24 in Wales are mostly likely to describe themselves as lonely.<sup>11</sup> Scrutiny of measures to support the mental health and wellbeing of young people should include the impact of social isolation, as well as opportunities for social and cultural connection.

#### **Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**

The fundamental role that the **early years** play in shaping future life chances and the disproportionate negative impact that disadvantage (especially but not only

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/Understanding%20Obesity%20Draft%20Report.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <https://gov.wales/welsh-index-multiple-deprivation-2019-deprivation-analysis-relating-young-children.html>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.nesta.org.uk/report/changing-minds-about-changing-behaviours-obesity-focus/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-02/healthy-weight-delivery-plan-2020-22.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25910392/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://gov.wales/loneliness-national-survey-wales-april-2019-march-2020.html>



socioeconomic disadvantage) can have on the youngest children is well-known. The early years have been a priority in Wales for some time, but the challenges persist.

In this context, we have identified a number of areas in the early years relevant to:

- Ensuring continued and focused attention on addressing the disadvantage gap
- Enabling innovative responses to challenges

**Data and evidence:** Data relating to early years outcomes in Wales remains largely based on key health milestones, with the Foundation Phase Indicator at 7 being the first national measure of developmental progress, even though we know that differences in developmental outcomes can be evident at a much earlier stage.<sup>12</sup> The Committee could usefully scrutinise the data and information needs of different stakeholders in the early years to support effective intervention and improve developmental outcomes for children, including the impact of routine assessments in terms of identifying which children need support. This should include national and local measures, as well as accessibility of information, and data and information sharing across services.

This should also include responding to the changing picture of poverty and disadvantage in Wales and the potential limitations of area-based models with rising child poverty levels, and assessing the value of alternative tools for identifying need (e.g. Adverse Childhood Experience-based approaches and our understanding of school-readiness factors<sup>13</sup>).

**Early Childhood Education and Care:** 'Early education' that supports positive child development begins at birth and should recognise the vital role of parents. Quality provision has the potential to impact on child development outcomes, as well as parental wellbeing, capacity and capability.

We also know that access to high quality ECEC is particularly beneficial for children growing up in disadvantage,<sup>14</sup> but that access to provision and funding arrangement can risk creating barriers for these children.

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<sup>12</sup> See <https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/content/dam/global/reports/education-and-child-protection/ready-to-read-wales.pdf> for an example of use of the Millennium Cohort Study to identify early gaps in language skills.

<sup>13</sup>

[https://www.adruk.org/fileadmin/uploads/adruk/Documents/Data\\_Insight\\_Risk\\_factors\\_for\\_not\\_being\\_ready\\_to\\_start\\_school\\_February\\_2021\\_.pdf](https://www.adruk.org/fileadmin/uploads/adruk/Documents/Data_Insight_Risk_factors_for_not_being_ready_to_start_school_February_2021_.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> <https://senedd.wales/media/yseggg0a/early-childhood-education-web-english.pdf> p.3



The Committee could usefully scrutinise the impact of current ECEC arrangements from the perspective of tackling the impacts of disadvantage, especially on children's developmental outcomes for those more at risk of falling behind. E.g. What proportion of children at risk of not meeting the Foundation Phase Indicator access 30 hours of childcare and/ or the Flying Start offer? How is the system proactively identifying children at risk of poorer outcomes and monitoring who is/ isn't participating in universal and targeted services? Given the detrimental impact that poverty can play if experienced in the first three years of life, are resources sufficiently targeted to children aged 0-3, including parenting support and perinatal mental health support?<sup>15</sup>

Structural challenges relating to affordability, accessibility and flexibility in the childcare context are longstanding and require fresh thinking, especially after the challenges of the pandemic. The Committees could usefully set the challenge of finding innovative solutions to these issues.<sup>16</sup>

Other topics that the Committee could usefully explore to generate impact in this area include:

- Assessing the impact of 'early education' from the age of 1 (see recent commitments from the Scottish Government)
- Coherence of provision across sectors in different parts of Wales and accessibility for different families, including financial barriers
- The role of peer-based and 'parent-powered' initiatives in creating positive outcomes for young children and investment in this area<sup>17</sup>
- Relative investment at different ages and stages based on potential for developmental impact
- Communication strategies linked to the early years and their success in engaging groups most at risk of not achieving outcomes, including using behavioural insights to tailor communication

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Changing-patterns-of-poverty-in-early-childhood-Nuffield-Foundation.pdf> p.4. Research shows that poverty is correlated with poorer outcomes, but children living in poverty, whose parents have good parenting skills can still have good outcomes: 'a study by Kiernan and Mensah (2011) found that 58% of children who experienced persistent poverty and strong parenting skills had good child outcomes at age five.' (p6)

<sup>16</sup> Nesta undertook some work in 2016 to identify innovation opportunities in this area. Whilst the work focuses on the context in England and is now five years old, the study demonstrates the value of this approach: <https://media.nesta.org.uk/documents/innovation-in-childcare-14-07.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> See <https://www.nesta.org.uk/report/parents-helping-parents-it-takes-village-raise-child/> for examples supported by Nesta.



- A rapid review of the potential of pandemic innovations to sustain support for the home learning environment
- Assessing the potential role of social prescribing to support perinatal mental health and child development as part of wider applications of this approach



## Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg

### Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)

This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)

#### CYPE SP 59

Ymateb gan: Helen Wales

Response from: Helen Wales, A Fairer Start Mission Manager, Wales, Nesta

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

#### Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol

Bydd y chweched Senedd yn gyfnod o newid mawr i bawb sy'n ymwneud ag addysg, o'r blynyddoedd cynharaf ymlaen. Mae cyflwyno'r Cwricwlwm i Gymru yn llawn, a'r ymatebion sy'n mynd ymlaen i'r pandemig, yn golygu y bydd hwn yn gyfnod o heriau a chyfleoedd a bydd angen atebion arloesol. Bydd y newidiadau hyn yn cael eu gosod yn erbyn cefndir o dlodi cynyddol ymhlith plant, anghydraddoldeb cymdeithasol cynyddol, a'r bwch sy'n bodoli o ran anfantais.

Rydym felly'n awgrymu bod y Pwyllgor yn canolbwyntio ar ddau faes allweddol:

- Sicrhau sylw parhaus a phenodol i fynd i'r afael â'r bwch anfantais i blant a phobl ifanc
- Galluogi ymatebion arloesol i fynd i'r afael â'r heriau presennol a chreu newid effeithiol

Mae'r blaenoriaethau hyn yn berthnasol ar draws yr ystod oedran, o'r cyfnod amenedigol ymlaen (gweler Thema 4).

#### 1. A yw diwygiadau i addysg a'r cwricwlwm yn cyfrannu at leihau'r bwch canlyniadau i blant sy'n tyfu i fyny dan anfantais, ymhob cam?

**Os nad ydynt, sut gallwn weithredu'n gyflym i newid hyn?**

Mae'r Rhaglen Lywodraethu bresennol yn ymrwmo i '[b]arhau â'n rhaglen hirdymor o ddiwygio addysg, a sicrhau bod anghydraddoldebau addysgol yn lleihau a bod



safonau'n codi'. Fodd bynnag, gwyddom fod cynnydd yn y maes hwn yn anodd a bod y pandemig wedi gwaethygu'r anghydraddoldebau presennol.

Cwestiynau i'w hystyried:

- A ydym yn dysgu o brofiad blaenorol o ddiwygio yng Nghymru a diwygio mewn mannau eraill? E.e. Profiadau cynnar gyda'r Cyfnod Sylfaen ac ymdrechion yr Alban i gau'r bwlch parhaus mewn cyrhaeddiad.
- A ydym yn mynd ati'n fwriadol i ddylunio strwythurau a systemau newydd gyda'r *bwriad* o gau'r bwlch canlyniadau, a sicrhau nad yw newidiadau a datblygiadau'n creu canlyniadau anfwriadol i blant sydd eisoes yn wynebu anfantais (gweler yr adran isod ar dechnoleg mewn addysg)?
- A ydym yn gwneud yn siŵr ein bod yn mynd i'r afael â rhagfarnau sy'n bodoli yn y system addysg ac a allai atgyfnerthu anfantais e.e. materion ehangach sy'n gysylltiedig â chost y diwrnod ysgol, gwahaniaethu ar sail hil ac ethnigrwydd?
- A ydym yn defnyddio amrywiaeth o fesurau sy'n ein helpu i ddeall cynnydd mewn perthynas â set ehangach o ganlyniadau sy'n cefnogi cynnydd addysgol e.e. lles a hunanhyder? A yw'r wybodaeth hon ar gael i'r holl randdeiliaid sy'n cyfrannu?

## **2. A ydym yn creu'r amodau ar gyfer ymatebion arloesol yn y broses o ddiwygio addysg, a gwasanaethau eraill sy'n cefnogi datblygiad plant a phobl ifanc?**

Mae angen i ni sicrhau ein bod yn creu'r amodau ar gyfer yr ystod lawn o ymarferwyr addysg i fod yn arloesol yn eu gwaith, ac i gynnal y creadigrwydd a'r ymatebolrwydd a ddangoswyd drwy'r pandemig.

Mae gan y Pwyllgor rôl allweddol i'w chwarae o ran sicrhau bod y system addysg yng Nghymru, a'r system ehangach o wasanaethau sy'n cefnogi pobl ifanc, yn meithrin yr amodau ar gyfer arloesi. Gallai hyn gynnwys y canlynol:

- Cefnogi'r broses o ganfod heriau wrth arloesi
- Craffu ar yr amodau ar gyfer arloesi e.e. yr amser sydd ar gael, mynediad at arbenigedd, mynediad at adnoddau ariannol, cydweithio – gan gynnwys rhwng sectorau, sicrhau bod y system yn cefnogi 'methiant adeiladol' a dysgu, fel bod modd mynd ati'n fuddiol i werthuso a lledaenu dysgu, datblygu a phrofi mentrau newydd
- Ceisio ffyrdd o ffurfioli arloesedd fel gwerth o fewn y system e.e. ymgorffori parodrwydd i arloesi mewn meini prawf arolygu, drwy ffrydiau cyllido





- Blaenoriaethu data a thystiolaeth o ansawdd uchel i gefnogi'r broses o wneud penderfyniadau

Mae angen gwybodaeth ar gyfer arloesi. Byddai'n fuddiol i'r Pwyllgor graffu ar anghenion data a gwybodaeth gwahanol randdeiliaid yn y system addysg (o rieni, i ymarferwyr, i asiantaethau trydydd parti), yn ogystal â mynediad at ddata sy'n bodoli eisoes (gan gynnwys unrhyw ddata a gesglir ar lefelau cenedlaethol, rhanbarthol a lleol ond nas cyhoeddwyd, a chan ddarparwyr preifat e.e. llwyfannau technoleg addysg), er mwyn galluogi cydweithio ac arloesi sy'n rhoi datblygiad cyfannol plant a phobl ifanc yn ganolog iddo. Bydd hyn yn arbennig o bwysig ochr yn ochr â threfniadau asesu newydd.

Sylwch: Mae'r adran hon hefyd yn berthnasol yn adran 4 mewn perthynas â'r blynyddoedd cynnar.

### **3. Sut gallwn ni sicrhau bod technoleg yn gwella canlyniadau i ddisgyblion difreintiedig, ac yn osgoi'r risg o barhau â'r anghydraddoldebau presennol?**

Mae technoleg yn cynnig cyfleoedd i fynd i'r afael â'r anfanteision addysgol presennol – nid yn unig o ran cefnogi dysgu, ond hefyd o ran ymgysylltu â theuluoedd a chefnogi'r gwaith o gasglu a deall data rheoli a chanlyniadau. Fodd bynnag, nid yw'n anochel y bydd technoleg yn cael effaith gadarnhaol ar anfanteision addysgol. Mae profiadau plant o dechnoleg yn ystod y pandemig wedi amrywio'n sylweddol – yn fwyaf amlwg drwy anghydraddoldebau o ran mynediad at galedwedd neu gysylltedd er mwyn defnyddio offer technoleg addysg.

Er bod ymchwil yn y maes hwn yn gyfyngedig, dangosodd ymchwil Nesta/SchoolDash yn Lloegr yn ystod y cyfnod clo pryd roedd ysgolion wedi cau gyntaf yng Ngwanwyn 2020 fod y defnydd o rai llwyfannau mathemateg wedi cynyddu rhwng 2 a 7 gwaith.<sup>1</sup> Fodd bynnag, mae'r dadansoddiad hwn o ddata llwyfannau technoleg addysg hefyd yn dangos, hyd yn oed wrth i fynediad at ddyfeisiau fynd yn fwy cyfartal, fod y bylchau'n parhau o ran ymgysylltu rhwng disgyblion o ysgolion sydd â mwy o blant sy'n gymwys i gael prydau ysgol am ddim. Dangoswyd hyn gan niferoedd is o fyfyrwyr a rhieni yn mewngofnodi fesul athro mewn ysgolion gyda lefelau uwch o amddifadedd.<sup>2</sup> Mae hyn yn dangos bod angen i ni ganolbwyntio ar anghenion plant difreintiedig er mwyn sicrhau bod arloesedd digidol o fudd i bob plentyn. Dylai hyn ystyried sut mae anghenion penodol rhai plant yn cyfrannu at ddylunio cynnyrch da, yr angen am fonitro a gwerthuso sensitif,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nesta.org.uk/data-visualisation-and-interactive/levelling-maths-during-lockdown/>

<sup>2</sup> Roedd y dadansoddiad hwn yn canolbwyntio ar ysgolion yn Lloegr: <https://www.nesta.org.uk/project-updates/edtech-usage-story-four-graphs/>



yr angen i fynd i'r afael â datblygiadau technolegol fel rhan o'r darlun ehangach o ymgysylltu, a chanllawiau i athrawon ynglŷn â sut y gellir teilwra'r gweithredu a'r defnydd ar gyfer anghenion plant difreintiedig.

Dylem hefyd ystyried pa feysydd technoleg mewn addysg sydd â'r potensial mwyaf i gau'r bwch anfantais. Unwaith eto, mae'r dystiolaeth yn gyfyngedig, ond y ddau faes sy'n dangos addewid yw tiwtora ar-lein ac ymgysylltiad rhieni â dysgu. Mae'r adroddiad [Y tu hwnt i Covid, Dysgu yn y Cyfnod Nesaf](#) ym mis Mawrth 2021,<sup>3</sup> er enghraifft, yn tynnu sylw at y cyfleoedd ar gyfer rhagor o gydweithio rhwng dysgwyr a rhieni/gofalwyr drwy offer addysgu ar-lein, a mwy o gyfathrebu â'r ysgol.

Mae gwaith diweddar Nesta ar dlodi data yng Nghymru a'r Alban wedi canfod y gallai'r grwpiau mwyaf agored i niwed mewn cymdeithas gael eu heithrio rhag defnyddio gwasanaethau cyhoeddus, gan gynnwys addysg, os na chymerir camau penodol ar fater tlodi data. Rydym yn diffinio tlodi data fel: *'yr unigolion, y cartrefi neu'r cymunedau hynny na allant fforddio digon o ddata band eang neu ddata symudol preifat a diogel i ddiwallu eu hanghenion hanfodol'*.<sup>4</sup> Byddai'n ddefnyddiol i'r Pwyllgor edrych ar effaith y Strategaeth Ddigidol ar gyfer Cymru gyda golwg benodol ar nodi camau gweithredu i fynd i'r afael yn gyflym â lle gallai technoleg mewn addysg waethygu anghydraddoldebau presennol sy'n gysylltiedig â thlodi data.

## **Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch**

### **Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc)**

Mae iechyd corfforol a meddyliol da yn ganlyniadau allweddol i blant a phobl ifanc ac yn rhagofynion ar gyfer galluogi plant a phobl ifanc i gyrraedd eu llawn botensial. Rydym yn croesawu'r ffocws ar iechyd meddwl a gynigir ar gyfer y chweched senedd, a'r ffocws ar iechyd a lles yn y cwricwlwm newydd.

Mae'r materion sy'n achosi afiechyd yn rhai strwythurol a chymdeithasol ac ni ellir mynd i'r afael â hwy ar lefel yr unigolyn yn unig. Mae hyn yn arbennig o wir am ordewdra, pan fo amgylcheddau bwyd gwael (h.y. argaeledd, hygrychedd a fforddiadwyedd bwydydd iach) yn anaml yn cael eu rheoli gan blant a phobl ifanc ac

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<sup>3</sup> <https://hwb.gov.wales/api/storage/2cdea018-95a7-4d62-a46d-79076863e86b/y-tu-hwnt-i-covid-dysgu-yn-y-cyfnod-nesaf-dadansoddiad-or-sgyrsiau.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> [https://media.nesta.org.uk/documents/Beth\\_yw\\_Tlodi\\_Data.pdf](https://media.nesta.org.uk/documents/Beth_yw_Tlodi_Data.pdf)



maent yn cael mwy o effaith ar ddewisiadau bwyd nag ar gymhelliant unigolion.<sup>5</sup> Mae'r dadansoddiad diweddaraf o'r Mynegai Amddifadedd Lluosog yn dangos yn glir y cysylltiadau rhwng gordewdra, amddifadedd incwm a chyrhaeddiad is yn y Dangosydd Cyfnod Sylfaen.<sup>6</sup>

Er bod polisiau cyffredinol sy'n ceisio mynd i'r afael â gordewdra yn cael cefnogaeth dda gan y cyhoedd, mae ymyriadau sy'n canolbwyntio ar addysgu a chefnogi gweithredu gan unigolion fel arfer yn cael eu hystyried yn fwy derbyniol nag ymyriadau mwy effeithiol sy'n canolbwyntio ar wella amgylcheddau bwyd (e.e. drwy newid, datgymell neu gyfyngu ar ddewisiadau bwyd). Gellir egluro hyn fel rhywbeth sy'n deillio o'r gred, eang ond ffug, fod gordewdra yn digwydd yn bennaf oherwydd diffyg ewyllys gan unigolion; safbwynt sydd hefyd yn atgyfnerthu stigma.<sup>7</sup> Mae hyn yn creu rhwystr posibl i weithredu polisi effeithiol ac felly mae angen rhoi blaenoriaeth uchel i newid y naratif hwn.

Mae'r ffaith fod Cynllun Cyflenwi Iechyd Pwysau Iach Cymru<sup>8</sup> yn rhoi'r ffocws ar amgylcheddau bwyd yn hytrach nag ar weithredoedd unigolion yn rhywbeth i'w groesawu. Mae'r cyfraddau gordewdra uchel ymysg plant yng Nghymru yn dangos bod angen rhoi mwy fyth o bwyslais ar ysgolion a lleoliadau blynyddoedd cynnar fel amgylcheddau bwyd ac fel asiantau newid posibl (mewn agweddau yn ogystal ag ymddygiad).

Mae ein dealltwriaeth o'r effeithiau negyddol y mae unigrwydd yn eu cael ar ganlyniadau iechyd gwael hefyd yn cynyddu,<sup>9</sup> ac rydym yn gwybod mai pobl ifanc rhwng 16 a 24 oed yng Nghymru sydd fwyaf tebygol o ddisgrifio eu hunain fel pobl unig.<sup>10</sup> Dylai'r gwaith o graffu ar fesurau i gefnogi iechyd meddwl a lles pobl ifanc gynnwys effaith arwahanrwydd cymdeithasol, yn ogystal â chyfleoedd ar gyfer cysylltiadau cymdeithasol a diwylliannol.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/Understanding%20Obesity%20Draft%20Report.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://llyw.cymru/mynegai-amddifadedd-lluosog-cymru-2019-dadansoddiad-amddifadedd-syn-ymwneud-phlant-ifanc-html>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.nesta.org.uk/report/changing-minds-about-changing-behaviours-obesity-focus/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://llyw.cymru/sites/default/files/publications/2020-02/pwysau-iach-cymru-iach-2020-22.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25910392/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://llyw.cymru/unigrwydd-arolwg-cenedlaethol-cymru-ebrill-2019-i-fawrth-2020-html>



## Thema 4: Plant a phobl ifanc

Mae'n hysbys iawn faint o ran sylfaenol y mae'r **blynyddoedd cynnar** yn ei chwarae yn siapio cyfleoedd bywyd yn y dyfodol a'r effaith negyddol anghymesur y gall anfantais (yn enwedig, ond nid yn unig, anfantais economaidd-gymdeithasol) ei chael ar y plant ieuengaf. Mae'r blynyddoedd cynnar wedi bod yn flaenoriaeth yng Nghymru ers cryn amser, ond mae'r heriau'n parhau.

Yn y cyd-destun hwn, rydym wedi nodi nifer o feysydd yn y blynyddoedd cynnar sy'n berthnasol i:

- Sicrhau sylw parhaus a phenodol i fynd i'r afael â'r bwch anfantais
- Galluogi ymatebion arloesol i heriau

**Data a thystiolaeth:** Mae'r data sy'n ymwneud â chanlyniadau'r blynyddoedd cynnar yng Nghymru yn dal yn seiliedig i raddau helaeth ar gerrig milltir allweddol ym maes iechyd, a dangosydd y Cyfnod Sylfaen yn 7 oed yw'r mesur cenedlaethol cyntaf o gynydd datblygiadol, er ein bod yn gwybod y gall gwahaniaethau mewn canlyniadau datblygiadol fod yn amlwg yn gynharach o lawer.<sup>11</sup> Gallai'r Pwyllgor graffu'n fuddiol ar anghenion data a gwybodaeth gwahanol randdeiliaid yn y blynyddoedd cynnar er mwyn cefnogi ymyriadau effeithiol a gwella canlyniadau datblygiadol i blant, gan gynnwys effaith asesiadau rheolaidd o ran canfod pa blant sydd angen cefnogaeth. Dylai hyn gynnwys mesurau cenedlaethol a lleol, yn ogystal â hygyrchedd gwybodaeth, a rhannu data a gwybodaeth ar draws gwasanaethau.

Dylai hyn hefyd gynnwys ymateb i'r newid yn y darlun o dlodi ac anfantais yng Nghymru a chyfyngiadau posibl modelau ar sail ardal gyda lefelau tlodi plant yn codi, ac asesu gwerth dulliau amgen ar gyfer adnabod anghenion (e.e. dulliau'n seiliedig ar Brofiadau Niweidiol yn ystod Plentyndod a'n dealltwriaeth o ffactorau sy'n ymwneud â pharodrwydd ar gyfer yr ysgol<sup>12</sup>).

**Addysg a Gofal Plentyndod Cynnar:** Mae 'addysg gynnar' sy'n cefnogi datblygiad plant cadarnhaol yn dechrau ar adeg yr enedigaeth a dylai gydnabod rôl hanfodol rhieni. Gall darpariaeth o ansawdd effeithio ar ganlyniadau datblygiad plant, yn ogystal â lles, capasiti a gallu rhieni.

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<sup>11</sup> Gweler <https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/content/dam/global/reports/education-and-child-protection/ready-to-read-wales.pdf> i gael enghraifft o'r defnydd o'r Astudiaeth Carfan y Mileniwm i ganfod bylchau cynnar mewn sgiliau iaith.

<sup>12</sup>

[https://www.adruk.org/fileadmin/uploads/adruk/Documents/Data\\_Insight\\_Risk\\_factors\\_for\\_not\\_being\\_ready\\_to\\_start\\_school\\_February\\_2021\\_.pdf](https://www.adruk.org/fileadmin/uploads/adruk/Documents/Data_Insight_Risk_factors_for_not_being_ready_to_start_school_February_2021_.pdf)



Gwyddom hefyd fod mynediad at Addysg a Gofal Plentyndod Cynnar o ansawdd uchel yn arbennig o fuddiol i blant sy'n tyfu i fyny dan anfantais,<sup>13</sup> ond gall mynediad at ddarpariaeth a threfniadau cyllido greu rhwystrau i'r plant hyn.

Gallai'r Pwyllgor graffu ar effaith trefniadau presennol yr Addysg a Gofal Plentyndod Cynnar o safbwynt mynd i'r afael ag effeithiau anfantais, yn enwedig ar ganlyniadau datblygiadol plant i'r rhai sydd mewn mwy o berygl o syrthio ar ei hôl hi. E.e. Pa gyfran o blant sydd mewn perygl o beidio â bodloni'r Dangosydd Cyfnod Sylfaen sef cael 30 awr o ofal plant a/neu'r cynnig Dechrau'n Deg? Sut mae'r system yn mynd ati'n rhagweithiol i ganfod plant sydd mewn perygl o ganlyniadau gwaeth a monitro pwy sydd/nad yw'n cymryd rhan mewn gwasanaethau cyffredinol ac wedi'u targedu? Ac ystyried yr effaith niweidiol y gall tlodi ei chael os caiff ei brofi yn nhair blynedd gyntaf bywyd, a yw adnoddau'n cael eu targedu'n ddigonol at blant 0-3 oed, gan gynnwys cymorth magu plant a chymorth iechyd meddwl amenedigol?<sup>14</sup>

Mae heriau strwythurol sy'n ymwneud â fforddiadwyedd, hygyrchedd a hyblygrwydd yn y cyd-destun gofal plant yn hirsefydlog ac mae angen meddwl o'r newydd, yn enwedig ar ôl heriau'r pandemig. Byddai'n fuddiol i'r Pwyllgorau osod yr her o ddod o hyd i atebion arloesol i'r materion hyn.<sup>15</sup>

Dyma bynciau eraill y gallai'r Pwyllgor eu harchwilio'n fuddiol er mwyn cael effaith yn y maes hwn:

- Asesu effaith 'addysg gynnar' o 1 oed ymlaen (gweler ymrwymadau diweddar gan Lywodraeth yr Alban)
- Cydlynid y ddarpariaeth ar draws sectorau mewn gwahanol rannau o Gymru a hygyrchedd ar gyfer gwahanol deuluoedd, gan gynnwys rhwystrau ariannol
- Rôl mentrau sy'n seiliedig ar gyfoedion ac sy'n cael eu 'grymuso gan rieni' i greu canlyniadau cadarnhaol i blant ifanc a buddsoddiad yn y maes hwn<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> <https://ymchwil.senedd.cymru/media/oy4bd0kr/19-47-web-cy.pdf> t.3

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Changing-patterns-of-poverty-in-early-childhood-Nuffield-Foundation.pdf> p.4. Dengys ymchwil fod cysylltiad rhwng tlodi a chanlyniadau gwaeth, ond mae'n dal yn bosibl i blant sy'n byw mewn tlodi a'u rhieni'n meddu ar sgiliau magu plant da gael canlyniadau da: 'canfu astudiaeth gan Kinan a Menshah (2011) fod gan 58% o blant a oedd yn profi tlodi parhaus a sgiliau magu plant cryf ganlyniadau da i blant yn bump oed.' (t6)

<sup>15</sup> Gwnaeth Nesta rywfaent o waith yn 2016 i ganfod cyfleoedd arloesi yn y maes hwn. Er bod y gwaith yn canolbwyntio ar y cyd-destun yn Lloegr a'i fod bellach yn bum mlwydd oed, mae'r astudiaeth yn dangos gwerth y dull gweithredu hwn: <https://media.nesta.org.uk/documents/innovation-in-childcare-14-07.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> Gweler <https://www.nesta.org.uk/report/parents-helping-parents-it-takes-village-raise-child/> i gael enghreifftiau a gefnogir gan Nesta.



- Buddsoddiad cymharol ar wahanol oedrannau a chyfnodau yn seiliedig ar y posibilrwydd o effaith ddatblygiadol
- Strategaethau cyfathrebu sy'n gysylltiedig â'r blynyddoedd cynnar a'u llwyddiant wrth ymgysylltu â grwpiau sydd fwyaf mewn perygl o beidio â sicrhau canlyniadau, gan gynnwys defnyddio gwybodaeth am ymddygiad i deilwra cyfathrebu
- Adolygiad cyflym o bosibiliadau'r dyfeisiadau a gafwyd yn ystod y pandemig i gynnal cefnogaeth i amgylchedd dysgu'r cartref
- Asesu rôl bosibl presgripsiynu cymdeithasol i gefnogi iechyd meddwl amenedigol a datblygiad plant fel rhan o ddefnyddio'r dull hwn yn ehangach



Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)

This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)

**CYPE SP 60**

**Ymateb gan: Dr Caroline Walters, Rheolwr Materion Allanol, Cymru, Coleg Brenhinol Therapyddion Iaith a Lleferydd**

**Response from: Dr Caroline Walters, External Affairs Manager (Wales), Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

### **Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

#### **Post-legislative Scrutiny on the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Act (ALNET)**

As the committee is well aware, this autumn will see the roll out of the ambitious new legislation for children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN). We believe strongly that the committee has a key role to play in scrutinising the implementation of the legislation and ensuring the best possible outcomes for children and young people with ALN. We feel a review of implementation of the legislation and impact of the lives of children and young people would be timely at a halfway point within the Senedd term. Given the staggered nature of implementation, we are of the view that lessons from such a review could inform implementation moving forward.

We believe such a review should bring together the perspectives of children and young people, their families and carers, education and health professionals and the third sector. It should consider;



- Identification of and support for children and young people with ALN including participation of children and young people in the process.
- Outcomes achieved by children with ALN.
- The transition from statements of special educational needs, School Action, School Action Plus and Learning Disability Assessments to Individual Development Plans.
- The level and distribution of funding for ALN provision.
- Dispute resolution including the role of the Education Tribunal for Wales.
- The roles of and collaboration between education, health and social care sectors.
- Provision for 16-25-year olds including support for independent living; transition to adult services; and access to education.
- Welsh language provision.

## **Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

Please see points above with relation to ALN provision for young people aged up to 25 in education or training.

## **Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

### **Neonatal services**

Given the recent critical review of neonatal services in Cwm Taf University Health Board, we feel it would be timely for the committee to review the provision of neonatal care across Wales.

Following the Neonatal Critical Care Review (2017), staffing levels on neonatal units have been revised and more specific information regarding Allied Health Professional (AHP) staffing ratios has been requested. This aims to move away from previous staffing recommendations of 'access to AHP input' and towards more equitable services for neonatal units across the UK.

Neonatal speech and language therapists have a specific role in the early identification and management of feeding and swallowing difficulties. They can facilitate positive feeding experiences and support feeding development from the beginning of the parent and infant's feeding journey to reduce the risk of known





prolonged feeding difficulties (Hawdon et al., 2000, Migraine et al. 2013, Johnson et al. 2016). They have a role in assessment and management of and in supporting families to promote effective early communication and interactions with their preterm and sick infants, improving early attachment and bonding and maximising speech, language and communication outcomes post discharge and beyond into adolescence (Van Noort-van der Spek et al. 2002, Foster-Cohen et al. 2007, Caskey et al. 2014, Rabie et al. 2016).

Since the Neonatal review, a number of external peer reviews in local health boards across Wales have been undertaken and have highlighted AHP shortages within teams and lack of ring-fenced funding for therapies as a significant concern.

Committee scrutiny of the AHP workforce within neonatal care as part of a wider inquiry into this area would be extremely helpful in shining a light on this issue and looking at potential ways forward for our youngest and most vulnerable children.

### **The sustainability of the Neurodevelopmental Services Workforce**

We are calling for a short inquiry into the current Welsh Government funded demand and capacity review of all-age neurodevelopmental services and have also raised this call in our response to the Health and Social Care Committee.

MSs will be well aware from their post bags of the high demand for neurodevelopmental services and long waiting lists exacerbated by the pandemic. Members working in these services have fed back to us significant concerns about the sustainability of services and ability to meet need. This featured strongly within scrutiny of the proposed Autism bill during the last Senedd term. A recent Welsh Government funded [Scoping Study for the Alignment and Development of Autism and Neurodevelopmental Services](#) also highlighted significant workforce sustainability concerns.

We would welcome scrutiny of the current Welsh Government funded demand and capacity review of all-age neurodevelopmental services. Given current issues within services, it is vital that the review incorporates the views of the broad range of stakeholders and that the findings support the development of long-term solutions. We are calling for a short one day inquiry to understand bottlenecks and pinch points within services, and provide recommendations as to how services may meet demand for all neurodevelopmental services regardless of diagnosis.

We are of the view that such an inquiry should include feedback from neurodiverse people, representative service user organisations and professional bodies representing the range of health care professionals working in ND teams. We work closely with other professional bodies working in this area and would be very keen to discuss and support further.



## **The impact of COVID-19 on pre-school children**

It is widely acknowledged that that Covid and the lockdowns it has entailed have had a huge impact on the lives of children. We know that much of the predecessor committee's scrutiny understandably focussed on the impact on older children and believe it would be extremely timely if the committee conducted a short inquiry into the impact on young children and how they now need to be supported.

Consideration should also be given to what mitigating steps need to be put in place in case of further lockdowns. We believe such a review could consider:

- Impact of disruption to early childhood education and care.
- Impact of redeployment of key early years professionals
- concerns around developmental delay due to lockdown as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic including speech, language and communication delay; fine and gross motor skills delay; and personal and social development
- Steps taken by Welsh Government to mitigate the impact of lockdown via the Child Development Fund

The inquiry should specifically focus on the impact on children from more deprived areas and those with additional learning needs.

There has been very recent research published on this area by [ICAN](#) and a team from [Oxford Brookes University](#) which could be helpful in shaping such an inquiry.

## **Mental health workforce for children and young people**

We welcomed the Fifth Senedd Children, Young People and Education Committee's focus on mental health and the significant progress made in driving forward the whole school approach. We now feel in terms of next steps that it would be extremely helpful for the committee to undertake scrutiny on the future mental health workforce for children and young people, potentially in conjunction with the health committee. We have also raised this issue in our response to the Health and Social Care Committee consultation.

We view the upcoming mental health workforce plan as a real chance to remodel current provision and create sustainable services which ensure that all people in Wales are able to access appropriate mental health support. We understand children and young people's mental health is due to be a key focus area within the plan.

We believe that multidisciplinary working – with a well-trained, supported workforce that is equipped to meet the demands – should be central to the future provision of mental health services for all ages. This approach would enable each group of professionals to use their unique skills, knowledge, and abilities to better meet the



needs of individuals. In our view, development and improvement of the mental health workforce must include the full range of allied health professionals and bring in new professions and skillsets.

Additional scrutiny would be very timely in determining to what extent the plan will drive change and include a wide range of professions considered given recruitment challenges in the traditional workforce. We would hope such an inquiry would engage widely across service user and professional groups and include professions such as speech and language therapy which are not currently routinely part of core mental health teams but evidence suggests have a great deal to offer, particularly for children and young people.

## **Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**

### **Young People within the Youth Justice Estate**

We are calling for a short inquiry into the speech, language and communication needs of young people in the youth justice estate. As the facts below highlight, this is a significant issue which could benefit from a timely, focused review.

#### **Key facts**

- Up to **60%** of young people in the youth justice estate have speech, language & communication needs (Bryan et al, 2007).
- **66%-90%** of young offenders have low language skills. 46-67% of these are in the poor or very poor range (Bryan et al, 2007).
- Around **40%** of young offenders find it difficult or are unable to access and benefit from rehabilitation programmes that are delivered verbally, such as drug rehabilitation courses (Bryan et al, 2004).

To our knowledge, this issue was last reviewed by the Senedd over ten years ago when the then Communities and Culture Committee report 'Youth justice: the experience of Welsh children in the secure estate' (2010) highlighted a lack of provision in Wales for young and adult offenders who have speech language and communication needs and recommended the Welsh Government enable pilot work to be done in Wales on the potential benefits of speech and language therapy for juvenile offenders both in custody and on release. Despite evidence from the pilots, provision remains extremely patchy over a decade later. This was briefly touched upon by the recent Health Committee inquiry on the provision of health and social care in the adult prison estate in Wales in which the governor of HMP Parc acknowledged that there was unmet need for speech and language therapy among the prison population.



We believe a potential short inquiry by the committee could be extremely helpful in shining a light on this key area. We are aware that this is an area that sits across the remit of a number of committees and we have also raised a potential inquiry with the Legislation, Justice and Constitution committee and the Equality and Social Justice Committee.



**This document provides a translation of correspondence received for Members' information, and is not intended for publication.**

**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 61**

**Ymateb gan: Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru**

**Response from: National Library of Wales**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

### **Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

Following the publication of the report of the Working Group chaired by Professor Charlotte Williams in March 2021, we believe that the Committee should be prioritizing the availability of resources to assist in the education of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities. We believe as a National Library that we have a prominent role to play in encouraging and supporting pupils to study and understand their local area, the ethnic and cultural diversity of Wales, and the communities, history, culture, landscape and industry in Wales, so that they can learn how Wales has developed into what it is today.

The National Library provides activities and workshops for children and young people who are educated somewhere other than at school. We believe that it is important that the Children, Young People and Education Committee continues to have a scrutiny role in this area to ensure well-being and accountability for the journey of all children and young people through education.

The National Library of Wales provides activities and resources to support the Welsh Baccalaureate qualification. We do this as a single organization, and in partnership with others, including the Welsh Parliament. We believe that, as a Library, the Welsh



Baccalaureate is important in developing broad skills among young people, as well as broadening their understanding of a wide range of subjects and areas. We believe that it should be a priority for the Children, Young People and Education Committee to continue to work to implement the recommendations of its report, *Bacc to the Future: The status of the Welsh Baccalaureate qualification*, April 2019, to ensure greater awareness and understanding of the qualification among key stakeholders.

It is an exciting time in schools with the introduction of a new curriculum that will transform education in Wales for the better. The National Library of Wales' new strategy for the years 2021-26 will include a commitment to continue to contribute to the development of the Curriculum for Wales, increase our provision of digital learning resources both ourselves and with partners, and invest in our services to schools and post-16 education.

The Library is keen to ensure that schools have adequate provision of resources for curriculum delivery, and the Children, Young People and Education Committee can assist us by recognizing that the national heritage bodies have rich collections that could be used to tell the story of Wales, and to help us promote opportunities for schools to use them to tell our national story.

## **Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

The National Library of Wales is part of a project led by Creative & Cultural Skills to offer training and work experience opportunities in the heritage sector. It has also offered apprenticeships to young people in the past to ensure progression in specialist areas such as conservation. In our view, it should be a priority for the Children, Young People and Education Committee to look at the range of experiences, skills and education offered to young people, and to encourage and support apprenticeships and other opportunities for young people to become a trainee in vocational areas.

## **Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

The National Library of Wales is well aware of the social impact it can make, and how access to information can transform lives. It has contributed significantly to the



Welsh Government's plans to use culture to tackle poverty through the Cyfuno programme, and has delivered programmes of activities with children and young people in areas which form part of the programme. It is also committed to continuing to publish collections online, and to offer free access to these.

We are aware of the work of the Children, Young People and Education Committee in looking at targeted funding to improve educational outcomes. I would like to see the Committee prioritize intervention targeted at reducing the attainment gap that exists between different communities, and people from different social or cultural backgrounds.

The Library has been operating a rolling programme of activities with children and young people in deprived communities across Wales for over a decade, and it would be good to see the Children, Young People and Education Committee prioritising joint working across Government departments, in order to maximize the impact of the work of organizations in different sectors on young people's well-being.

The National Library recognizes and supports the work of the Children, Young People and Education Committee in the field of child and adolescent mental health, the *Mind over Matter* report (2018) and the update in 2020, and the work being done on assessing and seeking to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the children and young people of Wales. We believe that the field is an important and urgent priority for the committee during the 6th Senedd.

#### **Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**

The National Library of Wales recognizes and supports the Committee's work in the field of the rights of children and young people, and hopes that this area will again be a priority for the Committee during the 6th Senedd.



The Library intends to carry out work in the near future – through the National Broadcast Archive's engagement work – on learning resources that will equip children and young people to identify and respond to fake news appropriately. As an information and education institution, we believe that this is an area that needs to be addressed urgently, and we see the growth of fake news as a real challenge for democracy. We believe that the Children, Young People and Education Committee should be looking at how the whole education sector can work together to meet this challenge.

The National Library of Wales believes that the Children, Young People and Education Committee should prioritise work that puts the Welsh language at the heart of the lives of all children and young people in Wales. Not only should the right to access education, information, learning resources, and services through the medium of Welsh be ensured but also – as a basic right – the right to play, socialise, learn informally and grow up through the medium of Welsh.





**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 61**

**Ymateb gan: Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru**  
**Response from: National Library of Wales**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

**Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

Yn dilyn cyhoeddi adroddiad y Gweithgor dan gadeiryddiaeth yr Athro Charlotte Williams ym Mawrth 2021 credwn y dylai'r Pwyllgor fod yn blaenoriaethu y gwaith o sicrhau bod adnoddau ar gael i helpu i addysgu am gymunedau a chynefin Pobl Dduon, Asiaidd a Lleiafrifoedd Ethnig. Credwn fel Llyfrgell Genedlaethol bod rôl amlwg i ni chwarae wrth annog a chynorthwyo disgyblion i astudio a deall eu hardal leol, amrywedd ethnig a diwylliannol Cymru, a chymunedau, hanes, diwylliant, tirwedd a diwydiant yng Nghymru, fel y gallan nhw ddysgu sut mae Cymru wedi datblygu i'r hyn ydyw heddiw.

Mae'r Llyfrgell Genedlaethol yn darparu gweithgareddau a gweithdai ar gyfer plant a phobl ifanc sy'n derbyn eu haddysg mewn lleoliad heblaw yn yr ysgol. Credwn ei bod yn bwysig bod Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg yn parhau gyda rôl graffu yn y maes hwn er mwyn sicrhau llesiant ac atebolrwydd ar gyfer taith pob plentyn a pherson ifanc drwy addysg.

Mae Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru yn darparu gweithgareddau ac adnoddau ar gyfer cefnogi cymhwyster Bagloriaeth Cymru. Gwnawn hyn fel sefydliad unigol, ac mewn partneriaeth ag eraill, gan gynnwys Senedd Cymru. Credwn, fel Llyfrgell, bod Bagloriaeth Cymru yn bwysig wrth ddatblygu sgiliau eang ymhlith pobl ifanc, yn ogystal ag ehangu eu dealltwriaeth o ystod eang o bynciau a meysydd. Credwn y dylai fod yn flaenoriaeth i'r Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg i barhau i weithio i weithredu argymhellion ei adroddiad *Bagloriaeth y Dyfodol: Statws cymhwyster*



*Bagloriaeth Cymru*, Ebrill 2019, er mwyn sicrhau ymwybyddiaeth gwell o'r cymhwyster, a dealltwriaeth gwell ohono ymhlith rhanddeiliaid allweddol.

Mae'n gyfnod cyffrous mewn ysgolion gyda chyflwyno cwricwlwm newydd fydd yn trawsnewid addysg yng Nghymru er gwell. Bydd strategaeth newydd Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru ar gyfer y blynyddoedd 2021-26 yn cynnwys ymrwymiad i barhau i gyfrannu at ddatblygiad y Cwricwlwm i Gymru, cynyddu ein darpariaeth o adnoddau dysgu digidol ein hunain ac ar y cyd â phartneriaid, a buddsoddi yn ein gwasanaethau i ysgolion ac addysg ôl-16.

Mae'r Llyfrgell yn awyddus i sicrhau bod darpariaeth ddigonol o adnoddau gan ysgolion ar gyfer cyflwyno'r cwricwlwm, a gall y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg ein cynorthwyo trwy gydnabod bod gan y cyrff treftadaeth cenedlaethol gasgliadau cyfoethog y gellid eu defnyddio er mwyn adrodd stori Cymru, a'n cynorthwyo i hybu cyfleoedd i ysgolion eu defnyddio i adrodd ein stori genedlaethol.

## **Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

Mae Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru yn rhan o brosiect sy'n cael ei arwain gan Creative & Cultural Skills i gynnig cyfleoedd hyfforddiant a phrofiad gwaith yn y sector treftadaeth. Mae hefyd wedi cynnig prentisiaethau i bobl ifanc yn y gorffennol er mwyn sicrhau dilyniant mewn meysydd arbenigol megis cadwraeth. Yn ein barn ni dylai fod yn flaenoriaeth i'r Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg edrych ar yr ystod o brofiadau, sgiliau ac addysg sy'n cael ei gynnig i bobl ifanc, ac annog a chefnogi prentisiaethau a chyfleoedd eraill i bobl ifanc ddod yn hyfforddai mewn meysydd galwedigaethol.

## **Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

Mae Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru yn ymwybodol iawn o'r effaith cymdeithasol y gall wneud, a sut mae mynediad at wybodaeth yn medru trawsnewid bywydau. Mae wedi cyfrannu yn sylweddol at gynlluniau Llywodraeth Cymru i ddefnyddio diwylliant i fynd i'r afael â thlodi trwy'r rhaglen Cyfuno, ac wedi cyflwyno rhaglenni o weithgareddau gyda phlant a phobl ifanc mewn ardaloedd sydd yn rhan o'r rhaglen. Mae hefyd wedi ymrwmo i barhau i gyhoeddi casgliadau ar-lein, a chynnig mynediad rhad ac am ddim at y rhain.

Rydym yn ymwybodol o waith Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg wrth edrych ar gyllid wedi'i dargedu i wella canlyniadau addysgol. Hoffwn weld y Pwyllgor yn



blaenoriaethu ymyrraeth wedi ei thargedu at leihau y bwlch mewn cyrhaeddiad sy'n bodoli rhwng cymunedau gwahanol, a phobl o gefndiroedd cymdeithasol neu ddiwylliannol gwahanol.

Mae'r Llyfrgell yn gweithredu rhaglen dreigl o weithgareddau gyda phlant a phobl ifanc mewn cymunedau difreintiedig ar draws Cymru ers dros ddegawd, a byddai'n dda gweld Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg yn blaenoriaethu cydweithio ar draws adrannau'r Llywodraeth er mwyn sicrhau bod gwaith sefydliadau mewn sectorau gwahanol yn cael yr effaith mwyaf posib ar lesiant pobl ifanc.

Mae'r Llyfrgell Genedlaethol yn cydnabod a chefnogi gwaith Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg ym maes iechyd meddwl plant a phobl ifanc, adroddiad *Cadernid Meddwl* (2018) a'r diweddariad yn 2020, a'r gwaith sy'n cael ei wneud ar asesu a cheisio lliniaru effaith COVID-19 ar blant a phobl ifanc Cymru. Credwn bod y maes yn flaenoriaeth bwysig a brys i'r pwyllgor yn ystod y 6ed Senedd.

#### **Thema 4: Plant a phobl ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**

Mae Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru yn cydnabod a chefnogi gwaith y Pwyllgor ym maes hawliau plant a phobl ifanc ac yn gobeithio y bydd y maes hwn yn flaenoriaeth unwaith eto i'r Pwyllgor yn ystod y 6ed Senedd.

Mae'r Llyfrgell yn bwriadu gweithio yn y dyfodol agos, trwy waith ymgysylltu yr Archif Ddarlledu Genedlaethol, ar adnoddau dysgu fydd yn arfogi plant a phobl ifanc i adnabod newyddion ffug ac ymateb iddo'n briodol. Fel sefydliad gwybodaeth ac addysg credwn bod hwn yn faes sydd yn rhaid mynd i'r afael ag ef ar frys, a gwelwn y twf mewn newyddion ffug fel her gwirioneddol i ddemocratiaeth. Credwn y dylai Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg fod yn edrych ar sut y gall y sector addysg cyfan gydweithio i wynebu'r her hon.

Mae Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru yn credu y dylai'r Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg flaenoriaethu gwaith fydd yn rhoi yr iaith Gymraeg yn ganolog i fywydau pob plentyn a pherson ifanc yng Nghymru. Dylid sicrhau nid yn unig yr hawl i gael mynediad at addysg, gwybodaeth, adnoddau dysgu, a gwasanaethau trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg, ond hefyd, fel hawl sylfaenol, yr hawl i gael cyfleoedd i chwarae, cymdeithasu, dysgu yn anffurfiol a thyfu fyny trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg.



**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 62**

**Ymateb gan: Aidan Phillips**

**Response from: Aidan Phillips, Trauma-informed Communities Project Manager, WAVE Trust and Alex Williamson, 70/30 Campaign Officer, WAVE Trust**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

**Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

**Post-legislative Scrutiny on the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Act (ALNET)**

1. WAVE Trust applaud the work the Welsh Government has done so far around implementing a whole-school approach, trauma-awareness schools training offered nationwide by the Wales ACE Hub and the transition to a new curriculum that takes greater account of socio-emotional needs. We believe these efforts could be enhanced further through a commitment to the thorough implementation of trauma-informed practice at all levels.
2. Childhood trauma is particularly relevant to schools, particularly when it comes to addressing challenging behaviour and supporting vulnerable pupils. For example, a 2011 study of youths in a low-income area of San Francisco found that of the 32.8% who said they had experienced no (potentially traumatising) Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE), only 3% had learning and/or behavioural problems. By contrast, 51.2% of the 12% who said they had 4 or more ACEs had these problems.
3. Children who have experienced adversity and trauma are best supported through a trauma-informed approach. The amount of time children spend



within school provides a sustained period within which meaningful relations can be built, the bedrock of this approach. Schools should therefore be among the key areas prioritised when tackling trauma.

4. We have provided case studies below to demonstrate how effective this approach has been across a range of outcomes that indicate improved mental well-being among students and staff, including exclusions, disciplinary referrals, aggression levels and a reduction in staff absence rates.
  - a. Pencoed Comprehensive, Bridgend: 2 years after undergoing trauma-informed training, the number of days lost due to exclusion was 48% lower.
  - b. Oasis Academy Harpur Mount Primary School, Manchester: between 2017/18 and 2018/19, fixed-term exclusions dropped 8%..
  - c. The Key Education Centre, Hampshire: Between 2018-2019, days lost to exclusion dropped by 81% and staff absences by 70%.
  - d. iTIPS project, Islington: data from 4 pupil referral unit sites and 5 primaries shows that between 2016/2017 and 2017/2018, the schools have seen reductions in fixed-term exclusion rates by 52% and permanent exclusions by 80%.
  - e. Healthy Environments and Response to Trauma in Schools (HEARTS) programme, San Francisco: incidents involving physical aggression reduced 43% after 1 year and 86% after 5 years. Disciplinary incidents dropped 32% after 1 year and 87% after 5 years. Out-of-school suspensions dropped by 95% after 5 years.

**5. WAVE recommends that the committee call on the Welsh Government to pursue the goal of all schools across Wales fully adopting and sustaining trauma-informed practice.**

**WAVE recommends that trauma-informed practice is embedded into teacher training courses nationwide.**

## **Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

1. For many young people, university is the first time that they will be away from their wider support networks. This can be particularly impactful for those who have experienced past trauma.
2. A 2021 study of 864 students at University of East London (UEL) found high childhood prevalence for discrimination (43.4%); parental separation (35.1%); verbal/emotional abuse (33.4%); threatened, hit or hurt badly in school or the community (32.5%); emotional neglect (29%); domestic violence (23.5%); having lived with a mentally ill person (26.4%); with an alcoholic/drug user (19.5%); and sexual abuse (18.9%). It should be noted that these figures were above the UK general population average and that the university has an



- unusually high proportion of mature students and those with children (27.8% of respondents for the latter).
3. A similar study conducted at Queens University Belfast (2012) with 764 students found reasonably high prevalence of having lived with a mentally ill person (30.1%); parental separation (22.8%); verbal/emotional abuse (20.6%); having lived with an alcoholic/drug user (16.7%); and having lived with a person who was incarcerated (2.6%). Together, these studies demonstrate how prevalent potentially traumatic childhood adversities can be among student populations.
  4. Whether having experienced trauma or not, the UEL (2021) study found high levels of stress, with 76% of respondents having felt nervous, anxious or on edge at least several days in the previous 2 weeks, with 21% nearly every day; and 56.4% finding pressure to meet deadlines to be a strong burden in the past 6 months (financial problems and family conflicts also scored highly at 53.7% and 42.1% respectively).
  5. The study also found correlations between experience of childhood adversities and a standardised anxiety measurement (.379); self-reported quality of life (.283); self-reported physical health (.265); self-reported mental health (.302); and negative perceptions about degree completion (.12).
  6. This reflects research by Public Health Wales (2016) that found how prevalence of low mental well-being among a general adult population was 19% on average; 14% among those who had experienced no ACEs in a list of 9 provided; and 41% of those who had experienced 4+.
  7. Because of this, we believe it is important that university staff are trained to understand how trauma impacts students' development and behaviour, and how to respond in the most effective way.
  8. We are glad to note the ongoing work at Glyndwr University, Wrexham to achieve this outcome. **We recommend that the committee encourage further tertiary education establishments to also pursue similar projects; and call on the Welsh Government to provide funds to enable this, as well as an evaluation to determine the effectiveness of the approach within a UK setting.**

### **Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

1. We have stated our arguments as to the benefits of trauma-informed practice in education sector. We would now like to emphasise the benefits this approach could bring for the health and well-being of children when implemented across an entire community.



2. A Trauma-informed Community (TiC) is an area where an understanding of how traumatic experiences can affect the brain, how best to respond to this and how to build emotional resilience against it is widespread among residents and embedded within practice throughout local statutory and support services.
3. Its beneficial impacts are strengthened further if preventing trauma from occurring, especially during the earliest years, plays a key role (see our response to this under Theme 4). Residents, statutory services, the third sector, the private sector and others can all contribute towards the creation and maintenance of a TiC.
4. Washington State has implemented what it calls the 'Self-Healing Communities Model' for more than 10 years. A comparison of counties adopting this approach with those that did not showed that the TiCs experienced significant reductions in child abuse and neglect; family violence; youth violence; youth substance abuse; youth suicide; teenage pregnancy; and school drop-outs. Benefits for individual counties have been listed below. A report on this initiative showed that for an annual investment of \$3.4 million, prevented cases in 4 areas collectively saved \$27.9 million per year, with significant additional indirect savings also.
5. Outcomes that have relevance to the health and well-being of children include: a 37% reduction in domestic violence rates (Kitsap County); 39% reduction in teen arrests for drugs (Thurston County); 59% reduction in youth suicides (Walla Walla County); and a 66% reduction in youth arrests for violent crime (Okanogan County). In Cowlitz County alone, infant mortality dropped by 43%; high school dropout rates by 47%; youth arrests for violent crime by 53%; births to teen mothers went down 62%; and youth suicide and suicide attempts by 98%.
- 6. WAVE recommends that the committee call on the Welsh Government to fund a project using the Self-Healing Communities Model in areas of Wales that experience high levels of trauma and related issues.**
7. WAVE welcomes the recent manifesto commitment from Welsh Labour to improve preventive services within the field of mental health.
- 8. We recommend that the committee scrutinise the Welsh Government as to what plans they have to introduce trauma-informed practices as part of this approach.**

#### **Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**

1. A child's brain grows at its fastest rate during its earliest years, growing to 25% of its adult size by birth and to 80% by age 3. During this period, the brain is very sensitive to being affected by its external environment and interpersonal experiences. It is also very elastic, able to learn and un-learn



information more easily than at any other point in life. An infant's brain development reflects the world in which they are raised, from their behavioural patterns to their emotions, language capabilities and mental health.

2. Due to this, a child raised in a loving, nurturing environment which is free from persistent, "toxic" stress will develop as healthy a brain as is possible. In contrast, a child raised in an environment of abuse, neglect or household dysfunction will see their cognitive abilities and emotional development severely impaired, more so than if the damage were to have occurred at any other time in their life.
3. To tackle trauma in the most effective way – and therefore contribute significantly towards efforts to improve mental and physical illness among children of all ages – we must prioritise its prevention during the first few years of life, when the brain is at its most vulnerable and the impact most severe.
4. In 2013, WAVE published a framework on how to achieve this (Conception to Age 2, 2013). This outlined our "Pioneer Communities" model to prevent trauma during the first 1,001 days and ensure optimum brain development, both for as many infants as possible. This was co-designed with senior staff at the Institute of Health Visiting and the Royal College of Midwives, among others. The UK Treasury initially allocated £50m in matched funding to implement it in various local authorities, though this was withdrawn following a change of UK Government.
5. The Pioneer Communities Model covers risk factors (e.g. domestic violence) and processes (e.g. attunement) that need to be taken into consideration and assessed; a series of programmes which have an evidence base suggesting they might be helpful in delivering the goals of the project; and collaboration with the wider community in pursuit of these goals.
- 6. WAVE recommends that the committee call on the Welsh Government to provide funding to at least one local authority within Wales to run a pilot of this Pioneer Communities model.**
7. One particular programme we would recommend as part of this would be Parent-Child Psychological Support (PCPS). Positive outcomes from this include improvements in attachment levels and parental stress levels. For instance, secure and disorganised attachment levels among PCPS recipients in a low socio-economic sample (SES) stood at 74.5% and 5.8% respectively, compared to 48.1% and 25.1% in a non-PCPS low SES population.
- 8. WAVE recommends that the committee call on the Welsh Government to fund a pilot of PCPS, either as part of the aforementioned pilot or separately.**





9. Whilst the Welsh Government is responsive to the idea of addressing and reducing child maltreatment within its population, it has been historically resistant to our calls for a target of a 70% reduction in child maltreatment (child abuse, neglect and domestic violence) in line with our 70/30 Campaign, which has the support of 65% of Assembly Members.
10. We believe this would raise expectations and make it easier for the committee to hold Government to account for its actions in improving the lives of children. Among the reasons given by ministers is that Wales lacks the necessary devolved powers to implement such an approach.

**11. WAVE recommends that the committee scrutinises whether such a target would be possible for Welsh ministers to implement, as well as the potential benefits of doing so.**



**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 63**

**Ymateb gan: Daniel Roberts**

**Response from: Daniel Roberts, Policy and Research Officer, Wales Co-operative Centre**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

**Wales Co-operative Centre – Policy and Research Officer**

The Wales Co-operative Centre is a not-for-profit co-operative organisation that supports people in Wales to improve their lives and livelihoods. We are working for a fairer economy. We help to create and retain wealth within our communities through the growth of co-operatives and social businesses and by providing people with the skills to take more control of their own lives and strengthen their communities.

**Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

**Social Enterprise**

*'Transforming Wales through Social Enterprise'* is a ten-year vision and action plan for the social enterprise sector in Wales that was launched in July 2020. It was co-produced by social enterprises and social enterprise support agencies in Wales and has the support of Welsh Government. Outcome Two of the document is that "More people will choose a social enterprise model to start a new business". We of course recognise that this an ambitious aim and in order to achieve this outcome, we need to have social enterprise education embedded in our curricula.

Enterprise education starts at a young age in Wales through the Enterprise Troopers; the National Primary Schools competition supported by Big Ideas Wales. Many of the business ideas that have been generated through the programme have had a social



and community focus, and this year there will be a specific category for social enterprise. Our Social Enterprise Stakeholder Group is sponsoring the award, and we will also be taking part in training events and developing resources for primary teachers to aid them in the teaching of social enterprise.

A number of activities have taken place to promote social enterprise education within secondary schools. Work has been done by Social Business Wales and Big Ideas Wales to develop a Social Enterprise Challenge for the Welsh Baccalaureate. Awareness-raising sessions have also been provided for Careers Wales advisors and business engagement teams to look at the potential of social enterprise ideas and work placement opportunities. Big Ideas Wales also have social enterprise role models that visit schools to talk about the work that they have been doing and the potential of social enterprise. It is hoped that by raising awareness and through continued promotion, young people can engage and be inspired by social businesses in their local communities through their studies, such as the Welsh Baccalaureate or through work placements or volunteering opportunities.

There is good practice to build on to meet this objective. We urge the committee to consider how social enterprise can be embedded in the learning experience for young people in Wales in its work. Social enterprises already make a significant contribution to local communities across the country through their focus on resilience and well-being, and ensuring that pupils are able to access these benefits, learn about the social enterprise model and become the next generation of social entrepreneurs would be a considerable benefit across Wales.

### **Digital Inclusion and Skills**

Covid-19 has also had a huge impact on the children and young people of Wales and their education. The cost of devices and connectivity has put extra pressures on families, and on schools, creating new barriers for pupils from poorer backgrounds. As the school system works to recover from the lost time caused by the pandemic, young people who had to overcome more barriers to access education online must be paramount. In addition, while the acceleration of the digitisation of learning has considerable benefits, we must learn the lessons of the pandemic and ensure that this is accessible for every student as we move on from Covid-19.

## **Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

### **Social Enterprise**

Martin Downes, Social Enterprise Officer at the Wales Co-operative Centre, has undertaken a number of Hackathon events with students across Wales. These events allow students to come together, to identify social problems, and to develop



potential solutions through social business ideas. There have been 6 social enterprise hackathon events so far, with 414 FE and HE student participants across Wales, with these events supported by 31 partner organisations. Hazel Israel, Education and Skills Adviser at Bantani Education and chief architect of the Essential Skills and Welsh Baccalaureate qualification suites, said that:

*"The students were engaged, energised and enthusiastic. The structured focus on solutions and building practical proposals was courage in action. In this experimental environment, students bubbled and fizzed with reflective understanding, compassionate involvement and a sense of ethical, civic and social responsibility."*

We are passionate about embedding this model within our FE and HE education systems, and are working with institutions across Wales to do this. We would urge the committee to explore how this can be done in a consistent way to ensure that everyone in Wales is able to access the opportunities it presents.

We are also working with academics to look at how we can promote the role and the resilience of the social enterprise sector in Wales, and this will include research relating to the role of social enterprise education. Training events have taken place with the Enterprise Champions within Further and Higher Education Institutions in Wales.

**Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

**Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**



Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)

This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)

**CYPE SP 64**

**Ymateb gan: Daniel Roberts, Prif Swyddog Gweithredol, Tros Gynnal Plan, Cymru, TGP Cymru**

**Response from: Jackie Murphy, Chief Executive Officer, Tros Gynnal Plan, Cymru, TGP Cymru**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

**Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

**Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

**Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

**Introduction**

**TGP Cymru asks is the Senedd Children and Young People's Education Committee to prioritise;**

- **Highlighting the lack of Residential Visiting Advocacy in children's homes across Wales**



- **Backing our calls for Residential Visiting Advocacy to be a requirement of Registration and Inspection with Care Inspectorate Wales**

This response builds on

- **Evidence given to the to last meeting of the Senedd Children and Young People's Education Committee on the 18<sup>th</sup> March 2021**, where Sharon Lovell CEO of NYAS Cymru, Deborah Jones CEO of Voices from Care Cymru and Jackie Murphy CEO of TGP Cymru presented evidence on the issues encountered when providing services to children and young people during the pandemic.

Jackie Murphy CEO of TGP Cymru focussed on the issue of the need for Residential Visiting Advocacy in children's homes across Wales as an added safeguard. She stressed that these children were isolated before the pandemic, but their circumstances had become even more precarious, and these children have become even more isolated and at risk since Covid 19.

Jackie Murphy made an impassioned plea for the recommendations of the TGP Cymru Research 'Out of Sight – Out of Rights' to be prioritised in the next Senedd Term, particularly that Residential Visiting Advocacy becomes a requirement of registration with Care Inspectorate Wales.

In her evidence Jackie Murphy stated that children and young people were suffering harm now and that they could not wait another 20 years for the recommendation of the Waterhouse enquiry to be implemented by the Senedd.

- **Waterhouse Inquiry – Lost in Care 2000** - recommended that an independent person regularly visit children's homes to establish a relationship of trust with children and young people so they would have someone to confide in if they did not feel safe. This recommendation has never been enacted by Welsh Government.

- **Recent events at a children's home in Cardiff. between November 2019 and September 2020**

On the 9<sup>th</sup> June 2021 the BBC reported the story of Ty Coryton. The article stated that "children at Ty Coryton were restrained and locked up unnecessarily.... one teenager was locked in her flat regularly because she was menstruating." A member of staff reported "*on one occasion she thought a child was going to die while being restrained on the floor for almost 20 minutes.*"

- **Findings from a recent Pilot Project conducted by TGP Cymru during the Pandemic**



In September 2020 TGP Cymru received WCVA Emergency Funding to pilot a free Residential Visiting Advocacy to 140 independent homes across Wales during the pandemic. Only 37 homes took up this offer.

During these virtual visits our residential visiting advocate dealt with issues including general care in the children's home and referred other issues to locally commissioned advocacy providers, including contact issues for Roma children who were separated from their parents and family.

It is disappointing that following on this from this free Pilot service only 3 of the homes have commissioned an ongoing Residential Visiting Advocacy Service.

- TGP Cymru's commitment to the **UNCRC** and consultation with the Children and Young People through the research and service user's forums.

TGP Cymru is the largest provider of Statutory and Residential Visiting Advocacy for Children and Young People in Wales. We currently visit 22 independently run children's homes and schools and up until recently to 1 health Care setting for adolescent girls. We also hold the contract with Neath Port Talbot CC for Hillside secure unit. Most of these contracts are long running and are generally in North Wales and have been with us since the Waterhouse Enquiry of 2000.

## Facts and Figures

- **How many Children are there in Care Homes in Wales?** - Our research found that there were 435 in total with 325 Welsh children and 110 English children. (However, these numbers vary – another report quotes 665 children and an article by The Children's Commissioner on the 27 February 2020 BBC online states there are 770 care home places for children in Wales with 80% being run by private companies.)
- **Who are these children?** – the majority are aged between 10 to 15 years. Boys are more likely than girls to be placed in residential care with a ratio of 60:40. The most common reason for child starting a placement in residential care was abuse and neglect, accounting for 48% of CLA starting a residential placement
- **How many Children's Homes are there in Wales?**- our research found there were 178 Children's Homes in Wales of which 23 were owned and run by a local authorities and 155 by independent or voluntary sector providers.
- **Who owns the Independent Homes?**- at the time of the research (2019) 81 of the 155 homes are owned by 5 providers (some of whom work across England and Wales).

Keys (22)

Priory (9)

CareTech Community Services (8)



Bryn Melyn Care (9)

Action for Children (8)

Landsker Child Care (7)

Stepping Stones Care Services (7)

Priority Childcare (6)

Genus Care (5)

- **Which homes provide Residential Visiting Advocacy services as an added safeguard?** All 23 local authority run children's homes have RVA contracts

Only 5-10% of children's homes provided by the independent sector approx. 22 homes out of 155.

This is quite an anomaly, the Local Authority are under closer scrutiny from elected representatives and officers of the Local Authority. Also children are placed closer to their home communities and tend to see their social workers more regularly, yet they are the ones where a Residential Visiting Advocacy service is prioritised.

Children placed in independently run Children's Homes tend to be further away from home and report they see their Social Worker, family members etc less frequently.

### **Cost of implementing these recommendations**

The implementation of these recommendations would require no additional resources from the Welsh Government or Local Authorities as it will be the responsibility of the Independent Care Home Providers to meet the cost. The cost of these services are not onerous and in some cases can work out at the cost of £5 per child per week.

### **Support for these recommendations**

TGP Cymru have consulted with the Children's Commissioner for Wales and the Association of Directors of Social Services and Cross Party Group on Looked after Children who support the recommendations of Out of Sight – Out of Rights. .

TGP Cymru has also shared the research and above evidence with the Ministerial Advisory Group on Improving Outcomes for Looked After Children and the Deputy Minister for Social Services.

### **Welsh Governments commitment to removing profit from Children**

With The Children's Commissioner for Wales's call to end profit-making in children's care services and the Welsh Governments commitment to remove profit from care in this term, TGP Cymru believe there will be a greater need for Residential Visiting Advocacy services to ensure these children are supported, consulted and their rights upheld through what could be a difficult transition for them.





## **Outcome**

TGP strongly believe that if the Senedd Children and Young People's Education Committee does prioritise If our ask is for the;

Backing our calls for Residential Visiting Advocacy to be a requirement of Registration and Inspection with Care Inspectorate Wales and is successful in influencing the Welsh Government to enact this then TGP Cymru strongly believe hundreds of children and young people in the care system in Wales will have an added Safeguard against violence and abuse and will be made aware of their rights and have someone to ensure that their rights upheld.

## **Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**

See no 3



**This response was submitted to the Children, Young People and Education Committee consultation on Sixth Senedd Priorities**

**CYPE SP 65**

**Ymateb gan: Grace Krause, Swyddog Polisi, Anabledd Dysgu Cymru**

**Response from: Grace Krause, Policy Officer, Learning Disability Wales**

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## **Theme 1: School-age education**

### **Reducing Restrictive Practices**

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has raised several areas of concern around school exclusions and managing 'challenging behaviour' in Welsh schools and criticised Welsh Government's lack of progress in these areas. Figures show that pupils in Wales with additional learning needs have higher rates of exclusions than those without, and that special schools have the highest rate of fixed-term exclusions of all types of school.<sup>1</sup> This issue needs investigating and addressing to reduce inequalities in the education system. We would therefore recommend that the Committee conducts an inquiry into the high rate of exclusions of pupils with additional needs in all types of school across Wales and provide recommendations to Welsh Government on how this can be addressed.

While residential care settings for adults have a duty to report uses of restraint, there is no legal duty on schools in Wales to do so. As a result, there is almost no official data about how and when restraint is used. However, there is significant anecdotal evidence that children and young people with additional needs and/or challenging behaviour are more likely to experience restraint in the education system. This can be terrifying and extremely damaging for the children and young people involved.

There is also currently no explicit prohibition of the use of restraint for disciplinary reasons in Welsh schools. According to the EHRC, "parents, carers and teachers may not understand how or why schools use restraint, and schools may be less able to monitor and minimise its use." These concerns led the EHRC to undertake an [inquiry into the use, reporting and monitoring of restraint in schools in Wales and England](#). We believe the Committee should study the findings of the EHRC inquiry and scrutinise Welsh Government's response and progress in these areas, including monitoring the implementation of the recently published [Reducing Restrictive Practices Framework](#). The Committee could undertake its own inquiry into how schools are implementing the new framework and the impact on children and young people's experiences.

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<sup>1</sup> Equality and Human Rights Commission <https://humanrightstracker.com/en/progress-assessment/school-exclusions-and-managing-challenging-behaviour-welsh-government-assessment/>



## **Inclusive Curriculum**

We know that almost a quarter of children and young people in Welsh schools have been diagnosed with an additional learning need. It is important to point out that these were only the children who had known additional learning needs. While we cannot know how many people are neurodivergent, we know that a significant number of children go through school with undiagnosed learning disabilities, learning difficulties and neurodivergences. We believe that because of this, schools should put a much stronger focus on how understanding of disability issues informs teaching.

The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 is being implemented for children who have, or are newly identified as having, additional learning needs from 1 September 2020, with children on school action or school action plus following from 1 January 2022. It is vital that the needs of all children with additional learning needs are met and they are supported to reach their potential regardless of whether they receive support through the new ALN system or the old SEN system. We therefore ask the Committee to scrutinise and monitor how the Welsh Government is supporting practitioners, children and young people with an additional learning need and their families during the implementation of the Act and the concurrent running of the old system. We suggest that the Committee carries out an inquiry into the implementation of the Act and how the needs of pupils with additional needs are being met.

We draw the attention of the Committee to our own work<sup>2</sup> on what changes we would like to see to the New Curriculum for Wales and how we think disability issues can be put at the heart of learning.

## **Theme 2: Further and higher education**

### **Better employment opportunities for young people**

In their 2021 Manifesto All Wales People First write that: "It is important that employers in Wales create opportunities for people with learning disabilities. Many people with learning disabilities have succeeded in the workforce when reasonable adjustments have been made, such as easy read information in adverts and interviews, support to learn a job and paid internships."

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<sup>2</sup>

Learnin Disability Wales (2021): School should work for every learner. Available online at: <https://www.ldw.org.uk/school-should-work-for-every-learner/>



Schools are an important institution in enabling learners with learning disabilities to develop their aspirations and skills. Too often young people with learning disabilities are made to feel from an early age that they are 'less' than others, that they deserve less and can achieve less than other children. To rectify this, disability issues have to be integrated into the teaching.

We urge the Committee to look specifically into supported employment and how it can be integrated into the curriculum to make sure that young people with learning disabilities get a fair shot. This includes making sure young people are aware of and have equal access to work experience in local businesses and equal access to work-based learning such as traineeships, internships and apprenticeships. It is essential that these young people are provided with individualised support to enable them to do so. Schools, colleges and Careers Wales need to ensure these opportunities are offered and that young people with learning disabilities are not led to believe that just because they are disabled, they will never get to expect more from life than going from service to service.

Supported employment agencies can offer specialist support to find, get, and keep a job through learning in the workplace and ensuring learners have a positive first experience within the world of work that will set them up for the future. We also suggest Careers Wales explores closer cooperation with NHS Wales in order to provide meaningful work experience placements for pupils with additional learning needs. More information on what such partnerships could look like can be found in our position paper "How can public sector employers like the NHS help people with a learning disability or autism get jobs?" available here: <http://www.engagetochange.org.uk/article/how-can-public-sector-employers-like-the-nhs-help-people-with-a-learning-disability-or-autism-get-jobs/>.

For the Committee this also means making sure that at every step measures taken to increase employability, for example the Youth Guarantee, are also inclusive to young people with a learning disability.

As such we urge the Committee to scrutinise and track the progress of the new FE ILS curriculum, in particular Pathway 4 Supported Internships, the Welsh Government supported traineeship and inclusive apprenticeship pilots and the new Job Growth Wales+ Youth Programme 2022-2026.

### **Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**



## **Better support for families of disabled children**

I would like to emphasise the need to tackle child poverty in Wales and to do so by looking at the specific links between disability and poverty. A study into the finances of families of disabled children<sup>3</sup> conducted in 2018 found that only 18% of respondents said that their disability benefits could cover the extra costs linked to their child's disability or health condition. These extra costs are significant, with 33% paying over £300 a month and 10% paying between £500-£1000 a month in disability related costs. 36% reported that changes to the benefits system in the past 2 years had left them worse off. These disadvantages will have been made worse by the effects of the pandemic and the extra pressures experienced by families. The Committee should pay special attention to how policy decisions will affect economically disadvantaged families with disabled children and young people.

## **Support for parents with learning disabilities**

Welsh Government has commissioned an important piece of work to develop guidance for professionals on supporting parents with a learning disability with the aim of reducing the number of children taken into care. When the guidance has been published, we suggest that the Committee could conduct an inquiry into how social workers are implementing the new guidance and ensuring that parents with a learning disability get the right support to help keep more families together.

## **Inclusive Covid recovery**

Much of Welsh Government work will be concerned with controlling and recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic. We ask the Committee to use its powers to ensure that disabled children and young people are not left behind and that policies intended to improve the lives of Welsh citizens do not have a negative impact on disabled people. We urge the Committee to closely study the report "[Locked Out: liberating disabled people's lives and rights in Wales beyond COVID-19](#)" published by the Disability Equality Forum earlier this year to understand more on what that would entail.

The report lays out how during the pandemic the rights of disabled people have suffered and how as a result of the pandemic the principles of "Voice, Choice and Control" for disabled people have been severely eroded. The "Locked Out" report argues that this highlights the fact that disabled people's rights were never fully enshrined in policy in the first place. Going forward we think it is important to ensure that the work of the Senedd is informed by the social model of disability and the principles of person-centred planning, and that your Committee engages with and listens to people with a learning disability directly to seek their opinions. The

<sup>3</sup> Counting the Cost – Research into the Finances of more than 2.700 families across the UK in 2018. Published by Contact Families: [https://contact.org.uk/media/1395947/counting\\_the\\_costs\\_2018.pdf](https://contact.org.uk/media/1395947/counting_the_costs_2018.pdf)



[All Wales People First Manifesto 2021](#), for example, sets out some of the key issues that people with a learning disability in Wales would like to see addressed.

### **Transitions**

We encourage the Committee to pay special attention to how people with a learning disability transition between services for different age groups. Young adults with learning disabilities often struggle significantly when services are not joined up and they lose support. This is particularly important for young people with a learning disability who may achieve developmental milestones slower than their peers and therefore might still need ongoing support beyond the age limits of children and young people's services.

## **Theme 4: Children and young people**

### **Access to inclusive play opportunities and extracurricular activities**

All children and young people, including disabled children, need access to play opportunities to support their learning and development. Learning Disability Wales would like to highlight the Play Wales information sheet [Play: inclusive provision](#). For young people with a learning disability, having access to places to go and things to do alongside their peers is also important. We therefore encourage the Committee to undertake an inquiry into how the needs of disabled children and young people with a learning disability to access inclusive play and leisure activities are being met.



Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)

This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)

**CYPE SP 66**

**Ymateb gan: Dan Steer**

**Response from: Dan Steer, Public Affairs and Policy Officer, Together for Short Lives**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

**Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

n/a

**Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

n/a

**Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

## **Background**

Together for Short Lives is the UK charity for children's palliative care. We are here to support and empower families caring for seriously ill children, and to build a strong and sustainable children's palliative care sector. We support all the professionals and children's palliative care services that deliver lifeline care. We have over 1,000 members, including children hospices, voluntary sector organisations and statutory service providers.



We work closely with the organisations that provide hospice care to children and young people in Wales – Tŷ Hafan and Tŷ Gobaith – and the professionals and services across the statutory and voluntary sectors that comprise the All-Wales Paediatric Palliative Care Network. We support the consultation submission made by Tŷ Hafan and Tŷ Gobaith.

Together for Short Lives is requesting that the Committee commit to addressing the challenges facing children with life-limiting and life-threatening conditions in Wales. This includes ensuring that they have access to children's palliative care 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This also means ensuring that there is sustainable funding for Wales' children's hospices who provide lifeline care for seriously ill children across the country.

### **Ensuring 24 hours access to children's palliative care**

National standards are clear children should have access to 24-hour care. [Standard 6 of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence \(NICE\) quality standard 161 'End of life care for infants, children and young people'](#)<sup>1</sup> states that infants, children and young people approaching the end of life and being cared for at home have 24-hour access to both children's nursing care and advice from a consultant in paediatric palliative care.

We know that the extent to which seriously ill children and young people can choose to receive palliative care at home, including at the end of their lives, depends in large part on whether they can access community children's nursing 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Community children's nursing can be provided by the NHS, children's hospice at home teams or a combination of both.

Worryingly, there are too few community children's nurses (CCNs) in Wales with the skills and experience needed to provide palliative care to children and young people. This means that too many children and families are missing out on the care and support they need, when and where they need it. It also means that too many seriously ill children need unplanned, prolonged emergency hospital admissions, when their needs could potentially have been met at home. As a result, the NHS is failing to achieve noncash savings in the resources it spends on these children and their families.

In 2018 the [Cross-Party Group for Hospices and Palliative Care](#)<sup>2</sup> published a report following its inquiry into the inequalities in access to hospice and palliative care in

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<sup>1</sup> The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). 2017. End of life care for infants, children and young people. Available at:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs160/chapter/Qualitystatement-6-Care-at-home>

<sup>2</sup> Cross Party Group for Hospices and Palliative Care. 2021. Available at:

<https://business.senedd.wales/mgOutsideBodyDetails.aspx?ID=502>





Wales. [The report highlighted the shortage of CCNs in Wales and the variation in the number and skills of CCNs across local areas](#)<sup>3</sup>. It recommended that the End of Life Care Implementation Board should develop a robust action plan to address shortages in community nursing for both children and young people, and adults with palliative care need. The report found that children and young people with life-limiting conditions should have the same choices about preferred place of care and/or death as adults at the end of life. For this to happen, the variation in numbers and skills of CCNs would need to be addressed to enable the delivery of end of life care for children in their own homes.

Together for Short Lives has estimated that 240 additional community children's nurses (CCNs) are needed to provide a holistic community children's nursing service in Wales. This has been calculated using the current number of CCNs (43) and the number estimated to be needed using recommendations from the Royal College of Nursing. In an area with a child population of 50,000, a minimum of 20 Whole Time Equivalent (WTE) community children's nurses are required to provide a holistic community children's nursing service (283 CCNs needed in total across Wales).

The 2017 Palliative and End of Life Care Delivery Plan<sup>4</sup> articulated the Welsh Government's vision and desired outcomes for palliative care services to achieve for both children and adults. This delivery plan aimed to ensure that:

- Children and young people will be appropriately supported closer to home by core service teams who have the appropriate support, skills and training
- Children, young people, their families and the professionals that care for them will have access to specialist advice and support
- Reduction in avoidable high intensity care or in-patient stays as children, young people and their families are supported to manage the child or young person's conditions safely in their own home
- Children, young people and their families are better supported by wider system organisations such as universal services, education and voluntary services as key links from core services are developed and maintained
- Children, young people and their families will have choice, control and involvement in their care
- Opportunities for self-management, for child or young person and family, are realised, offered and supported
- Carers and family members feel supported and their needs are assessed and addressed.

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<sup>3</sup> Cross Party Group for Hospices and Palliative Care. 2018. CPG Hospices and Palliative Care: Inquiry. Available at: [https://www.hospiceuk.org/docs/default-source/Policy-and-Campaigns/cpgreport\\_english\\_web.pdf?sfvrsn=4](https://www.hospiceuk.org/docs/default-source/Policy-and-Campaigns/cpgreport_english_web.pdf?sfvrsn=4)

<sup>4</sup> Welsh Government. 2017. Palliative and End of Life Care Delivery Plan



The All-Wales Paediatric Palliative Care Network supports the work of the End of Life Care Board by leading and facilitating the ongoing implementation, maintenance and evaluation of a comprehensive, integrated and coordinated system of palliative/end-of-life care in so far as it relates to children.

The network comprises members of the all-Wales tertiary paediatric palliative care team, medical and nursing paediatric palliative care and transition leads from each Local Health Board, paediatric oncology outreach nurse specialists, representatives of third sector providers, including children's hospices, representatives from social care and education services, and also a representative from Together for Short Lives.

Progress has been made by the End of Life Care Board and network on these priorities for children and young people. However, the End of Life Care Board is unable to solve certain key challenges – such as the gap in community children's nursing or the provision of sufficient respite care to support carers and family members. This is due to a lack of resourcing.

We welcomed the Welsh Government's recent recognition of the End of Life Care programme's work in its new [National Clinical Framework published in March 2021<sup>5</sup>](#). The Framework stated that the programme serves as a vital national requirement for investigating challenges, supporting transformation, and developing solutions.

However, part of this challenge is that infrastructure for community children's nursing is not being seen as part of palliative care itself, and so hasn't been considered part of what End of Life Care Board expects to fund – despite more recognition of this in recent years. This challenge is also due to a lack of resourcing for the Board making it unable to take action to provide a holistic community children's nursing service in Wales.

To achieve 24/7 access to palliative care at home for seriously ill children and young people in Wales, Together for Short Lives is asking the Children, Young People and Education Committee to take steps to ensure:

- NHS children's community nursing teams, hospice at home teams, hospital outreach teams, or a combination, are sustainably planned and funded by the NHS in Wales, in collaboration with the children's hospices.
- There are enough children's nurses with the skills, knowledge and experience needed to provide palliative care to children in the community

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<sup>5</sup> Welsh Government. 2021. National Clinical Framework: A Learning Health and Care System. Available at: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-03/national-clinical-framework-alearning-health-and-care-system.pdf>



- The current and the next end of life care programme are given responsibility for community children's nursing infrastructure as a key part of children's palliative care needs and be given the necessary resources to take action to fill the 240 community children's nurses needed in Wales to provide a holistic community children's nursing service

### **Achieving sustainable funding for Wales' children's hospices**

Together for Short Lives supports Tŷ Hafan and Tŷ Gobaith's call to create a sustainable funding solution for children who need palliative care in Wales. The hospice's aim is to ensure that every child facing an unfairly short life has the best quality of life, be that through support in a hospital, hospice, in the community, or at home.

Tŷ Hafan and Tŷ Gobaith - together - provide paediatric palliative care for more than 450 children with life-limiting conditions and their families across Wales and offer around 2,500 nights of respite care each year. The hospices are calling for a more sustainable funding solution to allow them to futureproof their services and extend their reach, particularly into more rural communities across Wales, as they expect the need for their services to continue to grow following the Welsh Government commissioned prevalence study.

Currently, across the UK, children's hospices in Scotland receive 50% of their funding from the statutory sources; in Northern Ireland it is 25% - while the Republic of Ireland recently announced it would fund 30% of running costs for their children's hospices<sup>6</sup>.

Recently in England, notably in 2020/21, there has been an increase in state funding for children's hospices from 21% to 34% of charitable expenditure<sup>7</sup>. This is largely a result of both additional government funding support through the Children's Hospice Grant and also a drop in the levels of charitable expenditure across the sector. While this figure of 34% may well be an anomaly due to the pandemic's impact on the third sector's expenditure, what it does suggest is that funding for children's hospices in England is moving in the right direction, while Wales is getting left further behind.

Tŷ Hafan and Tŷ Gobaith have continued, and will continue, to do everything they can to attract funding through charitable donations. Around 90% of their funding comes from the generosity of the Welsh public through their donations. However,

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<sup>6</sup> Tŷ Hafan and Tŷ Gobaith Children's Hospices. 2021. A Lifeline Fund for Wales. Available at: <https://www.tyhafan.org/uploads/lifeline-fund/Ty-Hafan-and-Ty-Gobaith-Briefing-Document-A-Lifeline-Fund-for-Wales-2021.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Together for Short Lives. 2021. Pushed to the limits – The impact of COVID-19 on children's hospice funding 2019/20-2021/22. Available at: <https://www.togetherforshortlives.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/210622-Pushed-to-the-Limits-the-impact-of-COVID-19-on-childrens-hospice-funding-a-report-from-Together-for-Short-Lives-FINAL.pdf>



the recent [Family Voices report](#)<sup>8</sup> made clear that we cannot meet future challenges alone. The hospices want to move Wales up from its current position at the bottom of the league table of home nations in funding this vital lifeline of support for the families of children with life-limiting conditions.

Together for Short Lives supports the hospices in this aim. We are calling on the Children, Young People and Education Committee to work with Tŷ Hafan and Tŷ Gobaith, and with Welsh Government, to achieve sustainable funding for Wales' children's hospices.

#### **Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**

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<sup>8</sup> Tŷ Hafan and Tŷ Gobaith Children's Hospices. 2020. Children's hospices in Wales. The voices of our families. Available at: <https://www.tyhafan.org/uploads/Documents/Family-Voices-Project-English.pdf>



**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 67**

**Ymateb gan: Jane O'Toole**

**Response from: Jane O'Toole, Chief Executive Officer, Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

**Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

- 1) Improvements to **pastoral care** within Primary Schools to ensure physical and emotional wellbeing of pupils.
- 2) Priority given to the Framework '**Embedding a Whole School approach to mental health and emotional wellbeing**' as well as the **Race Equality Action Plan** to ensure that all students are supported and able to thrive within school age education
- 3) We recommend that **play remains a priority**, particularly within primary education but also for secondary age children and young people – play is just as important as education (if not more so) to support children's mental health and recovery following Covid-19, as well as being a valuable tool in learning. It is essential that any planned changes to school hours / break times/ holidays do not detrimentally impact children's right (and need) to play
- 4) Ensure that children (and families) are able to **access school age education in the language medium (English/ Welsh) they wish**



- 5) Ensure that there are sufficient, quality childcare opportunities available to wrap around the school day and meet the needs of working parents and children and that these childcare services are registered (Care Inspectorate Wales), sustainable and robustly governed (i.e. with access to suitable funding, and suitable support such as through CWLWM partners). **There needs to be parity in the focus given during the Sixth Senedd to the childcare needs of school aged children and not just those in early years childcare** (and also parity in the focus on childcare and education); families continue to require quality, regulated childcare when their child is 3-12 years old, and typically the working day for parents/carers is longer than the school day. This message around needing to have parity in the support for early years **and** school age childcare is supported by our CWLWM partners.
- 6) Ensure that when new housing developments are being planned, there is **sufficient space** for:
- Schools**, with room to grow to meet local needs and with a **community focus**, whereby a childcare provider can tender to operate on site. Parental preference is typically for on site childcare availability and it also supports sustainability (removes transportation costs). This community room/space needs to be available in the longer term – too often we see these spaces withdrawn when the school needs the space for their own purposes, which then does not meet community childcare needs. **Childcare needs to be considered from the early planning stages**, engaging with relevant stakeholders to ensure the space is designed in a CIW registerable way.
  - Community buildings, designed with registerable childcare in mind** and with a community focus to ensure affordable rental rates are charged to services that will benefit the community, including childcare.
  - Both of the above need to take account of existing childcare provision in the area to ensure Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) registered providers are not displaced, and are given the option to tender for more preferable local space.

## **Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

1. Sufficient opportunities for all students to access **mental health and wellbeing support services**, particularly to address the further burden added by Covid-19
2. Address actions that are given within the **Race Equality Action Plan** to support an anti-racist Wales



3. Sufficient opportunities for those interested in a career in Playwork/Childcare to access **funded apprenticeships/ qualifications** (Welsh and English medium). Continued investment in professionalisation of the sector: through suitable funding, equitable access to continuing professional development and qualification opportunities to keep building Manager / Committee Member / Playworkers' knowledge and skills. This needs to continue beyond the 2022 Playwork qualification deadline for the sustainability and continued quality of the sector, and to suit a range of eligibility requirements (e.g. working under 16 hours, working under 10 hours, working in a currently unregistered Setting).
  
4. **Encouragement of careers in Playwork / Childcare** – linking with the Social Care Wales Campaign – the Sector needs more passionate, qualified Practitioners, and those working in the Sector need to be viewed as professionals and recognised for their valuable contribution (the [National Conversation with the Childcare, Play and Early Years Sector Report](#) found many childcare, play and early years workers felt undervalued and underappreciated during the Covid-19 pandemic). **We would like to see a continued commitment to recognise the professional status of the workforce** (as outlined in the Childcare, Play and Early Years Workforce Plan, 2017) and consideration of ways in which pay could be brought in line to reflect this. Within our recent [State of the Sector Report](#), 39% of Out of School Childcare Settings envisaged needing to recruit staff in the near future to replace those who had left during the Pandemic. Currently, there are Settings having to run at reduced capacity due to difficulty recruiting suitably qualified staff; Settings who have not been able to open for this reason; Settings that are considering de-registering with CIW due to an inability to meet the qualification ratios, and Settings who are facing an increasing likelihood that they will have to close their doors permanently.
  
5. An **active and effective sector skills council**, supporting the Playwork sector as an equal in the delivery of childcare alongside Early Years Workers.

**Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

1. **Holistic viewpoints in relation to funded schemes to ensure that Children's Rights and health and wellbeing are protected and supported**, without being a detriment to other priorities impacting on Children's Rights. For example, priorities linked to schemes such as School Holiday Enrichment Program and Holiday Hunger not being managed in a way that is of detriment



to the need for quality, sufficient, registered Childcare across Wales to support the poverty and health and wellbeing agendas.

#### **Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**

- 1.** To review the **exceptions order** (National Minimum Standards) and ensure that changes are made to support **quality services and safeguarding** of children. All children have the right to access quality, regulated childcare facilitated by qualified staff and where suitable policies and procedures are in place to safeguard them.
- 2.** Continued **support/extension to the accessibility and sustainability of registered play and care provision** through initiatives that support both affordability and fair remuneration for Playworkers (e.g. Tax Free Childcare, The Childcare Offer, 100% rates relief). Schemes that support affordability of childcare must be promoted widely and with relevance to Wales. **Exploration of whether additional funding could be made available to support the affordability of childcare for school age children**, to encourage parents/carers to continue to utilise quality childcare provision, particularly when working from home. With the Scottish Government announcing a commitment to providing fully funded Out of School Childcare to lowest income families, we would welcome similar considerations in Wales to support affordability of childcare for school age children, to support positive outcomes for these children, and to support the sustainability of the sector.
- 3. To consistently and publicly support CIW registered, regulated childcare**, and the registration of unregistered childcare, as opposed to other schemes falling within the Exceptions Order, often used for childcare purposes. Our [State of the Sector Report](#) highlights the current challenges facing the Out of School Childcare Sector and the actions required to address these, particularly in relation to re-opening (with data from CIW corroborating this) and sustainability due to lower place take up with changes to working patterns. We welcome continued consideration within the Play Review and NMS Review to ensure our sector is supported and strengthened.
- 4. To make funding and support available for all types of childcare** (Out of School Childcare, childminders, day nurseries, playgroups/cylch's) as well as all management types (limited companies, sole traders, unincorporated committees, charities and CIOs) to ensure that no one 'falls through the cracks'





post Covid-19 and to prevent any further closures that will impact communities across Wales. Parents and children have a right to choose the childcare they wish to use (e.g. childminder versus after school club, or standalone after school club versus club based within a day nursery), and so **it is essential that the variety in services and in management types (and language type) is celebrated and supported.** It is essential that funding is accessible and not overly burdensome to apply for – [many Settings who have accessed funding during Covid-19 have found the process to be a burden](#))

5. **Ensure that the implementation of ECEC across Wales does not negatively impact the Out of School Childcare or Play sector.** Considered effort must be made to mitigate any potential unintended consequences regarding confusion for Providers of both early years and Out of School Childcare, on the availability of school age childcare places or the sustainability of school age childcare provision.
6. Participation –**Ensure that children remain involved and engaged in decisions that affect them** – the best way to support change and to achieve positive outcomes is to address the needs they report themselves. Children’s views should be heard and considered in all processes, even those processes that at first glance appear to not be relevant to children.
7. Address no funding or minimal funding levels across Wales to support **inclusion and accessibility of services**, particularly when focusing on 1:1 support for children to access Childcare and play opportunities.
8. Promoting play, leisure, relaxation of children and young people in a positive way and educating adults in the community as to the **benefits of play** and the importance of positive communication and engagement.
9. Ensuring that **play spaces are provided for all**, from babies, toddlers, school age, young people and those with additional needs; all need to feel that they belong to their community and have a space and a voice.



This response was submitted to the Children, Young People and Education Committee consultation on Sixth Senedd Priorities

CYPE SP 68

Ymateb gan: Gethin Matthews-Jones

Response from: Gethin Matthews-Jones, Head of Policy and Public Affairs (Devolved Nations) at the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH)

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

## Theme 2: Further and higher education

## Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)

### Covid recovery and child health services

The previous Committee's [report on the impact of COVID-19 on children and young people](#) recommended that the next Welsh Government and their successor committee should maintain a close focus on:

- "Placing children and young people's wellbeing and education at the centre of all recovery planning"
- "Preparing for, and resourcing, the response to supporting our children and young people through any further disruption from COVID-19"
- "Adopting a children's rights approach to all decisions, across all sectors, must be a priority, and the voices of children and young people must be heard by the decision makers to help shape our road to recovery".<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Welsh Parliament Children, Young People and Education Committee (2021). *The impact of COVID-19 on children and young people: Final report*. Available at: <https://senedd.wales/media/ixzpwqr5/cr-ld14286-e.pdf>



We agree with this analysis which reflects our recent [manifesto for Wales](#) and hope that the CYPE Committee will prioritise recovery in all children's services, both within and outside of health services, with ongoing scrutiny and evidence from Ministers and officials.

Children and young people have highlighted to us that their recovery priorities for health services coming through and out of the pandemic are:

- Increasing access to mental health services (early intervention and prevention through to in patient)
- Improving pandemic information for children and young people
- Improving virtual health services for children and young people.

These areas need to be considered in any overarching priorities for health and social care, keeping children and young people and their rights at the centre, with particular regard to the shift to digital working and how this might be directly or indirectly impacting children and young people, for example not feeling able to access online mental health support due to not having a device/access to WiFi or being in a home setting where there is no privacy, confidentiality or a safe space to talk about issues that might be in conflict to family views, for example being LGBTQ+.

### **Covid recovery and public health**

Our 2020 [State of Child Health](#) report captured information across a range of indicators and could be seen as a pre-pandemic benchmark of children's health and wellbeing. Understandably, there was disruption to government action relating to a number of these indicators during the pandemic, but the challenges identified in the report have not gone away. We need to understand what progress is now being made to improve children's health across a range of public health issues including childhood obesity; smoking during pregnancy; breastfeeding rates; preventative dental health; and smoking in young people.

One outcome of Committee work could be to focus attention on these issues, either individually as short enquiries, or grouped together as a bigger piece of work, and establish whether the Welsh Government is on track to deliver on its existing commitments on CYP public health, prevention and early intervention. If it is not, the Committee might consider making recommendations for improvement. These commitments include:

- On oral health, the '[Designed to Smile](#)' programme; and commitments made as part of [A Healthier Wales](#) including a "year-on-year increase in the proportion of people who have seen an NHS dental practitioner in the last 2



years (1 year for children) in all Health Boards"; and "continued child oral health improvement 5 & 12 year old surveys"<sup>2</sup>

- On preventing and addressing childhood obesity, '[Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales](#)'
- On breastfeeding, the '[All-Wales Breastfeeding Plan](#)'
- At a strategic level, [A Healthier Wales](#) set out the need to deliver "a 'wellness' system, which aims to support and anticipate health needs, to prevent illness, and to reduce the impact of poor health."<sup>3</sup>

Running through each of these issues is the impact of inequalities. We highlighted this in relation to oral health, childhood obesity and breastfeeding in our State of Child Health reports. We have previously called for "specific targets for key areas of child health inequalities, with clear accountability across Government"<sup>4</sup>.

We would encourage the Committee to consider what actions it can take to provide scrutiny of the government's response to health inequalities; whether the current strategic framework for reducing inequalities is successful; and whether government is doing enough to ensure that tackling health inequalities is a priority in recovery from the pandemic.

### **Chronic fatigue services for children and young people**

One of the things that the Covid pandemic has exposed is a lack of services for children and young people experiencing chronic fatigue.

Although at the time of writing there is no agreed case definition for 'Long Covid' in children, the issue has gained significant profile and this has shone a light on existing problems. Paediatricians around Wales have reported a lack of referral options for children and young people presenting with fatigue, with no services at all for children in many parts of Wales.

Regardless of whether need is driven by viral infection; social, familial and educational impacts of the pandemic; or causes that have nothing to do with COVID-19 and which existed long before COVID-19, paediatricians would like to see rapid improvement.

An impact or outcome of Committee work around this could include scrutiny of Welsh Government understanding of gaps in services and demand for these services; along with providing government and service planners with recommendations to take forward.

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<sup>2</sup> Welsh Government (2018) *The oral health and dental services response*. Available at:

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-03/the-oral-health-and-dental-services-response.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Welsh Government (2019) *A Healthier Wales: our Plan for Health and Social Care*. Available at:

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-10/a-healthier-wales-action-plan.pdf> 2019

<sup>4</sup> Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (2021). *Senedd Elections Manifesto*. Available at:

<https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2021-03/RCPCWales-Senedd-election-2021-manifesto.pdf>



## Mental health

In the last Senedd term, the previous CYPE Committee published the influential Mind Over Matter report. We hope that over the course of this Senedd, the Welsh Government will deliver those recommendations with which it agreed or agreed in principle and that we will see an improvement in children's mental health. However, it is vital that there is effective scrutiny to ensure this is the case.

Over the course of the pandemic, we [published data](#) showing a sharp rise in the proportion of inpatient beds taken by children and young people due to a mental health admission. Anecdotal feedback from paediatricians suggests an increase in complex and severe presentations due to mental health. Children and young people consistently identify mental health as a priority in our engagement work both in Wales and UK-wide.

Children and young people with long term conditions in Wales and throughout the UK have told us that there are challenges around mental health support for them, needing all health services to be able to:

- Provide up to date sign posting information to support self-care, early intervention and prevention with staff being trained in mental health first aid
- Have access to specialist services that can provide psychological support around their health conditions
- Be able to also provide quick access wider specialist mental health support that isn't connected to their health conditions

We therefore ask the Committee to consider:

- Demand and capacity within neurodevelopmental (ND) services: paediatricians have highlighted the need to understand ND services as a whole so that we have a better picture of demand and capacity throughout Wales, not just of autism services but the whole ND pathway. During the consultation and development of the [Code of Practice on the Delivery of Autism Services](#), several stakeholders raised concerns about capacity within ND services. Now that the Code has been published, it would be timely to investigate this. Outputs could include a review with evidence gathering; and a report to understand bottlenecks and pinch points within services, with recommendations as to how we can ensure services can meet demand not just for autism services but for all ND services, regardless of diagnosis.
- Continued monitoring by the CYPE Committee of delivery of the Mind Over Matter report and the impact of the pandemic on children's mental health, picking up where the previous CYPE Committee left off. One of the original



Mind Over Matter recommendations was around training all professionals working with children and young people basic skills around mental health: it would be helpful to understand progress on this and the report's other recommendations.

- Long term strategy and delivery for children's mental health: the Together 4 Children and Young People programme (T4CYP) has a relatively short term funding model as we understand it. It may be helpful to take evidence from stakeholders to understand the Welsh Government's long term thinking and planning around children and young people's mental health and the services that support them.
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs): we would hope to see ongoing scrutiny of work to develop 'trauma informed' programmes and to ensure that key stakeholders are working in a joined-up way, particularly given the changes and challenges to youth services over the period of the pandemic.

### **Allergy services**

Allergic illnesses are common affecting different aged children in a variety of ways. Issues with the universal provision of excellent management of infants and children with eczema exist. For older children with allergic hayfever, access to disease modifying immunotherapy is restricted and not equitable throughout Wales. Access to a new oral desensitisation treatment currently being licensed for peanut allergy will be an issue we face over the coming Senedd term.

We propose a one-day inquiry looking at allergy services throughout Wales to highlight inequalities and make recommendations for providing excellent services throughout Wales.

### **Medication safety**

Children are at particular risk of medication errors due to their wide ranges of weights, calculations use for medications and the variety of unlicensed preparations that exist. The lack of universal electronic physician support prescribing systems means that children remain at a higher risk of medication errors. Research by Dr Tuthill and colleagues found that in Wales, over a two-year period, a total of 50 tenfold medication errors were reported in children; 20 of these errors reached the child and there were 30 near miss cases. This yields a minimum annual incidence of 1 tenfold error per 3,797 Paediatric admissions, or 4.6/100 000 children resident in Wales.

We ask the Committee to consider how it could approach scrutiny of medication safety and the lack of an electronic prescribing physician support system



throughout Wales, to reduce the chance of these medication errors continuing at this rate.

### **Paediatric research in Wales**

In the last Senedd term, the [previous CYPE Committee took evidence](#) from the child health research unit at Noah's Ark Children's Hospital for Wales, who highlighted the difficulties in attracting funding for paediatric research in Wales compared with adult research in Wales, or with paediatric research elsewhere in the UK. The consistent message from the paediatric research community in Wales is that the structural issues persist and disadvantage paediatric research in Wales, meaning that Welsh children and young people miss out on opportunities to be part of medical research.

The CYPE Committee could undertake a one-day inquiry into paediatric research in Wales, as a piece of follow-up to the issues identified by its predecessor committee; and consider at that point whether further recommendations should be made to the Welsh Government and/or whether these issues should be debated in the Senedd.

## **Theme 4: Children and young people**

As in previous Senedd terms, it is vital that the CYPE Committee works closely with other Committees, particularly the Health and Social Care; Equality and Social Justice; and Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committees to take a joined-up approach to scrutiny of issues that have a significant impact on children's health and to ensure that work is complementary but does not duplicate.

These include active travel, road and street safety (including implementation of the 20mph policy), recovery of children's services, oral and dental health (including consideration of water fluoridation) and taking strategic action on unequal outcomes in children's health caused by broader issues of poverty and inequality.

We will also respond to the Health and Social Care Committee's consultation on its priorities and some of the issues we have highlighted here will also inform our response to the Health and Social Care Committee.

We are pleased to hear that the Committee means to undertake a programme of engagement directly with Children and Young People. We would encourage the Committee to engage with children and young people in, or with recent experience of, health settings including hospitals. Children and young people with long term health conditions may miss school, have contact with other services or feel they are seen exclusively through a 'health' prism that doesn't adequately capture their wider concerns and aspirations. We would therefore ask the Committee to consider specific engagement with these groups.



Considering feedback in engagement work through a number of our projects including [State of Child Health](#), [Paediatrics 2040](#) and [Covid Bookclub](#), priorities consistently highlighted to us by young people in Wales include:

- Mental health
- Youth friendly services (including anywhere young people are accessing health information)
- Access to services
- Children's rights (including issues around choice, consent and confidentiality)

Their priorities and the data sets published and listed above identify recommendations and wishes from children and young people that extend wider than individual health discussions and look at the system as a whole. Children and young people have continuously asked that services are connected and place them at the centre as a person, for example with good information sharing between health and education linked to condition management.





**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chwched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 69**

**Ymateb gan: Cymorth i Ferched Cymru**

**Response from: Welsh Women's Aid**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chwched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

**Theme 1: School-age education**

**Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021**

Implementation of the new curriculum and fully embedding RSE will be crucial for the success of a Whole-Education Approach (WEA). There is fair evidence that the most effective way of challenging norms and stereotypes is when it is embedded within curriculum and seen as a core value of the institution itself, supported by workshops delivered by external specialists. We often hear from survivors that had they been taught that the behaviour they were subjected to was abusive, they would have been better able to seek advice and/or support at a much earlier stage.

We understand the Welsh Government's desire to promote a positive, outcomes-focused approach to RSE, in line with the wider curriculum. However, it is our view and the view of the groups we consulted when responding consultation on *the Relationships and Sexuality Education Statutory Guidance and Code*, that harmful behaviour, relationships, stereotypes and norms need to be labelled explicitly for the intended audience to appreciate the value of RSE in preventing harm, and to achieve the four overarching purposes of the curriculum.

In our response to priorities for the Children and Young People Committee under the Fifth Senedd we highlighted the Welsh Government Good Practice Guidance on Whole School Approaches developed in conjunction with Welsh Women's Aid which set out a practical toolkit for embedding the principles ending violence against



women in educational settings. The guide outlines nine key elements that would ensure a comprehensive and holistic approach to prevention of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.<sup>1</sup> We would urge the committee to revisit this Good Practice Guidance and scrutinise in what way it is being used to inform the roll out of the new curriculum. We would hope to see the Guidance clearly define a 'whole school approach' in terms of its core elements (education for pupil, staff, and parents/carers; active participation of pupils and staff; community engagement; healthy school culture, supported by policies; partnerships with local specialist services /experts; ensuring high quality information, advice and support is available and accessible to all; and mechanisms for monitoring impact and informing change). It should be made clear that all these aspects, together, constitute a whole school approach.

### **Commissioning**

In our 2019 Children Matter report<sup>2</sup> we highlighted that of the regional VAWDASV strategies in Wales used to inform future commissioning, only two made concrete commitments to develop and provide specialist provision for children and young people affected by VAWDASV. An additional, three strategies only referred to children and young people in the context of raising awareness of healthy relationships in schools, not with any regard to ensuring any provision of specialist support and intervention.

We would like the committee to drive work to ensure regional VAWDASV strategies and subsequent commissioning sees support for children and young people as a priority, and as essential for preventing and ending VAWDASV in Wales.

### **Estyn review**

We can and should be aiming to prevent all forms of violence against women and girls. Our education institutions are critical in enabling this. We have legislation in Wales that says public bodies, including schools, must prioritise prevention of violence against women and girls. This means we should be aiming for schools that promote a culture of respect, equality and empowerment for all.

Time and time again women and girls have called for education that teaches boys and men to respect them equally. Education institutions must be clear that harassment, abuse and violence is not acceptable and actively challenge the attitudes and norms that allow for it to continue.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://gov.wales/docs/dsjlg/publications/commsafety/151020-whole-educationapproach-good-practice-guide-en.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.welshwomensaid.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Children-and-Young-People-participation-report-FINAL.pdf>



To do this staff and pupils need the tools and understanding to prevent, challenge and respond to violence against women and girls within their establishments. This must include:

- how pupils, staff, and parents can learn about violence against women and girls, and be involved in preventing it;
- how people experiencing abuse can be supported;
- and how abuse can be prevented in the wider community.

This work is already happening. Specialist services in Wales have been working with children and young people and their wider communities to prevent violence against women and girls and provide support that empowers survivors (old and young) to live free from abuse. Unfortunately this work is chronically underfunded. Sustainably funded specialist services will have capacity to build links with schools and offer this expertise.

We urge the committee to scrutinise the ongoing Estyn review, and follow whether or not survivors and specialist services are being adequately consulted. The remit of the review needs to be broadened and more in keeping with the existing evidence on the causes and drivers of sexual harassment, abuse, as well as other forms of violence against women and girls. It must look at all those that are perpetrating the harassment and place the responsibility to standing up to harassment on government and education institutions whose policies and practices can change the culture that allows it to be pervasive. Most importantly, the review needs to aim to identify how education institutions can uphold girls' rights to go to school, college and university without the fear of being harassed or abused.

## **Theme 2: Further and higher education**

### **HEFCW Guidance**

In 2019 Welsh Government and HEFCW produced guidance for colleges and universities on VAWDASV. However, there has been minimal promotion and limited monitoring as to how this is being implemented. As the Everyone's Invited disclosures have highlighted, sexual harassment and violence is highly prevalent in FE colleges and universities in Wales however this is not being covered by the Estyn Review mentioned above.



Students' reporting experiences of sexual violence in particular are increasing at an alarming rate<sup>3</sup>, underpinned by a profoundly sexist and victim blaming culture. These statistics alone demonstrate that experiences of VAWDASV are the rule, as opposed to the exception therefore implementation of the guidance is critical.

It is crucial that students and staff in universities are not only able to identify VAWDASV and get help when needed, but that VAWDASV and the attitudes underpinning it are actively challenged: undertaking Bystander interventions is one effective way of doing so which has been successfully evaluated.

Some good practice activity is taking place, however this is not consistent across all universities or integrated in to VAWDASV strategies. We recommend that the committee looks at how it can hold the Welsh Government and higher education leaders to account to instil a sense of urgency regarding the development of appropriate and effective VAWDASV provision for students and staff in FE/HE in Wales.

Good Practice examples include:

1. Welsh Women's Aid are delivering the 'Bystander Intervention' to some Welsh universities. This intervention, an adaptation of the original 'Intervention Initiative' and piloted by Welsh Women's Aid in four Welsh Universities in 2017 (see report [here](#)) yielded positive results, showing consistent improvements in students' knowledge of and attitudes towards domestic abuse and sexual violence; their ability to identify potential situations of VAWDASV; their awareness of different ways to safely intervene; and in their self-reported likelihood of intervening.
2. Cardiff University launched the Disclosure Response Team (DRT)<sup>4</sup>, a dedicated pathway of disclosure, support and referral for anyone at the university who experiences any form of violence, harassment or abuse. Survivors can make disclosures via an online form, or by contacting a confidential email address. To support this model, Welsh Women's Aid developed training for staff on how to manage disclosures in order to contribute to the culture shift pertaining to all forms of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV) within the university.

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<sup>3</sup> Freedom of Information Request carried out by Channel 4 (2019) <https://www.channel4.com/news/82-increase-in-reports-of-sexual-violence-in-universities>

<sup>4</sup> The Disclosure Response Team, Cardiff University, <https://www.cardiffstudents.com/itsnojoke/report-an-incident/>



### **Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

Largely due to strategies and funding streams for VAWDASV being centred on adult provision and limited join up with social care children and young people focused strategic commitments and investment. The Regional Partnership Boards (RPB), overseeing elements of the social care budget offer an opportunity to improve investment into specialist support for children and young people experiencing VAWDASV. RPBs are tasked with developing an integrated approach to the commissioning of services for children and young people with complex needs. The RPB population needs assessment offer an opportunity to identify the complex needs of children and young people affected by VAWDASV across Wales and ensure that this feeds into strategic commitment and funding to provide sustainable specialist support to address their needs and enable children and young people to live free from abuse. Welsh Women's Aid and NSPCC Cymru has written to all RPB chairs in June 2021 to offer to support the needs assessment with the evidence we have in the needs of children and young people, so far only one has responded. The committee needs to ensure it scrutinises the mechanisms created to implement the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 to ensure that it is investing in the health and well-being needs of the most vulnerable children in Wales.

Welsh Women's Aid would encourage the committee to include the scrutiny of children and young people's experiences of VAWDASV and the role of engaging with children and young people in the prevention of future VAWDASV across all of its forthcoming scrutiny programme. The priority areas that we would recommend reflect those outlined within the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Act (Wales) 2015.

### **Theme 4: Children and young people**

#### **Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)**

All too often children and young people's experiences of violence and abuse are forgotten about within in strategies and funding for VAWDASV provision. Our findings have highlighted that provision of services for children and young people in Wales is *'limited, patchy and hugely varied due in large part to unsustainable, inconsistent and in some cases total non-existence of funding towards specialist dedicated services for children and young people'*.<sup>5</sup> This means children are not given the support they need to manage their experiences as survivors in their own right, leading to long term impacts on their health and well-being throughout their lives.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.welshwomensaid.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Children-and-Young-People-participation-report-FINAL.pdf>



NSPCC has found that 1 in 5 children have been exposed to domestic abuse.<sup>6</sup> Despite the VAWDASV Act and the Domestic Abuse Act recognising children experiencing domestic abuse, support for children and young people across Wales is inconsistent and mapping of services have demonstrated the urgent need for better funding and resources to meet need. COVID-19 only intensified this; calls to helplines increased<sup>7</sup> during the national lockdowns and specialist services reported increased pressure on already stretched provision.

We ask of Welsh Government the following which is also being called for by NSPCC;

- For the shortfall in service provision for children to be addressed and sustainable funding secured.
- That regional strategies must provide services for children and young people and that in developing strategies, designing services and evaluating the success of interventions, children and young people are consulted.
- That early intervention work is prioritised.
- Carry out an inquiry into the adequate commissioning and provision of specialist services for children and young people affected by VAWDASV across Wales

We therefore urge the Committee to spotlight the gap in specialist VAWDASV service provision for children and young people in Wales, especially as we come to understand the impact of the past 18 months on this cohort of children. The provision of specialist services for children and young people should be accessible to all children that need it and delivered by skilled professionals with the experience to offer a range of specialist support to children and young people that reflect their diverse spectrum of needs. At present this is not consistently being provided in Wales due to the lack of strategic leadership in the funding and commissioning of this provision.

### **Early intervention and sources of support**

Our recently published report "*I trust them*"<sup>8</sup> presents the findings from an online survey designed to contribute to an evidence base of children and young people's sources of 'resilience' in communities.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/pre-2013/child-abuse-neglect-uk-today>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/about-us/news-opinion/2021/nspcc-child-abuse-helpline-pandemic/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.welshwomensaid.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/I-trust-them-CYP-Resilience-Survey-Report-English-1.pdf>



The survey found that there were some clear differences between the sources of potential support identified by Black and minoritized young people and their White British counterparts. In particular: Black and minoritized respondents were nearly half as likely to identify the Police as a source of support compared to their White British counterparts (17% and 32%, respectively). A similar pattern emerged in relation to 'parents', with 24% and 46%, respectively. Black and minoritized respondents were also three times less likely to identify 'employer' as a source of support (7% and 21%, respectively), and were less likely to identify anybody from within the education sector as a potential source of support (66% compared to 86%).

The findings suggest that normalisation / lack of understanding of abuse, combined with a culture of victim-blaming, remain prevalent factors affecting young people's likelihood of seeking support. It is also clear that key institutions, especially the police and education (and possibly workplaces), are not considered accessible, desirable, or trustworthy places to seek support by many young people, and that this is partly due to previous bad experiences and/or lack of means to attend. This is more pronounced for young people from Black and minoritized backgrounds.

The findings show a need for:

- The need for training for education staff as RSE curriculum is rolled out to be able to respond to disclosures in a trauma-informed and needs-led manner.
- The importance of enabling young people affected by VAWDASV early access to specialist support.
- Appropriate advice and support to made available online for young people.
- The benefit of enabling peer learning and sign posting.

As stated elsewhere, these are areas which are currently under invested in.

### **Child Sexual Abuse (CSA)**

Almost 9% of adults in Wales experienced a form of sexual abuse before the age of 16.<sup>9</sup> It has devastating impacts with both short and long-term effects which can last a lifetime.

We echo NSPCC in welcoming Welsh Government's National Action Plan on Preventing and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse. However, as we enter the final year of the Action Plan, we urge the Committee to consider the gaps still to be addressed and undertake an inquiry into the response to CSA and what a service standard for Wales should look like. We would like to see greater alignment between the new VAWDASV Strategy for Wales and the CSA Action Plan, which are currently delivered in silo.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/policy/nspcc-cymru-wales-manifesto-2021-2026-english.pdf>



As with our recommendations above, this must consider;

- What preventative and early intervention is available?
- Can children access specialist support in a timely manner?
- Are funding arrangements for specialist services sustainable?
- Do child survivors receive services to fulfil their right to support and recover?

As part of the scrutiny of the response to CSA, the Committee should examine Welsh Government commitments to the Child House model, especially in light of the Scottish Government recently committing to ensure all children have access to a Child House by 2025. This needs to be developed in partnership with sexual violence services across Wales to ensure a model that is built on the expertise in providing support to child and adult survivors of CSA. It needs to ensure that there is sustainable specialist services for children and young people across Wales (as previously mentioned) to form part of the integral multi-agency support.





## USE OF YOUR INFORMATION

In order to enable us to handle your information in accordance with our [privacy notice](#), please complete the questions below. We will be unable to process your response if these questions are not completed.

**6. We have stated our intention to engage meaningfully with children and young people, in tailored and appropriate ways, in the autumn. However, if you are responding using this proforma and are under 13 years old, we will only be able to accept your response if your parent or guardian has confirmed that you can participate.** They can do this by sending us an email to [SeneddChildren@senedd.wales](mailto:SeneddChildren@senedd.wales).

**Are you under 13 years old?**

I am under 13 years old	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am 13 or over	<input type="checkbox"/>

**7. Please choose one of the following options to confirm whether you would prefer that your name is not published alongside your evidence.**

We will not publish the names of people under the age of 18.

I am aged 18 or over and I am content for you to publish my name alongside my evidence	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am aged 18 or over and I would prefer that you did not publish my name alongside my evidence.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am under the age of 18	<input type="checkbox"/>

**8. Please choose one of the following options to confirm whether you have agreement from any third parties referred to in your evidence that you can share information that may be used to identify them and that they understand that it may be published.**

I confirm that any third party I have referred to in my evidence has agreed that I can share information that may be used to identify them, and that they understand that it may be published.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I do not have the agreement of one or more of the third parties I have referred to in my evidence.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have not referred to any third parties in my evidence.	<input type="checkbox"/>



**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 70**

**Ymateb gan: Cymdeithas y Plant**

**Response from: The Children's Society**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

**Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

**Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

**Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

**Measuring children and young people's wellbeing**

'Well-being' is used to refer to a range of things in everyday life, such as being happy, not being ill, feeling fulfilled and being financially secure. Successive Welsh Governments have emphasised the importance of improving well-being, having introduced major pieces of legislation which provide a framework for improving well-being in Wales and making well-being a key element of the new curriculum.

Two key pieces of legislation that place duties on public bodies in Wales to promote well-being are the Social Services and Well-being Act and the Well-being of Future Generations Act. While it is welcome that these major pieces of legislation exist, the well-being goals that the Acts aim to achieve focus on 'objective well-being' – that is, access to education, educational attainment, housing, access to rights, and access to work and training. These are important goals, however they do not take into account



the importance of subjective elements of well-being, meaning how children feel about their lives – for example, whether they feel safe where they live or whether they enjoy school.

In this year’s Good Childhood Report, we provide the following estimates of how children in Wales feel about different aspects of their lives:

<b>Measures where mean scores for children aged 10 to 15 were found to be sig lower in 2018-19 than 2009-10:</b>	<b>Estimated number of children in Wales</b>
Low happiness with life as a whole in UK: 6.7%	14,000
Low happiness with friends in UK: 3.4%	7,000
Low happiness with appearance in UK: 14.4%	30,000
Low happiness with school in UK: 11.9%	24,000

We are able to learn a great deal more about children and young people’s lives by asking them about these aspects and how they impact their lives. Good policy requires good evidence and an absence of data on children’s subjective well-being remains a barrier to improving children’s lives. Whilst children are required to learn about how to look after their well-being, policymakers in Wales do not know how children feel about their lives and what they need to help them to live a fulfilling life and achieve their ambitions in the difficult times ahead.

Welsh Government needs to prioritise improving data on children’s subjective well-being. This could have positive implications for the development and implementation of policy relating to education, public health, social care, planning and housing at national and local levels. Importantly it could help provide a consistent objective of policy and spending decisions and a narrative on children and young people for Welsh Government – to improve children’s well-being.

We urge the Committee to scrutinise Welsh Government’s current thinking on measuring young people’s wellbeing; whether they are seeking to develop and expand current activity on gathering data on young people’s wellbeing; and if so, whether it will be expanded to all children and young people in Wales.



## Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people

### Support for care-experienced young people

It is crucial that young people who have left care are provided with support and guidance as they transition to living with greater independence, which is a time and process that can be exciting for the young person, but that also can induce anxiety. There are several factors involved with this process that need to be considered, such as managing money and accessing benefits; accessing or continuing with education or training; finding housing; and the ability to engage in activities to help with wellbeing. In recent years, support that should be in place for young people who are care experienced has garnered a lot of attention both at national and local levels.

In 2016, the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act came into force, which requires local authorities to prepare a pathway plan for a child who is 16 and who are looked after, to “set out the actions which are necessary to support the young person make a successful transition to adulthood and greater independence,” ([Code of Practice, Part 6, p.8](#)), and which require review once the young person has left care. As of April 2019, young people in Wales up to the age of 25 and who have left care are exempt from paying council tax. This policy is crucial for removing from young people who are care experienced a financial cost that can be significant, and giving them the space to transition to living with greater independence.

Additionally, in 2017 the Welsh Government launched the St David’s Day Fund, which provided to local authorities £1 million to support young people who have left care to access opportunities to help them transition to life with greater independence. This funding was doubled in 2019/20, and in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Welsh Government updated its guidance to prioritise support for care leavers “[who may be experiencing financial hardship due to income loss, difficulty with tenancy agreements, food and other basic living necessities.](#)”

We also welcome other forms of support available to young people who are care experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as the Protection from eviction (Wales) Regulations as part of the Coronavirus Act 2020, and the Tenancy Hardship Grant. It also is welcoming to see the First Minister’s intention to trail a Basic Income pilot with a cohort of care leavers.

Whilst it is important to recognise the commitment and action over recent years to support young people who are care experienced, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects for some time to come, we believe it is appropriate to evaluate the effectiveness of this support; to find gaps in current provision; and to consider how support could be improved.



One way in which greater support could be offered to young people who are care experienced who are in need of emergency assistance is easier access to the Discretionary Assistance Fund (DAF). In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Welsh Government invested an additional £11 million to the Fund, as well as make more flexible its criteria for accessing Emergency Assistance Payments (EAPs), one of the two grant types offered by the DAF, such as being able to be awarded up to five grants per year. However, this increased flexibility is due to end by 30 September 2021, and in June 2021 people would [no longer qualify for a grant if they face hardship as a result of extra costs brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.](#)

The impacts of the pandemic will be felt for some time, and those who are particularly vulnerable to financial hardship, such as care-experienced young people, will not be able to use the greater flexibility for accessing the DAF to respond to an emergency. In response to this, as well as making the case for these DAF flexibilities to be extended, we also would urge the Committee to examine how accessible the DAF has been to care-experienced young people during the pandemic, and to examine what changes could be made to the Fund to ensure that it can be accessed with ease by care-experienced young people. This should be for both EAPs and Independence Assistance Payments (IAPs), the latter of which is a DAF grant used to help a service user to live independently in a property he is moving into, and can be used to purchase, for example, white goods or furniture. IAPs could serve as an important form of support for a care-experienced young person who is moving into living with greater independence, and we urge the Committee to examine how accessible is this grant for these young people.

As well as the DAF, we encourage the Committee to examine the efficacy of the support and advice offered by Regional Advice Networks to care-experienced young people. These Networks were established at the beginning of 2020, which involves six networks across Wales working with services users to offer information, advice, and guidance on issues such as accessing benefits, money and debt, housing, employment, and immigration. Although we welcome the establishment of these networks, it is unclear how accessible they are to groups such as care-experienced young people, and whether social services have established links with these networks so as to streamline the process of a care-experienced young person accessing a Network's services, and to involve the Networks in the process of preparing the young person towards living with greater independence. We would argue that these Networks play a vital role in providing care-experienced young people with the financial advice and support they need, and we would urge the Committee to examine what support these Networks offer, and the efficacy of such support.

We will be doing more work in the coming months on support for care-experienced young people, and we will share with the Committee our findings and recommendations.



## Return Interviews

When a child goes missing, we must see that as an indication that something is going wrong in his or her life. When they go missing repeatedly, we must see that as a signal that the problem has still not been addressed. Missing episodes can place a child or young person at significant risk of danger, such as child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation, serious violence, or modern slavery. These forms of exploitation, as well as others, may be the cause of the child or young person going missing in the first place.

We can identify these as some of several 'push and pull' factors which lead to missing episodes, as well as repeat missing episodes. A return interview can help to identify potential 'push and pull' factors by providing a child or young person who has been found or has returned from a missing episode an opportunity to share their experience of the missing episode, so as to identify where they were, with whom, and to understand the reasons why they went missing.

Currently, there is too much variability in the provision of return interviews in Wales, with some areas enacting practice and providing support this is better than in other areas. This variability means that children and young people who go missing face inequality in the form and quality of support offered to them after a missing episode. This inequality means that two different children or young people who goes missing will receive a different response and offer of support depending on where they live in Wales.

In recognition of the risks that children and young people face when they go missing, Welsh Government guidance mentions the moment when they return home as potentially being crucial to identifying risk or harm. However, without clear guidance on Return Interviews, this crucial moment can be a lost opportunity.

Although we welcome guidance to address examples of 'push and pull' factors, return interviews play a crucial part in identifying these factors, and to prevent and disrupt them. The opportunity to do so is lost if a systematic approach to return interviews across Wales is not adopted, meaning that children and young people who go missing may experience repeat missing episodes and face the various risks associated with them.

We urge the Committee to scrutinise Welsh Government's current policy on return interviews and the impact the current variation in provision is having on the efficacy in safeguarding young people who go missing.

You can find more information on this in a 2020 joint report published by NYAS and The Children's Society in Welsh [here](#) and in English [here](#).



**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 71**

**Ymateb gan:**

**Response from: Individual, Hazel Turner-Lyons**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

**Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

A priority for the sixth Senedd ought to be responding to the revelations of the *Everyone's Invited* campaign, which highlighted unacceptable levels of abuse and intimidation from boys to girls happening in UK schools (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-politics-57428624>). 91 Welsh schools were named on the site making tackling this an obvious top priority. Access to a good education will be denied to girls if the Welsh Government does not immediately get to grips with this issue. This means girls must be guaranteed privacy in properly sex-segregated spaces wherever they need it, especially in toilets and changing rooms. Too many Welsh schools are responding to legally incorrect advice to have mixed sex-toilets and too many schools are allowing male students to identify as female and have access to girl-only spaces. There is no scientific or legal basis for doing this and knowing how much sexual harassment girls are suffering in schools, it is vital that boundaries are strengthened not weakened at this point in time. Gender non-conforming children who wish to wear any permutation of school uniform should be allowed but use the facilities which correspond to their sex. Anti-bullying policies must be strengthened/enforced to ensure GNC children do not suffer for their choices. Another serious issue fanning the flames of sexual harassment and abuse is boys' access to pornography. According to a 2017 study, the average age that males first saw porn was 13.37 years old. This means that by Year 9, the majority of boys will have seen porn. The same study showed that the younger boys are when they



first watch porn, the more they wish to exert power over girls (<https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/gadgets-and-tech/news/porn-age-first-viewed-young-old-women-relate-playboy-promiscuous-power-exert-a7875481.html>). This is a challenge for schools but much can be done to educate learners and their parents about the effects and dangers of accessing online pornography. Girls' specific needs around their bodies need to be understood and incorporated into school policy, specifically the need for menstrual products and, again, privacy to be able to access the products and change. Girls should not suffer if their families cannot afford to buy products as period poverty can cause girls to miss time from school. Young people are experiencing an epidemic of mental ill-health but there is much schools can do to support them. Keeping young people safe from bullying, sexual harassment and abuse, giving them access to single-sex provisions, menstrual products and keeping them away from harmful sexual imagery and practices is, in my opinion as a parent and experienced youth worker, a very good place to start, especially as children and young people are self-reporting their struggles with these issues.

## **Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

Same as in Theme 1

## **Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

As highlighted in Theme 1 – menstrual health for girls, challenging pornography use and culture for boys, freedom from sexual harassment and abuse, access to single-sex provisions and strengthened/enforced anti-bullying policies and access to mental health support.

## **Thema 4: Plant a phobl ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**

Same as in Theme 1





## CYPE SP 72

Ymateb gan:

**Response from: Individual, Christian Wilton-King**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

### **Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

Schools need to be prioritising the epidemic of sexual harassment in schools towards girls. They need to make it easier and more welcoming for girls to be able to confidentially report any sexual harassment to nominated members of staff/safeguarding team. Recent research on this kind of behaviour in schools has uncovered issues such as girls being 'contacted by up to 11 boys a night asking for nude images'. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-politics-57498128>

Related to the above, there needs to be more guidelines and rules on controlling children's access to mobile devices, which in turn, gives boys access to pornography. The solution to this, is not for external educators to teach about pornography and run sessions on the variety of sexual activity kids could practice (as some organisations like the Proud Trust and BISH UK do), but rather to teach children how to be safe online and how to protect their personal boundaries. Safeguarding should be paramount and having extensive anti-bullying and harassment policies should help to reduce these shocking statistics.

Further to the issue of children's access to internet devices, should be a focus on how to manage online activity in order to improve children's mental health, as it seems to be ever more apparent that children spending copious amounts of time on social media, which propagates unhealthy ideals based on body image etc, is fuelling a mental health crisis.



Children should also be safeguarded from partisan and political ideologies such as queer theory and gender identity ideology. Both the recent Relationships and Sexuality Education, and LGBTQ+ Action Plan consultations have made it abundantly clear that queer theory and gender identity ideology is to be introduced to schools as a matter of fact. This would potentially place many children who would otherwise grow up to be gay, lesbian or bi-sexual, at risk of a form of conversion therapy. This may be even more apparent for children who are simply gender non-conforming.

The most important thing here is for schools to create a learning environment which encourages and allows children to explore their developing identities, with no fear of being influenced either way.

## **Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

As these older children begin to move into adulthood and become more politically motivated and opinionated, social media and other forms of online activity will become more important to them.

Again, a focus on mental health and how access to pornography can seriously harm young people is a must.

Also, as young people are learning how to form their political positions, care should be taken by colleges and universities to protect free speech and enable young people to speak up without fear of being attacked and bullied by peers.

## **Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

Having solid and robust anti-bullying policies is very important here, to ensure children, no matter how they present and whatever they believe, are protected from bullying and harassment. For example, if a girl has come out as a lesbian, she should be allowed to maintain her boundaries and maintain same-sex relationships, with no fear of pressure from males who identify as 'lesbian'.



## **Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**

As in my response to theme 1, a focus on dealing with the epidemic of sexual harassment in schools (and elsewhere) is essential and this can be achieved through programmes designed to teach children about keeping themselves safe online, monitoring their own time spent online and for this 4<sup>th</sup> theme, having workshops for parents and carers, on how to manage their children's access to the internet. This includes a focus on improving mental health prospects for children and young people.

I feel a focus on additional learning needs, including some neurodivergent children who may have no learning difficulties, is very important. Many of these children can be hugely vulnerable and often fall through the net, when it comes to support and safeguarding.

In particular, with regards to the increasing use of queer theory and gender identity ideology in schools, autistic girls (diagnosed or undiagnosed) – who are often gender non-conforming – are at great risk of being viewed as 'gender dysphoric' and are at risk of having their autism 'missed', in favour of being put on an unnecessary and harmful medical pathway. This medical pathway, at its worst, could mean they are placed on puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones and made sterile.



## **Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg ar Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd**

**This response was submitted to the Children, Young People and Education Committee consultation on Sixth Senedd Priorities**

**CYPE SP 73**

**Ymateb gan: Ross Walmsley**

**Response from: Ross Walmsley, Policy and Public Affairs Assistant, NSPCC Wales/Cymru,**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

NSPCC Cymru are calling on the Committee to scrutinise how Welsh Government have enabled babies, children and young people to recover from the many impacts of Covid-19. Children living in homes with domestic abuse, sexual abuse, substance misuse, parental mental health needs or other adversities have experienced increased exposure to harms, compounded by the challenges facing safeguarding professionals to protect them.

### **Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

#### **RSE**

We support Welsh Government's vision to introduce mandatory RSE within the new curriculum, and the commitment to produce additional guidance (the RSE Code and Guidance document) for schools to support inclusive, high-quality RSE. We strongly recommend that the Committee allocates some time in its work programme to monitor the development and implementation of RSE.

There is an important role for the Committee to investigate whether schools are ready to design and deliver the new RSE curriculum. The committee could launch an inquiry that assesses how confident primary and secondary schools feel about co-producing RSE content, including;

- What training and resources are necessary to support them;



- What schools need to be ready for the implementation of the new RSE curriculum in September 2022.
- Once the new curriculum is implemented, we also feel the Committee should focus on whether RSE is meeting the needs of all children and young people, including those who are LGBTQ+.

## **Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

## **Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

### **Child Sexual Abuse (CSA)**

Almost 9% of adults in Wales experienced a form of sexual abuse before the age of 16.<sup>1</sup> It is devastating with both short and long-term effects which can last a lifetime. The lockdowns in response to COVID-19 and subsequent isolation from support heightened the risk of CSA for some children. The NSPCC helpline saw a 15% increase in referrals to Welsh outside agencies in 2020/21, demonstrating a rise in complexity and risk. Currently, children who experience sexual abuse do not always receive the support they need in a timely manner.<sup>3</sup> Readily available, integrated, child centred, specialist sexual abuse services, such as those delivered under a Child House model<sup>4</sup> are crucial to a child's ability to recover from the trauma of CSA.

We welcomed Welsh Government's National Action Plan on Preventing and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse. However, as we enter the final year of the Action Plan, we urge the Committee to consider the gaps still to be addressed and undertake an inquiry into the response to CSA and what a service standard for Wales should look like. This must consider;

- What preventative and early intervention is available?
- Can children access crisis support in a timely manner?
- Are funding arrangements sustainable?
- What building blocks are needed to enable the roll out of the Child House model in Wales?

<sup>1</sup> Estimated number and proportion of adults aged 18 to 74 in Wales who experienced abuse before the age of 16, year ending March 2019 CSEW - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)

<sup>2</sup> Any statistics on child sexual abuse are likely to be a conservative estimate, as it is a hidden crime. Some studies suggest it can take almost eight years to disclose abuse and some children never feel able to tell anybody about it.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.csacentre.org.uk/documents/responding-to-csa-childrens-services-wales/>

<sup>4</sup> [Child House: local partnerships guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/84444/child-house-in-a-box-toolkit-final_v1.pdf)  
[child-house-in-a-box-toolkit-final v1.pdf \(london.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/84444/child-house-in-a-box-toolkit-final_v1.pdf)



As part of the scrutiny of the response to CSA, the Committee should examine Welsh Government commitments to the Child House model, especially in light of the Scottish Government recently committing to ensuring all children have access to a Child House by 2025.

## **Domestic Abuse**

Our priorities for the new term align with the previous Committee's report<sup>5</sup>, to prioritise well-being, highlight children's rights and hear their voices.

Despite the ground-breaking Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Wales Act, slow implementation has seen a gap between the policy intent and the reality on the ground. NSPCC has found that 1 in 5 children have been exposed to domestic abuse<sup>6</sup>. Despite the VAWDASV Act and the Domestic Abuse Act recognising children experiencing domestic abuse, support for children and young people across Wales is inconsistent and mapping of services have demonstrated the urgent need for better funding and resources to meet need. COVID-19 only intensified this; calls to helplines increased<sup>7</sup> during the national lockdowns and specialist services reported increased pressure on already stretched provision.

Our key asks of the new Welsh Government are;

- For the shortfall in service provision for children to be addressed and sustainable funding secured.
- That regional strategies must provide services for children and young people and that in developing strategies, designing services and evaluating the success of interventions, children and young people are consulted.
- That early intervention work is prioritised.

We therefore urge the Committee to spotlight the gap in specialist VAWDASV service provision for children and young people in Wales, especially as we come to understand the impact of the past 18 months on this cohort of children.

## **Poverty**

Whilst the economic impact of the pandemic has hit people across Welsh society, it is the poorest households, and especially those with children, who have been hardest hit. The Bevan Foundation's 'Snapshot of poverty in Winter 2020'<sup>8</sup> showed nearly a quarter of Welsh households have seen their income fall. This will only be compounded by the end of furlough and the removal of the £20 uplift to Universal Credit.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://senedd.wales/media/ixzpwqr5/cr-ld14286-e.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/domestic-abuse/>

<sup>7</sup> The NSPCC Helpline saw 1500 contacts from adults during the national UK lockdown, while Childline delivered over 500 sessions to children worried about domestic abuse.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.bevanfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/A-snapshot-of-poverty-in-winter-2020.pdf>



In our manifesto for the 6<sup>th</sup> Senedd, we welcomed the planned expansion of Flying Start but called for an enhanced service for all parents of 0-4-year old across Wales, as well as training for practitioners on the impact poverty can have on families, so support can be provided in a non-stigmatising way.

We also welcome the planned UBI pilot in Wales, but it is essential the effects of this on children is considered. We echo the End Child Poverty Network's (of which we are a member) submission which asks the committee to undertake an inquiry into child poverty in Wales, taking into account the ECPN 10 point manifesto for the sixth Senedd. The manifesto calls included a renewed and robust strategy to end child poverty.

### **Perinatal Mental Health**

As COVID-19 has heightened the risk of new mothers experiencing perinatal mental health problems<sup>9</sup>, and has delayed progress in improving support for those affected in Wales<sup>10</sup>, it is more important than ever to address gaps in support and ensure that women and their families across Wales have equal access to constant and quality perinatal mental health care. We strongly suggest that the Committee:

- Monitor the recommendations from the perinatal mental health inquiry
- Ensure teams in specialist perinatal mental health services are fully resourced to meet national quality standards
- Scope timelines for the permanent MBU in South Wales, and for a MBU to be accessible for families in North Wales. Provision of MBU should cater for Welsh speakers so they can feel confident in accessing this vital service.
- Investigate how the pandemic has impacted perinatal mental health and the services that support families in Wales.

### **Infant Mental Health**

An infant's mental health is vitally important because it lays the foundations for all future health and wellbeing<sup>11</sup>. While the evidence is clear that investing in the early

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<sup>9</sup> See: Brophy S, Todd C, Toomey S. (2020) Early findings from first 100+women in Born in Wales <https://ncphwr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Born-In-Wales-Newsletter-Sep2020-1.pdf>; Brophy S, Todd C, Toomey S. (2020) Early findings from first 200+women in Born in Wales Newsletter 2: <https://ncphwr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Born-in-Wales-Newsletter-Dec-2020.pdf>; Davenport, M.H., Meyer, S., Meah, V. L., Strynadka, M.C and Khurana, R (2020) Moms Are Not OK: COVID-19 and Maternal Mental Health. *Frontiers in Global Women's Health*. 1 (1): 1-6; Hessami K, Romanelli C, Chiurazzi M, Cozzolino M. (2020) COVID-19 pandemic and maternal mental health: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *J Matern Fetal Neonatal Med*. Nov 1:1-8; Papworth, P., Harris, A., Durcan, G., Wilton, J and Sinclair, C (2021) Maternal mental health during a pandemic: A rapid evidence review of Covid-19's impact. Centre for Mental Health and Maternal Mental Health Alliance; Saunders, B and Hogg, S (2020) Babies in Lockdown: listening to parents to build back better. Best Beginnings, Home-Start UK, and the Parent-Infant Foundation; Thapa, S. B., Mainali, A., Schwank, S. E and Acharya, G (2020) Maternal mental health in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. *Acta Obstet Gynecol Scand*. 99 (7): 817-818

<sup>10</sup> See: [Fich cyf \(senedd.wales\)](https://www.senedd.wales)

<sup>11</sup> National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. (2004). Young children develop in an environment of relationships. Working Paper No. 1. Retrieved from <http://www.developingchild.net>



years is the most efficient and cost-effective way of transforming outcomes for children, the specific emotional developmental needs of babies often go unrecognised and there is very little specialist provision to support this.

We would like to see the Committee:

- Carry out an inquiry into the support that is available for babies and their families in the first 1000 days, including mapping out existing services that support parent-infant relationships across local authorities and Welsh health boards.
- Mapping children's social care and health workforce competencies around infant mental health.
- Articulate its commitment to recognising the specific emotional and developmental needs of babies and infants, by the language it uses around children's mental health.
- Use the term babies/infants, children and young people in its work and communications where appropriate.

In response to the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory studies 'Born into care'<sup>12</sup> that found that between 2015 and 2018 the rate of newborns entering care doubled to 83 cases per 10,000 live births in Wales, we would like the Committee to scrutinise the pre-birth support offered to vulnerable parents and how effective the joint working is between social care and health in delivering this support.

#### **Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people Threat to Children**

The internet is an extremely valuable tool for children but the scale and complexity of the online threat is growing. Existing problems have been intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic:<sup>13</sup>

- Online grooming crimes increased by around 70% in the last three years to an all-time high<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> [Born into care Wales - main report English final.pdf \(cfj-lancaster.org.uk\)](#)

<sup>13</sup> Europol (2020) Catching the virus: cybercrime, disinformation and the Covid-19 pandemic. Lyon: Europol

<sup>14</sup> The true scale of this crisis is likely higher as Facebook tech failures halved the removal of abuse material during the pandemic. The NSPCC asked all 43 territorial police forces in England and Wales the number of recorded offences of Sexual Communication with a Child between April 1<sup>st</sup> 2020 and March 31<sup>st</sup> 2021, and the platform used to commit these crimes. All 43 forces responded and the data provided showed there were 5,464 offences. However, we queried Gwent Police's data due to inconsistencies, we are in the process of verifying this with Gwent and therefore their figures were not included in the report. Therefore, 42 police forces reported 5,441 recorded offences in 2020/21. We will send Wales specific figures when they are released.





Social networks create new opportunities to initiate, maintain and escalate online child abuse, exacerbated by plans for [end-to-end encryption](#). Platforms haven't invested in or prioritised child safeguarding, treating it as an optional extra. This leaves children exposed to risks including:

- Production and distribution of child abuse images;
- Harm of exposure to inappropriate content;
- Online grooming.

UK-wide regulation and National prevention efforts must work in tandem. The Committee should scrutinise to ensure Welsh Government is pressing for legislation, within the Online Safety Bill, to put child protection front and centre and to deliver tougher measures to identify and disrupt abuse in line with our '[six tests for success](#)'.

The scale of the threat means that prevention efforts must be reviewed and redoubled.<sup>15</sup> Strong and comprehensive National Online Safety Action Plans are crucial to coordinate prevention and complement UK Legislation. The Committee should recommend a Welsh Government Online Safety Plan exclusively focused on children and young people that connects all partners<sup>16</sup> in a pan-Wales protection and prevention approach.

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<sup>15</sup> More information about the [NSPCC's Child Safety Online prevention work](#) including our [Report Remove](#) tool.

<sup>16</sup> This should foster a cross-sector approach spanning: health, education, law enforcement, social services, youth services, education, industry and the third sector.



## USE OF YOUR INFORMATION

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**6. We have stated our intention to engage meaningfully with children and young people, in tailored and appropriate ways, in the autumn. However, if you are responding using this proforma and are under 13 years old, we will only be able to accept your response if your parent or guardian has confirmed that you can participate.** They can do this by sending us an email to [SeneddChildren@senedd.wales](mailto:SeneddChildren@senedd.wales).

**Are you under 13 years old?**

I am under 13 years old	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am 13 or over	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**7. Please choose one of the following options to confirm whether you would prefer that your name is not published alongside your evidence.**

We will not publish the names of people under the age of 18.

I am aged 18 or over and I am content for you to publish my name alongside my evidence	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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**8. Please choose one of the following options to confirm whether you have agreement from any third parties referred to in your evidence that you can share information that may be used to identify them and that they understand that it may be published.**

I confirm that any third party I have referred to in my evidence has agreed that I can share information that may be used to identify them, and that they understand that it may be published.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I do not have the agreement of one or more of the third parties I have referred to in my evidence.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have not referred to any third parties in my evidence.	<input type="checkbox"/>



**This response was submitted to the Children, Young People and Education Committee consultation on Sixth Senedd Priorities**

**CYPE SP 74**

**Ymateb gan: Joe Rossiter**

**Response from: Joe Rossiter, Policy and Campaigns Officer, Stonewall Cymru**

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### **Theme 1: School-age education**

The Committee should pledge to launch an inquiry on schools' readiness to teach LGBTQ+ inclusive Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in a holistic manner, across all Areas of Learning and Experience whilst being underpinned by a whole school approach. We have yet to see adequate evidence that the workforce is trained, knowledgeable and, crucially, confident enough in delivering fit-for-purpose RSE in Wales. Additionally, we have seen no concrete plans from Welsh Government to meet this need for professional learning on RSE specifically. Whilst research on professionals' confidence to deliver RSE in Wales has yet to be undertaken, such research would be of great value. [NSPCC research](#) conducted alongside NEU (National Education Union) in England found that half of teachers lacked confidence to teach compulsory RSE lessons. Here in Wales, the picture is less clear, as teachers have not been asked how comfortable they feel in delivering RSE and the new curriculum more widely. We think it is vitally important that this inquiry takes place, to get ahead of the likely challenges faced during implementation before they happen and to provide evidence for where government resources are best targeted to ensure that all children in Wales receive high-quality LGBTQ+ inclusive RSE. Following this inquiry it should be clearer what intervention is needed by the Welsh Government to ensure that the implementation is of a safe and high standard. The findings should indicate what level of provision is needed from Welsh Government, some provisions might include; ringfenced targeted funding on RSE and specific support in light of new areas being covered such as violence against women and domestic abuse, that should sit alongside the new curriculum content.

During the second half of the Committee's tenure in this Senedd, the Committee should seek the views of young people on the effectiveness of RSE delivery and LGBTQ+ inclusion across the curriculum. Such outreach should act to uplift the voices of LGBTQ+ children and young people to ensure they are seen and heard in these conversations.

In addition to this, the Committee should focus on scrutinising the roll-out of the new curriculum more broadly, focussing on the delivery of new curricula in comparison to its aspirations. Within this we feel that this exercise should take a particular focus on the embedding of LGBTQ+ inclusive RSE and relevant professional learning processes. With the Committee running for the next five



years this scrutiny will be vital in ensuring that the new curriculum acts as imagined. We believe the Committee sit in a strong position to lead on this work.

Safeguarding and bullying in education environments should also be an issue of concern for the Committee. [Stonewall Cymru's School Report](#) (2017) highlighted how LGBTQ+ learners in Wales are all too often bullied for their LGBTQ+ identities, hear homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language and, equally important, do not feel confident that teachers will intervene when incidents take place. The study found that three in five LGBTQ+ pupils in Wales felt that there was not an adult in school they could talk to about being LGBTQ+. It is very likely that this is worse for some LGBTQ+ young people as [evidence](#) shows that LGBTQ+ people of faith, for example, are less likely to be open about their identity to family members. It is vital that all LGBTQ+ children and young people, as well as practitioners are adequately supported in identifying the needs and issues LGBTQ+ people can experience. In this regard, we feel that this is a vital issue facing young people in school-age education and one that the Committee could spend some of its valuable time on considering.

## **Theme 2: Further and higher education**

In light of an increase in hostility towards trans inclusion at some Welsh Universities, it is vital that protection for all students, including trans and non-binary students, is on the agenda of the Committee. Universities and places of further education should be safe spaces for all and this status is currently being brought into question in Wales, as more and more anecdotal evidence is presented by students and staff at higher education institutions. [Research](#) suggests that LGB and especially trans students in Britain face multiple disadvantages and discriminations in universities, from negative comments from staff and students alike and a lack of confidence in reporting homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying to university staff. Higher and further education thus have a long way to go before they are safe spaces for all.

## **Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

On Health and well-being, the Committee should understandably focus on the impact of the pandemic on the mental health and well-being of young people. Within this, it is vital that the Committee attempt to understand the experiences of LGBTQ+ children and young people. [Research suggests](#) that poor mental health is alarmingly high amongst LGBTQ+ young people in Wales, with trans young people at particular risk. LGBTQ+ young people in Wales also reported disproportionate levels of self-harm and suicidal thoughts. This situation is likely to have been



exacerbated by the pandemic, with recent [research by Just Like Us](#) highlighting the disproportionate mental health impact of the pandemic on LGBTQ+ young people, with feelings of loneliness and suicidal thoughts being [prevalent](#). It is therefore vital that any examination of the mental health of children and young people must consider the distinct experiences of LGBTQ+ young people as well as the intersection of these identities and orientations with other marginalised groups, e.g. LGBTQ+ Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people, LGBTQ+ disabled people etc.

The Committee should work with the Health and Social Care Committee to seek to understand the need for a Welsh Gender Service for children and young people in Wales. In this regard the Committee is in a good place to seek to understand the need for such a service from the perspective of children and young people in Wales, which can inform the work of the Health and Social Care Committee as well as Welsh Government.

More broadly, it is important that when analysing any health or social care issue that impacts children and young people that the experiences of LGBTQ+ youth are given space to provide their input and experiences. This is the only means through which equitable outcomes will be achieved in policy interventions. Using the Committee's platform to uplift marginalised young people's voices is a meaningful and powerful use of Committee's time and could have a tangible impact on its ability to scrutinise government.

#### **Theme 4: Children and young people**

Broadly speaking, a priority for the Committee should, in all of its work, seek to uplift the experiences and voices of children in Wales, whilst attempting to reflect the experiences of all children and young people, especially including those from marginalised identities. The Committee should support LGBTQ+ children to be safe, seen and heard by being cognisant of their needs, seeking to hear from them and by understanding that LGBTQ+ inclusion is vital for wellbeing and mental health for all.

The Committee could consider children and young people who are not in education, employment or training and means through which assistance can be given to support those individuals. Within this it is important to identify groups of people who experience disproportionate levels of exclusion in these environments. Recent [research](#) found that anti-LGBTQ+ bullying, lack of support at home or visible role models continues to have a devastating impact on LGBTQ+ young people's mental health, leading many to become shut out of higher education and work. With far too many LGBTQ+ young people in Britain falling through the gaps in current support services, the Committee should consider how minoritised young people can best be supported in Wales.



The Committee could use its time to support the youth work sector in its efforts to upskill on all matters of equality, diversity and inclusion. This could come in the form of scrutinising the Welsh Government's response to the [Interim Youth Work Board's Recommendations](#). It is vitally important that the youth work sector in Wales, both voluntary and statutory, is equipped to support the needs of LGBTQ+ young people.



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**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 75**

**Ymateb gan:**

**Response from: Lecturer, School of Psychology Cardiff University**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

**Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

**Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

**Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

**Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**

Play is a vital ingredient for happy and healthy childhoods. For young children growing up in the COVID-19 pandemic, their social experiences have been drastically transformed in ways which are likely to affect their social development. According to a survey of 23,700 children and young people between the ages of 3 and 18 in Wales, the biggest impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been "not being able to spend time with friends" (Children's Commissioner for Wales, 2021). As we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic and social restrictions, children's opportunities to play with other children are vital to their recovery following a long period of uncertainty and confusion.





Research highlights the vital importance of play with other children for development and mental health. Our research lab in the Cardiff University Centre for Human Developmental Science is currently running projects investigating the importance of play in 5-to-8-year-old children living in the UK. Particularly, we are interested in how children's sharing of humour is one of the building blocks of warm and playful relationships that serves important cognitive, emotional, and social functions. In a recent study of children living in Wales, we found that children's humour relates to their tendency to engage in pretend play and ability to understand the thoughts and feelings of others. We are now running a major study, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (PI Dr Amy L. Paine, Cardiff University School of Psychology), to investigate how humour and play might act as a protective factor for child wellbeing.

More than ever, the COVID-19 pandemic has created a need to emphasise the importance of playful childhoods, and to give children opportunities to experience humour, silliness, and joy in the face of an uncertain and confusing situation. It is recommended that a top priority should be the recognition and support of children's development by prioritising play to help Wales build back better following the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions. This should be achieved by ensuring that every child is given the opportunity, freedom, and a safe and quality environment to play with others.

#### **Evidence from Research:**

Paine, A. L., Hashmi, S., Howe, N., Johnson, N., Scott, M., & Hay, D. F. (Under Review). "A pirate goes nee-nor-nee-nor!" Humor with siblings in middle childhood: A window to social understanding?

Hashmi, S., Gerson, S., A., Paine, A. L., Vanderwert, R. E. (2021). Doll play prompts social thinking and social talking: Representations of internal state language in the brain. *Developmental Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/desc.13163>

Hashmi, S., Paine, A. L., & Hay, D. F. (2021). Seven-year-olds' references to internal states in virtual and non-virtual contexts of play. *Infant and Child Development*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/icd.2223>

Paine, A. L., Karajian, G., Hashmi, S., Persram, R. J., & Howe, N. (2020). "Where's your bum brain?" Humour, social understanding, and sibling relationship quality in childhood. *Social Development*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/sode.12488>

Paine, A. L., Howe, N., Karajian, G., Hay, D. F., & DeHart, G. (2019). "H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, PEE! Get it? Pee!" Siblings' shared humour in childhood. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjdp.12277>



**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chwched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 76**

**Ymateb gan: Robert Sage, Athletau Cymru**

**Response from: Robert Sage, Welsh Athletics**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chwched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

**Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

**Issue:** Increasing the amount of physical activity during the school day and reducing the amount of time spent being sedentary.

**Solutions:**

1. extending the school day to allow more time for extra-curricular physical activity – provision of physical literacy focused after school activity in primary schools and led social running groups for secondary pupils (14+).
2. advocating for adoption of The Daily Mile in all primary schools in Wales.

**Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

**Issue:** access to professional/elite coaching support and elite facilities at HE&FE institutes

**Solutions:**

1. partnership Investment in facilities & coaches
2. advocacy to encourage greater community partnerships with local athletics/sports clubs to allow access to facilities.



**Issue:** mass participation in health enhancing physical activity.

**Solutions:**

1. Investment in social running groups at all HE&FE institutes  
Investment in safe active routes to/from and around all HE&FE institutes and related residential areas.

**Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

**Issue:** Equal access to facilities and participation opportunities for C&YP across all 22 LA areas.

**Solutions:**

1. Increase the provision of Junior parkrun opportunities across Wales
2. All children and young people have modern , accessible athletics facilities available within a reasonable journey distance/time.

**Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**

[as above in themes 1,2, & 3]



**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 77**

**Ymateb gan:**

**Response from: Ceredigion Youth Service and Ceredigion's Carers Unit**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

Ceredigion County Council Porth Cymorth Cynnar: This is a combined response on behalf of Ceredigion Youth Service and Ceredigion's Carers Unit. Responses under each theme are in two parts, firstly representing Ceredigion Youth Service advocating on behalf of their Youth Council and secondly the voice of professionals representing the Young Carers Service, which forms part of Ceredigion's Carers Unit.

**Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

**Ceredigion Youth Service: New National Curriculum for Wales and it's role to educate pupils around healthy relationships and sexuality**

Following recent Ofsted research and analysis: Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges (10 June 2021); concerns were raised and discussed by Ceredigion Youth Council members regarding how schools could address the topic of inappropriate sexual behaviour between pupils. Youth Council members firmly believed that the new curriculum for Wales (being introduced from September 2022) presents an important opportunity to educate young people about this topic. Where it is recognised that RSE is one of the cross cutting themes for the new curriculum; the Ceredigion Youth Council would support that RSE is made a mandatory module within the new curriculum.



Therefore, we would support Welsh Governments proposals that all schools will have a duty to provide Relationship and Sexuality Education as part of the new curriculum for Wales. A priority should be to ensure that the guidance being proposed for schools provides a holistic and consistent approach to RSE in all schools in Wales; with consideration to the potential positive role of school based youth workers in supporting RSE delivery through thematic workshops and PSHE sessions.

### **Young Carers Service:**

Young Carers (YC's) want increased awareness & understanding amongst primary and secondary school staff of the additional responsibilities that YC's carry out and the impact that these can have on their educational attainment.

There is a plethora of tools and resources made available to schools, however, take up of these is limited.

The Ceredigion Carers Unit worked with Welsh Government during the pandemic to create a Young Carers ID (YCID) card for Young Carers aged up to 18. It was launched in October 2020 ([Young Carer ID Card - Ceredigion County Council](#)).

### **How can the committee address them?**

- Strengthen existing requirements on educational institutions to make staff more aware of the challenges faced by Young carers to enable YC's to reach their full potential.
- YC's, as a hidden/hard to reach group, to be named *explicitly* within the new curriculum of Wales – either in diversity or RSE.
- Ensure that school staff to be aware of the YCID card scheme in their local authority area and to recognise it when shown by YC's in schools.

## **Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

### **Ceredigion Youth Service: Free University for Welsh Students**

The topic of free university for Welsh students was seen as one priority for Ceredigion Youth Council in 2021. Where it was recognised that student fees supports Universities to offer a comprehensive undergraduate and post graduate programmes; it was mainly agreed by members that fees excluded a number of young people from all backgrounds from aspiring to study in higher education.

Youth Council members also discussed that Universities fees were also seen as a deterrent for some young people due to the level of debt studying at University would bring. This was amplified with the global pandemic and the question of 'value



for money' due to the online or blended approach to learning and the apparent decrease in the 'student life' experience.

Therefore, we would welcome a new review by Welsh Government regarding the viability of free university for Welsh Students.

### **Young Carers Service:**

Young Carers are asking for increased awareness & understanding amongst FE and HE staff of the additional responsibilities that Young Carers carry out and the impact that those extra responsibilities can have on their educational attainment.

The Ceredigion Carers Unit worked during the pandemic to create an Adult Carers ID card ([Ceredigion Carer Card - Ceredigion County Council](#)) for adult Carers 18+.

### **How can the committee address them?**

- Work with Higher Education Funding Council for Wales and it's FE equivalent to influence policy within HE and FE institutions across Wales to improve identification of YC's across all staff (not just those with welfare/pastoral responsibilities) in order to ensure YC's are supported to reach their full potential.
- Ensure that FE/HE staff to be aware of any Carer ID card scheme in their local authority area and to recognise it when shown by Young Adult and Student Carers.

## **Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

### **Ceredigion Youth Service – Young People's Mental Health**

Young people's mental health and access to support services in schools and the community has been a reoccurring discussion point for the Ceredigion Youth Council. Youth Council members have expressed their concerns regarding how the pandemic will have a negative impact on youth mental health in the present and in the future. With the addition of school closures, online learning (2020) and lack of clarity regarding exams in 2022; this has amplified the need for appropriate levels of mental health support for young people both in schools and their community. The overall view of youth council members is that greater provisions need to be put in place with supporting young people's mental health.

Seemingly supporting this view is a report that is already in the public domain that followed the Children's commissioner for Wales Office: Coronavirus and Me 2 Survey. The report highlights how from those respondents aged 12 – 18; how feeling happy 'most of the time' had reduced from 50% in May 2020 to 39% in January 2021. Other



negative trends found in the results highlighted that feeling worried 'most of the time' had increased from 14% of respondents in May 2020 to 20% in January 2021.

Therefore, we would welcome as a priority a national policy that ensures that school pupils/young people have access to appropriate mental health support services in both school and their community; along with a national campaign that would help to remove the stigma around young people's mental health.

### **Young Carers Service:**

Young Carers can present as hesitant to progress onto FE and HE *because* of their caring responsibilities. They are often unaware that social care can potentially support them to put things in place for the cared for person to enable them to feel confident enough to commit to FE/HE study or move away to access those educational opportunities.

### **How can the committee address them?**

- Secondary schools, school careers services, social care and FE/HE institutions to work together more closely to raise awareness of ways in which YC's can be supported to follow their desire to go into FE or HE *at the point in which they are having those next steps conversations in schools*. We would like the committee to consider how they could strengthen this.

Provision of more more targeted/ring fenced funding from Welsh Government specifically for YC's. This would be to ensure that Young Carers service capacity can be strengthened to work with Young Carers (and all those partners listed above) across those transitional points when YC's are making such important decisions.

## **Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**

### **Ceredigion Youth Service: Supporting rural Children and Young People as a result of the Global Pandemic**

It is apparent that the global pandemic has had a significant impact on Children and Young People across Wales and in Ceredigion. As a result, a number of local concerns have been raised by Ceredigion Youth Council regarding the long term impact of school closures on pupil's education and also, the impact on health and wellbeing due to a decrease in opportunities for social interaction and access to leisure activities, as a result of national lockdowns. This seemingly amplified for children and young people living in rural isolation and especially at times of school closures.



The Welsh index of Multiple Deprivation (2019) highlights the Service domain deprivation experienced by Ceredigion citizens due to the nature of its rural setting, (WIMD (2019) highlights that 50% of the LSOA's in Ceredigion ranked within the most deprived 10% ranks 1 – 191); services which includes access to superfast broadband or good digital connectivity.

As a result, we would call on Welsh Government to consider measures that removes barriers for rural children and young people to participate in meaningful activities. Measures such as free public transport schemes or subsidised access to cultural and leisure activities will empower young people to re-engage in meaningful opportunities. Therefore, promoting healthier lifestyles and improving the health and wellbeing of children and young people.

Further to this; the pandemic has highlighted the need for good digital connectivity in order to engage in online learning, youth support services or organised youth activities/platforms such as the Ceredigion Youth Council forum. Poor digital connectivity does put children and young people at a disadvantage regardless of the devices available to them. Therefore, prioritising this issue of improving rural digital connectivity would be seen as a priority for young people in a rural County such as Ceredigion.





This response was submitted to the Children, Young People and Education Committee consultation on Sixth Senedd Priorities

## CYPE SP 78

Ymateb gan: Ruth Coombs

Response from: Ruth Coombs, Head of Wales, Equality and Human Rights Commission

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### Theme 1: School-age education

#### 1.1 Restraint in Schools

Following a formal inquiry under Section 16 of the Equality Act 2006, the Equality and Human Rights Commission recently published a report '[Restraint in Schools Inquiry: using meaningful data to protect children's rights](#)'.

Our inquiry found that, without a standardised system for the monitoring and reporting of restraint, a significant proportion of schools are not being supported with the basic safeguards needed to protect children. Our recommendation is that the use of restraint in schools should be monitored, recorded and analysed with the same rigour as exclusions.

Schools face the challenging task of developing their own recording and monitoring practices for restraint. While most schools are doing their best, our inquiry found that across primary, secondary and special needs schools, restraint policies and the information gathered about its use vary from school to school. Some schools do not have policies in place to ensure the safeguarding of pupils; this includes not having policies that cover the recording of all incidences of restraint, the analysis of restraint records and the recording of any adverse impacts.

A data-informed approach to restraint is key to managing restrictive interventions effectively. We found that almost half of the schools that analyse restraint data had put in place new or revised de-escalation practices. Three in ten reported that it helped them to reduce their use of restraint, either with an individual or with a group of pupils. We spoke to schools that use data-informed practices to prevent low-level disruption or 'challenging behaviours' from escalating into crises, which are illustrated by our case studies of best practice.

Under the public sector equality duty (PSED), schools are required to assess the impact of their policies and practices on people with protected characteristics, however our inquiry found that nearly three in ten schools (29%) do not have a policy that covers the analysis of incidents involving their use of restraint. Without sufficient data, schools cannot identify whether they use restraint disproportionately on certain groups, such as disabled children and children from ethnic minority backgrounds, and take mitigating actions. This leaves them at risk of not meeting their legal requirements under the PSED.

Furthermore, without common standards and national data, it is difficult for Estyn to consider and use relevant available restraint data to identify trends, inform priorities and support school inspection and evaluation.

To address this, [we made a series of recommendations for the UK and Welsh Governments, which can be viewed here](#)



The Commission's formal inquiry powers require that organisations to which recommendations are directed must have due regard to those recommendations.

The CYPE Committee may wish to focus on the use of restraint in schools as a priority for example by conducting its own inquiry.

### **1.2 Implementation of the new Curriculum for Wales – Human Rights Education**

We recently published research into Human Rights Education (HRE), [“Respect, equality, participation: exploring human rights education in Great Britain.”](#) The report considers what good practice in HRE looks like, how it is benefiting learners and includes Welsh case studies. We are keen that HRE is embedded within the implementation of the new Curriculum for Wales and would welcome the opportunity to work with the CYPE Committee and the Welsh Government in sharing this research and learning with all schools and relevant stakeholders throughout Wales. It will also be important that opportunities to reinforce a HRE approach in Codes and Guidance are taken by the Welsh Government.

Our human rights tracker contains [an assessment of Welsh Government's progress on Human rights education, training and awareness raising](#). The Commission has allocated a progress assessment of 'limited progress' meaning here have been legal or policy changes to improve human rights protections but very limited evidence of sustained improvements in the enjoyment of human rights on this issue.

### **1.3 Implementation of the new Curriculum for Wales – Post-implementation Review**

In [our consultation response to the CYPE Committee on the Curriculum and Assessment \(Wales\) Bill](#) we highlighted that the equality considerations and implications across protected characteristics must be embedded into all of the plans to undertake a post-implementation review. This will ensure the Welsh Government are able to fully understand and assess the impact on children and young people with protected characteristics.

We highlighted the need to gather, disaggregate, use and embed equality related evidence and to take an intersectional approach as a part of the PSED collecting and using relevant equality information. This is critical in meeting the general and specific duties and essential to making informed and effective decisions.

The CYPE Committee may wish to scrutinise The Welsh Government's plans for any post-implementation review.

### **1.4 School exclusions**

If Wales is to make sure that every child is able to fulfil their potential, then it is vital that we understand why an increasing number of children are experiencing exclusions or are being educated otherwise than at school (EOTAS) and why certain groups are overrepresented.

We raised the over-representation of certain groups in national statistics on exclusions in our state of the nation report – Is Wales Fairer? 2018. The consequences of formal exclusion from school, whether temporary or permanent, can be very serious. The high exclusion rate of pupils eligible for free schools meals has a negative impact on their attainment. Understanding and addressing the disproportionate use of exclusions experienced by certain groups of children, such as pupils eligible for free school meals and pupils with Additional Learning Needs is necessary, when considering education other than at school. This must be understood to ensure the legislation supports all pupils including those in EOTAS.



Our human rights tracker contains [our assessment of Welsh Government's progress on school exclusions and managing 'challenging behaviour'](#). We have allocated a progress assessment of 'no progress' meaning there have been no legal or policy changes to improve human rights protections in relation to this issue, and very limited evidence of progress in the enjoyment of these rights.

### **1.5 Addressing the impact of the pandemic on educational inequality**

We are concerned that during the pandemic, existing inequalities in education have deepened with potentially severe and long-lasting impact on young people, reversing the progress we had observed and increasing persistent inequalities for the most disadvantaged. Given the economic impact of the pandemic, increasing levels of poverty may further affect education attainment and long-term prospects.

Our report '[How coronavirus has affected equality and human rights](#)' highlights the disproportionate impact that pandemic response measures have had on the education of already disadvantaged learners. Inequalities in the home-learning environment and changes to grading systems risk exacerbating existing inequalities in education, leading to a disproportionately severe impact on some groups including, Black pupils, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils, pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) and those who are socioeconomically disadvantaged.

Our human rights tracker contains [an assessment of Welsh Government's progress on educational attainment](#). We have allocated a progress assessment of 'no progress.' Performance has worsened in certain areas and evidence of inequalities for different ethnic groups and children with additional learning needs persists. No improvement has been made in the attainment gap between socio-economically disadvantaged and other children, despite additional government funding. While it is too early to assess the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, there are concerns that existing attainment inequalities are likely to widen.

The CYPE Committee may wish to prioritise an examination of how the pandemic has affected equality and human rights in education and of the action the Welsh Government is taking to identify and address this impact including ensuring the needs of pupils with ALN are met.

## **Theme 2: Further and higher education**

### **2.1 Embedding equality and human rights into Tertiary Education and Research**

The CYPE Committee may wish to scrutinise the new Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Bill and new Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (CTER) to ensure that equality and human rights considerations and principles are at the heart of both the new legislation and Commission and that promoting equality, eliminating discrimination and fostering good relations are at the forefront of emerging priorities.

## **Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

### **3.1 A rights-based approach to preventing sexual harassment in schools**



We welcome the introduction of relationships and sexuality education (RSE) which requires schools to teach pupils about respectful relationships, consent, and damaging stereotypes (including in relation to sex, gender and sexual orientation) as a statutory part of the new curriculum for all education settings..

We would like to offer our support in providing evidence of effective approaches to teaching children about healthy relationships. The Commission has produced a position paper based on our own research and on evidence of international best practice, which suggests that a rights-based approach to implementing RSE can help schools prevent and tackle sexual harassment. We would be happy to share this paper with Committee members.

We recommend that Welsh Government should prioritise a preventative approach to sexual harassment in schools by equipping children and young people with knowledge and understanding of human rights. This should include:

- Ensuring that its forthcoming RSE statutory guidance and code, and other strategies and products, support schools and colleges to shape their RSE curriculum in line with a rights-based approach, including by drawing on relevant [Council of Europe](#) and [United Nations](#) resources.
- Making human rights education, including knowledge and understanding of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), a mandatory part of all teacher training and continued professional development. This should focus on supporting children to understand that sexual harassment is a form of discrimination and a human rights violation, and explaining what they can do to challenge it.

[Research the EHRC carried out with schools in Wales, England and Scotland highlights the benefits of a rights-based approach to education.](#) Implementing the RSE curriculum in line with these principles may be an effective way for schools to prevent and tackle sexual harassment. Moreover, the Welsh Government has a legal obligation under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) to support schools to adopt a rights-based approach to education.<sup>1</sup> By encouraging teachers and children to respect and realise each other's rights, a rights-based approach is also consistent with the obligations of schools under the Public Sector Equality Duty.<sup>2</sup>

We ask that the Committee highlight this evidence when scrutinising implementation of the Curriculum for Wales 2022, including the forthcoming statutory guidance, codes and wider programme of support aimed at helping teachers to deliver RSE more effectively.

Given that The Welsh Government have [recently announced a review into culture and processes in response to reports of sexual harassment and abuse in schools](#), there has never been a more appropriate time to prioritise effective approaches to teaching children and young people about healthy relationships.

## Theme 4: Children and young people

### 4.1 Upholding Children's Rights in Wales

<sup>1</sup> Article 29 of the CRC sets out the development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms as one of the purposes of education. Article 42 requires governments to ensure that all children and adults know about the CRC and its contents.

<sup>2</sup> Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. The PSED obliges schools in receipt of public funding to give due consideration to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.



In October 2020 [we submitted evidence to the United Nations \(UN\) Committee on the Rights of the Child](#). Our submission expressed significant concerns about how the pandemic is affecting children's rights, their wellbeing and their future prospects. We highlighted concerns about growing levels of child poverty, mental health concerns and widening educational attainment gaps. The report provided the Welsh Government with an extensive set of recommendations to protect and enhance children's rights.

We would also like to draw the Committee's attention to [our submission and recommendations made during the previous Committee's review of Children's Rights in Wales](#), which include strengthening the implementation of the Measure through developing outcome-focused objectives and making children's rights (and other UN treaty rights) legally enforceable. We encourage the Committee to follow up on Welsh Government's progress on delivering the Committee's recommendations.

## Other sources of information the Committee may wish to consider

### Human Rights Tracker

Our [human rights tracker](#) is the UK's first tool monitoring human rights compliance.

It is a searchable online tool to track how well the Welsh and UK Governments are putting its human rights obligations into practice and contains all of the most recent recommendations made to the UK by the UN treaty bodies and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR).

The Committee can use the tracker to:

- Review the progress the [Welsh & UK governments](#) have made towards fulfilling their international human rights obligations.
- Search by Wales and UK so you can see which government is responsible for implementing the recommendations.
- Find out what the UN has said about a particular human rights issue (such as education, living standards or work) or population group (such as disabled people or children) in the UK.
- Find dedicated pages on each of the UN human rights treaties the UK has agreed to follow, and on the UPR process.

### **EHRC, The Impact of Legal Integration of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Wales – Hoffman/O'Neill**

In 2018 the Equality and Human Rights Commission [commissioned research on the impact of the Rights of Children and Young Persons \(Wales\) Measure 2011](#) (the 'Measure'), which is Wales-only legislation integrating the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (the 'Convention') into Welsh law. The research assesses the impact of the Measure and how it has made a difference to children's rights in Wales. It concludes that the Measure has integrated the Convention in Welsh law and introduced a number of mechanisms to strengthen accountability for children's rights in policy in Wales. However, its potential contribution to strengthening Ministerial accountability for policy decisions has yet to be fully realised.



**This response was submitted to the Children, Young People and Education Committee consultation on Sixth Senedd Priorities**

**CYPE SP 79**

**Ymateb gan:**

**Response from: Dr Kirsten Jones, Policy Officer (Wales), Natspec**

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**Theme 1: School-age education**

Natspec's vision is that all young people with learning difficulties and disabilities can access quality education and training which meets their individual needs and supports their aspirations for skills, work, and life.

In terms of school-age education, our priorities for the CYPE Committee focus on the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 and its role in overseeing the implementation of the reforms. The COVID-19 pandemic leaves the sixth Senedd facing unprecedented challenges and the CYPE Committee has a crucial role to play in ensuring the intentions of the Act are realised. Overall, we welcome the introduction of the new system, but believe the reforms present a real danger that children with complex additional learning needs (ALN) may not be given sufficient information and encouragement to pursue further education and training opportunities. It follows that in-school support for post-16 planning will be critical to individuals' life chances.

The Additional Learning Needs (ALN) code that accompanies the Act is ambiguous on how or if, the post-school education and training needs of young people with complex ALN should be met. Without intervention and support for local authorities, finance-driven rather than person-centred decision making is inevitable.

Ways the CYPE Committee may address the issues raised include working with Welsh Government to:

- ensure adequate support and accountability measures are in place so no child is discriminated against by the nature of their additional learning needs
- ensure children, young people and their parents or carers are given access to timely and sufficient information on post-16 options and the rights afforded them within the ALNET Act
- introduce measures for monitoring the efficacy of the ALN code in supporting the aims of the ALNET Act.



## Theme 2: Further and higher education

We believe that equity of opportunity and improving transparency on the quality of further education provision for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities across Wales should be priorities for the CYPE Committee.

Welsh Government currently use discretionary powers to provide further education and training opportunities for young people with complex ALN who have stayed in special schools until they are 19 years old. Typically, these young people either progress to a regional further education institution (FEI) or a specialist further education college where they access an adult-orientated skills-based curriculum to best prepare them for post-college adult living. For those young people whose education and training needs cannot be met by a regional FEI, the new legislation does not explicitly uphold the maintenance of the discretionary powers currently used to facilitate placements at specialist further education colleges. We believe this will result in a postcode lottery of post-school provision for young people with the most complex ALN. As the pandemic continues to exacerbate existing inequalities, a commitment to safeguarding equitable access to further education is now urgently needed.

The CYPE Committee should consider the role it can play in increasing parity and transparency in the way the quality of post-school provision for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities is assessed and reported. Wales' specialist further education colleges are fully monitored by Estyn through annual visits and the scrutiny of a full inspection team in line with inspection cycles. All resulting judgements and reports are publicly available. In comparison, the quality and standards of provision for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities attending what are typically known as Independent Living Skills (or ILS) courses in FEIs is not assessed with anything like this rigour. As part of Estyn's inspection of post-16 providers, ILS provision may or may not be visited by Estyn Inspectors and no specific judgement is required of them on the quality and standards of provision for this group of learners.

As ALN transformation progresses, regional FEIs take on increased statutory responsibilities and are expected to meet the needs of learners with increasingly complex ALN. These learners do not typically achieve formal qualifications but use their time at college to build skills for adult life. Given the breadth of specialist teaching and learning approaches young people with complex ALN may need, we believe a more uniform and transparent approach is required to the assessment of quality within different providers.

In England, evidence given to the Education Select Committee's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) inquiry demonstrated that the localism agenda is not fit for purpose in meeting the needs of young people with low incidence and high needs learning difficulties and disabilities. Measures include



low success rates for local authorities at SEND Tribunals (5%), the high percentage of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) upheld by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, as well as the frequency by which Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission SEND inspections report serious weaknesses with local area EHCP processes.

Ways the CYPE Committee may address the issues raised include working with Welsh Government to:

- proactively avoid the pitfalls and failings of the English system outlined in the House of Commons Education Committee report on SEND (2019)
- ensure safeguards are in place so young people are not denied equitable access to post-school education and training due to the complexity of their ALN. Local authorities must be supported to maintain the use of discretionary powers for post-school education and training and funding for young people requiring specialist further education provision should be ringfenced
- increase parity and transparency in the way the quality of different providers of further and education and training for young people with complex ALN is assessed and reported.

### **Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

We believe that priorities for the CYPE Committee should be to listen to the voices of children and young people and support the implementation of multi-disciplinary and person-centred systems.

Improvements to support health and well-being that young people in Natspec's Student Voice Parliament have told us they need are:

- more disability sport facilities and opportunities
- increased accessibility in different areas including transport, information (e.g. menus, leaflets, signs), IT and in future planning of communities
- more personalised education that builds on strengths and provides the right support where it is needed
- more meaningful social and employment opportunities and more ways to make a positive contribution to society
- increased disability awareness amongst the general public
- policy and decision makers hearing the voices of young people with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Young people with learning difficulties and disabilities can often face cliff edge scenarios at the end of college placements with little or no provision in place to





ensure the maintenance and growth of personal and vocational skills. This has a profound and negative impact on the health and well-being of individuals and results in a loss of abilities as well increases in mental health problems.

We believe that the absence of post-college systematic planning for how young peoples' skills can continue to be built, and their aspirations realised, is symptomatic of a lack of ambition for Wales' young people with learning difficulties and disabilities. This is also exemplified by Welsh Government currently collecting no data on the achievements and post-college destinations of young people who have attended ILS courses at FEIs.

We also believe that through an increased focus on multi-agency collaborative working, the ALN reforms can impact positively on Wales most disadvantaged and vulnerable learners to increase life chances, reduce stress on families and positively impact the public purse.

Ways the CYPE Committee may address these issues include working with Welsh Government to:

- enable services and providers to work together to raise aspirations, expectations and opportunities for young people with complex ALN
- collate and monitor achievement and destination data for all post-16 learners with ALN.

#### **Theme 4: Children and young people**

Natspec welcomes the Committee's expressed commitment to engaging meaningfully with children and young people. In doing so, we urge that the voices of Wales' learners with the most complex additional learning needs in further education institutions and specialist further education colleges are appropriately sought alongside that of their non-disabled peers.

Natspec has a Student Voice Parliament and would welcome the opportunity to work with the CYPE Committee to facilitate tailored and appropriate consultations with young people with learning difficulties and disabilities across Wales.



## CYPE SP 80

Ymateb gan:

Response from: **Simon Jones, Head of Policy & Influencing, Mind Cymru**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chwched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

### **Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

There were some significant strides taken in the last Senedd in providing more mental health support for children and young people through education. From more funding for school based counselling and a CAMHS in-reach programme, to the publication of a framework on embedding a whole school approach to mental health and the amendment made to the Curriculum and Assessment Act that placed a greater priority on mental health. Taken together these have the potential to create a step change in the space and priority provided for discussions about mental health, as well as the support available for all children and young people. The *Mind Over Matter* reports published by the previous committee were central in driving this agenda. We would suggest that the Committee considers further follow up work, towards the mid point of this Senedd term and once the framework for a whole school approach and the new curriculum has bedded in. The focus of this work should be to determine whether and how these developments have made a difference to the experiences and outcomes of all children and young people. This would be absolutely critical in ensuring that the strategic intention is followed through and effectively delivered.



## **Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

### **Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

Whilst significant progress was made on the education recommendations made by *Mind Over Matter* and its follow-up reports, the progress on those relating to providing mental health support through service provision has been slower. We recognise that there has been considerable work undertaken to develop a new early intervention framework for children and young people, which again has the potential to create a step change in how children and young people are supported at an early point. It is our understanding that this framework will only start to be applied by Regional Partnership Boards from 2022/23 so there is nothing to consider at the moment in terms of impact. However, it would certainly be worth the committee looking at the impact this model is having before the end of this Senedd term.

We are aware from surveys we have carried out during the pandemic that young people are a particular group of concern in terms of how their mental health has been impacted, particularly those with pre-existing mental health problems. Throughout the pandemic it has become increasingly clear that there has been an unequal mental health impact which has seen a greater impact on young people from our different ethnic communities and those living in families where there is a low or insecure income. These groups should in particular be considered in future scrutiny or inquiries relating to mental health. You can read the insight from our latest survey via this link:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/media/8961/the-consequences-of-coronavirus-for-mental-health-in-wales-final-report.pdf>

The conclusion of the ten year *Together for Mental Health* strategy next year provides an opportunity for the committee to consider how this all age strategy has delivered improvements for children and young people, taking into account the work already undertaken through *Mind Over Matter*, as well as priorities for the future. This coincides with the ten year anniversary of the Mental Health Measure implementation, an all age piece of legislation. There is potential for the committee



to work with the Health and Social Care Committee to look at the overall impact on all age groups and the priorities for any future strategy.

Continued scrutiny around *Mind Over Matter* recommendations is absolutely critical. This report and the Committee's determined advocacy for the voices it heard has been central to driving Welsh Government and its delivery partners to create a greater focus on the mental health of children and young people and to seek to improve access and experiences. If the recommendations were not followed up as part of Ministerial scrutiny or in bespoke sessions during this term it would be a significant missed opportunity to keep up momentum and determine where support does not meet the need or the expected experience of young people and their families. We know there is a lack of available, transparent data to effectively track progress, particularly when it comes to equalities, so ongoing scrutiny needs to be built into the committee programme.

We would also welcome a continued focus on the reports relating to perinatal mental health support and the impact of COVID on children and young people, as both these reports had key recommendations that need to be effectively delivered in order to ensure that specific groups and communities are able to access the services and support that they need.

#### **Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**



## **Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg ar Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd**

### **This response was submitted to the Children, Young People and Education Committee consultation on Sixth Senedd Priorities**

#### **CYPE SP 81**

#### **Ymateb gan:**

#### **Response from: ACT training**

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ACT training is Wales' largest training provider, training approximately 6,400 learners last year across our Traineeship and Apprenticeship programmes, with approximately 1700 of our learners being between 16 and 24. We have established 7 centres across South Wales employing almost 400 people, to deliver engaging learning programmes for young people. The centres include Aberdare, Cardiff, Barry, Bridgend, Caerphilly, Ebbw Vale.

In addition to this, ACT developed a Schools Programme in 2012 to support learners excluded from mainstream settings and redress disengagement in the education system. In April 2018, ACT Schools became a registered Independent Special Schools with the capacity to educate 150 learners aged 11–16. The school is registered to admit students with special educational needs including social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. In the summer of 2021, our school learners achieved record GCSE results, with 57% achieving grades A\*-C.

ACT has a longstanding commitment to developing opportunities for young people to access and engage in Apprenticeship programmes. Our Youth Apprenticeship strategy is designed to promote opportunities; engage and support employers to recruit young apprentices; provide clear pathways for progression and development for young apprentices and through our youth engagement team provide tailored advice, support and guidance for young apprentices entering the world of work or changing job role.

**We strongly believe that the committee should focus on the mental health and wellbeing of young people and children in Wales, and specifically the role of work-based learning providers in improving the wellbeing of learners.**

Currently there is not a clear enough requirement on work-based learning providers to focus on, or to support, the mental health and wellbeing of our learners. We believe this needs to change. Many great initiatives rolled out by Welsh Government such as the period poverty campaign, are targeted

to schools or colleges, but not work based learning . Many of our 1850 young learners from aged 11 – 25 are from deprived communities, in poverty and have experienced adverse childhood experiences. Many young people in our schools provision have been excluded or are at risk of exclusion, who are school phobic or are classed as vulnerable. We strongly believe that we should have a duty to support their mental health and wellbeing whilst the learners are accessing our provision. The Welsh Government’s main focus in Work Based Learning is the attainment of qualifications. Whilst we obviously support and recognise the importance of qualifications in driving the skills agenda in Wales, if learners are not also equipped with the critical life skills to thrive as adults they will not be able to apply their learning effectively in the workplace.

ACT has developed and delivered a bespoke wellbeing strategy for our learners as we believe that as a recipient of public funds, we have a duty to support our learners through a prevention and intervention approach.

Although this work started pre-Covid, we have accelerated this work over the last 18 months. We were grateful for the additional funds released by Welsh Government to support the wellbeing of learners through COVID and we were able to train staff in mental health first aid and enrich our curriculum with a series of wellbeing activities. However, this was a one-off fund in response to COVID and we are committed to continually improving our staff’s development in this area.

More information can be found below, and we would be delighted to discuss with you the scope of the issues that we believe the committee should be looking into, which we believe are:

- The role of work-based learning providers in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people (and their family/support).
- The need for Welsh Government to consider work-based learning when developing mental health and wellbeing policies and interventions for children and young people.
- The need for Welsh Government to re-introduce the national learner survey with specific questions on learner wellbeing and mental health to obtain information and track progress on improving the mental health and wellbeing of all of our young people in Wales.

As the new curriculum will embed wellbeing into the curriculum in schools and colleges, we believe that more should be done to ensure work-based learning providers embrace a similar approach,



particularly in relation to wellbeing. We would be grateful for the opportunity to present more evidence to the committee on this specific area, and on future inquiries relevant to our learners too.

We would also be pleased to provide opportunities for the committee to discuss with our learners your priorities for the Senedd term.

Your sincerely

Richard Spear

MD ACT Training

## Overview

ACT's prime focus has always been on developing the vocational and essential skills of learners, whilst also supporting learners with personal, health and wellbeing issues. The changing nature of our learners' needs, particularly younger learners, has led us to **rethink our priorities**. Many of our learners are dealing with personal challenges such as mental health issues, chaotic home lives, poor general health and poor diets. These issues have been compounded this over the last year due to the challenges surrounding Covid-19.

We strongly believe that unless we support learners to address these issues, they will not develop into successful and happy adults, despite what other skills they acquire with us.

From a successful Learner Wellbeing Pilot Project in Bridgend in 2019, we have now embedded supporting the wellbeing of our learners in everything we do. Our comprehensive, innovative and bespoke wellbeing strategy is embedded in every element of our work and goes above and beyond what is required of us as an educational provider. We have established a dedicated Wellbeing Department to support and reinforce this work.

This work was fast-tracked during 2020 due to the pressing need to support the wellbeing needs of our learners during the Covid-19 pandemic. We shifted our wellbeing support online, opened a food bank for our apprentices and traineeship learners, and partnered with a local hygiene bank.

As Wales' largest training provider, training approximately 6,400 learners last year across our Traineeship and Apprenticeship programmes, we believe that we have a responsibility to intervene to try and improve the health and wellbeing of our learners.

## Background

After witnessing bad health choices and the lack of focus on individual wellbeing year after year, we decided that we could help the young people in our care to make better choices and to look after their health and wellbeing. We surveyed our traineeships learners in 2019 and found worrying levels of



poor wellbeing and reinforced **our belief that all post-16 training providers have a responsibility to do more to support their learners improve their health and well-being.**

After spending time in the Bridgend centre in 2019, as part of ACT's annual Senior Management job swap initiative, CEO Andrew Cooksley MBE discovered nearly all of the learners aged 16 – 18 year old on the Traineeship programme smoked. On further investigation he found that many learners also had poor diets, didn't exercise, and their self-esteem, confidence and aspirations were extremely low.

We surveyed our learners and found:

- 42% of our learners smoke tobacco, with only around 22% having never smoked.
- Only 9% always ate five fruit or vegetables every day (38% did so never or rarely).
- Only 42% of our learners said that in the last two weeks they not been bothered by feeling down, depressed or hopeless (17% said they had been bothered by this nearly every day).

These findings were and remain hugely concerning for ACT and was the wakeup call needed for us to be doing even more to support our learners to become successful, happy and healthy adults in systematic and strategic way, embedded in our everyday work. We believe it should be a wakeup call for the wider education sector too.

We have for a number of years invested in a counselling service for our learners but have long felt the need that we could be and should be doing more, and so we have developed the Learner Health and Wellbeing Strategy and a team to ensure its successful implementation.

The wider picture is also stark. Over 11% of the Welsh budget spent on the NHS in 2018-2019<sup>1</sup> was spent on mental health services. The estimated cost of smoking to the Welsh NHS is £302 million per year<sup>2</sup>. Illnesses associated with obesity projected to cost the Welsh NHS more than £465 million per year by 2050, with a cost to society and the economy of £2.4 billion.<sup>3</sup>

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant effect on mental health and health inequalities.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2020-04/nhs-expenditure-programme-budgets-april-2018-march-2019-371.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> The economic cost of smoking to Wales: a review of existing evidence, Ash Wales and British Heart Foundation Wales

<sup>3</sup> 'Making a Difference' Public Health Wales (2016)

According to the ONS<sup>4</sup>, more than two thirds (69%) of adults across the UK have reported feeling worried, or very worried about the effect of Covid-19 on their lives. The most common issues affecting wellbeing are worry about the future (63%), feeling stressed or anxious (56%) and feeling bored (49%). Social isolation, lack of access to mental health services, financial pressures and a loss of coping mechanisms have also contributed to the deterioration of mental health this year. The IFS have highlighted that groups have not been equally impacted, young adults and women have been hit hardest.<sup>5</sup> Most recently, the charity Young Minds reported results from their January 2021 survey of young people and the impact of the pandemic on young people's mental health showed that 67% of young people surveyed across the UK believed that the pandemic will have a long term negative effect on their mental health<sup>6</sup>.

Our own evidence from our learners highlight that 80% of our learners feel that Covid has negatively impacted on their mental health and wellbeing.

## Our Wellbeing Strategy

The ACT Learner Wellbeing Strategy has nine elements

1. Mental Health and wellbeing
2. Safeguarding
3. Physical learning Environment
4. Personal Finances & Hardship
5. Counselling and Emotional support
6. Additional Learning Needs
7. Autistic spectrum disorder and Neurodiversity
8. Behaviour and Tolerance
9. Equality and Diversity

Below are some of the key development.

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<sup>4</sup><https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandwellbeing/bulletins/coronavirusandthesocialimpactsongreatbritain/5june2020>

<sup>5</sup><https://www.ifs.org.uk/uploads/The-mental-health-effects-of-the-first-two-months-of-lockdown-and-social-distancing-during-the-Covid-19-pandemic-in-the-UK.pdf>

<sup>6</sup><https://youngminds.org.uk/about-us/reports/coronavirus-impact-on-young-people-with-mental-health-needs/#covid-19-january-2021-survey>

- Wellbeing Curriculum

We have recently developed a bespoke Wellbeing Curriculum delivered by our dedicated Wellbeing advocate. The topics delivered are based around the key areas that create positive foundations for Mental Health and Wellbeing:

- Resilience and Confidence Building Skills
- Mental Health Awareness
- Creating Positive Relationships
- Emotional Literacy
- Self Discovery
- Skills for Effective Learning
- The Brain, Learning and Behaviour.

As a recent development, we are in the process of rolling out all elements of the wellbeing and collating learner feedback as we progress. So far, the learner feedback has been exceptionally positive. We will continue to gather feedback and monitor the impact for future reports.

- Our learning environment

The key pillar of our wellbeing strategy is to promote a safe and supportive environment for learners, which celebrates equality, diversity and inclusivity. Our strategy also promotes a positive, physical, social and mental state and creates an environment where learners feel secure, healthy and, as far possible, happy. Experiencing positive relationships, having some control over one's life and having a sense of purpose are all important attributes to wellbeing, as well as having a high self-worth, positive values and self-esteem.

We have developed online training modules and developed resources and toolkits to support delivery staff.

- Learners with ALN

In addition to this we have reviewed and improved our wellbeing offer to those learners with additional learning needs – reviewing the needs of all learners receiving ALN support.

- Staff wellbeing

The wellbeing of our staff is also of critical importance and so we have also developed a staff Wellbeing strategy and support its implementation. We have received a grant from Welsh Government for staff wellbeing training to ensure that provide a supportive environment for learner. The training includes

the following key elements:

- Mental Health First Aid Training (Youth and Adult courses)
  - Mindfulness Now
  - Mental Health Teacher's Toolkit (this is what the Wellbeing Advocates are delivering as outlined above)
  - Restorative Approach Practitioner Training
  - Restorative Peer Mediation Training
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- Universal support offer

We have developed a universal support offer within the delivery of our training programmes. All learners are and will continue to benefit. We have expanded and made our Counselling service more accessible giving service users a choice to engage in English or Welsh, and to receive the counselling online, face to face phone or by text.

Accessibility of our support is of key importance – making sure all of our learners understand the support we offer. To support this we are marketing the support available to learners and are developing a new learner wellbeing app, and a new online counselling referral process.

- Smoking cessation

Our Stop Smoking Campaign in partnership with ASH Wales has built on the work in Bridgend as highlighted above. The campaign has seen 500 learners across Traineeships receive a Stop Smoking Awareness session followed up by 1-to-1 support from our Wellbeing Team for those learners that want to give up.

We have links with local pharmacies across all our local areas where Pharmacists have continued that support for our learners by providing free NRT treatment. To date we have had 15 learners attend their local pharmacies and are receiving 1-to-1 support within centre through the Stop Smoking clinics the Wellbeing team offer. Long-term impact is to be monitored. Phase 2 is about to be rolled out which will see those local Pharmacists coming into centre to continue the Education process.

- Rights Respecting School

We are working on becoming a Rights Respecting School, in partnership with the UNCRC. This will mean that our work will focus on 4 key areas, namely- Wellbeing, participation, relationships and self-esteem.

## The impact of Covid

We already deal with young people who have faced many challenges. Many who have already been affected by adverse childhood experiences and this experience, added to previous negative experiences, will significantly exacerbate behavioral issues, resulting in a significant increase in pastoral and well-being needs.

We understood early on in the pandemic that we needed to increase and change the support we offered our learners.

**Provision of online wellbeing support.** ACT shifted delivery of its wellbeing approach to digital following the Covid-19 lockdown, where learners received regular wellbeing updates and ongoing check-in surveys through OneFile, delivering 824 fully digital wellbeing and counselling sessions. 99% of learners positively rated ACT's digital approach to wellbeing support.

**ACT food bank programme.** During the lockdown period, ACT set up and ran an outstanding food bank programme, resulting in over 9 tonnes of essential food parcels provided to Apprenticeship and Traineeship learners and vulnerable people within the community.

**Hygiene bank.** ACT have established links with Cardiff hygiene bank, and are able to offer learners living in deprivation areas the opportunity to access free hygiene products. Two deliveries have been received to date, and further impact will be tracked throughout 2020/21.

## Annex A

### More about ACT

ACT is Wales' largest training provider, and last year trained approximately 6,400 learners last year across its Traineeship and Apprenticeship programmes, with 96% of learners rating our course as excellent/good.

Since its establishment in 1988, ACT's mission has been to make a positive difference to people's lives by providing excellent learning programmes. We value our strong relationship with the Welsh Government, as its leading provider of training and Apprenticeships, delivering dynamic training packages designed to meet the needs of young people and employers across 30 different industry sectors.

Named in the prestigious Sunday Times Top 100 List of Best Companies to Work For, we have gained Investors in People Gold Award since 2010 and that in 2017 we were placed 7<sup>th</sup> best IIP Gold company in the world. We were also named the BITC Responsible Large Employer of 2018.

We have established 7 centres across South Wales employing almost 400 people, to deliver engaging learning programmes for young people, who are disengaged from pre-16 education. The centres include Aberdare, Cardiff, Barry, Bridgend, Caerphilly and Ebbw Vale.

We deliver a range of courses and qualifications – from Traineeships, Apprenticeships and Higher Apprenticeships across over 30 different sectors, to employability training and short commercial courses.

## Annex B

### The pilot programme

Following our Andrew Cooksley's experience shadowing our engagement tutors, we developed a Learner Wellbeing project at our Bridgend Skills Centre. In a bid to quit smoking and improve their lifestyle habits, the learners were given gym memberships and participated in various workshops with third sector organisations such as Ash Wales, raising awareness around the damaging and lasting effects of poor lifestyle choices. As a result of the project:

- 42% of the Bridgend learners now class themselves as non- smokers (compared to the 37% at the start of the project)
- 55 % of learners reported they wanted to give up smoking at the end of the project (compared to 39% at the start of the project)
- 4% of learners are now going to bed earlier to get a better night's sleep
- There has been 10% rise in learners now rating their health as excellent.
- Increase in attendance of approx. 3%

Although this was a small project (45 learners) with modest but positive outcomes, if this was replicated across the post-16 education and skill sector the impact would be very significant.

**This response was submitted to the Children, Young People and Education Committee consultation on Sixth Senedd Priorities**

**CYPE SP 82**

**Ymateb gan: Amanda Sefton**

**Response from: Amanda Sefton, Head of Campaigns, Union of Jewish Students**

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**Theme 1: School-age education**

**Theme 2: Further and higher education**

As the Union of Jewish Students, we are the representative body for over 8,500 Jewish students on campus across the UK and Ireland. We are responsible for facilitating positive and vibrant Jewish life on campus, in numerous ways, including combatting antisemitism in all its forms.

Antisemitism in the UK is on the rise and this increase is also on campus, shown in the Community Security Trust Campus Antisemitism Report 2018-20. Both HE&FE institutions need to take the first step in ensuring Jewish students are supported and protected on campus; adopting the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism, in full. This is the definition that the majority of the British Jewish community support and use, and has so far been adopted by over 111 HE&FE institutions across the UK, however as far as we know only one Welsh institution has adopted : "Bangor University".

In May 2017, the First Minister Carwyn Jones announced that the Welsh Government had adopted the IHRA definition of antisemitism, including all the examples. Then in February 2020 Plaid Cymru adopted the definition as part of a review, commissioned by Plaid Cymru, undertaken by Liz Saville Roberts MP for Dwyfor Meirionnydd. These were incredible steps taken by the Welsh leadership to show the Welsh community the importance of adopting the definition and standing up against antisemitism. Although little action has been taken by previous Senedd's to push for HE&FE institutions in Wales to do adopt.

Adopting this definition is extremely important for Jewish students. Firstly, it is a sign from their institutions that they are taking the initial step to support them and stamp out antisemitism. Additionally, the definition is a useful tool and guidance, for universities to understand what and how modern-day antisemitism may





manifest, specifically when dealing with disciplinary and complaints processes. Lastly, it will show Jewish students that if there is an antisemitic incident on their campus, their institution will be using a definition they agree with, during the complaint's procedure. Adopting the IHRA definition of antisemitism is not the only thing institutions should be doing to support their Jewish students, however it is the first step in beginning to build relationships with Jewish students and creating a welcoming environment for them on their campus.

**Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

**Theme 4: Children and young people**



**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg ar Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 83**

**Ymateb gan: Sean O'Neill**

**Response from: Sean O'Neill, Coordinator, Wales UNCRC Monitoring Group**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

**Theme 1: School-age education**

**Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

**Theme 4: Children and young people**

The **Wales UNCRC Monitoring Group** (est. 2002) is a national alliance of non-governmental and academic agencies, tasked with monitoring and promoting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in Wales and facilitated by Children in Wales. The Group has submitted civil society reports to inform successive UK State Party Examinations in 2002, 2008 and 2016, and is currently engaged in the 2020-23 reporting cycle.

Our submission has been drafted to complement responses from member organisations<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Members of the Wales UNCRC Monitoring Group are representatives from Barnardo's Cymru, Centre for Welsh Legal Affairs - Aberystwyth University, Children in Wales, Children's Commissioner for Wales (observers), Equality and Human Rights Commission Wales (observers), National Deaf Children's Society, NSPCC Wales/Cymru, Play Wales, Save the Children Wales, The Children's Society, The Observatory on Human Rights of Children, UNICEF and the Welsh Local Government Association (observers)

## Children's Rights

We call upon the Committee to include in their forward workplan a commitment to

- Undertake a follow-up review of the previous Committee's inquiry into 'Children's Rights in Wales' and the progress made by the Welsh Government (WG) to deliver the report's recommendations.
- As a core component for all future inquiries, to take account of the duty placed upon Welsh Ministers to have due regard to the UNCRC in all their actions, and ensure that effective and meaningful Child Rights Impact Assessments (CRIA) have been undertaken on all policy and legislation relevant to children.
- Work with other relevant Senedd Committees to ensure that mechanisms are in place for sharing issues impacting on children, and that consideration is given to all UN Treaty recommendations relevant to progressing their human rights.

The Committee will also wish to routinely and explicitly make reference to children's rights in all sessions, and to make use of the due regard duty to the UNCRC in their scrutiny of all Ministers (Hoffman/O'Neill 2018<sup>2</sup>)

### Rationale

The Wales UNCRC Monitoring Group (MG) was pleased to provide written<sup>3</sup> and oral evidence<sup>4</sup> to the previous Committee inquiry into 'Children's Rights in Wales' in 2019. We very much welcomed the 16 recommendations in the final report<sup>5</sup> and were delighted to see that our contribution had helped inform the Committee's conclusions. The previous WG accepted most of the recommendations, and members of the MG are presently tracking progress and engaging with lead officials to help support their full implementation.

The impact of COVID-19 has undoubtedly highlighted that now more than ever, that the rights of children, as underpinned by the UNCRC, must be at the forefront of decision making processes and prioritised in line with existing legislation. Members of the MG have been keen to ensure that there was no regression of children's rights throughout the period of the pandemic, and that key decisions taken to help protect the health of the population

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<sup>2</sup>[https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/the\\_impact\\_of\\_legal\\_integration\\_of\\_the\\_un\\_convention\\_on\\_the\\_rights\\_of\\_the\\_child\\_in\\_wales\\_eng.pdf](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/the_impact_of_legal_integration_of_the_un_convention_on_the_rights_of_the_child_in_wales_eng.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://business.senedd.wales/documents/s94618/CRW%2014%20Wales%20UNCRC%20Monitoring%20Group.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://record.assembly.wales/Committee/5683>

<sup>5</sup> <https://senedd.wales/laid%20documents/cr-ld13405-r/cr-ld13405-r-e.pdf>

did not compromise or reduce existing rights protections children access under present laws.

As restrictions are eased and the WG delivers its Programme for Government within the context of Covid-19 recovery, the 'due regard' duty prescribed through the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011 (Measure), including the production and publication of timely CRIA on all policy decisions which impact directly, and non-direct on children must be observed. The Committee will wish to ensure, throughout all future scrutiny inquiries, that compliance is observed.

Since the publication of the Committee's report, the WG have begun progressing a number of key actions, including consulting on their Draft Children's Rights Scheme (under Section 2 of the 'Measure') and have published a summary report which commits to a series of future priorities. The revised Scheme sets out a number of positive proposals, including a training offer for Ministers and officials, and is expected to be published in the autumn. The Committee will understandably wish to give consideration to its content and to monitor delivery of the proposals in light of the previous Committee's recommendations. The WG have also published a report which maps progress against the 2016 UN Concluding Observation.

The UN are presently re-examining progress made by the UK and devolved governments to implement the UNCRC and the steps taken to comply with the last set of Concluding Observation. In 2020, as a core component of the UN's evidence gathering processes, the MG undertook a comprehensive consultation and engagement exercise with civil society organisations which captured the emerging issues, barriers and challenges facing children in accessing and realising their rights across all Articles of the UNCRC in Wales.

In December 2020, the MG published its report - the 'State of Children's Rights in Wales'<sup>6</sup> - and engaged widely with stakeholders, Senedd members and the WG to promote the findings. This report, compiled during the pandemic, was submitted to the UN to help inform their considerations when developing their 'List of Issues', as a series of questions and priorities to governments for response. The UN published their 'List of Issues' in February 2021, and governments are now required to submit a detailed combined response by June 2022. The Committee will wish to consider this report once published which will inform the focus and deliberations at the State Party Hearing in Geneva in 2023 and the next set of Concluding Observations for governments to implement.

The State of Children's Rights report, with contributions from 90 organisations and key stakeholders in Wales, provides the Committee with a comprehensive insight into the challenges and barriers children continue to face in accessing and realising their rights in Wales, and will be an invaluable resource throughout this Senedd term. The report sets out

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.childreninwales.org.uk/professionals/our-work/state-childrens-rights/>

30 priority areas and 70 recommendations for WG across the whole CRC to fulfil their obligations for children. The Committee will wish to take account of this report when determining their future priorities.

## 1. General Measure of Implementation

We have called upon the WG to fully and directly incorporate the CRC into Welsh law, and to take steps to incorporate other relevant Conventions which impact on children. Whilst we welcome the Programme of Government commitment to incorporate the UNCRPD and the UNCERD into Welsh law, we remain frustrated that there is no equivalent commitment to directly incorporate the UNCRC, and thus strengthen the existing legal duty under the aforementioned Measure.

The Measure does not provide direct legal accountability for children who consider their rights to have been breached. The example from Scotland, which has recently introduced legislation which will enhance judicial accountability and confer a legal remedy on a child where their rights have been violated, demonstrates the potential of a reserved model of devolution to enable incorporation in a manner which provides for directly enforceable rights at a devolved level. We fully support the recommendation from Hoffman, S. et al (August 2021) in the WG commissioned report 'Strengthening and advancing equality and human rights in Wales'<sup>7</sup> for existing legal duties in this regard to be strengthened. In particular, recommendations 1 and 25 which, if adopted, will ensure that Welsh Law develops so that children's human rights become directly enforceable in Wales

The 'State of Children's Rights' report has also called for there to be

- a comprehensive and fully resourced national strategy for children, with achievable and measureable actions subject to robust monitoring, evaluation and scrutiny arrangements<sup>8</sup>

In the continued absence of a national strategy for children or a rolling plan for the implementation of the UNCRC, the Committee will wish to raise this with relevant ministers, and ensure that future actions which impact on children and sit within the separate portfolios of several different ministers are fully joined-up, appropriately resourced and sufficiently ambitious to deliver maximise impact.

- that CRIA are systematically completed and published on all legislative proposals which are likely to directly or indirectly affect children, and to make CRIA a statutory requirement

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<sup>7</sup> <https://gov.wales/strengthening-and-advancing-equality-and-human-rights-wales>

<sup>8</sup> The report by Hoffman et al (2021) includes a number of recommendations to improve planning, mainstreaming, monitoring and scrutiny of progress on human rights (see in particular 1-4, and 24-33). We believe these recommendations should be fully integrated into a national strategy for children.

The CRIA process remains an important mechanism by which to inform and improve policy and legislative developments, and to ensure that 'due regard' is consistently applied in practice (Hoffman/O'Neill 2018); and through CRIAs being made public, as a basis for scrutiny and accountability. The Committee inquiry reported on the inconsistencies with the current approach, and the Committee will wish to ensure that the CRIA process is enhanced and sufficiently robust<sup>9</sup>.

- legislation which ensures there is a due regard duty to the CRC placed upon all Welsh devolved public bodies, with robust monitoring, accountability and reporting arrangements in place to ensure compliance

The role of public bodies is pivotal in delivering services which enhance the promotion of children's rights and help children achieve better outcomes. Whilst we have previously welcomed the inclusion of the 'due regard' duties to the UNCRC on some public bodies in Wales<sup>10</sup>, there is neither a reporting nor accountability framework in place to help public bodies evidence their compliance nor a general public sector duty of 'due regard' applying to all public bodies and those delivering public functions. In this continued absence, the Community can play a key role in ensuring that compliance by public bodies is secured.

We also welcome new duties placed upon local authorities, head teachers and governing bodies to promote knowledge and understanding of the UNCRC and UNCRPD through the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021, but there is a need for the curriculum to be directive and require human rights education to be taught. The Committee will wish to ensure that compliance is secured, which complement existing duties placed upon WG under Part 6 of the 'Measure'<sup>11</sup>.

- Comprehensive child budgeting analyses, which ensures that a CRIA is undertaken on the WG annual budget

The current presentation of budget expenditure on children across all ministerial portfolios does not aid any assessment as to whether the maximum level of available resources to fulfil UNCRC obligations are being used. The recommendation from the previous Committee for a CRIA of the draft budget was rejected.

- Fully resourced national strategy for prompting knowledge and understanding of the UNCRC subject to monitoring and scrutiny arrangements

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<sup>9</sup> The report (above) includes a number of recommendations to improve the WG's Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) (see in particular 18 and 19). We believe these recommendations should be applied to improve CRIA as part of IIA.

<sup>10</sup> through the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018

<sup>11</sup> Hoffman et al (2021) identified a need to strengthen human rights education in Wales. We believe the curriculum should be more directive to require human rights education. We adopt the recommendation made in the research report for guidance on the curriculum to mandate inclusion of human rights principles (see recommendation 34).

The WG accepted the previous Committee's recommendation and encouragingly, the draft Children's Right Scheme confirms that a national strategy is being developed. The Committee will wish to give consideration to the robustness of this strategy.

## 2. Thematic priorities

The State of Children's Rights in Wales highlights challenges and pressures children face in realising their rights, despite progress being made in many policy areas. The impact of the pandemic on children lives, especially for those most vulnerable, has been profound and unprecedented, as the evidence received to inform our report demonstrated.

However, many of the issues highlighted throughout our report didn't emerge back in March 2020 when Wales first went into lockdown. What the pandemic did was to expose pre-existing and often growing levels of inequalities, disadvantage and vulnerabilities amongst many children, and exacerbated rights violations which were already present.

Our report highlights that

- **Child poverty** was already unacceptably high and predicted to increase further prior to the pandemic. We support calls from ECPN Cymru for there to be a revised Child Poverty Strategy and Action Plan; a review and extension of Free School Meal entitlement and the creation of a Welsh Benefit System which provides a single point of access for assistance.
- The number of **children in care** is increasing each year, with concerns around placement stability; an ability to maintain relationships; mental health challenges and transition arrangements from care to safe and stable accommodation.
- Socio-economic disadvantage has a huge impact across a range of **health indicators**, and indeed across the whole report.
- Particular groups of children are facing greater challenges and vulnerabilities in respect of disruption to their **education**, and the potential impact on key developmental milestones, especially amongst younger children.
- The impact of isolation and lasting separation from friends, family and support networks on **children's mental health and wellbeing**,
- Many children live in less than ideal home environments (including abuse and neglect), with growing anxieties amongst the social care workforce of the increase in need for accessible support and social work intervention to help address some of the **safeguarding** concerns children have experienced.
- The lack of access to **play and recreational** opportunities, and the impact this will have on health, social interaction and development.

We look forward to working with members of the Committee again during this Senedd term and happy to be contacted on any aspect of our work.

### **Other links**

Children's Commissioner for Wales [The Right Way](#)

Equality and Human Rights Committee [Human Rights Tracker](#)

**Total word count 1999**



**This response was submitted to the Children, Young People and Education Committee consultation on Sixth Senedd Priorities**

**CYPE SP 74**

**Ymateb gan: Joe Rossiter**

**Response from: Joe Rossiter, Policy and Campaigns Officer, Stonewall Cymru**

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### **Theme 1: School-age education**

The Committee should pledge to launch an inquiry on schools' readiness to teach LGBTQ+ inclusive Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in a holistic manner, across all Areas of Learning and Experience whilst being underpinned by a whole school approach. We have yet to see adequate evidence that the workforce is trained, knowledgeable and, crucially, confident enough in delivering fit-for-purpose RSE in Wales. Additionally, we have seen no concrete plans from Welsh Government to meet this need for professional learning on RSE specifically. Whilst research on professionals' confidence to deliver RSE in Wales has yet to be undertaken, such research would be of great value. [NSPCC research](#) conducted alongside NEU (National Education Union) in England found that half of teachers lacked confidence to teach compulsory RSE lessons. Here in Wales, the picture is less clear, as teachers have not been asked how comfortable they feel in delivering RSE and the new curriculum more widely. We think it is vitally important that this inquiry takes place, to get ahead of the likely challenges faced during implementation before they happen and to provide evidence for where government resources are best targeted to ensure that all children in Wales receive high-quality LGBTQ+ inclusive RSE. Following this inquiry it should be clearer what intervention is needed by the Welsh Government to ensure that the implementation is of a safe and high standard. The findings should indicate what level of provision is needed from Welsh Government, some provisions might include; ringfenced targeted funding on RSE and specific support in light of new areas being covered such as violence against women and domestic abuse, that should sit alongside the new curriculum content.

During the second half of the Committee's tenure in this Senedd, the Committee should seek the views of young people on the effectiveness of RSE delivery and LGBTQ+ inclusion across the curriculum. Such outreach should act to uplift the voices of LGBTQ+ children and young people to ensure they are seen and heard in these conversations.

In addition to this, the Committee should focus on scrutinising the roll-out of the new curriculum more broadly, focussing on the delivery of new curricula in comparison to its aspirations. Within this we feel that this exercise should take a particular focus on the embedding of LGBTQ+ inclusive RSE and relevant professional learning processes. With the Committee running for the next five



years this scrutiny will be vital in ensuring that the new curriculum acts as imagined. We believe the Committee sit in a strong position to lead on this work.

Safeguarding and bullying in education environments should also be an issue of concern for the Committee. [Stonewall Cymru's School Report](#) (2017) highlighted how LGBTQ+ learners in Wales are all too often bullied for their LGBTQ+ identities, hear homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language and, equally important, do not feel confident that teachers will intervene when incidents take place. The study found that three in five LGBTQ+ pupils in Wales felt that there was not an adult in school they could talk to about being LGBTQ+. It is very likely that this is worse for some LGBTQ+ young people as [evidence](#) shows that LGBTQ+ people of faith, for example, are less likely to be open about their identity to family members. It is vital that all LGBTQ+ children and young people, as well as practitioners are adequately supported in identifying the needs and issues LGBTQ+ people can experience. In this regard, we feel that this is a vital issue facing young people in school-age education and one that the Committee could spend some of its valuable time on considering.

## **Theme 2: Further and higher education**

In light of an increase in hostility towards trans inclusion at some Welsh Universities, it is vital that protection for all students, including trans and non-binary students, is on the agenda of the Committee. Universities and places of further education should be safe spaces for all and this status is currently being brought into question in Wales, as more and more anecdotal evidence is presented by students and staff at higher education institutions. [Research](#) suggests that LGB and especially trans students in Britain face multiple disadvantages and discriminations in universities, from negative comments from staff and students alike and a lack of confidence in reporting homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying to university staff. Higher and further education thus have a long way to go before they are safe spaces for all.

## **Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

On Health and well-being, the Committee should understandably focus on the impact of the pandemic on the mental health and well-being of young people. Within this, it is vital that the Committee attempt to understand the experiences of LGBTQ+ children and young people. [Research suggests](#) that poor mental health is alarmingly high amongst LGBTQ+ young people in Wales, with trans young people at particular risk. LGBTQ+ young people in Wales also reported disproportionate levels of self-harm and suicidal thoughts. This situation is likely to have been



exacerbated by the pandemic, with recent [research by Just Like Us](#) highlighting the disproportionate mental health impact of the pandemic on LGBTQ+ young people, with feelings of loneliness and suicidal thoughts being [prevalent](#). It is therefore vital that any examination of the mental health of children and young people must consider the distinct experiences of LGBTQ+ young people as well as the intersection of these identities and orientations with other marginalised groups, e.g. LGBTQ+ Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people, LGBTQ+ disabled people etc.

The Committee should work with the Health and Social Care Committee to seek to understand the need for a Welsh Gender Service for children and young people in Wales. In this regard the Committee is in a good place to seek to understand the need for such a service from the perspective of children and young people in Wales, which can inform the work of the Health and Social Care Committee as well as Welsh Government.

More broadly, it is important that when analysing any health or social care issue that impacts children and young people that the experiences of LGBTQ+ youth are given space to provide their input and experiences. This is the only means through which equitable outcomes will be achieved in policy interventions. Using the Committee's platform to uplift marginalised young people's voices is a meaningful and powerful use of Committee's time and could have a tangible impact on its ability to scrutinise government.

#### **Theme 4: Children and young people**

Broadly speaking, a priority for the Committee should, in all of its work, seek to uplift the experiences and voices of children in Wales, whilst attempting to reflect the experiences of all children and young people, especially including those from marginalised identities. The Committee should support LGBTQ+ children to be safe, seen and heard by being cognisant of their needs, seeking to hear from them and by understanding that LGBTQ+ inclusion is vital for wellbeing and mental health for all.

The Committee could consider children and young people who are not in education, employment or training and means through which assistance can be given to support those individuals. Within this it is important to identify groups of people who experience disproportionate levels of exclusion in these environments. Recent [research](#) found that anti-LGBTQ+ bullying, lack of support at home or visible role models continues to have a devastating impact on LGBTQ+ young people's mental health, leading many to become shut out of higher education and work. With far too many LGBTQ+ young people in Britain falling through the gaps in current support services, the Committee should consider how minoritised young people can best be supported in Wales.



The Committee could use its time to support the youth work sector in its efforts to upskill on all matters of equality, diversity and inclusion. This could come in the form of scrutinising the Welsh Government's response to the [Interim Youth Work Board's Recommendations](#). It is vitally important that the youth work sector in Wales, both voluntary and statutory, is equipped to support the needs of LGBTQ+ young people.



## USE OF YOUR INFORMATION

In order to enable us to handle your information in accordance with our [privacy notice](#), please complete the questions below. We will be unable to process your response if these questions are not completed.

**6. We have stated our intention to engage meaningfully with children and young people, in tailored and appropriate ways, in the autumn. However, if you are responding using this proforma and are under 13 years old, we will only be able to accept your response if your parent or guardian has confirmed that you can participate.** They can do this by sending us an email to [SeneddChildren@senedd.wales](mailto:SeneddChildren@senedd.wales).

### Are you under 13 years old?

I am under 13 years old	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am 13 or over	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

### 7. Please choose one of the following options to confirm whether you would prefer that your name is not published alongside your evidence.

We will not publish the names of people under the age of 18.

I am aged 18 or over and I am content for you to publish my name alongside my evidence	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I am aged 18 or over and I would prefer that you did not publish my name alongside my evidence.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am under the age of 18	<input type="checkbox"/>

### 8. Please choose one of the following options to confirm whether you have agreement from any third parties referred to in your evidence that you can share information that may be used to identify them and that they understand that it may be published.

I confirm that any third party I have referred to in my evidence has agreed that I can share information that may be used to identify them, and that they understand that it may be published.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I do not have the agreement of one or more of the third parties I have referred to in my evidence.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have not referred to any third parties in my evidence.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 85**

**Ymateb gan:**

**Response from: Catholic Education Service**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

The Catholic Education Service ('CES') is the education agency of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales (Bishops' Conference). The Bishops' Conference is the permanent assembly of all the Catholic Bishops in England and Wales and the CES, as the education agency of the Bishops' Conference, is charged with promoting and securing education on behalf of the Bishops. I represent the CES in Wales, and we also have three Welsh Catholic Dioceses each with a Director of Education. There are 85 Catholic schools in Wales which educate over 28,500 pupils.

**Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

**Roll-Out of the New Curriculum**

The CES recognises the positive opportunities afforded to schools in the realisation of the Curriculum for Wales within their individual contexts. We welcomed the opportunity given to Catholic schools to be involved in the development of the Curriculum for Wales as pioneer schools and also as practitioners contributing to involvement groups for RVE and the RSE code and guidance. Going forward, it is important for the CYPE Committee to ensure the positive work in the development stage is carried through to implementation with clear recognition of the time and work required to do this.



Suggested Priority – The CYPE Committee should consult with headteachers, teachers and governors as the curriculum is developed in their schools to gauge the effectiveness of the implementation stage and identify where additional support is required.

Suggested Priority – The CYPE Committee should consult with learners and most especially with parents now that parents are no longer able to exercise their right of withdrawal. Parents are the primary educators of their children and must be informed and consulted especially on more sensitive matters such as RSE.

### **Learning the Lessons from COVID-19**

Everyone was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in different ways. The CES recognises that some people have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. This includes children in Early Years, learners who were taking qualifications at secondary school, and the teachers who were overseeing these learners and assessing them. Learners from deprived communities have also been adversely affected.

The well-being of pupils, together with staff well-being, is what drives all the decisions taken in Catholic schools. It is important that the CYPE Committee focuses on how learning and development have been negatively impacted for pupils, and how the interruption to time in school impacted the well-being of staff and learners alike.

The Curriculum for Wales encourages schools to provide learners with a range of experiences to support their formal learning. The loss of time in schools due to COVID-19 meant that learners missed out on cultural and religious formation and artistic and sporting experiences. It is essential that learners are offered opportunities to catch-up in these important areas of their development.

Catholic schools have always been at the heart of the community. During the pandemic the work of Catholic schools came to the forefront as they provided support to their local communities during an unprecedented time. For further information please see our section on Theme 3.

Suggested Priority – The CYPE Committee should assess the success of support provided by Welsh Government to teachers in closing gaps in learning and development in key year groups such as Early Years and learners taking GCSEs or A Levels.

Suggested Priority – The CYPE Committee should focus their work on those who took their qualifications during the disruptions to school to identify any issues or positive outcomes that have arisen since taking centre-assessed examinations.



Suggested Priority – The CYPE Committee should assess the effectiveness of mental health and pastoral support made available to members of staff by Welsh Government in schools following the past 18 months and the additional expectations placed upon teachers to assess examinations centrally.

Suggested Priority – The CYPE Committee should assess the extent to which the Welsh Government is supporting learners to experience the religious, cultural, artistic and sporting experiences that they lacked during their time out of school due to the pandemic.

### **Parental Choice in the School Their Child Attends**

The CES acknowledges the role of parents as the primary educators of their children. This principle is embodied in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). The ability of parents to choose from a range of schools with different perspectives is one of the factors that enables the State in Wales to provide the pluralistic education system envisaged by the ECHR. The range of different schools in Wales - including Catholic schools - plays an important role in celebrating diversity in Wales.

As primary educators of their children, it is important for parents to be able to choose the education that they envisage for their child, especially if they feel that they would like their child to attend a school of religious character. Accessibility, affordability and availability of transport to schools of their choice, such as a Catholic school, is an important aspect of this, especially if their closest school is not Catholic.

Suggested Priority – The CYPE Committee should review the accessibility, affordability and availability of transport to a school of an appropriate character.

### **Welsh Language**

Integral to the CES's approach to the Curriculum for Wales is a commitment to foster and develop ability in, and understanding of, the Welsh language and the culture of Wales. Welsh Catholic history is abundant in such practice and traditions, which is part of the rich legacy that makes up our linguistic and cultural heritage. Catholic schools will be supported to increase their language provision including bilingual provision. In this way Catholic schools will contribute to one of the fundamental aims of the new curriculum to encourage an increase in the number of learners who become confident Welsh speakers using both languages in their everyday life.

However, it is important for the CYPE Committee to recognise the amount of time and financial challenges that come with increasing the amount of Welsh taught and spoken in schools. Schools require support in achieving the goals of Cymraeg 2050.





Suggested Priority – The CYPE Committee should monitor the effectiveness of support and funding made available to primary and secondary schools who wish to increase the amount of Welsh taught and spoken in schools.

Suggested Priority – The CYPE Committee should assess the ease of access to and success of the Welsh Government sabbatical scheme for teachers to improve their Welsh language skills.

## **Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

### **Protecting Catholic Sixth Form Provision**

The CES supports the ability of parents to choose from a range of schools, including Catholic schools; a number of which provide education to the age of 18. There is one Catholic sixth form college in Wales and a number of Catholic sixth forms within secondary schools. It is important for the CES that the introduction of the Tertiary Education and Research Bill does not pose any threats to the provision of Catholic sixth forms within Catholic secondary schools. It is crucial that these sixth forms within Catholic schools are offered the support and funding required to enable them to continue educating learners over the age of 16.

Suggested Priority – The CYPE Committee should consult with headteachers, teachers and governors on how the Tertiary Education and Research Bill could impact Catholic schools, and find solutions to enable the continuation of Catholic post-16 education in secondary schools and colleges.

## **Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

### **Community Development and a Joined-Up Approach to Services**

Catholic schools have always been at the heart of their local communities. It was made clearer than ever during the pandemic that schools are community hubs. Many Catholic schools across Wales provided support to their local communities in various ways including running food banks and providing support for vulnerable people in their area. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has illustrated the necessity of continuing to develop and strengthen a joined-up approach across services to support learners and their families who have been disproportionately impacted. Examples of ways to do this include:

- Providing opportunities for schools to develop wrap-around childcare.



- Encouraging and facilitating schools who are prepared to open their doors to community services.

However, in doing this, schools should not risk becoming overstretched in resources, staffing and finances. It is important that schools are offered the financial and practical support to continue to sit at the heart of their local communities and provide the support required.

Suggested Priority – The CYPE Committee should consult with schools to understand what challenges are most prominent in their local communities and how they feel they could be supported in their role as community hubs.

## **Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**

### **Listening to the Voices of Children and Young People**

It is the view of the CES that understanding the needs and concerns of children and young people is important. Through our work, it has become clear that a large number of young people have a particular concern for protecting the environment for future generations. More could be done in this area, both by Welsh Government but also in schools.

Suggested priority - The CYPE Committee should consult with learners on how they feel effective and practical steps can be implemented to protect the environment both in schools and in wider society.



**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 86**

**Ymateb gan:**

**Response from: Chris Haines, External Affairs Manager, National Autistic Society Cymru**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

**Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

**Additional Learning Needs (ALN)**

Autistic children and young people may need additional help and support with education. Some will need highly specialised education while others will follow a more mainstream path. The most recent figures from the Pupil Level Annual School Census show that 5,265 autistic pupils have a statement of special educational needs. This means that more than one in five pupils with statements are autistic. A further 4,553 autistic pupils are receiving support through the graduated response system.

We know the current system is not working for autistic pupils, who have lodged more appeals than those with any other condition, according to the Special Educational Needs Tribunal for Wales' annual reports. The statistics show the number of Autism Spectrum Disorder-related appeals more than doubled between 2012 and 2018. One test of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act, and its accompanying code, will be whether it leads to a reduction in the alarming number of appeals, with more autistic pupils receiving the education they deserve.

NAS Cymru is concerned about implementation of the ALN code, particularly reports of misleading messages being spread by the regional transformation leads for the past 18 months to two years. While the Welsh Government is expected to correct some of this misinterpretation in a technical guidance note, we are concerned that



dissemination of such messages has created ambiguity and confusion within the system.

### **Teacher training**

All teachers will work with autistic pupils throughout their career – yet many are not given training to understand their autistic pupils' needs, or what they can do to help. This has been particularly evident over the past year as pupils have alternated between home-learning and school, facing huge changes to usual rules and routines. The pandemic has laid bare the lack of understanding of autism within our education system.

We need to make sure the people teaching autistic children have a basic understanding of their needs. During the Fifth Senedd, the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee agreed. It recommended that the Welsh Government ensures all school staff – particularly teachers and teaching assistants – receive training in awareness and understanding of autism, during initial teacher training and continuing professional development.

The Welsh Government needs to deliver this. There is a new system of support in place for pupils with ALN, which places added responsibilities on schools and colleges to assess and meet pupils' needs. Similarly, the new curriculum will be implemented during the next Senedd term. With such seismic changes taking place, it is crucial that school staff are given the support they need to ensure autistic pupils succeed.

### **Careers advice**

Young learners with additional needs are at an increased risk of becoming not in education, employment or training. Consequently, careers advice can be particularly valuable for autistic learners and their parents. Careers advisers should be part of a multi-agency approach to IDP reviews.

### **Girls**

Research has found that many autistic girls are often overlooked, which can result in misdiagnosis, late diagnosis or girls not being diagnosed at all. In education settings, this can mean that girls miss out on support. NAS Cymru wants to see a focus on identifying autism in women and girls to ensure they receive the same opportunity to fulfil their potential.



## **Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

### **Further education**

It is crucial that autistic pupils, their families and others in their circle of support are involved in transition planning early. Decisions made as we prepare to leave school can impact the rest of our lives. Transition from secondary school can be one of the most life-changing events an autistic young person and their family will face, and the process is often difficult.

An autistic person may decide to stay in sixth-form or move into further education and thought must be given to how they can be supported to reduce anxiety throughout the process. Early action and support strategies can help young people transition. Planning to leave school can be a long process, often taking more than two years. New support staff should work with the young person before the move and they should have the chance to visit their new educational environment in advance. It is vital to involve autistic young people and their families in discussions around transition.

### **Higher education**

Many students report frustration with accessing support in higher education. NAS Cymru believes the Additional Learning Needs and Tribunals (Wales) Act should also cover higher education to ensure a consistent approach. The key to autistic students' success will be a good transition, with staff getting to know students and how to meet their needs. There is a link between poor transitions and less successful outcomes, so it is important that autistic students do not face a 'cliff edge'. Removing support that a young person has previously received could hamper an autistic learner's chances of success in higher education.

We were alarmed by proposed changes to Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA), which were consulted on last year. The consultation proposes putting in place more generalised 'off-the-shelf' support for disabled students. The proposals place the burden on the student to request a study needs assessment, only if they feel they need one. It is our view that the default position of all students being offered an assessment must continue. Moving away from study needs assessments will have a detrimental impact on autistic students' academic outcomes. NAS Cymru believes support should be person-centred, with the emphasis on individuals' needs rather than their condition. This proposed approach appears to be out of kilter with ALN reforms and other Welsh Government policies.

Reflecting the 'average needs of students depending on their disability' is not appropriate for a spectrum condition such as autism, which affects each person differently. No two autistic people are the same, yet Student Finance Wales suggests



that it can often 'predict' what support will be required. It is also unclear how a pre-determined package of support would respond to an autistic person's needs as they vary over time.

The consultation's description of assessment recommendations as a 'copy and paste exercise' clearly shows that the DSA system is not fit for purpose. We would welcome well thought out, uniquely Welsh reforms but we believe this change in particular would make the system worse.

### **Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

#### **Mental health**

Autism is not a mental health condition, but many autistic young people develop mental health problems. This is often avoidable, but a lack of support can mean preventable issues worsen. Our research suggests that this situation is driven by a lack of community mental health services which are adjusted to support autistic young people's needs.

Our report, [Left Stranded](#), painted a worrying picture of the impact of the pandemic on autistic people's mental health. The survey – which received more than 4,000 responses – found that compared to the general public, autistic people were seven times more likely to be chronically lonely and six times more likely to have low life satisfaction. We also found that nine in ten autistic people worried about their mental health during lockdown.

NAS Cymru believes making adapted counselling available – alongside other community-based support, and clear autism-specific pathways – would help prevent unmet mental health needs from escalating. To further evidence-led policymaking, we think data on the number of autistic young people receiving mental health services must be collected.

We believe health boards should also be required to reduce the number of autistic people admitted to inpatient facilities. Wales also needs to ensure casework services are available, such as our [Autism Inpatient Mental Health Service](#), which is currently funded in England. The service provides advice to autistic people and the families of autistic people who have been detained in a mental health hospital or are at risk of detention.



## **Autism code**

As you will be aware, the Code of Practice on the Delivery of Autism Services came into force on September 1. The new legal duties include mandatory timeframes for accessing a diagnostic assessment and post-diagnostic support, training for specific staff, and better planning of services. The code has the potential to transform services for autistic people and their families but implementation will be key to making the improvements we need to see. While the code makes some welcome changes, we remain concerned that it does not address some significant challenges faced by autistic people and their families – many of which have been exacerbated by the pandemic.

NAS Cymru is disappointed that the code does not include duties to improve public awareness and understanding of autism, unlike the autism strategy in England. Our research shows that while 99% of people have heard of autism, only 16% of autistic people feel the public understands them. One in eight autistic people and one in six family members said they have been asked to leave public places as a result of autism-associated behaviour. Due to anxiety, bad experiences and a lack of confidence, many autistic people and their families avoid going out, which leads to increased social isolation. We call on the committee to urge the Welsh Government to help improve public understanding by launching a Wales-wide autism awareness campaign to inform people about the key things they can do to support autistic people.

We are also concerned the code may not be strongly enforced. That is why we are calling on the Welsh Government to appoint an independent person or body to oversee implementation, educate public bodies on their responsibilities, and advise ministers on enforcement action. It is crucial that autistic people and their families can enforce their rights if they are not receiving the support they are entitled to. Furthermore, we are concerned by suggestions the code could be expanded to other neurodevelopmental conditions, which may dilute the rights of autistic young people.

We would also like to see more ambitious waiting time targets set by ministers. Under clinical guidelines, NICE recommends that no child should have to wait more than three months from referral to autism diagnostic assessment – yet the target set by the Welsh Government is twice as long.



## **Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**

### **Covid-19**

The coronavirus outbreak and ensuing lockdown has changed the lives of most people in the country. While the crisis has been hard for everyone, it is particularly challenging for autistic young people, who typically experience intense anxiety and extreme unease around unexpected change. They may also need more time to process information and instructions.

Many autistic people have contacted us to describe their experiences. Adjusting to the sudden change in their lives and routines is a huge challenge, alongside concerns about the availability of social care or special educational support. In addition, families are often unable to visit relatives who live in residential care settings, and this causes anxiety both for them and their family members. As well as these new challenges, we know that too many children on the autism spectrum were not getting the support they needed before the coronavirus outbreak began.

Autistic children are struggling now more than ever, with many of the services they rely on having been removed or reduced. The impact of lockdown and school closures on children on the autism spectrum cannot be under-estimated. While the law is clear that local authorities still have a duty to secure and deliver the special educational provision set out in a child or young person's statement, we know that there is a gap emerging between guidance and young people's experiences.





Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)

This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)

**CYPE SP 87**

**Ymateb gan: Dr Rhian Croke**

**Response from: Dr Rhian Croke, Independent Children's Rights Adviser and Observatory Affiliate, Observatory on the Human Rights of Children**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

**Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

**Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

**Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

**Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**

**Covid-19**

**Observatory on Human Rights of Children  
and  
Children's Legal Centre Wales**

**Submission to the Committee on Children, Young People and Education  
Consultation on Priorities for the 6<sup>th</sup> Senedd**



1. The Observatory on Human Rights of Children and the Children's Legal Centre Wales are established sources of knowledge and expertise on children's rights, and how these are given effect in law and policy in Wales and internationally. This submission focuses on areas falling within our sphere of expertise: in particular, general measures of implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
2. Now is a critical time to consider the priorities to be adopted by the Committee and by the Welsh Government to ensure children's rights are fully respected, protected and fulfilled: as the Covid-19 pandemic continues to impact on human rights globally, in the UK and in Wales. Wales is rightly admired on the international stage for progress to date on implementing children's rights through law and policy. But more could and should be done to realise children's rights through law and policy.
3. We ask the Committee to consider the following as priorities for law and policy on children in Wales.

**Strengthen incorporation of the UNCRC to provide for legal enforceability of children's rights**



4. We have witnessed advances in children's rights legislation in Wales, in particular the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Act 2020; as well as sectoral legislation emphasising children's rights in education<sup>1</sup> and social care.<sup>2</sup> These have been positive developments. However, research<sup>3</sup> has highlighted the need for legislation to go further than the current 'indirect' approach to incorporation of the UNCRC which requires Welsh Ministers to have 'due regard' to children's rights when exercising their functions.<sup>4</sup>
5. We see the need for further incorporation of the UNCRC in Welsh law to provide for individual legal enforceability of children's rights, through full and direct incorporation; and to provide for legal enforceability against all public bodies in Wales. This is what is intended in Scotland,<sup>5</sup> where legislation adopts a 'maximalist' approach to give effect to children's rights as directly enforceable claims in Scots law. It is time that children in Wales were similarly offered a direct route to a legal remedy in a court of law for breaches of their human rights.<sup>6</sup>
6. We support the recommendations made in research carried out for the Welsh Government on Advancing and Strengthening Equality and Human Rights in Wales 2021 (the '2021 SAEHR Report'),<sup>7</sup> for a taskforce to consider how to achieve direct incorporation of international human rights in Welsh law (recommendation 1), so that they are enforceable before a court or tribunal (recommendation 25).

**We urge the Committee to:**

- **Support a maximalist (full and direct) approach to incorporation of the UNCRC in Wales.**
- **Call on the Welsh Government to take further steps to progress incorporation of the UNCRC in Wales so that it is made part of Welsh law in a way which permits children in Wales (or their representatives) to take action to enforce children's rights.**

A Child Rights Approach as part of National Strategy on Children



7. The Child Rights Measure, the Welsh Government's Children's Scheme, and its use of Child Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) as part of an Integrated Impact Assessment provide a framework for a child rights approach to children's policy in Wales. This has been further enhanced through the adoption of a principled and modelled Child Rights Approach to frame the Children's Scheme. The Children's Rights Approach was developed by the Observatory on behalf of the Children's Commissioner for Wales (CCfW) and is based on extensive research into approaches to implementing children's rights in practice.<sup>8</sup>
8. In its National Inquiry on Children's Rights 2020,<sup>9</sup> the Committee made a number of recommendations consistent with a Child Rights Approach to policy, these were: introduce a child-friendly complaints system for children, training for Welsh Government Ministers on children's rights, children's budgeting, monitoring of children's rights and more effective and early application of CRIA.
9. The 2021 SAEHR Report includes a number of recommendations to improve planning, mainstreaming, monitoring and scrutiny of progress on human rights (see in particular 1-4, and 24-33). Once again, these are consistent with a Child Rights Approach.

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<sup>1</sup> Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Hoffman, S.; Nason, S.; Beacock, R.; Hicks, E. (with contribution by Croke, R.) (2021). *Strengthening and advancing equality and human rights in Wales*. Cardiff: Welsh Government, GSR report number 54/2021: <https://gov.wales/strengthening-and-advancing-equality-and-human-rights-wales> (accessed September 2021).

<sup>4</sup> S.1, Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011.

<sup>5</sup> UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill.

<sup>6</sup>Croke R (2020), *A case study investigation into a children's rights approach to health services*. Hillary Rodham Clinton School of Law. Swansea University, See Chapter 10.

<sup>7</sup> Hoffman, S.; Nason, S.; Beacock, R.; Hicks, E. (with contribution by Croke, R.) (2021). *Strengthening and advancing equality and human rights in Wales*. Cardiff: Welsh Government, GSR report number 54/2021, <https://gov.wales/strengthening-and-advancing-equality-and-human-rights-wales> (accessed September 2021); Kilkelly, U., "The UN convention on the rights of the child: incremental and transformative approaches to legal implementation", *The International Journal of Human Rights*, 2019 (23(3)), 323–337.

<sup>8</sup> Children's Commissioner for Wales. 2017. *The Right Way: A Children's Rights Approach*. Swansea: CCfW, Available online: <https://www.childcomwales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/The-Right-Way.pdf> (accessed on 2 March 2021).

<sup>9</sup> Senedd Children and Young People and Education Committee. 2020. National Inquiry into Children's Rights. Available online: <https://senedd.wales/laid%20documents/cr-ld13405-r/cr-ld13405-r-e.pdf> (accessed on 10 December 2020).



10. We see a need to focus on a Child Rights Approach to law and policy in Wales, and in particular to promote this approach as the basis for a Welsh Government National Strategy for Children.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, specific to CRIA, we note that a number of research reports have commented on the need to improve CRIA, including the recent 2021 SAEHR Report.

11. CRIA is key to giving effect to children's rights in legislation and policy. For this reason we feel the Committee should pay particular attention to ensuring that CRIA is effective in Wales. The 2021 SAEHR makes a number of recommendations to improve the Welsh Government's Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) (see in particular recommendations 18 and 19). We believe these recommendations should be applied to improve CRIA as part of IIA.

**We urge the Committee to:**

- **Promote the Child Rights Approach endorsed by the CCfW as a guiding framework for children's policy across the public sector in Wales.**
- **Call on the Welsh Government to develop a National Strategy for Children, deploying a Child Rights Approach as a guiding framework.**
- **Encourage improvement of CRIA by calling on the Welsh Government to implement the recommendations in the 2021 SAEHR Report on Impact Assessment.**

**Raise Awareness of Children's Rights**

12. We welcome the new duties on local authorities, head teachers and governing bodies to promote knowledge and understanding of the UNCRC and persons with disabilities through Part 6 of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021. However, we agree with the findings set out in 2021 SAEHR Report that more needs to be done to strengthen human rights education in Wales.

13. We believe the curriculum should be more directive to require human rights education. We adopt the recommendation made in the 2021 SAEHR Report for guidance on the curriculum to mandate inclusion of human rights principles (see recommendation 34).

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<sup>10</sup>Croke R (2020), *A case study investigation into a children's rights approach to health services*. Hillary Rodham Clinton School of Law. Swansea University, See Chapter 10.



**We urge the Committee to:**

- **Call on the Welsh Government to make human rights education a mandatory requirement in the Welsh Curriculum.**

**Children's rights in a public health emergency**

14. Evidence establishes that the pandemic has had a negative impact on children's health, mental health, children's right to play and freedom of assembly, children's right to a quality education, children's right to an adequate standard of living and children's right to be protected from violence. For example, the NSPCC reported an unprecedented demand across the UK for their Child Line Service during lockdown, with child abuse calls to NSPCC rising by 20%.<sup>11</sup> Research for the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC) in 2021 shows that the pandemic, and Emergency Measures taken in response to the pandemic, have had a broadly negative impact on children across Europe (including in Wales).<sup>12</sup>

15. ENOC will publish a position statement on Emergency Measures during a pandemic, with recommendations for future action in the event of a further public health emergency. The Observatory has been closely involved developing the recommendations to be put forward by ENOC (not currently in the public domain, due for publication late September 2021). We suggest that the Committee review the ENOC recommendations in due course with a view to ensuring they are adopted by the Welsh Government as principles to guide law and policy in Wales in the event of future public health emergencies.

**We urge the Committee to:**

- **Call on the Welsh Government to ensure that children's rights are properly protected and respected during any public health emergency.**

**End Child Poverty**

<sup>11</sup> NSPCC, <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/about-us/news-opinion/2020/report-risk-abuse-teenagers-children/> (accessed April 26 2021).

<sup>12</sup> Croke R and Hoffman S, *Mapping the Impact of Emergency Measures Introduced in Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic on Children's Rights in ENOC Member States*, Observatory on the Human Rights of Children 2021 (due to be published September 2021).



16. 29% of children were already living in relative poverty in Wales pre the pandemic.<sup>13</sup>

The impact of the pandemic means the number of children living in poverty has increased.<sup>14</sup> Alongside and as an aspect of poverty, many children are experiencing food poverty.<sup>15</sup> This is a violation of Article 27 of the UNCRC (the right to an adequate standard of living) it is unacceptable that any child in Wales should not be fully benefiting from this right, including adequate food.

17. In collaboration with Food Sense Wales and the CPAG, and with input from a Young Food Ambassador we held a webinar on food poverty earlier this year. Amongst the outcomes of the webinar was recognition of the importance of the Children's Right to Food Charter. We urge the Committee to take account of the Charter, and the five principles it sets out:

- A right to food commission;
- A nutritious start in life for every child;
- A healthy lunch every day;
- Stop the stigma (of food poverty);
- Health before profits.<sup>16</sup>

18. We ask the Committee to endorse the Charter and to revisit the Welsh Government's obligations under the Children and Families (Measure) 2010 and their commitment to end child poverty by 2020.<sup>17</sup> While action in Wales is limited by the UK Government's control over tax and benefits, we do not see this as good reason for not prioritising ending poverty in Wales and setting ambitious targets.

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<sup>13</sup>Welsh Government, Child Poverty Progress report (Welsh Government 2019). <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-01/child-poverty-strategy-2019-progress-report.pdf> (accessed September 8 2021)

<sup>14</sup>Resolution Foundation (2021) *Long Covid in the Labour market, The impact on the labour market of Covid-19 a year into the crisis and how to secure a strong recovery*, <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2021/02/Long-covid-in-the-labour-market.pdf> (accessed September 8 2021); Bevan Foundation (2020) *A snapshot of poverty in Winter 2020*, <https://www.bevanfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/A-snapshot-of-poverty-in-winter-2020.pdf> (accessed September 8 2021);

<sup>15</sup> UK Children's Commissioner's Report., *Children's rights in the UK in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, Annex to Report of the UK Children's Commissioners to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child: Examination of the Combined Sixth and Seventh Periodic Reports of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland*, December 2020 <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/cco-uncrc-report-covid-annex.pdf.pdf> (accessed September 10 2021)

<sup>16</sup> Children's Legal Centre for Wales, Information and recommendations on food poverty <https://childrenslegalcentre.wales/child-food-poverty/>

<sup>17</sup> Croke R & Crowley A (2013) *Child poverty and human rights*, In Williams J (eds) *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in Wales*. (University of Wales Press).



We support the Bevan Foundation and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's call for the Welsh Government to create a 'Welsh Benefits System'.<sup>18</sup>

**We urge the Committee to:**

- **Endorse the Children's Right to Food Charter.**
- **Recognise ending child poverty in Wales as a priority for law and policy in Wales.**
- **Call on the Welsh Government to develop a new strategy and plan of action to end child poverty.**

**Sustainable development and climate change**

19. We note that the Welsh Government is committed to sustainable development and tackling climate change. There is a clear link between children's rights and sustainable development,<sup>19</sup> as noted by the CCfW and the Future Generations Commissioner.<sup>20</sup> The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child emphasises that climate change is the 'biggest threat to children's health and exacerbates health disparities'<sup>21</sup> and the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights acknowledges, climate change has a disproportionate impact on children.<sup>22</sup> The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child is currently drafting a new General Comment on Children's Rights and the Environment.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Bevan Foundation (N.D) Welsh Benefits System, how it can help solve poverty, <https://www.bevanfoundation.org/resources/a-welsh-benefits-system/> (accessed September 8 2021)

<sup>19</sup>Croke R, Dale H, Dunhill A, Roberts A, Unnithan M, William J, 'Integrating Sustainable Development and Children's Rights: A Case Study on Wales'. *Soc. Sci.* 2021, 10, 100. <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-0760/10/3/100> (accessed April 6 2021)

<sup>20</sup> Children's Commissioner for Wales and Future Generations Commissioner. 2017. The Right Way: A Wales Future Fit for Children, [https://www.childrensrightsplanning.wales/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/CCFW-FGCW-Report-English\\_01.pdf](https://www.childrensrightsplanning.wales/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/CCFW-FGCW-Report-English_01.pdf) (accessed on 21 December 2020).

<sup>21</sup>Committee on the Rights of the Child. General Comment No. 15 on the Rights of the Child to the Enjoyment of the Highest Attainable Standard of Health. CRC/C/15/2013, [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fGC%2f15&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fGC%2f15&Lang=en) (accessed on 2 March 2021).

<sup>22</sup> Office of the High Commissioner. 2016. Report of the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights. 2016. Analytical Study on the Relationship between Climate Change and the Human Right of Everyone to the Enjoyment of the Highest Attainable Standard of Physical and Mental Health. A/HRC/32/23 (UN General Assembly) Paras 26–27 <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/841798?ln=en> (accessed on 2 March 2021).

<sup>23</sup> The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child commits to a new General Comment on Children's Right and the Environment with a special focus on Climate Change. <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27139&LangID=E> (accessed September 8 2021)





20. The 2021 SAEHR Report sets out a number of recommendations to promote better alignment between the well-being (sustainable development) agenda and human rights agenda in Wales (see recommendations 9-16). We feel these recommendations, if implemented by the Welsh Government, would contribute toward stronger alignment between children's rights and sustainable development in Wales.

**We urge the Committee to:**

- **Promote the better integration of the children's rights and sustainable development agendas in Wales.**
- **Call on the Welsh Government to implement the recommendations in the 2021 SAEHR Report to align human rights and sustainable development agendas in Wales.**



**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg ar Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 88**

**Ymateb gan: Catherine Rees, Cyngorydd Effaith Ymarfer a Pholisi, Achub Y Plant**

**Response from: Catherine Rees, Policy and Practice Officer, Save the Children Wales**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

**Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

**Rydym yn argymhell bod y Pwyllgor:**

- Yn asesu'r trothwy cymhwyso ar gyfer Prydau Ysgol Am Ddim er mwyn sicrhau bod gan yr holl blant y mae eu rhieni yn derbyn Credyd Cynhwysol hawl yn ystod tymor yr ysgol a thrwy gydol gwyliau'r haf ac yn ystyried buddion hawl cynhwysol i bawb.
- Yn ystyried y ffordd orau o gynorthwyo ysgolion a darparwyr eraill y blynyddoedd cynnar i hyrwyddo pwysigrwydd cymorth i deuluoedd ac ymgysylltu rhieni.

Mae ymchwil yn dangos y gall ehangu darpariaeth ar gyfer Prydau Ysgol am Ddim fod yn offeryn hanfodol ar gyfer lleihau anghydraddoldebau iechyd a hybu cyrhaeddiad addysgol. Mae gan blant sydd yn derbyn prydau ysgol am ddim sicrwydd o un pryd iach y dydd yn ystod y tymor, gan sicrhau nad ydynt yn llwgu yn ystod y diwrnod ysgol. Gallant hefyd gryfhau cadernid ariannol teuluoedd incwm isel trwy leihau cyfran incwm yr aelwyd sydd yn cael ei gwario ar fwyd. Mae'r galw a'r cymhwysedd ar gyfer prydau ysgol am ddim wedi cynyddu o ganlyniad i bandemig Covid-19 ac mae mynediad at Brydau Ysgol am Ddim yn hanfodol i lawer o



deuluoedd. Fodd bynnag, nid yw llawer o deuluoedd sydd yn byw ar incwm isel yn bodloni meini prawf y trothwy incwm, sydd yn cyfyngu cymhwysedd ac ymgymriad, gan arwain at lawer o blant yn byw mewn tlodi heb hawl i dderbyn pryduau ysgol am ddim.

Mae'r cyfnod pontio rhwng lleoliadau'r blynyddoedd cynnar ac ysgolion uwchradd yn cael ei godi'n gyson fel maes sydd yn peri pryder ymysg partneriaid sydd yn gweithio mewn ardaloedd o amddifadedd. Yng Nghymru, gwyddom y gall cynnydd o ran ymgysylltu teuluoedd mewn darpariaeth cyn-statudol gael ei golli pan fydd plant yn symud i mewn i leoliadau statudol. Mae rhieni'n dweud wrthym yn aml eu bod yn teimlo'n bryderus neu fod ganddynt ddiffyg hyder yn ymgysylltu ag addysg eu plant yn y feithrinfa neu'r ysgol. Mae angen bod cysondeb yn y system a chyfleoedd ar gyfer ymgysylltu â rhieni a gwranddo arnynt, yn gynnar yn ystod y broses.

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### **We recommend that the Committee:**

- Assesses the eligibility threshold for Free School Meals to ensure that all children whose parents are in receipt of Universal Credit are entitled during the school term and throughout the school holidays and considers the benefits of universal entitlement for all.
- Considers how schools and other early years' service providers, including through the allocation of specific funding, can be best supported to promote the importance of family support and parental engagement.

Research shows that widening provision for Free School Meals can be a vital tool for minimising health inequalities and boosting educational attainment. Children in receipt of FSM are guaranteed one healthy meal per day during term time, ensuring that they do not go hungry during the school day. They can also strengthen the financial resilience of low-income families by reducing the proportion of household income they spend on food. Demand and eligibility for FSM has increased as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and access to Free School Meals is a vital lifeline for many families. However, many families living on a low income do not meet the income threshold criteria, which restricts eligibility and take up, resulting in many children that are living in poverty not entitled to receive free school meals.

The transition between early years settings and primary schools is frequently raised as an area of concern amongst partners working in areas of deprivation. In Wales we know progress to engage families in pre-statutory provision can be lost when children move into statutory settings. Parents often tell us that they feel anxious or



lack confidence to engage with their children's education in nursery or school. There needs to be consistency in the system and opportunities for engaging with and listening to parents, early in the process.

## **Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

## **Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

### **Rydym yn argymhell bod y Pwyllgor:**

- Yn asesu darpariaeth bresennol addysg a gofal plentyndod cynnar ar gyfer plant sydd yn byw mewn tlodi ac yn ystyried newidiadau i'r system er mwyn sicrhau bod pob plentyn sydd yn byw mewn tlodi, waeth beth fo'u hoed a statws gwaith eu rhieni, yn cael mynediad at system addysg a gofal plentyndod cynnar cydlynol ac integredig, o ansawdd uchel.
- Yn ystyried darpariaeth bresennol i gynorthwyo rhieni i ymgysylltu ag addysg a datblygiad eu plant gartref. Mae angen i rieni allu cael mynediad at gymorth, gwybodaeth ac adnoddau, yn cynnwys adnoddau digidol, er mwyn cynorthwyo addysg eu plant gartref heb stigma.

Dylai fod gan bob plentyn ifanc yng Nghymru fynediad at addysg a gofal o ansawdd uchel, ac elwa arnynt. Mae cyflawni'r uchelgais hwn yn dibynnu ar gael polisi'r blynyddoedd cynnar fydd yn darparu Addysg a Gofal Plentyndod Cynnar (ECEC) o ansawdd uchel i bob plentyn ifanc tra'n parhau i gefnogi teuluoedd.

Ar lefel systemau, mae ymgysylltu teuluoedd a phlant wrth gynllunio a dylunio gwasanaethau yn allweddol i greu darpariaeth gyson, ddi-dor. Os nad yw safbwyntiau a phrofiadau yn cael eu hystyried, rydym yn gweld gwasanaethau tameidiog, wedi eu dyblygu nad ydynt yn siarad â'i gilydd. Mae rhai teuluoedd yn cael y cymorth sydd ei angen arnynt lle mae eraill yn mynd ar goll yn llwyr neu'n ei chael hi'n rhy anodd ffeindio eu ffordd drwy'r system gymhleth.

Gwyddom fod tlodi'n effeithio ar ganlyniadau plant a gallu rhieni i gynorthwyo addysg eu plant. Rhieni yw'r dylanwad pwysicaf ar fywyd plentyn ac addysgwr cyntaf plentyn. Gwyddom fod plant sydd ag amgylchedd dysgu cyfoethog ac amrywiol gartref yn gwneud yn well na'u cyfoedion, waeth beth yw lefelau incwm y teulu neu gyrhaeddiad addysgol y rhieni. Felly, mae'n hanfodol gwella addysg gynnar a chyfleoedd chwarae i blant trwy gynorthwyo rhieni i ddarparu amgylchedd dysgu



ysgogol ac ymatebol yn y cartref, o enedigaeth a grymuso a galluogi rhieni i barhau i ymgysylltu ag addysg eu plentyn wrth iddynt ddechrau'r ysgol.

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**We recommend that the Committee:**

- Assesses current ECEC provision for children living in poverty and considers system changes to ensure that all children living in poverty, regardless of age and parental work status, have access to a high quality coherent and integrated ECEC system.
- Considers existing provision to support parents to engage in their children's learning and development at home. Parents need to be able to access support, information, and resources, including digital resources, to effectively support their children's learning at home without stigma.

All young children in Wales should have access to and benefit from high quality education and care. Achieving this ambition rests on having an early year's policy that ensures access to a system that will provide high quality Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) to all young children whilst continuing to support families.

At a systems level, the engagement of families and children in the planning and design of services is key to creating seamless, consistent provision. Where views and experiences are not considered, we see fragmented, duplicated services that don't talk to each other. Some families get the support they need whereas others are totally missed or find it too hard to navigate the complex system.

We know that poverty impacts on children's outcomes and parents' ability to support their child's learning. Parents are the most important influence in a child's life and a child's first educator. We know that children who have a rich and varied home learning environment, do better than their peers, regardless of family income levels or parental educational attainment. Therefore, it is crucial to enhance early learning and play opportunities for children by supporting parents to provide a stimulating and responsive home learning environment from birth and empower and enable parents to remain engaged in their child's learning as they start school.

**Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**

**Covid-19**

**Rydym yn argymhell bod y Pwyllgor yn:**



- Cynnal ymchwiliad i effaith tlodi plant yng Nghymru gan ganolbwyntio ar brofiadau bywyd teuluoedd a phlant mewn tlodi.
- Galw ar Lywodraeth Cymru i gyhoeddi Strategaeth Tlodi Plant diwygiedig ynghyd â'r angen am gynllun cyflenwi gyda cherrig milltir mesuradwy, clir a thargedau uchelgeisiol, a threfniadau adrodd tryloyw i adlewyrchu'r effeithiau hyn.
- Ymchwilio i'r ffordd y mae'r holl ddyletswyddau statudol presennol i fynd i'r afael â thlodi plant yn cael eu bodloni ar lefel leol a chenedlaethol er mwyn sicrhau nad oes unrhyw blentyn o dan anfantais oherwydd incwm teulu.
- Ystyried sut gellir cryfhau cymorth ariannol i deuluoedd yng Nghymru trwy system cymorth ariannol gydlynus ac wedi ei symleiddio sydd ar gael ac yn hygyrch i bob teulu ar incwm isel.

Mae cael mynediad at safon byw sydd yn ddigonol i wireddu datblygiad corfforol, meddyliol, cymdeithasol a moesol plentyn yn hawl yn unol ag erthygl 27 o Gonfensiwn y CU ar Hawliau'r Plentyn (UNCRC). Mae erthygl 4 yn datgan bod yn rhaid i bob llywodraeth wario "graddau eithaf yr adnoddau sydd ar gael" i ryddhau plant o fywyd o dlodi.

Hyd yn oed cyn argyfwng Covid-19, roedd bron un mewn tri (200,000) o blant yng Nghymru yn tyfu i fyny yng ngafael tlodi. Disgwylir i'r ffigur hwn gynyddu'n sylweddol o ganlyniad i'r pandemig.

Mae plant ifanc yn arbennig o agored i niwed oherwydd tlodi a'r effeithiau y gall eu cael ar eu llesiant corfforol ac emosiynol. Mae tystiolaeth barhaus, hirsefydlog sydd yn dangos perthynas arwyddocaol rhwng yr anfantais y mae plant sydd yn byw mewn tlodi yn ei wynebu a chanlyniadau addysg gynnar plant ifanc. Erbyn tair oed, mae tystiolaeth yn dangos na fydd plant sydd yn profi tlodi efallai'n cael yr un cyfleoedd i gyflawni eu potensial â rhai o'u cyfoedion mwy cefnog. Heb gymorth, gall hyn barhau trwy gydol eu haddysg ac yn nes ymlaen yn eu bywydau.

Bydd lefelau cynyddol tlodi plant yn gofyn am weithredu ymrwymedig, hirdymor er mwyn sicrhau ein bod yn mynd i'r cyfeiriad iawn yn lleihau'r effaith ar y genhedlaeth bresennol a chenedlaethau'r dyfodol. Mae angen cyhoeddi Strategaeth Tlodi Plant a Chynllun Cyflenwi wedi eu diwygio, gyda cherrig milltir mesuradwy, clir a thargedau uchelgeisiol, a threfniadau adrodd tryloyw. Gallai Cynllun Cyflenwi helpu i fynd i'r afael â chymhlethdod y system trwy ddod â'r amrywiaeth o weithgareddau a gynhelir gan adrannau gwahanol ynghyd o dan arweiniad Gweinidogion gwahanol ar draws y Llywodraeth a gallai helpu i ddangos yn glir sut mae pob adran yn cyfrannu, yn defnyddio eu cyllidebau i'r eithaf ac yn effeithio ar leihau tlodi plant.



Er bod llawer o raglenni a mentrau unigol addawol sy'n ymdrin â thlodi, mae'n anodd dangos yn aml bod gweithgareddau presennol yn gwneud gwahaniaeth cadarnhaol cronol i fywydau plant a theuluoedd. Dylai unrhyw Gynllun Cyflenwi felly fod yn destun prosesau monitro cadarn fyddai'n galluogi cynnydd i gael ei olrhain a'i gofnodi, gan ddod yn 'ddogfen fyw'.

Mae angen i unrhyw bolisi a gweithredu i leihau tlodi fod yn gynhwysol i bob plentyn, dylai teuluoedd allu cael mynediad cyfartal i'r holl gymorth ariannol sydd ar gael ar eu cyfer gan Lywodraeth y DU a Chymru. Mae angen nodi unrhyw gyfleoedd ychwanegol i ddarparu systemau cymorth ariannol cydlynus a chydlynol ar gyfer teuluoedd yng Nghymru, a sicrhau bod teuluoedd yn gallu defnyddio'r system yn hawdd ar adegau pennaf o angen.

Mae angen i leisiau uniongyrchol plant a'u teuluoedd ar y ffordd y maent yn profi byw mewn tlodi gael eu cynrychioli ac mae angen sefydlu system ymgynghori a phroses cymryd rhan fel rhan o gyflwyno, monitro a gwerthuso'r strategaeth.

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#### **We recommend that the Committee:**

- Hold an inquiry into the impact of child poverty in Wales focusing on the lived experiences of families and children in poverty.
- Call on Welsh Government to publish a revised Child Poverty Strategy along with the need for a delivery plan with clear measurable milestones and ambitious targets, and transparent reporting arrangements to reflect these impacts.
- Investigates how all current statutory duties to tackle child poverty are being met at a local and national level to ensure that no child is disadvantaged because of family income.
- Considers how financial support for families in Wales can be strengthened through a simplified and cohesive financial support system that is available and accessible for all families on a low income.

Access to a standard of living adequate to fulfil a child's physical, mental, social, and moral development is a right under article 27 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Article 4 states that all governments must spend to the "maximum extent of available resources" to free children from a life of poverty.



Even before the Covid-19 crisis hit, nearly one in three (200,000) children in Wales were growing up in the grip of poverty. It is expected that this figure will rise significantly as a result of the pandemic.

Young children are especially vulnerable to poverty and the effects it can have on their physical and emotional wellbeing. There is long-standing, consistent evidence that shows a significant relationship between the disadvantage faced by children living in poverty and young children's early learning outcomes. By the age of three, evidence shows that children that experience poverty may not have the same opportunities to fulfil their potential as some of their better off peers. Without support this can continue throughout their education and later life.

Rising levels of child poverty will require long term, committed action to make sure we are going in the right direction in reducing the impact on current and future generations. The publishing of a renewed Child Poverty Strategy with a Delivery Plan, with clear measurable milestones and ambitious targets, and with transparent reporting arrangements is required. A Delivery Plan could help address the complexity of the system by bringing together the breadth of activities being undertaken by different departments led by different Ministers across Government and could help clearly demonstrate how each department is contributing, maximising their budgets and impact towards child poverty reduction.

Whilst there are many programmes and promising single poverty related initiatives, it is often difficult to demonstrate that existing activities are making a cumulative positive difference to the lives of children and families. Any Delivery Plan should therefore be subject to robust monitoring processes which would enable progress to be tracked and recorded, becoming a 'living document'.

Any policy and action to reduce poverty needs to be inclusive for all children, families should have equality of access to all financial support that is available to them from UK and Welsh Government. There is a need to identify any additional opportunities to provide a cohesive and coherent financial support systems for families in Wales, and to ensure that families are able to access the system easily at times of most need.

The direct voices of children and their families on how they experience living in poverty needs to be represented and a consultation and participation process system be in place as part of the delivery, monitoring and evaluation of the strategy.





**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 89**

**Ymateb gan: Stephanie Hoffman**

**Response from: Stephanie Hoffman, Head Social Action, ProMo-Cymru**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

As Head of Social Action at ProMo-Cymru, I have direct responsibility for the development, delivery and management of the Meic service; this includes informing and influencing strategy and policy on children's and young people's advocacy and right to be heard.

This service reaches and engages with a high volume of mostly seldom heard children and young people across Wales up to the age of 25, dealing with an average of 5000 helpline contacts per year; it is their stories reflected in the calls, instant message and text transcripts that informs the bulk of the response to this consultation.

As the Lead for the Meic service, I also represent Meic on the Children's Advocacy Providers Group, the Independent Advice Providers Forum, CWWYS forums, and have been an active participant and contributor to the task and Finish group for the Whole Schools / Systems Approach (WSA). We also work collaboratively with Swansea University's Observatory on the Human Rights of Children and the Children's Legal centre.

I also support ProMo-Cymru's active engagement with strategic partnerships and forums including the Wales Internet Safety Partnership (WISP), and groups established to inform the review of Youth Work provision in Wales.

I am also an active member of the Our Minds our Future Wales partnership with Hafal and Youth Access, aimed at coproducing improvements to young people's mental health and emotional well-being services and pathways.



As part of Promo-Cymru's senior management team, I am also actively engaged in developing and informing strategy and policy on digital inclusion, online / digital youth information and youth services, the service design approach aimed at coproducing solutions to challenges and concerns experienced by public / third sector organisations and professionals.

We have submitted written and oral evidence to the Committee's enquiries on various themes and issues, including suicide prevention, and the impact of Covid. We have contributed to the State of Children's Rights in Wales. We have contributed to Time to Deliver for Young People in Wales. We have contributed to the development of NASA, NEST, WSA, and more...

### **Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

1. **Promote and embed Meic** Wales' universal all issues, one stop information, advice and advocacy support service for all CYP in Wales
2. Ensure understanding, awareness and **application of children's and human rights**; there is a substantial disconnect during and after the transition from primary to secondary school and beyond –
3. Linked to this an understanding, awareness and application of the full spectrum of **advocacy** as the vehicle for CYP to project their individual and collective voice in order to influence, challenge and inform (better) decision-making
4. Development of **online information - seeking skills** to find, access and navigate tools and services to support and help CYP across all issues including the facilitation of self care and self –advocacy
5. Understanding, awareness and **application of emotional intelligence** and regulatory skills and tools to promote resilience, including how to conduct or deal with difficult conversations, disagreements, conflict - within the context of power, control, safety

### **Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

As above.

In addition: Extend the children's rights approach to include 16 – 25 year olds



### **Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

As above.

In addition:

1. Review and streamline legislation and policy in order to make more coherent in their cross-cutting application to CYP
2. Ensure CRIA (IAA) is embedded and applied with a view to ensure coherence and minimise the risk of fragmentation of service design, procurement and funding, delivery
3. Ensure resource allocation, commissioning and procurement arrangements and guidance are transparent, fair, longer term, and equitable
4. Ensure lessons from Covid are understood and applied
5. Ensure and promote understanding and application of online information, tools, resources and services as legitimate and essential parts of the landscape for the prevention, early, crisis, and other interventions for children and young people.
6. Review CYP advocacy legislation, policy and provision, including the National Approach to Statutory Independent Professional Advocacy (NASA)
7. Ensure residential visiting advocacy in children's homes and that this be a requirement of Registration with the Care Inspectorate

### **Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**

As above.

In addition:

1. A comprehensive, cross - cutting resourced national strategy for children and young people, with achievable and measureable actions subject to robust monitoring, evaluation and scrutiny arrangements
2. Promoting cross cutting coherence and streamlining across all devolved areas of Ministerial responsibility, and the mechanisms in place to support this, which have an impact on children and young people's journey into independent adulthood
3. A Minister with the specific portfolio and purpose to champion, promote and join up CYP rights and interests across all devolved responsibilities



**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 90**

**Ymateb gan:**

**Response from: Emma Phipps, Well-being Manager, Voices From Care Cymru**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

**Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

**Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

**Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

**Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**

Voices From Care Cymru exists to improve the lives of care experienced children and young people in Wales by being an independent voice for the care community to influence systemic and long term change.

Over the past year we have worked with our care experienced community asking them to highlight what they feel should be the Senedd's priorities over the next term.

Based on their responses and the recent Manifesto led and co-production with care experienced children and young people. The following outlines key asks for our care community in Wales.



There are many reasons why children and young people are in care however all will say they have experienced trauma within their childhood. Many live in foster care (3,520 children) Residential Care (470 children) Kinship Care; with a family member (1,348 Children). They tell us they are regularly made to feel different and stigmatised because they looked after. Care experienced children and young people in Wales, want Wales to lead the way to provide care which enables them to thrive, feel secure and belong. Care experienced children and young people in Wales believe their Government has the opportunity to do this.

Voices from Care Cymru, in partnership with care experienced young people are calling on you to seek your commitment to listen to 1,000 care experienced children and young people from across Wales to coproduce a care system built on aspirations and relationships. Voices from Care Cymru would welcome supporting our Government in achieving this.

Care experienced young people have identified five key asks which they believe the education committee can ensure is progressed and committed to. Together as a care community family we want to see a care system which provides all children and young people with the stability, support and love they need to thrive. The care system can achieve this. However, we know for too many children and young people the system creates instability which compounds the trauma they have already experienced. In order to make strides in making a care system which provides the support and interventions needs to allow our care experience children and young people to reach their full aspirations. they have asked for the following:

**Legislation to ensure excellence in Corporate Parenting** *Ensuring an extension of Corporate Parenting duties in legislation to all public bodies in Wales.*

This support for care experienced children and young people must be enshrined in legislation. All Corporate Parenting bodies should develop a strategy which outlines how they will better understand, assess the needs, promote the interests and provide opportunities for care experienced children and young people. There should be a commitment by cabinet through the creation of a children and young people minister; who will act as a key defender of care experienced children's rights up to the age of 25.

**To provide the missing middle in mental health and wellbeing services** *Reform of Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing services for care experienced young people is required.*

Care experienced children have a right to mental health support, many care experienced children are let down by not being provided the right mental health support at the right time. Corporate Parents such as health, social services and education should be working together to provide a joined-up approach to emotional and mental health services for care experienced children and young people.



Reforming how we assess the wellbeing of care experienced children throughout their care journey. Having professionals confident in understanding trauma informed approaches. Earlier intervention is key to stopping young people bouncing from service to service, resulting in their issues never being fully addressed and therefore escalating into adulthood. For those most in need, dedicated CAHMS resources for care experienced children and young people is needed. Wales needs a comprehensive mental health and wellbeing service which plugs the current missing middle; whilst meeting the needs of our most vulnerable children.

### **Lasting Loving Relationships should be at the centre of a young persons looked after journey.**

Relationships should be a key consideration in all decisions made with and about a young person's care, providing consistency throughout childhood and into adulthood. Strong relationships provide young people with a sense of stability, identity and belonging. These relationships can include individuals from statutory agencies, past and present foster carers, family members and friends. A young person's care review should be empowering, allowing children and young people to identify who are important to them. Ensuring life journey work provides a young person with a sense of their whole identify; not simply family. Most importantly no young person should be separated from their siblings, only in exceptional circumstances and 'contact' with siblings should be afforded the same importance as with birth parents.

### **Creation of a Care Leavers Commitment Cymru:**

A national commitment led by the First Minister to our care leavers up to the age of 25. Drawing on support from Local and National Governments, private sector and the voluntary sector to create a benchmarked series of commitments to our care leavers, regardless of where they live in Wales. This includes greater transitional support into independent living, work experience, paid employment, innovative opportunities to broaden care leavers horizons. The offer of quality housing, so no care leaver is placed in unsuitable or unregulated accommodation. Further consideration is needed for the evaluation, impact and the expansion of 'When I Am Ready' provision and any costs of participating in education, training and employment is needed. Voices believe a care leaver charter can be created and used to standardised and infrom a gold standard care provision to our young care leavers.

### **Profit Free Placements**

Young people tell us they feel upset, angry and commercialised when conversations on the costs of placements become a factor in their life. Removing incentives of accruing profit can ensure that every penny is spent on building stable, supportive and sustainable placements, instead of being diverted to distant shareholders. This



could be a not-for-profit or full cost recovery approach. Any approach should be phased in to ensure existing placements are not disrupted.

Voices from Care Cymru and its members from the care community in Wales would welcome supporting our Government and this committee in achieving and progressing towards the above key asks.

The above response is submitted by by Voices from Care Cymru on behalf of its members, care experienced young people in Wales



**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 91**

**Ymateb gan:**

**Response from: Elinor Crouch-Puzey, NGO Children's Policy Officer Group**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

**Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

**Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

**Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

**Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**

**Submitted by NSPCC Cymru/Wales, with and on behalf of the National Children's Charities Policy Group**

**Introduction**

This response brings together the overarching priorities of the contributing third sector children's charities (listed below). Primarily our response asks the committee to consider the importance of improved provision of family support and early intervention, which could help mitigate the impact of poverty and poor mental health in the family. Stressors in the family, while not a cause or excuse, may increase the risk of abuse and neglect and so our asks will also consider the importance of appropriately resourced support to meet safeguarding concerns, as well as the needs





of children on the edge of care and children who are care experienced. We ask the committee to consider these intersecting themes within the context Covid-19 and the impact the lockdowns had on children and their families and the ongoing legacy of the pandemic.

Our asks must be considered within an intersectional framework, that any work by the committee considers the specific experiences and barriers faced by Black, POC, Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, migrant, refugee & asylum seeker, children, young people and families who continue to experience high levels of inequality and discrimination in Wales. We particularly call on the committee to scrutinise Welsh Government's post-Brexit strategy to ensure EEA children and young people have equal access to education, healthcare, culturally appropriate accommodation and employment.

We refer the committee to the response from the UNCRC Monitoring Group and ask all decisions are made within a children's rights framework, where the importance of children, their rights and voices are central to any work carried out in their name.

We particularly note the following from the UNCRC response;

That the Committee;

- Undertake a follow-up review of the previous CYPE Committee's inquiry into 'Children's Rights in Wales' (2019-20) and the progress made by the Welsh Government to deliver the report's recommendations.
- As a core component for all future inquiries, to take account of the duty placed upon Welsh Ministers to have due regard to the UNCRC in all of their actions, and to ensure that effective and meaningful Child Rights Impact Assessments (CRIA) have been undertaken on all policy and legislation relevant to children.
- Work with other relevant Senedd Committees to ensure that cross-committee mechanisms are in place for sharing issues impacting on children, and that consideration is given to all UN Treaty recommendations relevant to progressing their human rights.

## **Poverty**

Whilst the economic impact of the pandemic has hit people across Welsh society, it is the poorest households, and especially those with children, who have been hardest hit. The Bevan Foundation's 'Snapshot of poverty in Winter 2020'<sup>1</sup> showed nearly a quarter of Welsh households have seen their income fall. This will only be compounded by the end of furlough and removal of the £20 uplift to Universal Credit. Research shows that poverty can have a similar impact on children as Adverse

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.bevanfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/A-snapshot-of-poverty-in-winter-2020.pdf>



Childhood Experiences, such as parental substance misuse or child abuse<sup>2</sup> and socio-economic disadvantage has an impact across a range of health indicators and educational attainment.

We ask the CYPE committee to support the following calls through their workplan;

- Support the call from our colleagues in the End Child Poverty Network for Welsh Government to publish a revised statutory Child Poverty Strategy with Delivery Plan, with clear measurable and ambitious milestones, supported by transparent monitoring arrangements. We ask the committee to undertake an inquiry into child poverty in Wales as part of this.
- Support our calls for an enhanced Flying Start service for all parents of 0-4-year old across Wales.
- Finally, we want to see an increase in the eligibility threshold for Free School Meals to ensure that all children whose parents are in receipt of Universal Credit are entitled during the school term and throughout the school holidays, and take steps towards universal entitlement for all.

## **Mental Health**

We welcome the recognition from Welsh Government of the impact of covid on children, young people and families' mental health and its commitment to tackle it. We are clear this work must be long-term, it must both mitigate the wider impacts of the pandemic and ensure early intervention and timely support is provided going forward.

We suggest the committee focus on the important role the Regional Partnership Boards can play in this field. Pre-pandemic integrated health and social care services for children were at the back of the queue in terms of RPB priorities. Part 9 guidance on partnership arrangements under the Act have been recently updated to include a focus on early intervention and prevention services for children and families, as well as integrated services for children with complex needs<sup>3</sup>. An inquiry by the Children's Commissioner for Wales reported on the issue in 2020.<sup>4</sup> In it the commissioner made recommendations for Welsh Government and RPB's relating to the provision of services for children with complex needs and the need for accessible, 'No Wrong

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<sup>2</sup><https://www.ncmedicaljournal.com/content/79/2/124#:~:text=Poverty%20is%20a%20strong%20reinforcing,adulthood%20%5B3%2C%204%5D.&text=Such%20cumulative%20exposure%20to%20adversity,developing%20brain%20of%20a%20child.>

<sup>3</sup> <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-02/part-9-statutory-guidance-partnership-arrangements.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.childcomwales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/NoWrongDoor\\_FINAL\\_EN230620.pdf](https://www.childcomwales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/NoWrongDoor_FINAL_EN230620.pdf)



Door' early support services, which Welsh Government subsequently accepted.<sup>5</sup> This should lead to a timely, clearer focus on the needs of children and families as we emerge from the health and social care challenge of a generation.

The programme for government includes the aims of 'tackling health inequalities, improving mental health provision and focussing on prevention' and meeting the needs of 'children, young people and families who face the greatest challenges'<sup>6</sup> It is imperative that Welsh Government continue to improve governance of RPBs to ensure that excellent, integrated health and social care early intervention and prevention services for children and families are established, going forward, if these aims are to be met. We ask the committee to monitor for this.

We ask the committee to focus on the importance of Advocacy Services for Children and Young People in line with the National Approach to Statutory Advocacy. This will enable all children and young people to have support to access their rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and to access the best education and health services available, particularly mental health services.

We welcome the previous committee's work on Mind Over Matter and ask the new committee to undertake a review of progress against the recommendations from the previous committee.

### **Safeguarding against violence and abuse**

A holistic response to children who experience violence and abuse is essential. We must see universal prevention and early intervention, crisis support and therapeutic recovery available across Wales. The pandemic spotlighted the epidemic of abuse in the home; risk increased for some children as incidents of violence and abuse became more frequent and severe, while other children became newly vulnerable to abuse in the home. The NSPCC helpline and Childline saw both an increase in contacts from adults concerned about children at risk of domestic abuse/from a child<sup>7</sup> living with domestic abuse and a 15% increase in referrals to outside agencies in 2020/21 about child sexual abuse, demonstrating a rise in complexity and risk. We cannot underestimate the impact of the past 18 months on this cohort of children, it will likely manifest in the months and years to come, services must be fully resourced to meet this demand.

We ask the committee to;

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<sup>5</sup> <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-11/welsh-government-response-to-annual-report-of-the-childrens-commissioner-for-wales-2019-2020.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-06/programme-for-government-2021-to-2026.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> The NSPCC Helpline saw 1500 contacts from adults during the national UK lockdown, while Childline delivered over 500 sessions to children worried about domestic abuse.



- Spotlight the shortfall in specialist service provision for children and the need for sustainable funding
- Back our calls on the importance of early intervention and that an element of funding for specialist support is ringfenced for prevention and early intervention work
- Undertake an inquiry into the response to child sexual abuse and what a service standard for Wales should look like, including consideration to what building blocks are needed to enable the roll out of the Child House model in Wales.

### **Children on the edge of and care experienced children and young people**

The impact of the pandemic on care experienced children and young people was and remains significant, in addition, the pandemic created newly vulnerable children who find themselves on the edge of care. We welcome the First Minister's commitment to safely reducing the number of children in care. But are clear this must not result in children being missed and that the best interests of the child must be paramount. The focus must be on ensuring all children that need to be safeguarded are identified, with an understanding that attempts to reduce numbers will be challenging in the aftermath of the pandemic given the added safeguarding concerns of lockdown.

We remain concerned about access to advocacy services and the so called active offer for care experienced children. In addition, we want to see Residential Visiting Advocacy a requirement of Registration and Inspection for children's homes and residential schools in Wales, to act as an added safeguard. This is particularly important in the wake of Covid-19 which has further isolated this vulnerable cohort of children. We ask the committee to consider this within a wider investigation into the experiences of looked after children in Wales.

In terms of young people leaving care. We welcomed the financial support from Welsh Government for young people as they exit care, particularly the recent additional support in response to the financial impact of Covid-19 and the recognition that this cohort of young people, 'may be experiencing financial hardship due to income loss, difficulty with tenancy agreements, food and other basic living necessities'. However, we believe it is appropriate to evaluate the effectiveness of this support; to find gaps in current provision; and to consider how support could be improved as the effects of the pandemic are felt in the months and years to come. Submitted by, and on behalf of the National Children's Charities Policy Group;

- Children in Wales
- Barnardo's Cymru



- NSPCC Cymru/Wales
- Save the Children
- The Children's Society
- Action for Children
- TGP Cymru



## USE OF YOUR INFORMATION

In order to enable us to handle your information in accordance with our [privacy notice](#), please complete the questions below. We will be unable to process your response if these questions are not completed.

**6. We have stated our intention to engage meaningfully with children and young people, in tailored and appropriate ways, in the autumn. However, if you are responding using this proforma and are under 13 years old, we will only be able to accept your response if your parent or guardian has confirmed that you can participate.** They can do this by sending us an email to [SeneddChildren@senedd.wales](mailto:SeneddChildren@senedd.wales).

**Are you under 13 years old?**

I am under 13 years old	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am 13 or over	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**7. Please choose one of the following options to confirm whether you would prefer that your name is not published alongside your evidence.**

We will not publish the names of people under the age of 18.

I am aged 18 or over and I am content for you to publish my name alongside my evidence	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I am aged 18 or over and I would prefer that you did not publish my name alongside my evidence.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am under the age of 18	<input type="checkbox"/>

**8. Please choose one of the following options to confirm whether you have agreement from any third parties referred to in your evidence that you can share information that may be used to identify them and that they understand that it may be published.**

I confirm that any third party I have referred to in my evidence has agreed that I can share information that may be used to identify them, and that they understand that it may be published.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I do not have the agreement of one or more of the third parties I have referred to in my evidence.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have not referred to any third parties in my evidence.	<input type="checkbox"/>



**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 92**

**Ymateb gan: Amber Courtney**

**Response from: Amber Courtney, UNISON Cymru Wales**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

**Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

Many school support staff are on term-time only contracts, unlike their teaching counterparts, and so will be taking on additional and often insecure work to make ends meet. There are wide discrepancies in how teaching assistants are paid and deployed across local authorities in Wales, leading to inequities across Wales.

School support staff make up the majority of the schools workforce in terms of education delivery. There are more registered learning support assistants than teaching staff. However, this group of workers are a largely unregulated workforce by comparison with teachers.

There is a legal obligation to backfill teaching staff where positions become vacant or where there is absence. There is not the same onus on Teaching Assistants (TAs), meaning a burden on other members of the education team where posts aren't backfilled. Because of inadequate funding, the TA role is often the first to be cut or schools spread their TA staff thinly, so pupils are not getting the support they need. Furthermore, where backfilling does occur for TA roles, it is not always done on the basis of need, but on the basis of cost. There is a minimum daily pay rate set for supply teaching staff, but this does not translate for teaching assistants other than the national minimum wage. Where backfilling of teaching assistants does occur, it is



more likely supply TAs will be brought in on the basis of cost, so as a Level 1 TA irrespective of the original postholders level or needs of the school.

There is also an increase in the numbers of supply TAs being registered compared to supply teachers and an increased use of supply TAs. UNISON is questioning why this is the case and we have concerns over whether TAs are being properly deployed and whether the workforce is being properly managed.

UNISON has long called for consistency across local authorities. TAs were registered with the promise that it would professionalise standards. UNISON was cautious that registration would be costly with little benefit to TAs. UNISON believes the job descriptions and pay needs to be standardised across Wales. UNISON is also opposed to term-time only contracts. Consistency across the sector would undoubtedly benefit the delivery of education – it would promote a more stable workforce and create a level playing field across the sector. It would also encourage workers into the sector and would enhance clear progression routes for members of the workforce. Overall, this can only have a positive impact on the delivery of education and the pupil experience.

## **Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

Based on experience to date, universities in Wales are going to avoid working in social partnership. The committee needs to hold Welsh Government account over how they intend to make partnership working effective in higher education.

## **Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

The health and wellbeing of children and young people must clearly be a priority as we move forward through the COVID crisis and beyond. However, it is important to recognise the pandemic has also negatively impacted the mental health and wellbeing of the schools workforce. Unless the workforce is properly supported, they in turn will be unable to provide that support and wellbeing for children and young people in education. Such support must not be limited to teaching staff alone. Many schools support staff, such as teaching assistants, provide pastoral care and support in the education environment and can often be the first port of call for pupils.





One in four of us will experience mental health problems at some stage in our working lives. At any one time one in six of us are estimated to be experiencing depression, anxiety, or problems relating to stress. 15% of employees attribute their condition to work alone, 65% to both work and non-work factors, and just 20% entirely to non-work issues.

COVID has undoubtedly exacerbated factors that can lead to poor mental health. Many school support staff worked throughout the pandemic in school Hubs, ensuring care and education was provided for vulnerable pupils and children of key workers. However, workplace factors prior to the pandemic will also have had a detrimental impact. Many of these issues have been outlined above.

Mental health and wellbeing are workplace issues. The benefits of good health and wellbeing policies are clear – reduced sickness absence, reduced staff turnover, less management time, raised productivity, and improved morale. Of course, this in turn allows support staff to more effectively support children and young people in their care.

Workplace policies and practices in schools, further education, higher education, and social care must support mental health and wellbeing. A clear, public commitment to ensuring good mental health and wellbeing practices is essential. The CYPE committee should scrutinise the work of the Welsh Government to ensure this work is being undertaken, and evidence should be gathered about the range of workplace policies or lack of policies that are available across the 22 authorities, and that all staff working in school must have the same opportunities for support regardless of their role.

UNISON believes consistency is key to ensuring school support staff are well equipped to maintain their own mental health and wellbeing, as well as offer support to those children and young people in the education and social care environment.

#### **Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**

Youth services – no child should be left behind. Almost one in three in Wales live in relative income poverty – a figure likely to worsen as a result of welfare reform and the pandemic. The combination of over a decade of cuts to youth services and the pandemic has been devastating to youth service provision.

This is undoubtedly impacting the mental health, wellbeing, and prospects for Wales' young people. Current rules allow youth service provision to be merged and



provided as part of a broad package of education and social care measures. As a result, real youth work is being lost.

When youth services go, benefits to young people and communities are lost – along with resulting savings in intervention services further down the line. Local authorities must have a genuine duty to provide universal, open access youth services, backed up by the necessary resources.

Children's services are a lifeline for many families, and this must not be forgotten.



This response was submitted to the Children, Young People and Education Committee consultation on Sixth Senedd Priorities

CYPE SP 93

Ymateb gan: Sarah Williamson

Response from: Sarah Williamson, Policy, parliamentary and public affairs officer, Royal College of Nursing Wales

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### Theme 1: School-age education

The Royal College of Nursing is a strong supporter of the 'Mind over Matter' report published by the fifth Senedd Children, Young People and Education Committee in 2018. Since 2018 it was recognised that there was a need for steep changes in emotional and mental health support for children and young people in Wales. COVID-19 has provided the opportunity to evaluate current capabilities and an opportunity to determine the extent of the need to expand services in order to improve mental health service.

COVID-19 has affected many school age children, it's been acknowledged that children and young people have recorded feeling anxious and distressed by the pandemic. Furthermore children or young people may have lost family members due to COVID-19 and will require support. Bereavement can be emotionally distressing for children and young people. It is important that a school is informed of a family bereavement so that they can offer any necessary support.

School nurses are in the ideal position to provide advice, support and referrals for pupils that have experienced distress and anxiety caused by COVID-19. However, in order to do so, the school nursing services require support in terms of their capacity including administrative capacity along with access to the latest resources and advice on referrals

Furthermore with the roll out of the COVID-19 vaccination to school aged children it is important that there are sufficient number of school nurses to support the vaccination effort and coordinate a programme if vaccinations are to be given in schools.

### Theme 2: Further and higher education

N/A

### Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)

#### **Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)**

- **The Committee should launch an inquiry into the specialist and residential mental health services.**

During the fifth Senedd, the Committee extensively look at the emotional and mental health of children and young people in their inquiry, 'Mind over matter'. The Committee launched an in depth inquiry in 2018 and followed up on this work in 2020.



Mind over matter looked at the emotional resilience of children and young people and the importance of providing help as early as possible. The Royal College of Nursing would welcome a follow up inquiry specifically looking into specialist and residential mental health inpatient services. A child or young person with severe and enduring mental ill-health who requires specialist services can be extremely vulnerable and experiencing a tremendously difficult time in their life. It is important that Wales can provide care for these individuals.

Being admitted to hospital or an inpatient facility for any ailment, at any age can be a worrying and stressful experience. When a child or young person requires inpatient care due to mental ill-health this add another dimension, with additional challenges for both the child or young person, those providing care and their families. To add to this, the experience can become further complex when the child or young patient is admitted to an unsuitable ward such as an adult ward because there is no room on a child ward, when the facility is far from home, for example in Birmingham, or when the child or young person's preferred language is Welsh. A child or young person should be cared for in an age-appropriate, caring and supportive environment. They should also receive care in their preferred language.

However currently, inpatient CAMHS are under an immense amount of pressure due to the increase service demand and a significant workforce shortage. This has led to children and young people who need inpatient services being placed on adult wards and in facilities far from home. The Royal College of Nursing believes specialist and residential mental health facilities need urgent investment to ensure the experience of being admitted for a child or young person is as stress free as it can be.

#### **Theme 4: Children and young people**

##### **Learning Disabilities**

- **The Committee should launch an inquiry into the services available for children and young people and their families with learning disabilities. This must include an assessment of the learning disability workforce.**

There are currently 16,000 children with a learning disability in Wales. Some learning disabilities are discovered at birth, whilst others are not identified until much later. The extent of a child's disability will become clearer as children grow and develop, e.g. talking, walking or reading.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on all area of society, but it is has become well known that the pandemic has had an unequal impact on pockets of society including those with learning disabilities. The effects of the pandemic on children with learning disabilities has yet to be fully explored.

However, the pandemic has exposed high levels of health inequalities within our society. People with learning disabilities already experienced more health inequalities than the general population, demonstrated by the increased rate of preventable deaths among those with a learning disability, and COVID-19 has sadly confirmed this. A report by Public Health Wales noted COVID-19 deaths are three to six times higher in those with a learning disability than the general population in



Wales.<sup>1</sup> The higher death rate mirrors the higher non-COVID-19 mortality rate experienced by those with learning disabilities.

The experience of those with learning disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic has not yet been fully understood, this is especially true for children and young people with learning disabilities.

Children with a learning disability are more likely to face challenges with physical and mental health, family poverty and difficulty at school. Support during the early years will boost early development and provide children the best start to life. This includes access to learning disability nurses who can provide support and guidance for the family and access the needs of a child or young person with a learning disability.

Children and young people with learning disabilities use health services just like everyone else. However it has been acknowledged that 97% of people with a learning disability have other co-existing conditions such as physical health conditions, mental ill-health, epilepsy and physical impairments.<sup>2</sup> This means that children and young people with learning disabilities will require continuous access to health services throughout their life.

A learning disability nurse can provide support for the individual in understanding and accessing health services. They are also vitally important for supporting a child or young person transitioning from child to adult services. The transition from child to adult services can be a confusing and stressful time for anyone but for a young person or child with a learning disability this can be extremely challenging, especially when services are ill-equipped for the transition. Health services can be poorly designed to meet the environmental requirement of people with learning disabilities, and not equip with the skills required to make the reasonable adjustments that would enable equitable access to healthcare. This is precisely why a learning disability nursing is crucial in every setting.

In 2020, we celebrated 100 years of learning disability nursing. Learning disability nursing is pivotal to ensuring individuals can receive the level of care they need. However Wales does not have enough learning disability nurse to meet current or future demand. Learning disability nurses are needed in every setting to ensure the appropriate care of an individual with a learning disability. The role of learning disability nursing should be celebrated and valued for the highly skilled, compassionate role that it is. Wales needs more pre-registration learning disability nurse and a career pathway for learning disability nurses to become advance nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists and consultant nurses'. The number of commissioned learning disability nursing places has remained static at a mere 77 a year since 2018/2019. Wales has also only had 1 learning disability nurse consultant since 2016. – this urgently needs to change.

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<sup>1</sup> Public Health Wales, 2021, *COVID-19-related deaths in Wales amongst People with Learning Disabilities from 1st March to 19th November 2020*, <https://phw.nhs.wales/publications/publications1/covid-19-related-deaths-in-wales-amongst-people-with-learning-disabilities-from-1st-march-to-19th-november-2020/>, [accessed 10 September 2021]

<sup>2</sup> National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, 2016.



## USE OF YOUR INFORMATION

In order to enable us to handle your information in accordance with our [privacy notice](#), please complete the questions below. We will be unable to process your response if these questions are not completed.

**6. We have stated our intention to engage meaningfully with children and young people, in tailored and appropriate ways, in the autumn. However, if you are responding using this proforma and are under 13 years old, we will only be able to accept your response if your parent or guardian has confirmed that you can participate.** They can do this by sending us an email to [SeneddChildren@senedd.wales](mailto:SeneddChildren@senedd.wales).

**Are you under 13 years old?**

I am under 13 years old	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am 13 or over	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**7. Please choose one of the following options to confirm whether you would prefer that your name is not published alongside your evidence.**

We will not publish the names of people under the age of 18.

I am aged 18 or over and I am content for you to publish my name alongside my evidence	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I am aged 18 or over and I would prefer that you did not publish my name alongside my evidence.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am under the age of 18	<input type="checkbox"/>

**8. Please choose one of the following options to confirm whether you have agreement from any third parties referred to in your evidence that you can share information that may be used to identify them and that they understand that it may be published.**

I confirm that any third party I have referred to in my evidence has agreed that I can share information that may be used to identify them, and that they understand that it may be published.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I do not have the agreement of one or more of the third parties I have referred to in my evidence.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have not referred to any third parties in my evidence.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 94**

**Ymateb gan: Mike Greenaway**

**Response from: Mike Greenaway, Director, Play Wales**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

**Theme 1: School-age education**

Play Wales has seen an increase in contact from parents with concerns about the the withdrawal of playtime as part of behaviour management policy and also because of the shortening of school days.

The practice of withdrawing breaktime as a punishment for bad behaviour, slow progress or forgetting equipment is still common across many schools. When playtime/breaktime is withdrawn or parts of it withheld, children are publicly humiliated, and for many that experience creates a negative situation. Excluding children from playtime can make them vulnerable to name calling, isolation or bullying. Ensuring that playtime exclusion does not feature in behaviour regulation strategies will encourage collaboration and co-operation, which helps children be happy and healthy.

It is important to note and pleasing that Welsh Government's *Framework on embedding a whole school approach to emotional and mental well-being*<sup>i</sup> now makes it explicit that play should not be removed from children at school as a form of punishment.

The importance of play in school for children of all ages is shared by others. Concerns about diminished opportunities for play at school, especially for vulnerable groups such as children with special educational needs and disabilities, and children living in poverty has already been highlighted by the British Psychological Society



Division of Child and Educational Psychologists in a Position Paper<sup>ii</sup>. Additionally, it has been found that curriculum pressures have led to reduced opportunities for play in schools<sup>iii</sup>.

The Active Healthy Kids Wales 2018 expert group recommended that providing sufficient breaks for play and would contribute to overall physical activity for children<sup>iv</sup>. Additionally, Estyn's *Healthy and happy – school impact on pupils' health and wellbeing* report<sup>v</sup> evaluates how well primary and secondary schools in Wales support the health and well-being of their pupils. The report makes several references to school play and break times. The report highlights that schools that apply a whole school approach to supporting health and well-being provide an environment, facilities and space to play, socialise and relax at break times.

In a 2019 report<sup>vi</sup> the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee expressed disappointment to hear that reductions in lunch breaks and break times (which provide daily opportunities to get active) are common in schools. It urged the Welsh Government to review how widespread this practice is in schools across Wales. Play Wales is not aware of such a review taking place.

**Play Wales recommends that during the sixth Senedd, the CYPE Committee:**

Considers the wide range of national policy and initiatives that support children to access their right to play across educational settings. It should scrutinise to what extent play is valued and provided for in these settings, not only for instrumental educational outcomes, but also for the immediate well-being benefits it brings to children of all ages.

## **Theme 2: Further and higher education**

The development and delivery of playwork qualifications at further education level have traditionally benefitted from and relied upon European funding. There is concern that the system of allocation of replacement funding will have a negative impact on the playwork qualifications, negatively impacting on the professional development of practitioners.

**Play Wales recommends that during the sixth Senedd, the CYPE Committee:**

Considers scrutinising the impact that changes to funding mechanisms have had on the sustainability of the development and delivery of playwork qualifications.





### **Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

In April 2020, The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed concerns about the physical, emotional and psychological effect of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated lockdowns and other measures on children.<sup>vii</sup> The Committee called on States to protect the rights of children. In particular, it stressed the need to consider the health, social, and recreational impacts of the pandemic on the rights of the child. It implored governments worldwide to explore alternative and creative solutions for children to enjoy their Article 31 rights to play, rest, leisure, recreation and cultural and artistic activities. Whilst the previous Children, Young People and Education Committee undertook its own inquiry into the impact of Covid-19, it is disappointing that there was little reference to the recognition of the importance of the right to play for a healthy and happy childhood.

Opportunities to play are particularly beneficial during a pandemic. The 2018 International Play Association's *Access to Play for Children in Situations of Crisis toolkit* notes that, '*In situations of crisis, stress, weakened physical and emotional development, feelings of lack of control and loss of trust steadily multiply if children lack everyday opportunities for play.*'<sup>viii</sup>

Some children reported playing more in the very early days of the pandemic<sup>ix</sup> and lockdown; however, these figures dropped significantly in January 2021<sup>x</sup>. Access to play varied for children in Wales, with many reporting missing school, friends and having opportunities to play and socialise<sup>xi</sup>. Children in disadvantaged circumstances were hard hit, especially those with no access to private gardens, or in neighbourhoods with little or no public space.<sup>xii</sup>

A rapid review of the impact of quarantine and environmental restrictions on children's play shows that play is considerably altered. Emerging evidence suggests that prolonged school closure, staying at home and social restrictions during outbreaks of disease could have serious consequences for children's physical and mental health.<sup>xiii</sup> A key conclusion from the review notes, that:

'as we learn how to support children living in and emerging from a pandemic-related lockdown, play may be one of the most important areas of focus to promote children's health and well-being.'<sup>xiv</sup>

Researchers, academics and advocates<sup>xv</sup> have raised concerns that at a time of increased stress and worry, children have also faced reduced access or significant change to play and the benefits it offers/affords for coping, enjoyment of life and development.

**Play Wales recommends that during the sixth Senedd, the CYPE Committee:**



Ensures that interventionist programmes for children intended to support Covid-19 recovery are complemented by a focus on supporting children to be active participants in building their own resilience. Any programmes that support children's physical and mental health should be scrutinised to ensure that they feature opportunities and time for self-directed play.

#### **Theme 4: Children and young people**

In terms of children's play, Welsh Government has led the way by publishing the world's first Play Policy in 2002, followed by a Play Sufficiency Duty, enacted in 2012 as part of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010.

There have been four small-scale research studies undertaken since the commencement of the Play Sufficiency Duty<sup>xvi</sup>. The studies draw together the successes and challenges facing local authorities in the implementation of the Play Sufficiency Duty.

The most recent research study<sup>xvii</sup> makes a number of recommendations regarding the conditions that can support local authorities to develop actions to secure sufficient opportunities for children to play. In summary, they include:

- policy alignment with, and promotion nationally and locally of, the Play Sufficiency Duty
- the right people in the right place at the right time with sufficient authority, capacity, capability and consistency
- a consistent and dedicated source of funding for Play Sufficiency
- existing and new information, including research (especially hyper local research with children and ways to share information)
- supporting organisational cultures that allow a response when opportunities arise.

We draw the Committee's attention to the current Ministerial Play Review<sup>xviii</sup>, commenced by the Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services in autumn 2019. The aim of the Review is to assess where Welsh Government is with respect to play policy and to inform how we develop and progress the play agenda. Unfortunately, the Review was stalled in March 2020 due to the pressures and uncertainties that the coronavirus pandemic brought. Welsh Government recommenced the Review in winter of 2020 and it is ongoing.

**Play Wales recommends that during the sixth Senedd, the CYPE Committee:**



Scrutinises Welsh Government's response to the Ministerial Play Review and its recommendations.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-03/framework-on-embedding-a-whole-school-approach-to-emotional-and-mental-well-being.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> Hobbs, C., et al. (2019) *Children's Right to play position paper*. Leicester: The British Psychological Society Division of Educational and Child Psychology.

<sup>iii</sup> Baines, E. and Blatchford, P. (2019) *School break and lunchtimes and young people's social life: A follow-up national study*. Final report (EDU/42402) to the Nuffield Foundation.

<sup>iv</sup> Edwards, L. C., et. al (2018) Results From Wales' 2018 Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth *Journal of Physical Activity and Health* 15, s2; [10.1123/jpah.2018-0544](https://doi.org/10.1123/jpah.2018-0544)

<sup>v</sup> Estyn (2019) *Healthy and happy – school impact on pupils' health and wellbeing* report. Cardiff: Crown copyright 2019 <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/thematic-report/healthy-and-happy-school-impact-pupils-health-and-wellbeing>

<sup>vi</sup> National Assembly for Wales Health, Social Care and Sport Committee (2019) *Physical Activity of Children and Young People*. Cardiff: National Assembly for Wales Commission Copyright 2019.

<sup>vii</sup> [The Committee on the Rights of the Child warns of the grave physical, emotional and psychological effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on children and calls on States to protect the rights of children](#)

<sup>viii</sup> King-Sheard, M., Mannello, M. and Casey, T. (eds) (2018) *Access to Play for Children in Situations of Crisis: Play: rights and practice: A toolkit for staff, managers and policy makers*. Faringdon: International Play Association, page 4.

<sup>ix</sup> Children's Commissioner for Wales (2020) *Coronavirus and Me*. Swansea: Children's Commissioner for Wales.

<sup>x</sup> Children's Commissioner for Wales (2021) *Coronavirus and Me*. Swansea: Children's Commissioner for Wales.

<sup>xi</sup> Children in Wales (2021) *Children and Young People's Consultation on the Ministerial Play Review*. Cardiff: Children in Wales.

<sup>xii</sup> Health & Attainment of Pupils in a Primary Education Network (2020) *HAPPEN at Home Survey – Early Results for Schools report*. Swansea: HAPPEN; Children's Commissioner for Wales (2020) *Coronavirus and Me*. Swansea: Children's Commissioner for Wales.

<sup>xiii</sup> Graber, K. M., Byrne, E. M., Goodacre, E. J., et al. A rapid review of the impact of quarantine and restricted environments on children's play and the role of play in children's health. *Child Care Health Dev.* 2021; 47: 143– 153. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cch.12832>

<sup>xiv</sup> Ibid, page 1.

<sup>xv</sup> See for instance: Russell, W. and Stenning, A. (2020) Beyond active travel: children, play and community on streets during and after the coronavirus lockdown, *Cities & Health*, DOI: [10.1080/23748834.2020.1795386](https://doi.org/10.1080/23748834.2020.1795386); Gill, T. and Monro-Miller, R. (2020) *Play in Lockdown: An international study of government and civil society responses to Covid-19*.

*and their impact on children's play and mobility*. Faringdon: International Play Association; Cartwright-Hatton, et al. (2020) *Play First: Supporting Children's Social and Emotional Wellbeing During and After Lockdown*. Brighton: University of Sussex.

<sup>xvi</sup> See Play Wales website: [Play Sufficiency Research](#)

<sup>xvii</sup> Russell, W., Barclay, M., Tawil, B. and Derry, C. (2020) *Making it Possible to do Play Sufficiency: Exploring the conditions that support local authorities to secure sufficient opportunities for children in Wales to play*, Cardiff: Play Wales.

<sup>xviii</sup> <https://gov.wales/written-statement-update-ministerial-play-review? ga=2.179183204.1752561893.1578568171-2102679765.1568392042>



**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg ar Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 94**

**Ymateb gan: Mike Greenaway**

**Response from: Mike Greenaway, Director, Play Wales**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

### **Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol**

Mae Chwarae Cymru wedi gweld cynnydd mewn cysylltiadau oddi wrth rieni gyda phryderon am dynnu amser chwarae'n ôl fel rhan o bolisiau rheoli ymddygiad a hefyd oherwydd cwtogi'r diwrnod ysgol.

Mae'r arfer o dynnu amser egwyl yn ôl fel cosb am ymddygiad gwael, cynnydd araf neu anghofio offer yn dal i fod yn gyffredin ar draws llawer o ysgolion. Pan gaiff amser chwarae / egwyl ei dynnu'n ôl neu pan ddelir rhan ohono'n ôl, caiff plant eu bychanu'n gyhoeddus, ac i lawer o blant mae hynny'n creu sefyllfa negyddol. Gall eithrio plant o amser chwarae olygu y gallai plant eraill alw enwau arnynt, eu hynysu neu eu bwlio. Bydd sicrhau nad yw eithrio amser chwarae'n rhan o strategaethau rheoleiddio ymddygiad yn annog cydweithio a chydweithredu, sy'n helpu plant i fod yn iach a hapus.

Mae'n bwysig nodi ac yn bleser i weld bod *Fframwaith ar sefydlu dull ysgol gyfan ar gyfer llesiant emosiynol a meddyliol*<sup>i</sup> Llywodraeth Cymru bellach yn ei gwneud yn glir na ddylid tynnu cyfleoedd i chwarae'n ôl oddi ar blant yn yr ysgol fel dull i gosbi.

Mae pwysigrwydd chwarae yn yr ysgol ar gyfer plant o bob oed yn cael ei rannu gan eraill. Mae pryderon am lai o gyfleoedd i chwarae yn yr ysgol, yn enwedig i grwpiau bregus fel plant sydd ag anghenion addysgol arbennig ac anabledau, a phlant sy'n byw mewn tlodi, eisoes wedi eu hamlygu gan Adran Seicolegwyr Plant ac Addysg, Cymdeithas Seicolegol Prydain mewn Papur Sefyllfa<sup>ii</sup>. Yn ogystal, canfuwyd bod pwysau'r cwricwlwm wedi arwain at lai o gyfleoedd i chwarae mewn ysgolion<sup>iii</sup>.



Argymhellodd grŵp arbenigol Active Healthy Kids Wales 2018 y byddai darparu digon o egwyliau ar gyfer chwarae yn cyfrannu at weithgarwch corfforol cyffredinol i blant<sup>iv</sup>. Yn ogystal, mae adroddiad Estyn *Iach ahapus – Effaith yr ysgol ar iechyd a llesiant disgyblion*<sup>v</sup> yn gwerthuso pa mor dda mae ysgolion cynradd ac uwchradd Cymru'n cefnogi iechyd a llesiant eu disgyblion. Mae'r adroddiad yn gwneud nifer o gyfeiriadau at amser chwarae ac egwyl mewn ysgolion. Mae'r adroddiad yn pwysleisio bod ysgolion sy'n defnyddio agwedd ysgol gyfan tuag at gefnogi iechyd a llesiant yn darparu amgylchedd, cyfleusterau a lle i chwarae, cymdeithasu ac ymlacio yn ystod amser egwyl.

Mewn adroddiad yn 2019<sup>vi</sup> mynegodd y Pwyllgor Iechyd, Gofal Cymdeithasol a Chwaraeon eu siom o glywed bod cwtogi amser cinio ac egwyliau (sy'n cynnig cyfleoedd dyddiol i fod yn fywiog) yn arferiad cyffredin mewn ysgolion. Anogodd Lywodraeth Cymru i adolygu pa mor eang yw'r arfer hwn mewn ysgolion ledled Cymru. Nid yw Chwarae Cymru'n ymwybodol os cynhaliwyd adolygiad o'r fath.

### **Mae Chwarae Cymru'n argymhell y dylai'r Pwyllgor PPIA, yn ystod y chweched Senedd:**

Ystyried yr ystod eang o fentrau a pholisi cenedlaethol sy'n cefnogi plant i dderbyn eu hawl i chwarae ar draws lleoliadau addysgol. Dylai graffu i ba raddau y mae chwarae'n cael ei werthfawrogi a'i ddarparu ar ei gyfer yn y lleoliadau hyn, nid yn unig ar gyfer deilliannau addysgol cyfrannol, ond hefyd ar gyfer y buddiannau llesiant uniongyrchol y mae'n eu sicrhau ar gyfer plant o bob oed.

### **Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch**

Yn draddodiadol, bu i ddatblygiad a throsglwyddiad cymwysterau gwaith chwarae ar lefel addysg bellach elwa o a dibynnu ar gyllid Ewropeaidd. Mynegwyd pryderon y caiff y system o ddyrannu cyllid newydd effaith negyddol ar y cymwysterau gwaith chwarae, gan effeithio'n negyddol ar ddatblygiad proffesiynol ymarferwyr.

### **Mae Chwarae Cymru'n argymhell y dylai'r Pwyllgor PPIA, yn ystod y chweched Senedd:**

Ystyried craffu ar yr effaith y mae newidiadau i fecanweithiau cyllido wedi ei gael ar gynaliadwyedd datblygu a throsglwyddo cymwysterau gwaith chwarae.

### **Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc)**

Ym mis Ebrill 2020, mynegodd Pwyllgor y CU ar Hawliau'r Plentyn bryderon am effeithiau corfforol, emosiynol a seicolegol y pandemig COVID-19, a'r cyfnodau clo a mesurau cysylltiedig eraill, ar blant<sup>vii</sup>. Galwodd y Pwyllgor ar i Wladwriaethau warchod hawliau plant.



Pwysleisiodd, yn benodol, yr angen i ystyried effeithiau iechyd, cymdeithasol, ac adloniant y pandemig ar hawliau'r plentyn. Crefodd ar lywodraethau ledled y byd i archwilio datrysiadau amgen a chreadigol er mwyn i blant fwynhau eu hawliau dan Erthygl 31 i chwarae, gorffwys, hamdden, adloniant a gweithgareddau diwylliannol a chelfyddydol. Er i'r Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg blaenorol gynnal ei ymchwiliad ei hun i effaith Covid-19, mae'n siomedig nad oedd fawr o gyfeiriad at y gydnabyddiaeth o bwysigrwydd yr hawl i chwarae ar gyfer plentynod iach a hapus.

Mae cyfleoedd i chwarae'n arbennig o fuddiol yn ystod pandemig. Mae pecyn cymorth yr International Play Association - *Access to Play for Children in Situations of Crisis toolkit* 2018 - yn nodi, *'Mewn sefyllfaoedd o argyfwng, bydd straen, datblygiad corfforol ac emosïynol gwannach, teimladau o ddiffyg rheolaeth a cholli ymddiriedaeth yn cynyddu'n raddol os bydd plant heb gyfleoedd i chwarae bob dydd.'*<sup>viii</sup>

Dywedodd rhai plant eu bod yn chwarae mwy ar gychwyn cyntaf y pandemig<sup>ix</sup> a'r cyfnod clo; fodd bynnag, cwmpodd y ffigyrau hyn yn sylweddol ym mis Ionawr 2021<sup>x</sup>. Amrywiodd mynediad i chwarae ar gyfer plant yng Nghymru, gyda llawer yn nodi eu bod yn methu'r ysgol, ffrindiau a chael cyfleoedd i chwarae a chymdeithasu<sup>xi</sup>. Cafodd plant mewn amgylchiadau difreintiedig eu bwrw'n galed, yn enwedig y rheini heb ddefnydd gerddi preifat, neu mewn cymdogaethau heb ddim neu fawr ddim gofod cyhoeddus.<sup>xii</sup>

Mae adolygiad cyflym o effeithiau cwarantîn a chyfyngiadau amgylcheddol ar chwarae plant yn dangos bod chwarae'n cael ei altro'n sylweddol. Mae tystiolaeth newydd yn awgrymu y gallai cau ysgolion am gyfnodau maith, aros adref a chyfyngiadau cymdeithasol yn ystod achosion o afiechyd, achosi canlyniadau difrifol ar gyfer iechyd corfforol a meddyliol plant.<sup>xiii</sup> Mae un o gasgliadau allweddol yr adolygiad yn nodi:

'wrth inni ddysgu sut i gefnogi plant sy'n byw trwy ac yn dod allan o gyfnod clo oherwydd  
pandemig, efallai mai chwarae fydd un o'r meysydd ffocws pwysicaf er mwyn hyrwyddo iechyd a  
llesiant plant.'<sup>xiv</sup>

Mae ymchwilwyr, academyddion ac eiriolwyr<sup>xv</sup> wedi mynegi pryderon bod plant, ar adeg o straen a phryder cynyddol, hefyd wedi wynebu llai o fynediad neu newid sylweddol i chwarae a'r buddiannau y mae'n ei gynnig ar gyfer ymdopi, mwynhau bywyd a datblygu.

### **Mae Chwarae Cymru'n argymhell y dylai'r Pwyllgor PPIA, yn ystod y chweched Senedd:**

Sicrhau bod rhaglenni ymyraethol ar gyfer plant, y bwriedir iddynt gefnogi adferiad ar ôl Covid-19, yn cael eu cyfannu gan ffocws ar gefnogi plant i fod yn gyfranogwyr gweithredol wrth gryfhau eu gwytnwch eu hunain. Dylid craffu ar unrhyw raglenni sy'n cefnogi iechyd corfforol a meddyliol plant er mwyn sicrhau eu bod yn cynnwys cyfleoedd ac amser ar gyfer chwarae a gyfarwyddir yn bersonol



## Thema 4: Plant a phobl ifanc

O ran chwarae plant, mae Llywodraeth Cymru wedi arwain y ffordd trwy gyhoeddi'r Polisi Chwarae cyntaf yn y byd yn 2002, a'i ddilyn gyda Dyletswydd Cyfleoedd Chwarae Digonol, a ddaeth i rym yn 2012 fel rhan o Fesur Plant a Theuluoedd (Cymru) 2010.

Cynhaliwyd pedair astudiaeth ymchwil graddfa fechan ers cychwyn y Ddyletswydd Cyfleoedd Chwarae Digonol<sup>xvi</sup>. Mae'r astudiaethau'n dwyn ynghyd y llwyddiannau a'r heriau sy'n wynebu awdurdodau lleol wrth weithredu'r Ddyletswydd Cyfleoedd Chwarae Digonol.

Mae'r astudiaeth ymchwil ddiweddaraf<sup>xvii</sup> yn gwneud nifer o argymhellion ynghylch yr amodau all gefnogi awdurdodau lleol i ddatblygu camau gweithredu i sicrhau cyfleoedd digonol i blant chwarae. Maent, yn gryno, yn cynnwys:

- alinio polisi gyda'r Ddyletswydd Cyfleoedd Chwarae Digonol, a'i hyrwyddo'n lleol ac yn genedlaethol
- y bobl gywir yn y man cywir ar yr adeg gywir gydag awdurdod, capasiti, gallu a chysondeb digonol
- ffynhonnell benodol a chyson o gyllid ar gyfer Digonolrwydd Chwarae
- gwybodaeth gyfredol a newydd, yn cynnwys ymchwil (yn enwedig ymchwil hynod-leol gyda phlant a ffyrdd i rannu gwybodaeth)
- cefnogi diwylliannau sefydliadol sy'n caniatáu ymateb pan fo cyfleoedd yn codi.

Hoffem dynnu sylw'r Pwyllgor at yr Adolygiad Gweinidogol o Gyfleoedd Chwarae<sup>xviii</sup> cyfredol, a gychwynnwyd gan y Dirprwy Weinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol yn ystod hydref 2019. Nod yr Adolygiad yw asesu ble mae Llywodraeth Cymru'n sefyll o ran y polisi chwarae ac i hysbysu sut y gallwn ddatblygu a symud yr agenda chwarae yn ei blaen. Yn anffodus, cafodd yr Adolygiad ei ohirio ym mis Mawrth 2020 oherwydd y pwysau a'r ansicrwydd ddaeth yn sgil y pandemig coronafeirws. Ail-gychwynnodd Llywodraeth Cymru yr Adolygiad yn ystod gaeaf 2020, ac mae'n parhau.

### **Mae Chwarae Cymru'n argymhell y dylai'r Pwyllgor PPIA, yn ystod y chweched Senedd:**

Craffu ar ymateb Llywodraeth Cymru i'r Adolygiad Gweinidogol o Gyfleoedd Chwarae a'i argymhellion.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://llyw.cymru/sites/default/files/publications/2021-03/fframwaith-ar-sefydlu-dull-ysgol-gyfan-ar-gyfer-lliesiant-emosiynol-a-meddyliol.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> Hobbs, C., et al. (2019) *Children's Right to play position paper*. Caerlŷr: The British Psychological Society Division of Educational and Child Psychology.

<sup>iii</sup> Baines, E. a Blatchford, P. (2019) *School break and lunchtimes and young people's social life: A follow-up national study*. Adroddiad terfynol (EDU/42402) i'r Nuffield Foundation.

<sup>iv</sup> Edwards, L. C., et. al (2018) Results From Wales' 2018 Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth *Journal of Physical Activity and Health* 15, s2; [10.1123/jpah.2018-0544](https://doi.org/10.1123/jpah.2018-0544)



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- <sup>v</sup> Estyn (2019) *Adroddiad Iach a Hapus – Effaith yr Ysgol ar Iechyd a Llesiant Disgyblion*. Caerdydd: Hawlfraint y Goron 2019 [www.estyn.llyw.cymru/adroddiadau-thematig/iach-hapus-effaith-yr-ysgol-ar-iechyd-llesiant-disgyblion?\\_ga=2.155481149.703300380.1631797048-1798201523.1631535543](http://www.estyn.llyw.cymru/adroddiadau-thematig/iach-hapus-effaith-yr-ysgol-ar-iechyd-llesiant-disgyblion?_ga=2.155481149.703300380.1631797048-1798201523.1631535543)
- <sup>vi</sup> Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru, Y Pwyllgor Iechyd, Gofal Cymdeithasol a Chwaraeon (2019) *Gweithgarwch corfforol ymhlith plant a phobl ifanc*. Caerdydd: Hawlfraint Comisiwn Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru 2019.
- <sup>vii</sup> [The Committee on the Rights of the Child warns of the grave physical, emotional and psychological effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on children and calls on States to protect the rights of children](#)
- <sup>viii</sup> King-Sheard, M., Mannello, M. a Casey, T. (gol) (2018) *Access to Play for Children in Situations of Crisis: Play: rights and practice: A toolkit for staff, managers and policy makers*. Faringdon: International Play Association, tud 4.
- <sup>ix</sup> Comisiynydd Plant Cymru (2020) *Coronafeirws a Fi*. Abertawe: Comisiynydd Plant Cymru.
- <sup>x</sup> Comisiynydd Plant Cymru (2021) *Coronafeirws a Fi*. Abertawe: Comisiynydd Plant Cymru.
- <sup>xi</sup> Plant yng Nghymru (2021) *Children and Young People's Consultation on the Ministerial Play Review*. Caerdydd: Plant yng Nghymru.
- <sup>xii</sup> Health & Attainment of Pupils in a Primary Education Network (2020) *HAPPEN at Home Survey – Early Results for Schools report*. Abertawe: HAPPEN; Comisiynydd Plant Cymru (2020) *Coronafeirws a Fi*. Abertawe: Comisiynydd Plant Cymru.
- <sup>xiii</sup> Graber, K. M., Byrne, E. M., Goodacre, E. J., *et al.* A rapid review of the impact of quarantine and restricted environments on children's play and the role of play in children's health. *Child Care Health Dev.* 2021; 47: 143– 153. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cch.12832>
- <sup>xiv</sup> *Ibid*, tud 1.
- <sup>xv</sup> Gweler, er enghraifft: Russell, W. a Stenning, A. (2020) Beyond active travel: children, play and community on streets during and after the coronavirus lockdown, *Cities & Health*, DOI: [10.1080/23748834.2020.1795386](https://doi.org/10.1080/23748834.2020.1795386); Gill, T. a Monro-Miller, R. (2020) *Play in Lockdown: An international study of government and civil society responses to Covid-19 and their impact on children's play and mobility*. Faringdon: International Play Association; Cartwright-Hatton, *et al.* (2020) *Play First: Supporting Children's Social and Emotional Wellbeing During and After Lockdown*. Brighton: Prifysgol Sussex.
- <sup>xvi</sup> Gweler gwefan Chwarae Cymru: [Ymchwil Digonolrwydd Chwarae](#)
- <sup>xvii</sup> Russell, W., Barclay, M., Tawil, B. a Derry, C. (2020) *Making it Possible to do Play Sufficiency: Exploring the conditions that support local authorities to secure sufficient opportunities for children in Wales to play*, Caerdydd: Chwarae Cymru.
- <sup>xviii</sup> [https://llyw.cymru/datganiad-ysgrifenedig-y-diweddaraf-am-adolygiad-gweinidogol-o-gyfleoedd-chwarae?\\_ga=2.179183204.1752561893.1578568171-2102679765.1568392042](https://llyw.cymru/datganiad-ysgrifenedig-y-diweddaraf-am-adolygiad-gweinidogol-o-gyfleoedd-chwarae?_ga=2.179183204.1752561893.1578568171-2102679765.1568392042)





**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 95**

**Ymateb gan: Greg Ellwood-Hughes**

**Response from: Greg Ellwood-Hughes, Policy and Media Officer, Parentkind**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

**Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

Parentkind is the largest network of PTA fundraisers in the UK. We bring specialist fundraising support and advice to parent volunteers so that every school can benefit from a successful PTA. Our 13,000 PTA members raise over £120+ million per year, placing us alongside some of the largest charities in the UK. As a national charity, Parentkind give parents a voice in education. We invest substantial resources in representing parent views on their child's learning to local, regional and national governments and agencies because evidence tells parental participation in education benefits all children in all schools and society as a whole.

Too often, education policy in all parts of the UK is made without reference to parents' views. Parents are generally positioned as recipients of information rather than active agents in their children's education.

There is currently no universal mandatory requirement for a parent body to be established in every school, and there are no direct policies or statements on the introduction of a parental participation framework. Therefore, in line with our manifesto asks, Parentkind believes the priorities for education in Wales should be:



1. A representative parent body to be present in every school in Wales with key stakeholders acknowledging the value of, and endorsing the requirement for, every school to have a parent body such as a PTA, Parent Support Group or Parent Council with a view to making this a statutory requirement if they are not established voluntarily.

2. Teacher training and Continuing Professional Development must include meaningful training in why and how to engage with parents for the benefit of the children. Many teachers are thrust into parental interactions without understanding why they are worthwhile and how to get the most for the child through the relationship. Let's invest in our teachers to build a partnership approach with our parents.

3. Include parental participation in the inspection and assessment criteria of our schools by Estyn. The measure of a school's success must evidence how parent voice and engagement are at the core rather than the fringe. Our education system needs to be assessed on how it is working with parents as partners. Simply put, when schools are inspected, parental engagement must form a core of Estyn's common framework. Parentkind's Blueprint for Parent-Friendly Schools\* is a tool for building a more rigorous way to analyse and ultimately support Wales' schools to become outstanding globally in education.

4. Enable wider use of parental consultation in schools. As a major education stakeholder, parents deserve a seat at the table when decisions are taken about schools at a local, regional and national level recognising parents as partners in education. Parents are increasingly demanding a say in how decisions are made, but what must be clear is how they can have this say beyond their own school. We ask the next Welsh Government to work with Parentkind to create an inclusive path for parents to have a seat at the decision making tables - in their communities, councils, consortia, and in Cathays Park. Parents are essential stakeholders as policy is developed for their children's education. Parent consultation enables parents to support schools more effectively. We would like to see Welsh Government publish statutory guidance outlining clear minimum requirements for schools regarding parent consultation, and publish non-statutory guidance for schools on effective parent consultation.



5. Parent consultation at local, regional and national levels. Parentkind wants Welsh Government to establish processes for formally consulting with parents about children's education. This may include building greater parent consultation into decision-making and publishing statutory guidance for local authorities on how they can consult with parents over local educational and schooling policy issues. An example is the new curriculum. Curriculum for Wales 2022 is a radical overhaul of how schools teach their students, and the content that teachers will deliver. As part of the revised curriculum, the parent's right to withdraw their child from sex education classes is being removed. However, guidance for schools on developing a vision for their new curricula states parents, carers and the wider community should be consulted. Parentkind's Blueprint for Parent-Friendly Schools is the ideal mechanism for maximising schools' parental participation strategies, and can be mapped on to existing strategies with little extra demand on teachers' time.

### **\*Using Parentkind's Blueprint for Parent-Friendly Schools to increase parent participation in schools**

Parentkind wants to see high-quality parent participation take centre stage in schools, and for it to be embedded in accordance with the principles set out in [Parentkind's Blueprint for Parent-Friendly Schools](#). Research for Parentkind has found that high quality parental participation has five drivers:

1. Leadership, ethos and resources
2. Effective two-way communication
3. Supporting learning at home
4. Involvement in school life
5. Community engagement

Our Blueprint for Parent Friendly Schools provides a framework that supports school leaders to maximise parental engagement and involvement to create successful home-school partnerships. Please contact us at [greg.ellwood-hughes@parentkind.org.uk](mailto:greg.ellwood-hughes@parentkind.org.uk) to discuss any of the above policy solutions.

### **Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

N/A



**Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

N/A

**Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**

Better parental participation in school life and effective parent consultation in local, regional and national decision-making would improve educational outcomes for children. Ensuring that no parent feels alienated by their child's school would have many positive impacts, including on behaviour, attendance, building stronger communities and increasing social mobility. When parents are actively and positively participating in their child's learning, the school experience and academic outcomes for the child improve, helping every child to reach their potential.



**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 96**

**Ymateb gan:**

**Response from: Individual**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

**Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

The end of mixed sex toilets in school. My girls all go to q school with these and avoid going to the toilet as they tell me the boys in there kick the cubicle doors, comment loudly on how long they are taking and any noises. They are scared in case they are cornered in the toilets by boys. The school tells me this system cuts down on bullying but it doesn't. St cyres featuring in the everyone's included website doesn't surprise me. I am also concerned that with the rapid onset gender dysphoria that is prevalent in schools, my daughters will have to share a changing room with a biological male who identifies as a woman.

Porn is a problem in schools – especially the sending of 'dick pics'. The pse lessons seem to be more about gender and trans and being kind than about breaking sex stereotypes, accepting feminine men in male spaces and not thinking of women by their appearance and or availability to men.

Help for gender dysphoria is woefully lacking. NHS recommends watchful waiting and studies show most children mature and accept their sex. The trans ideology that puberty blockers and confirming the child's belief that they are the opposite sex is the way schools are dealing with this issue.



**Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

**Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

**Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**



**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 97**

**Ymateb gan: Tessa Marshall**

**Response from: Tessa Marshall , Policy Assistant, Sport Wales**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

### **Overview**

Sport Wales is the national organisation responsible for developing and promoting sport and physical activity in Wales. As the main adviser to the Welsh Government on sport and the delivery of the Vision for Sport in Wales, we welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation on the Children, Young People, and Education committee's priorities for the sixth Senedd.

In this response, we seek to highlight key areas of work advocating for the influence of sport in driving education, health, and wellbeing outcomes for children, young people, and education. We ask the committee offers support to this work through its scrutiny of the implementation of the curriculum for Wales and changes to the school day and year, which will see the opportunity for physical activity to be more substantially embedded in school-age children's lives.

Our work is evidence-based and supports the Programme for Government. We hope the committee will be able to:

- **Support** our work by advocating for the importance of physical activity in the new curriculum; acknowledging and supporting the important role of physical activity and sport within the health and wellbeing AOLE and enhancing other areas of learning, supporting the achievement of all four purposes, and increasing the impact of the Curriculum for Wales with physical literacy-informed learning.



- **Scrutinise** the offer for physical activity in schools and education settings by supporting the upskilling of teachers, in preparation for the new Curriculum for Wales.
- **Review policies on enhancing** the school day to ensure it provides real benefits for children and young people, improving education, health, and wellbeing outcomes for all.
- **Collaborate** with children and young people, including by working with our Youth Panel and Young Ambassadors, and our other working and focus groups to support and enhance the provision of sport and physical activity for children and young people across Wales.

Sport Wales' strategic intents – to be person centred; to give every young person a great start; ensuring everyone has the opportunity to be active through sport; to bring people together for the long term; showcase the benefit of sport; and to be a highly valued organisation – are directly informed by our commitments to children, young people, and future generations.

We want Wales to be a healthy and active nation, and this must start with children and young people, their teachers, parents or carers, and their communities, to deliver lifelong relationships with physical activity. We ask the committee to scrutinise the provision of sport and physical activity for children and young people, to ensure this can improve the health and wellbeing outcomes available, and to work with us to ensure these mental health, physical health, wellbeing, cultural, educational, and economic benefits can be felt by all.

## **Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

Sport Wales believes there is an important role for this committee in scrutinising the enhancement of the sporting and physical activity provision for children and young people during their school-age education. We have worked with Government and education providers to support the development of the Curriculum for Wales, a crucial change modernising our education system in Wales. Sport and physical activity makes up a key element ensuring learners achieve the four purposes, with a focus on Healthy and Confident Individuals, and we are keen that the Area of Learning and Experience for Health and Wellbeing, which has physical activity clearly embedded within it, is firmly embedded in the delivery of the new curriculum and that the committee's scrutiny of the curriculum's delivery draws out where this is working and where it isn't.

Sport Wales' aim is to gain a better understanding of the infrastructure of the new Curriculum to improve the capability, capacity and confidence of teachers, as we know that teachers' confidence in supporting the development of physical activity skills is paramount to a child's learning and understanding of being physically active.





Further, in the Sixth Senedd, Sport Wales would like to see active education systems where the new curriculum combined with an enhanced school day will ensure every child has access to sport and physical activity opportunities beyond the school day, and that schools utilise their facilities when necessary to serve the needs of their community. The Welsh Government, alongside its Summer of Fun, has provided us and the Arts Council funding to trial what works and what are the barriers in delivering such a policy.

### **The Curriculum for Wales**

Through our engagement in the development of the new curriculum, we have advocated for a move away from sport and physical activity as 'just' a PE lesson.

**Physical activity is a skill**, and a crucial aspect of personal development which can ensure children and young people are **physically literate, physically and mentally healthy, have high levels of wellbeing, and can be healthy and active for life**; easing pressures on the health service in the long term, building community cohesion, and strong local economies.

Therefore, it is important to ensure adequate physical literacy-informed formal teaching through sport as part of a clear and expected component within the new curriculum. Physical literacy and **daily engaging and positive forms of physical activity can contribute to lifelong physical and mental health benefits**, decreasing social isolation and loneliness, enhancing physical health and wellbeing, and improving all learning during the school day.

Through insight and research, it is clear that enhancing the physical activity offer at school and within the curriculum is paramount:

- Just 9% are physically active for over 60 minutes a day (Youth Sport Trust (YST) *Evidence Paper, the Impact of Covid-19 Restrictions on Children and Young People*, 2020: YST).
- 49% felt it was harder to be physically active during the pandemic (YST).
- 81% of young people want to be active with their friends (YST).
- 63% of pupils enjoy PE 'a lot' (*School Sport Survey*, 2018).
- 56% of pupils felt school sports and PE lessons helped them 'a lot' to have a healthy lifestyle (SSS).

Further, our most recent survey into adult physical activity attitudes and behaviour – wave 4 (Sport Wales and ComRes) found adults reporting their children were typically doing more physical activity than they would typically before the Covid-19 restrictions were introduced in March 2020.



## **These figures support the need to ensure support for children and young people to be physically active within school-age education.**

A key challenge to successfully improving the sporting and physical activity provision is the **gap in teacher confidence around the delivery** of sport and physical activity in schools. There is a significant variability in the access pupils have to physical education depending on where they live in Wales. Schools in one local authority area may have differing amounts of time dedicated to physical activity than those in a neighbouring area, and this can be impacted by socio-economic deprivation. We know that in Primary schools, provision of sport and physical activity is often dependent on the headteacher and their interest in sport. Yet:

- 91% of practitioners believe it's very important to re-engage children and young people in physical activity (following Covid-19) (YST).
- 3 out of 10 practitioners do not feel prepared for the new curriculum (YST).

**Sport Wales would like** to see the Children, Young People and Education committee work closely with the Health and Social Care Committee and the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language Sport, and International Relations Committee to ensure the new curriculum has the best possible, and consistent physical activity and sport provision for all children.

Scrutinising the level of professional learning and guidance materials available to teachers and local authorities, as well as in person upskilling for those facing significant change in their workload or who lack confidence in the delivery of sport and physical activity, would support the implementation of the new curriculum and its success in developing healthy and active young people.

### **The School Sport Survey**

Our School Sport Survey for 2022 will support and update insight into what the physical activity and sporting offer is that young people want at school, as well as shed light on the provision of this offer at schools across Wales, and the confidence of our teachers. This insight will further inform our work, and we hope the data, along with other research and insight, will help inform this committee's priorities for the current term.

### **Community Focused Schools**

As mentioned already, Sport Wales would like to see active education systems where the new curriculum combined with an enhanced school day will see a focus on **schools becoming hubs of physical activity for the whole community.**

We know schools host a number of facilities which are close to communities across Wales. Our School Sport Survey has consistently shown that pupils would like to do more sport and physical activity, and that the school setting remains the most



effective and impactful environment in which to structure a cultural wellbeing offer. Reasons for not doing more sport relate to:

- Not being able to get to activities (20%, SSS 2018);
- Wanting friends with them (35%, SSS 2018),
- Having more time available to do so (30%, SSS 2018).

Opening schools up to enhance the sporting offer to children and the community will take steps to address these barriers to engagement in sport and physical activity.

The Welsh Government awarded £450,000 for Sport Wales and the Arts Council for Wales to develop a series of pilots looking at how to provide sporting and cultural activities around the school day, over the course of the next school year. By piloting the enhancement of the school day, we will be testing what works and what doesn't, identifying barriers to provision. The project will enhance the Curriculum for Wales approach to ensuring healthy, confident learners, will allow for more community provision in buildings and facilities which often stay closed for long periods of time, and reduce barriers to participation for those living in areas of multiple deprivation.

This work makes up an aspect of the Welsh Government's commitment to 'explore reform of the school day and the school year to bring both more in line with contemporary patterns of family life and employment,' within the *Programme for Government 2021-26*, and in the Minister for Education Welsh Language's *Renew and Reform Covid-19 Recovery Plan*. Therefore, this area of work could make up a significant priority for scrutiny by this committee in the Sixth Senedd.

Community Focused Schools contribute to wider agendas/actions such as Welsh Government commitments and the *Renew and Reform Plan*.

## **Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

There are many opportunities for children and young people to progress through the education system, with a focus on sport, health, and wellbeing. Sports makes a significant contribution to the Welsh economy, with the Economic Importance of Sport in Wales 2016/17 report finding the industry was worth £1,142m, and contributed 29,700 jobs in the same year.

There is a demonstrable opportunity for the committee to analyse the opportunities available to children and young people in terms of work experience in the sector, and how this could be expanded in the new curriculum. Such work could enhance the volunteering workforce, which we understand has been hit hard by the Covid-19 pandemic.



Furthermore, we understand there is an opportunity to analyse the applicability of higher education qualifications to the sector. Wales has a proud sporting history, and our further and higher educational offer should enable children and young people to become highly valued members of the sector, with clear and accessible career paths available to them from school-aged education to the workplace and facilitated effectively by our further and higher education settings.

### **Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

One of our five key policy areas which are strategically important to the delivery of an active nation, alongside our aims in supporting them, is '**Active and Resilient Young People.**'

An enhanced offer to young people must be made to make progress against both the Future Generations Wellbeing Goals and the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#). The international examples of this success, such as the [Norwegian Rights of the Child](#), are a positive example of how sport can put developing young people at the heart of its agenda.

Creating good quality, equal opportunities for young people to access physical activity in the from the earliest age, supporting teacher training, and an opportunity to rethink schools' place at the heart of communities are opportunities to enhance the wellbeing of children and young people in the Sixth Senedd.

Therefore, in the Sixth Senedd, Sport Wales would like to see active education systems where the new curriculum combined with an enhanced school day will see a focus on schools becoming hubs of physical activity for the whole community, enhancing the health and wellbeing of children and young people. We would like to see the Children, Young People and Education Committee working in partnership with the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee and the Health and Social Care Committee to review how this policy is being implemented.

#### **Local Provision**

Many local authorities have embraced this holistic sporting provision, enhancing their offer to be more than 'sport for sports sake,' by working with social services, housing associations, and police and crime commissioners to deliver activities. This collaborative way of working has enabled the use of local knowledge to build productive relationships and improve the health and wellbeing of vulnerable and



disadvantaged children and young people, creating significant benefits. Scrutinising this provision and identifying the barriers to expanding the holistic provision of sport will improve the health and wellbeing of young people across Wales.

#### **Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**

We welcome the committee's decision to inform its priorities by running activities with children and young people. We would also advocate for the committee to inform its priorities by using data, such as that gathered by the school sport survey, to ensure the priorities reflect the needs of a diversity of young people from across Wales.

We work closely with our partners to ensure these intents can be felt within communities and schools across Wales. We are also working with children and young people through our Young Ambassador programme with the Youth Sport Trust.

In addition, we have worked with the Young Ambassadors, and YST to create a youth panel, who have opportunities to inform and scrutinise the decision making and programme of work of Sport Wales, and with forewarning, the panel could support this committee by engaging in consultations and calls for evidence by this committee.

We engage with young people in myriad ways to meet our strategic intents, including:

- Prioritising investment in young people's physical activity.
- Introducing a new delivery model for community sport with community focussed schools.
- Supporting and delivering guidance for the new curriculum.
- Providing a strong evidence base on young people's activity levels and their motivations.
- Develop key partnerships with those who share our goals. We are already doing this by working with Local Authorities, National Governing Bodies, and wider partners such as the Urdd, Street Games, and WCVA.

Working with children and young people from a wide variety of backgrounds, including socio-economic disadvantage, welsh speaking, and from ethnically and culturally diverse communities to ensure our sporting offer meets the needs of all children and young people across Wales.



**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 98**

**Ymateb gan: Nicolas Webb**

**Response from: Nicolas Webb, Royal College of General Practitioners Cymru Wales**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

**Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

**Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

**Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

RCGP Cymru Wales proposes that the Committee carry out an inquiry into the involvement of children in drugs gangs, specifically those associated with the 'County Lines' problem. While this is an issue which cuts across a range of remits both devolved such as impact on education, where children may well drop out of schooling, and non-devolved, criminal justice, it also has a significant relevance to health and safeguarding. The College would suggest an inquiry which reaches wider than simply the health and safeguarding implications, but that included this aspect prominently.

County Lines typically involves a gang from a large urban area travelling to locations such as county or coastal towns to sell class A drugs. Users are contacted via a mobile phone line used by the gang. Couriers travel between the gang's urban base



and the county locations on a regular basis to collect cash and deliver drugs. Gangs groom and use young people to act as couriers and deliver drugs to customers out of their areas – this often involves deception, intimidation, violence and debt bondage.

It is anticipated that the recent destabilisation of Afghanistan will further increase the flow of narcotics into Wales.

From a safeguarding perspective we would like to see consideration given as to how steps can be taken to protect children from becoming involved in the drug trade.

From a health perspective we would like to see a robust evaluation of rehabilitation support services to assess what can be done to help those effected rebuild their lives as law-abiding citizens.

#### **Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**



This response was submitted to the Children, Young People and Education Committee consultation on Sixth Senedd Priorities

CYPE SP 99

Ymateb gan: Richard Duffy

Response from: Richard Duffy, Public Affairs Officer, Cardiff University,

### Theme 1: School-age education

We would recommend that the committee give further consideration to, and scrutiny of, how the Welsh Government plans to change the qualification system after the impact of COVID-19. The shift to alternative assessment methods across the UK and the consequent inflation of top grades has had consequences for higher education (HE).<sup>1</sup>

At Cardiff University, the 2021 grade inflation has had a significant impact.<sup>2</sup> Over-recruitment has been felt in subjects that were on a rising trend of demand or experienced a sudden surge in 2021, as well as those with places set by the Welsh Government. Such subjects include law, criminology, biosciences, medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, psychology, architecture, engineering and computer science.

The number of above-target undergraduate students exceeds 500 and could reach c. 1,000. It has necessitated the rapid appointment of c. 100 new staff members, repurposing of space for teaching, additional IT equipment and infrastructure, and extra investment in student support services (e.g., mental health, study skills, wellbeing, disability, advice and money).

### Theme 2: Further and higher education

We strongly recommend that the Children, Young People and Education Committee prioritise the need for Wales to respond swiftly to forthcoming reforms of HE in England. In particular, the committee should consider the major changes to student finance. As an associated matter, the committee should examine the legacies of the Diamond and Reid reviews.<sup>3 4</sup> Although parts of Diamond and all of Reid examined matters covered by other committees (e.g. research and innovation), both have a key bearing on Welsh HE's financial model.

<sup>1</sup> Coughlan, S., Richardson, H. and Long, J. 2021. [A-level results 2021: Top grades reach record high](#). London: BBC.

<sup>2</sup> Riordan, C. 2021. [Student recruitment, new academic year, National Student Survey, international support, Graduation](#). Cardiff: Cardiff University.

<sup>3</sup> Diamond, I. 2016. [The Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance Arrangement in Wales](#). Cardiff: Welsh Government.

<sup>4</sup> Reid, G. 2018. [Review of Government Funded Research and Innovation in Wales](#). Cardiff: Welsh Government.





The committee should note that the University will be suggesting that the Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee prioritise the funding of research and innovation in Wales, with a particular focus on the legacies of the Diamond and Reid reviews. The University will also be suggesting that the Health and Social Care Committee prioritise the expansion of medical education and training in Wales. We would be happy to provide those submissions as supplementary evidence. Cross-committee collaboration on these matters or on a wider inquiry regarding universities could be a sensible step forward.

## Reforms in England

Cardiff University is concerned that potential changes to England's student funding arrangements could unbalance the UK's shared higher education ecosystem and adversely affect Welsh universities. Reports indicate the UK Government is considering a range of major reforms, with a consultation due in the autumn.<sup>5 6 7 8</sup>

<sup>9 10</sup> It is believed that the UK Government will pursue some or a combination of:

- Cutting fees to £7,500, compensating for universities' lost income with higher subsidies for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) courses, but no such subsidies for arts and humanities.
- Capping fees and allowing the cost to be eroded by inflation.
- Limiting student numbers, potentially via minimum entry requirements for access to student loans.

Changes in England affect student recruitment in Wales. A significant proportion of students at Welsh universities are English domiciled (36.6% in 2019/20).<sup>11</sup> A substantially different rate of fees between England and Wales will create problems for cross-border study. It would be highly damaging if English domiciled students were no longer attracted to Wales due to a sharp divergence in fee policies.

Equally, lost income would need to be made up in full if Wales followed suit and cut fees to £7,500 or lower. For Cardiff University, reducing fees to £7,500 would cost approximately £27.3m annually. The financial hit would have a damaging effect on all aspects of our teaching and research if not compensated.

<sup>5</sup> Adams, R. 2021. ['Horrible' cuts in pipeline for English universities and students](#). London: Guardian.

<sup>6</sup> Forsyth, J. 2021. [Tories want to end the university boom years](#). London: Times.

<sup>7</sup> Griffiths, S. 2021. [University fees to fall — but arts degrees may suffer](#). London: Times.

<sup>8</sup> Hazzell, W. 2021. [Students could be prevented from taking university courses deemed 'low value' by the Government](#). London: i.

<sup>9</sup> Parr, C. 2021. [Williamson confirms London weighting cut](#). London: Research Professional.

<sup>10</sup> Weale, S. 2021. [Funding cuts to go ahead for university arts courses in England despite opposition](#). London: Guardian.

<sup>11</sup> Higher Education Statistics Agency. 2021. [Where do HE students study?](#) Cheltenham: Higher Education Statistics Agency.



If the UK Government pursues a cap on places, the issue will be a serious one for the Welsh Government. The experiences of summer 2020 and dialogue failure between the UK and Welsh governments were portentous in this regard.<sup>12</sup>

There are already funding challenges around HE, irrespective of any possible fee cut in the future. Inflation and rising provision costs have resulted in declining levels of resource. This is particularly the case for lab-based subjects deemed to be of strategic importance to the UK and Welsh governments.<sup>13</sup>

Analysis from the Russell Group shows overall funding per student will be similar in real terms to the level it was before £9,000 fees.<sup>14</sup> Figures from England's Office for Students show that current fees do not cover subject costs, making £7,500 completely unviable without top-up funding.<sup>15</sup>

The UK Government is also considering fast-track degrees, which have been discussed previously. The University is unconvinced there is an appetite for this form of provision within Wales. Demand for these programmes is low and two-year degrees are not the most appropriate course structure at research-intensive institutions.<sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, the UK Government is introducing a lifelong learning entitlement (LLE) via its Skills and Post-16 Education Bill, for which legislative consent is currently being considered by the Senedd.<sup>17 18</sup> In keeping with the Welsh Government's view, we would not welcome any legislation that creates additional burdens, duties and financial implications for Welsh universities as a result of a policy for England.

The University is calling for the Welsh Government to convene an urgent task and finish group to consider how Wales should react to fee cuts, students caps and other reforms in England. The committee should also consider this work as a matter of urgency.

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<sup>12</sup> Adams, R. 2020. [Plan to cap numbers at UK universities to go ahead](#). London: Guardian.

<sup>13</sup> Hazell, W. 2020. [Universities losing thousands of pounds on STEM courses as funding eroded by cuts and inflation](#). London: i.

<sup>14</sup> Russell Group. 2020. [Sustainable funding for higher education](#). London: Russell Group.

<sup>15</sup> Office for Students. 2020. [Development of the OfS's approach to funding](#). London: Office for Students.

<sup>16</sup> Russell Group. 2017. [Russell Group response to accelerated degrees consultation](#). London: Russell Group.

<sup>17</sup> Department for Education. 2021. [Skills and Post-16 Education Bill: Policy Summary Notes](#). London: UK Government.

<sup>18</sup> Miles, J. 2021. [Legislative Consent Memorandum: Skills and Post-16 Education Bill](#). Cardiff: Senedd Cymru.



The committee should also note that recommendations of the Diamond and Reid reviews remain unfulfilled, despite having been accepted by the Welsh Government. Failure to implement continues to hinder Welsh HE.

### **Draft Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Bill**

Finally, the committee will no doubt be tasked with scrutinising the Draft Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Bill. The University's key views on the Bill follow:

**Commission's independence:** The bill needs redrafting to make clear the new Commission for Tertiary Education and Research's operation as an arms-length body. As drafted, the bill would give ministers powers over a swathe of issues which ought to lie within the purview of the commission. These include a power to modify the commission's strategy without the commission's consent or any input from the further and higher education sectors, which we would suggest is unacceptable.

**Final bill's details:** The draft as a whole leaves far too many powers within as-yet-undefined regulations. This legislation represents a major change to the education sector and future changes to it should come before the Senedd rather than being decided by ministerial fiat.

**Universities' governance:** Whilst the new commission will replace HEFCW as the regulator of Welsh HE, we would strongly recommend that the positive relationship which has been built between universities and HEFCW is maintained. In general, the Welsh sector has a more collegiate relationship with its regulator than is the case between English universities and the Office for Students (OfS). It is surprising, therefore, that many powers of the new commission more closely resemble the OfS in England rather than mirror the existing situation in Wales.

Like the OfS, the proposed new commission will:

- Maintain a register of providers, with conditions of registration.
- Require the production of access and opportunity plans, as a condition of a higher fee limit.
- Make arrangements for quality assurance provided by a designated body.
- Enjoy a power of entry and inspection.

It will also be expected to respond to ministerial priorities, with ministerial power of approval over the commission's strategic plan. We would prefer to see a system which gives greater autonomy to the new commission and a commission that, in turn, gives greater autonomy to institutions.

**Research:** Questions around the new commission's research and innovation agenda are much more fundamental than simply whether the agenda should be



delivered by a wider range of providers. As such, we strongly recommend that all of the recommendations of the 2018 Reid review are implemented in full prior to the establishment of any new commission. Doing so will give the university and research sector confidence that the new commission will be overseeing a sustainable and resilient research ecosystem.

We also share the concerns raised by Universities Wales about the Welsh Government seeking to specify areas of research when setting the terms and conditions of funding for the commission.<sup>19</sup> This is a clear erosion of the protections of academic autonomy for institutions and has the potential to undermine the strategic role and authority of the commission.

**Civic mission:** Any definition of ‘civic mission’ in the bill should be a non-binding umbrella definition that allows universities to make their own decisions about what their own civic mission might be. This is important if universities are to retain the autonomy to deliver a civic mission that works for them and their community. From a governance perspective, it also ensures that universities are not bound by anything that might conflict with or undermine their charitable objectives.

Secondly, if the commission is to have a specific duty in terms of ensuring universities carry out a civic mission, there must be new, discrete funding to do this rather than having to come at the expense of funds earmarked for students or research.

**Access and opportunity plans:** As noted by Universities Wales, the proposed access & opportunity plans could end up replicating the administratively burdensome elements of existing fee & access plans — something which universities have been clear is a problem that needs addressing.<sup>20</sup> We do however welcome the movement in the bill towards access & opportunity plans covering a longer period of time, and recognise that this element does represent an improvement to the existing situation.

**Freedom of speech on campus:** The UK Government is pursuing its Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill. We would urge the Welsh Government to rule out this being part of the new commission’s remit, on the basis that so-called ‘campus culture wars’ are an artificial construct for political purposes and addressing them is not a priority for students.

**Social mobility and skills:** To complement the work of the new commission, we suggest the establishment of a Social Mobility & Skills Commission to work with all educational partners and Regional Skills Partnerships to further clarify the skills needs and social mobility targets for Wales. This commission should specify the

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<sup>19</sup> Universities Wales. 2020. [Draft TER\(W\) Bill consultation response](#). Cardiff: Universities Wales.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.



appropriate contribution of different parts of the educational system and set targets for skills development and social mobility.

**Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

**Theme 4: Children and young people**



**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg ar Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 100**

**Ymateb gan: Rocio Cifuentes**

**Response from: Rocio Cifuentes, Chief Executive Officer, EYST Wales**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

**Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

**Impact of Poverty on ability to learn**

- **Food Poverty**
- **Digital Poverty**

From our significant engagement with ethnic minority young people and their families since our establishment in 2005 and throughout the pandemic period, we have established that Poverty, and specifically food poverty and digital poverty are having significant detrimental impacts on children and young people from ethnic minority backgrounds in particular. Children in Wales already have high levels of poverty compared to the rest of the UK, and for children from ethnic minority backgrounds this rate is even higher. During the pandemic, those already living on the margins were squeezed even more so, with parents losing income and employment. Resulting, and very sadly, we saw far higher rates of food poverty and families seeking food parcels or food vouchers than ever before. We support the campaign led by the Child Poverty Action Group for universal free school meals and believe this move would greatly mitigate the devastating impact of poverty and its impact on learning.



Digital poverty became a huge and more obvious factor in educational inequality with the closure of schools due to the Covid-19 pandemic. We found there was huge inconsistency in the response of schools and their ability to provide learning equipment for online classes. Many many children we support did not have a laptop, and a high number were sharing perhaps their mum's phone amongst many siblings to try to access online lessons. We found that WG's response and support to schools was fairly slow and late, meaning that in practice many children had no access to devices for a 12 months.

We would like to see an inquiry into Poverty and its impact on Children and Young People, including Digital and Food Poverty in particular, looking for practical ways to mitigate its impact.

### **Racism**

- **Racism from pupils and teachers**
- **Poor school responses to Racism**

Unfortunately we have continued to receive reports of racism towards children and young people from other pupils, and sometimes from teachers, and a pattern of unsatisfactory school responses to dealing with racist incidences. Further evidence can be seen here for example <https://racealliance.wales/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Show-Us-You-Care-Executive-Summary-2.pdf> .

Despite excellent progress from Welsh Government in commissioning the report into Diversity in the School Curriculum, <https://gov.wales/final-report-black-asian-and-minority-ethnic-communities-contributions-and-cynefin-new-curriculum> , there is a lack of progress in supporting schools to strengthen their response to racism.

Currently there is lack of regulation over schools as to how they respond to racism, and it is not a clear part of the regulatory framework.

We would welcome an inquiry into how schools respond to racism in Wales and how this can be improved.

### **Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

We would propose that the Committee focuses on access to Further and Higher Education for pupils from poorer backgrounds, ethnic minorities, refugees and asylum seekers. Including a specific focus on



### - **Access to FE and HE for Asylum Seekers**

Welsh Government has stated its ambition to become a Nation of Sanctuary, nevertheless is currently tied to UK Government restrictions for asylum seekers to some public funds including Education Maintenance Allowance. The current asylum process is very slow, and sadly, many people who come to Wales seeking sanctuary are stuck in the system for what can be many years while their claims are assessed. As a result, many children who come to Wales and are thriving in their education, find themselves suddenly unable to access FE and HE in the same way as their peers. Asylum-seekers are not currently eligible for Education Maintenance Allowance which means that families may see themselves financially unable to support their child to access FE education as they would like to. Even worse is the barrier to HE which asylum seekers face as they are treated like international students for funding purposes and therefore are subject to astronomical fees which are completely unaffordable for those living on the current Asylum Seeker allowance of £5 per day.

We would recommend a review is carried out into barriers to accessing HE and FE for those from poorer backgrounds including asylum seekers.

### **Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

We are aware of significant issues affecting the health and wellbeing of ethnic minority children in particular including the need for better:

- **Mental health support**
- **Access to sports and leisure**
- **Improved access to transport**

During the pandemic, the mental health of children and young people from minority ethnic background worsened significantly, with the dual hit of the Pandemic alongside the trauma of George Floyd's death and the focus on Black Lives Matter. Unfortunately, there is still a lack of mental health support for children and young people in general, and a specific lack of culturally specific and targeted mental health support for young people from minority ethnic backgrounds.

We would like to see an inquiry into the provision of mental health support for children and young people across Wales, with focus on the needs of specific minority groups.

In terms of access to sports and leisure, this also worsened during the pandemic, but had already been worsening over many years. Since the economic downturn started ten years ago, the creeping closure of public services such as libraries, swimming





pools and youth centres has disproportionately affected children and young people, and lessened their ability to keep physically and emotionally healthy and well.

We would like to see an inquiry into the impact of closing public services on the physical and emotional health of children and young people.

Associated to this, is poor access to public transport due to prohibitive cost, lack of availability of services, and sometimes physical barriers, along with concerns about not feeling safe on public transport. During the summer of 2021 some local authorities made buses free for children on certain days. We would like to see an inquiry into the potential of making public transport free for children always, as a means of improving physical and mental health, reducing pollution, and creating safer more cohesive communities.

#### **Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**

**We would suggest that the CYPE committee focus on the key issues outlined above.**



**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 101**

**Ymateb gan: Archwilio Cymru**

**Response from: Audit Wales**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

**Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

Ym mis Tachwedd 2020, gwnaethom gyhoeddi adroddiad dilynol ar ymdrin ag absenoldeb athrawon. Roeddem eisoes wedi adrodd ar y pwnc hwn yn 2013. Roedd ein hadroddiad yn 2020 yn cydnabod bod Llywodraeth Cymru wedi cymryd camau i gynorthwyo staff cyflenwi, mynd i'r afael ag achosion sylfaenol absenoldeb athrawon o'r ystafell ddosbarth, gwella'r modd y rheolir absenoldeb a mynd i'r afael â rhai pryderon allweddol am gontractau asiantaeth. Fodd bynnag, adroddwyd bod bylchau mewn data yn golygu ei bod yn dal yn anodd dweud a yw rhai o'r camau hyn yn cael yr effeithiau a fwriedir.

Cyfeiriodd yr adroddiad at faterion yn ymwneud ag effaith pandemig COVID-19 ar athrawon cyflenwi sy'n gweithio i asiantaethau ond nododd fod effaith tymor hwy yr aflonyddwch ar y gweithlu cyflenwi ac asiantaethau heb ei weld eto. Pwysleisiwyd bod angen i Lywodraeth Cymru ystyried a oedd digon o weithwyr dros dro ar gael i helpu i reoli ymateb COVID-19 ochr yn ochr â pharatoadau ar gyfer y cwricwlwm newydd, yn enwedig lle mae prinder eisoes.

Gwnaethom argymhellion ynghylch sicrhau ansawdd a digonolrwydd athrawon cyflenwi mewn ysgolion, gan gynnwys hyfforddiant a chymorth cyn cyflwyno'r cwricwlwm newydd o 2022. Gwnaethom argymhellion hefyd ynghylch y contract fframwaith cenedlaethol ar gyfer staff asiantaeth. Wrth ymateb i'n hargymhellion ym



mis Mai 2021, pwysleisiodd Llywodraeth Cymru fod gwella ansawdd a digonolrwydd y gweithlu addysg a sicrhau bod fframwaith asiantaethau cyflenwi'r Gwasanaeth Caffael Cenedlaethol yn diwallu anghenion ysgolion ac athrawon cyflenwi yn faterion allweddol i Lywodraeth Cymru. Dywedodd Llywodraeth Cymru hefyd, ers ein hadroddiad, y bu trafodaethau gyda chyflogwyr ac undebau llafur ar gyflenwi materion addysgu, gydag ymrwymadau gan randdeiliaid i gefnogi a chryfhau Fframwaith y GCC. Nodwn fod y Rhaglen Lywodraethu newydd ar gyfer 2021-2026 yn cynnwys ymrwymiad i 'ddatblygu model cynaliadwy ar gyfer darpariaeth athrawon cyflenwi sydd â gwaith teg yn ganolog iddo'.

Dros y pedair i chwe wythnos nesaf byddwn yn cyhoeddi cyfres o allbynnau 'Darlun o Wasanaethau Cyhoeddus'. Bydd y rhain yn cynnwys sylwebaeth fer, 'Darlun o Ysgolion'. Ochr yn ochr â sylwebaeth ar strategaeth, cyllid, perfformiad, galw a chapasiti, byddwn yn tynnu sylw at dri mater allweddol i ysgolion o'n safbwynt ni: rheoli effaith COVID-19 a chefnogi adferiad addysg; dilyn drwy'r rhaglen ddiwygio; a mynd i'r afael â heriau'r gweithlu, gan gynnwys ar gyfer addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg.

Byddwn hefyd yn sôn yn ein hadroddiad Darlun o Ysgolion am raglen ysgolion ac addysg yr 21ain ganrif, gan gyfeirio at ein hadroddiad blaenorol ar y pwnc hwn ym mis Mai 2017. Gwnaeth ein hadroddiad rai argymhellion gan gynnwys mwy o safoni ar draws y prosiectau i sicrhau gwerth am arian. Ers i ni adrodd, mae Llywodraeth Cymru wedi dechrau Band B, sy'n cynnwys ffrwd o brosiectau a ariennir drwy'r Model Buddsoddi Cydfuddiannol o gyllid preifat. Byddwn yn rhoi ystyriaeth bellach i'r potensial ar gyfer gwaith dilynol yn y maes hwn wrth i ni gynllunio ein rhaglen waith ar gyfer 2022-23 a thu hwnt.

Yn olaf, rydym wrthi'n datblygu gwaith i archwilio'n fanylach y gwaith y mae Llywodraeth Cymru yn bwriadu gweithredu'r cwricwlwm newydd i Gymru. Rydym yn gobeithio cwblhau'r gwaith hwn erbyn diwedd 2021-22. Rydym yn anelu drwy ein gwaith i esbonio'r rhaglen ddiwygio (a diwygiadau eraill sy'n hanfodol i'w llwyddiant), archwilio'r cynnydd hyd yma, yn ogystal â'r gwaith pellach sydd ei angen cyn i'r gweithredu ddechrau, ac archwilio risgiau i weithredu'r rhaglen yn llwyddiannus cyn mis Medi 2022.

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In November 2020, we published a follow up report on covering teachers' absence. We had previously reported on this topic in 2013. Our 2020 report recognised that the Welsh Government has taken action to support supply staff, tackle the root causes of teacher absence from the classroom, improve the management of absence and address some key concerns about agency contracts. However, we reported that gaps in data mean that it is still difficult to say whether some of these actions are having the intended effects.



The report touched on issues around the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on supply teachers working for agencies but noted the longer-term impact of the disruption on the supply workforce and agencies remained to be seen. We emphasised that the Welsh Government needed to consider whether there were enough temporary workers available to help manage the COVID-19 response alongside preparations for the new curriculum, particularly where there are already known shortages.

We made recommendations around ensuring the quality and sufficiency of supply teachers in schools, including training and support ahead of the introduction of the new curriculum from 2022. We also made recommendations around the national framework contract for agency staff. Responding to our recommendations in May 2021, the Welsh Government emphasised that improving the quality and sufficiency of the education workforce and ensuring the National Procurement Service's supply agency framework meets the needs of both schools and supply teachers are key issues for the Welsh Government. The Welsh Government also said that, since our report, there had been discussions with employers and trade unions on supply teaching issues, with commitments from stakeholders to support and strengthen the NPS Framework. We note that the new Programme for Government 2021-2026 includes a commitment to 'develop a sustainable model for supply teaching that has fair work at its heart'.

Over the next four to six weeks we are publishing a series of 'Picture of Public Services' outputs. These will include a short commentary, 'A Picture of Schools'. Alongside commentary on strategy, funding, performance, demand and capacity, we will highlight three key issues for schools from our perspective: managing the impact of COVID-19 and supporting education recovery; following through the reform programme; and addressing workforce challenges, including for Welsh-medium education.

We will also touch in our Picture of Schools report on the 21<sup>st</sup> century schools and education programme, referencing our previous report on this topic in May 2017. Our report made some recommendations including more standardisation across the projects to achieve value for money. Since we reported, the Welsh Government has started Band B, which includes a stream of projects funded through the Mutual Investment Model of private financing. We will be giving some further consideration to the potential for follow-up work in this area as we plan our work programme for 2022-23 and beyond.

Finally, we are currently progressing work to examine in more detail the Welsh Government's planning for implementation of the new curriculum for Wales. We hope to complete this work by the end of 2021-22. We are aiming through our work



to explain the reform programme (and other reforms crucial to its success), examine progress to date, as well as the further work required before implementation begins, and explore risks to the successful implementation of the programme ahead of September 2022.

## **Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

Ar ddiwedd mis Awst 2021, gwnaethom gyhoeddi adroddiad ar gyllid myfyrwyr sy'n esbonio sut mae'r system cyllid myfyrwyr yn gweithio i fyfyrwyr o Gymru ac yn ystyried sut mae Llywodraeth Cymru yn goruchwyllo'r system. Mae'r symiau cyffredinol dan sylw a'r angen i ragweld ad-daliadau benthyciadau yn golygu bod cyllid myfyrwyr yn nodwedd bwysig yng nghyfrifon blynyddol Llywodraeth Cymru. Er i ni adrodd bod rheolaeth Llywodraeth Cymru o ddydd i ddydd ar gyllid myfyrwyr yn effeithiol, gwnaethom dynnu sylw at yr angen iddo gryfhau ei gwaith craffu ar berfformiad y Cwmni Benthyciadau i Fyfyrwyr a gwerth cyffredinol am arian y gwasanaethau y mae'n eu darparu, gan sicrhau bod anghenion a phrofiadau myfyrwyr o Gymru wrth wraidd ei benderfyniadau.

Nid yr Archwilydd Cyffredinol yw archwilydd allanol cyfrifon sefydliadau AB/AU. Fodd bynnag, mae ei bwerau arholi ehangach yn dal i fod yn sail ar gyfer adrodd ar faterion sy'n ymwneud â chyflawni polisi Llywodraeth Cymru drwy'r sectorau a'r defnydd o arian cyhoeddus.

Ym mis Chwefror 2017, cyhoeddwyd adroddiad gennym yn edrych ar oruchwyliaeth Llywodraeth Cymru o gyllid a darpariaeth colegau addysg bellach. Mae materion amrywiol a godwyd yn yr adroddiad hwnnw yn parhau i fod yn berthnasol heddiw. Bydd 'Darlun o Wasanaethau Cyhoeddus' o'r pecyn o adroddiadau yr ydym yn eu cyhoeddi dros yr wythnosau nesaf yn cynnwys 'Darlun o Addysg Uwch ac Addysg Bellach'. Gan ymdrin â themâu tebyg i'n hadroddiad Darlun o Ysgolion, byddwn yn tynnu sylw fel materion allweddol at y pwysau ariannol sy'n deillio o COVID-19 a phensiynau. Byddwn hefyd yn nodi rhai o'r heriau sy'n deillio o ganlyniadau parhaus Brexit, o ran niferoedd myfyrwyr, disodli cyllid yr UE, a chynnal cydweithio a chyfnewidiadau. Byddwn hefyd yn tynnu sylw at gyfleoedd a heriau i reoli'r rhaglen ddiwygio addysg ôl-16, gan gynnwys unrhyw ddatblygiadau pellach yn dilyn y Bil Addysg Drydyddol ac Ymchwil Drafft.

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At the end of August 2021, we published a report on student finances which explains how the system of student finances works for Welsh students and considers how the



Welsh Government oversees the system. The overall sums involved and the need to forecast loan repayments mean that student finances are an important feature in the Welsh Government's annual accounts. Although we reported that the Welsh Government's day to day management of student finances is effective, we highlighted the need for it to strengthen its scrutiny of the performance of the Student Loans Company and the overall value for money of the services it provides, ensuring that the needs and experiences of Welsh students are at the heart of its decision-making.

The Auditor General is not the external auditor of FE/HE institutions' accounts. However, his wider examination powers still provide a basis on which to report on matters relating to delivery of Welsh Government policy through the sectors and the use of public funding.

In February 2017, we published a report looking at the Welsh Government's oversight of further education colleges' finances and delivery. Various issues raised in that report remain relevant today. The 'Picture of Public Services' package of reports that we are publishing over the coming weeks will include 'A Picture of Higher and Further Education'. Covering similar themes to our Picture of Schools report, we will highlight as key issues the financial pressures arising from COVID-19 and pensions. We will also note some of the challenges from the ongoing consequences of Brexit, around student numbers, replacing EU funding, and sustaining collaboration and exchanges. We will also highlight opportunities and challenges to manage around the reform programme of post-16 education, including in terms of any further developments following the Draft Tertiary Education and Research Bill.

### **Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

Ym mis Medi 2019, cyhoeddwyd pecyn o ddeunydd o dan y thema 'Lles Pobl Ifanc'. Roedd y gwaith hwnnw'n cynnwys rhai sylwadau annibynnol byr ar 'rieni ifanc', 'gofalwyr ifanc' ac 'iechyd meddwl'. Os bydd y Pwyllgor yn nodi blaenoriaethau yn y meysydd hyn, efallai y bydd allbynnau'r gwaith hwn yn ddefnyddiol ar gyfer rhywfaint o gyd-destun cefndir. Ochr yn ochr â'r adroddiadau, gwnaethom hefyd gyhoeddi offeryn data ategol.

Mae pob un o'n hadroddiadau yn nodi cyfleoedd i wella ymagwedd Llywodraeth Cymru. Gallai unrhyw waith craffu ar y pynciau hyn yn y dyfodol roi cyfle i ystyried cynnydd yn erbyn y materion hynny.



Rydym hefyd yn ymwybodol o'r gwaith ymchwilio a wnaed gan y Pwyllgor Cyfrifon Cyhoeddus yn y pumed Senedd ar blant a phobl ifanc â phrofiad o ofal. Yna cafwyd Adroddiad Trosolwg Cenedlaethol Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru ynglŷn â phlant a phobl ifanc â phrofiad o ofal yn 2019. Mae'n ymddangos yn glir bod llawer o'r heriau a nodwyd yn y corff gwaith blaenorol hwnnw'n parhau. Nodwn fod Llywodraeth Cymru wedi ymrwymo yn ei Rhaglen Lywodraethu 2021-2026 i ddau gam gweithredu cysylltiedig, a gallai fod angen craffu ymhellach ar eu manylion: 'Archwilio diwygio gwasanaethau cyfredol yn radical ar gyfer plant sy'n derbyn gofal a'r rhai sy'n gadael gofal', a 'Dileu elw preifat o ofal plant sy'n derbyn gofal yn ystod tymor nesaf y Senedd'.

Bydd ein pecyn o allbynnau Darlun o Wasanaethau Cyhoeddus (gweler uchod) yn cynnwys 'Darlun o Ofal Cymdeithasol'. Byddwn yn disgrifio yn yr adroddiad hwnnw rai o'r tueddiadau ariannol a thueddiadau eraill mewn gofal cymdeithasol i blant a theuluoedd.

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In September 2019, we published a package of material under the theme 'The Well-being of Young People'. That work included some short stand-alone commentaries on 'young parents', 'young carers' and 'mental health'. Should the Committee identify priorities in these areas then it may find the outputs from this work helpful for some background context. Alongside the reports we also published a supporting data-tool.

Each of our reports set out opportunities for improvement in the Welsh Government's approach. Any future scrutiny of these topics could provide an opportunity to consider progress against those issues.

We are also aware of the body of inquiry work undertaken by the Public Accounts Committee in the fifth Senedd on care experienced children and young people. There then followed a Care Inspectorate Wales National Overview Report in relation to care experienced children and young people in 2019. It seems clear that many of the challenges identified in that previous body of work remain. We note that the Welsh Government has committed in its Programme for Government 2021-2026 to two related actions, the details of which may merit further scrutiny: 'Explore radical reform of current services for looked after children and care leavers', and 'Eliminate private profit from the care of looked after children during the next Senedd term'. Our package of Picture of Public Services outputs (see above) will include 'A Picture of Social Care'. We will describe in that report some of the financial and other trends in social care for children and families.

#### **Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**



Roedd y pecyn o ddeunydd a gyhoeddwyd gennym ym mis Medi 2019 ar Les Pobl Ifanc (y cyfeirir ato uchod) hefyd yn cynnwys sylwebaeth ar 'sgiliau a chyflogadwyedd' ac ar 'ddigartrefedd ieuenctid'. Unwaith eto, nododd y ddau adroddiad hyn rai cyfleoedd allweddol ar gyfer gwella yr oeddem wedi'u nodi o'n gwaith ac a allai ddarparu cyd-destun ar gyfer craffu ar y pynciau hynny yn y dyfodol. Roedd ein offeryn data yn cynnwys gwybodaeth am y ddwy thema hyn ochr yn ochr â'r meysydd eraill a grybwyllir uchod. Roedd hefyd yn cynnwys rhywfaint o ddata o'r amser ar brosiectau gwaith ieuenctid, achredu, ffynonellau incwm, gwariant a'r gweithlu.

Ochr yn ochr â'r pum sylwebaeth thematig, gwnaethom hefyd gyhoeddi adroddiad cryno ar les pobl ifanc. Gwnaethom dynnu ynghyd yn yr adroddiad hwnnw rai themâu cyffredin a ddaeth i'r amlwg o'n gwaith, gan annog Llywodraeth Cymru i fod yn:

- Chwilfrydig – darganfod mwy am yr hyn sy'n bwysig i bobl ifanc a'u profiadau, pa gymorth sydd ar gael a faint o wahaniaeth y mae'n ei wneud.
- Pwrpasol – cyfleu pwrpas clir ar gyfer gwasanaethau cyhoeddus sy'n ysbrydoli ac yn grymuso pobl i gydweithio i wella lles pobl ifanc.
- Dewr – annog arbrofi, cymryd risgiau a reolir yn dda a dathlu llwyddiant.

Fe wnaethom gynnwys ein gwaith Lles Pobl Ifanc yn ein rhaglen ar ôl ymrwymo i weithio gyda sefydliadau eraill i archwilio thema gyffredin ieuenctid. Adroddodd Estyn ar wasanaethau cymorth ieuenctid ym mis Gorffennaf 2018 a chyhoeddodd Arolygiaeth Gofal Iechyd Cymru adolygiad o wasanaethau gofal iechyd i bobl ifanc ym mis Mawrth 2019. Fel y nodwyd uchod, adroddodd Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru ym mis Mawrth 2019 ar blant a phobl ifanc â phrofiad o ofal. Rydym yn ymwybodol bod Estyn wedi adrodd ers hynny ym mis Hydref 2020 ar werth hyfforddiant gwaith ieuenctid ac rydym hefyd yn ymwybodol, ymhlith datblygiadau ehangach eraill, o waith diweddar y Bwrdd Gwaith Ieuenctid Dros Dro cenedlaethol.

Hefyd yn ystod hydref 2019, gwnaethom gyhoeddi adroddiad yn edrych ar ddull Llywodraeth Cymru o weithredu Deddf Llesiant Cenedlaethau'r Dyfodol. Cafodd yr adroddiad ei lywio gan waith maes a oedd yn ystyried sut yr oedd Llywodraeth Cymru yn cymhwyso'r egwyddor datblygu cynaliadwy (drwy'r pum ffordd o weithio) mewn tri maes polisi gwahanol. Roedd dau o'r tri maes hyn ar brentisiaethau ac ar y cynnig gofal plant i Gymru. Nodwyd rhai cryfderau gennym ond hefyd cyfleoedd i wella yn gysylltiedig â phob un o'r ffyrdd o weithio.

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The package of material that we published in September 2019 on The Well-being of Young People (referenced above) also included commentaries on 'skills and





employability' and on 'youth homelessness'. Again, both of these reports picked out some key opportunities for improvement that we had identified from our work and that could provide context for any future scrutiny of those topics. Our data tool included information on these two themes alongside the other areas mentioned above. It also included some data from the time on youth work projects, accreditation, income sources, spending and workforce.

Alongside the five thematic commentaries, we also published a summary report on the well-being of young people. We drew together in that report some common themes that had emerged from our work, encouraging the Welsh Government to be:

- Curious – finding out more about what matters to young people and their experiences, what support is available and how much of a difference it is making.
- Purposeful – communicating a clear purpose for public services that inspires and empowers people to work together to improve the well-being of young people.
- Brave – encouraging experimentation, taking well-managed risks and celebrating success.

We included our Well-being of Young People work in our programme having committed to working with other organisations to examine a common theme of youth. Estyn reported on youth support services in July 2018 and Healthcare Inspectorate Wales published a review of healthcare services for young people in March 2019. As noted above, Care Inspectorate Wales reported in March 2019 on care experienced children and young people. We are aware that Estyn has since reported in October 2020 on the value of youth work training and are also aware, among other wider developments, of the recent work of the national Interim Youth Work Board.

Also in autumn 2019, we published a report looking at the Welsh Government's implementation of the Well-being of Future Generations Act. The report was informed by fieldwork that considered how the Welsh Government was applying the sustainable development principle (through the five ways of working) in three different policy areas. Two of these three areas were on apprenticeships and on the childcare offer for Wales. We identified some strengths but also opportunities for improvement in respect of each of the ways of working.



**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 102**

**Ymateb gan: George Baldwin**

**Response from: George Baldwin, Policy and Campaigns Officer for Wales, National Deaf Children's Society Cymru**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

**Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

**Additional Learning Needs Reforms:** A new [system](#) for planning support for disabled learners has begun to come into force this September 2021. Unfortunately, we have grave concerns that there has been much confusion among professionals around when the reforms come in and who is eligible for a support plan.

In particular, we are extremely disappointed that lead officials have presented professionals with incorrect information around eligibility for a support plan. While we are currently working with the Welsh Government to resolve some of these issues in a technical note, discussions around other aspects of mis-messaging (specifically around incorrectly classing targeted support provided by specialist sensory services as "universal learning provision" which does not qualify for an IDP) are still ongoing. This is presenting difficulties since the reforms are already in force for some groups of learners.

We are mindful that mis-messages have been spread far and wide and are having a significant impact on the implementation of the legislation, undermining the ethos of providing a support plan for learners with a range of levels of need and leading the way for exacerbating a post-code lottery of support as well as a likely increase in the number of appeals to Education Tribunal.



We would welcome the Committee's support both in seeking urgent clarification on these matters and in the ongoing monitoring of the implementation of the reforms, given the widespread nature of this misinformation.

**Coronavirus:** We would welcome the opportunity to support the Committee in investigating the ongoing issues Covid is creating for ALN learners, including deaf children and young people, as a specific group. While many professionals have worked very hard during the pandemic, and everyone has faced difficulties, deaf children and young people have faced a number of specific challenges such as restrictions on access to remote learning/specialist support and peripatetic teachers of the deaf during the pandemic. Deaf students have also experienced difficulties due to the barriers face coverings present to communication, and difficulties with isolation and emotional wellbeing through not being able to access their usual support networks in the same way.

We are grateful that the Welsh Government has consistently acknowledged the barriers face coverings present for deaf learners in its guidance. However, on the ground, this guidance as well as other guidance on specialist support has not been consistently followed.

As the pandemic continues, we are keen to increase understanding of accessible adaptations that can be made and to ensure that deaf learners are provided with support to address gaps that may have occurred in their learning. In addition, we are mindful of the longer-term changes we may see as a result of Covid. In some areas, there are early discussions about changing service delivery to online only on a permanent basis. Such changes need to be approached with caution – while remote service delivery has been useful during the pandemic, it is not necessarily an appropriate substitute for face to face support in the longer term. Suggestions to change services on a permanent basis must not be overly focused on cost saving and must look at effectiveness of delivery.

## **Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

**Universities:** The National Deaf Children's Society Cymru is keen to ensure that universities across Wales support the access needs of deaf students with the return of the academic year. Universities will be implementing coronavirus guidance which could involve the use of face coverings and home working, measures which we know have presented significant challenges for deaf students. We would welcome support from the Committee in supporting universities to ensure such measures are inclusive of deaf students, so they do not negatively impact deaf students.



The National Deaf Children's Society recently ran a UK wide survey of deaf students in Higher Education. The majority of respondents said working from home worsened their mental health, left them feeling lonelier and that online lectures were inaccessible in many cases. If left unaddressed, we will continue to see deaf students face barriers both academically and within their wellbeing. This will leave deaf students unable to achieve their goals and aspirations. With the right support, deaf students can achieve on par with their hearing peers both academically and within the world of work.

**Further Education:** We are mindful that implementation details of the ALN reform roll out for post 16 learners have yet to be published. As highlighted in discussion with the previous Committee, we feel there is potential for a conflict of interest in the new funding arrangements for post 16 ALN support and would welcome careful consideration of relevant checks and balances.

**Careers Advice:** The development of the new ALN Code saw the downgrading of the former duty to invite a careers advisor to be involved in reviews of support plans as learners reach key transition stages. Our concern was shared by the former Children, Young People and Education Committee, which made a clear recommendation on the matter in its reports to the Minister on the ALNET Act and the development of the Code. Despite this, the duty to involve careers advisors was not enhanced in the final Code. We are aware that many deaf, and indeed ALN learners generally, feel they would benefit from more tailored careers advice. As such, we would welcome the Committee's support to consider this matter further as part of the monitoring of the implementation of the reforms.

### **Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

**Coronavirus:** The majority of deaf young people who responded to our survey in Wales reported a decline in their mental health due to social isolation. Some of this social isolation is down to the widespread use of face coverings in social settings which makes lip reading, seeing facial expressions and understanding visual cues difficult. Many support services have also moved online, which has not been without difficulties. Indeed 63% of parents we surveyed said their deaf child finds it difficult to follow services such as online teaching.



**Health:** We have highlighted a number of priorities to the Health Committee. This includes the need for health professionals to understand their duties under the Additional Learning Needs Code and for investment in audiology to reduce waiting times.

#### **Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**

**Close the Gap:** National Deaf Children's Society Cymru is working to close the attainment gap in education between deaf and hearing students. Deafness itself is not a learning disability. With the right support, deaf students can achieve on a par with their hearing peers. However, Welsh Government statistics [shows](#) deaf students are less likely to reach their potential than their hearing peers.

This gap exists at all stages of education between deaf and hearing students with a shocking 20% gap at the foundational learning phase. For this reason, we are keen to see more investment in specialist support during the early years. While the early years are encompassed within the new ALN reforms, the National Deaf Children's Society is not aware of increased investment in specialist sensory services in order to match the increased age range under the new ALN legislation.

**Access to British Sign Language:** In 2004, the Welsh Government recognised British Sign Language (BSL) as a language in its own right. However, work to improve access to the language for learners must go further. A Welsh Government [review](#) of access to British Sign Language for adults revealed that families of deaf children are often unable to access opportunities to learn BSL. We need to see a continued commitment to address this issue in the sixth Senedd.

We know that both deaf and hearing children are keen to learn BSL. From our survey, four out of five young people in Wales want to see more opportunities for them to learn the language. We are pleased to see an emphasis within the BSL guidance for the new curriculum on encouraging the teaching of BSL in schools. We believe that the next step is to now review the infrastructure to support this, particularly with the upcoming development of a BSL GCSE.

In addition, we would welcome moves to review the availability of Communication Support Workers with an appropriate level of BSL to support BSL users in our schools.

**Service Cuts:** Deaf children are at risk of seeing local authorities across Wales cut funding and restructure vital support services. As Wales comes out of the pandemic, it is vital to protect these essential services and ensure that any permanent changes to the delivery of services are given thorough consideration. For example, while accessing a Teacher of the Deaf remotely has been better than losing the service altogether during the pandemic, many families have commented on how difficult it is for their child to engage in this way – especially younger children.



**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 103**

**Ymateb gan:**

**Response from: [Diverse Cymru](#)**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

We would like to be added to the Children, Young People and Education Committee's contacts list in order to receive updates about your work.

We are writing to provide evidence on the forthcoming strategic priorities for the Children, Young People and Education Committee and in particular how the focus of the committee relates to, and can build on commitments to a fair and equal Wales for all.

Diverse Cymru promotes equality for all. We work across all protected characteristics and with other people who experience discrimination and disadvantage, such as carers and people from lower socio-economic backgrounds. We believe that we can work together to challenge discrimination in all its forms and create an equitable future for the people of Wales.

We believe that equality and human rights should be at the heart of every decision the Senedd makes affecting Wales. Equality, diversity and inclusion must be a cross-cutting theme, central to all inquiries and work of every Senedd committee and policy area.

We would welcome any opportunity to work with you to build commitments to a fair and equal Wales for all into your policies and work as the Children, Young People and Education Committee.



A copy of our Manifesto for 2021 is available, in both English and Welsh, here:  
<https://www.diversecymru.org.uk/a-manifesto-for-a-fair-and-equal-wales-2/>

**What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.**

**Theme 1: School-age education & Theme 2: Further and higher education**

We believe that equality and diversity must be embedded into the curriculum. The content of all subjects should be reviewed to ensure that Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic people, disabled people, LGBTQIA+ people, people of different religions and faiths, and women are fully represented. This is particularly true in history, but extends to other subjects, such as examples used in mathematics textbooks. The review of the curriculum in Wales and the new curriculum provide a once in a generation opportunity to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion for all are fully integrated throughout the curriculum. We feel this should be a priority for the committee.

Work placements in schools, colleges and universities should be more practical, longer, and provided in a wider variety of careers to enable young people to develop more skills and experience before entering the employment market. These need to include ensuring that all communities and individuals can participate and benefit from work placements with appropriate support, and tackling career segregation on gender and other characteristics.

**Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

We believe that health and social care must provide an integrated, seamless service, which actively recognises and accounts for each individual's views, wishes, and circumstances. Social care must be seen as just as valuable to society as health care.

We believe that health, wellbeing, and social care services must ensure support and treatment are integrated, holistic, and tailored for diverse communities across Wales. Mental health must be seen as an equal priority to physical health, including public health messages, quick and early access to support, tackling stigma, and providing tailored services to meet the needs of different protected characteristics. Children and young people need to be fully recognised as diverse people with more than one



characteristic and whose voices need to be heard and integrated into service design and delivery.

A comprehensive and multi-sectorial approach to mental health promotion, prevention, treatment, care and recovery is vital. This approach must be culturally sensitive and competent. It must take full account of all the diversity and equality factors each individual experiences, including children and young people.

Support for carers should be improved, including training, mental health support, respite and a specific bereavement service for carers, this includes young carers.

Investment in advocacy, including specialist advocacy services, is needed to ensure that barriers to accessing services and receiving equal outcomes are addressed. This includes making sure that advocacy for children and young people are fully responsive to their characteristics, background, and individual requirements.

#### **Theme 4: Children and young people**

As we recover from Covid-19 it is vital that equality and human rights is placed front and centre of all legislation, strategies, policies, programmes, and actions. The impact on all different communities and groups in Wales must be monitored and action taken to ensure that we emerge from this crisis stronger and more equal, rather than equality and human rights being detrimentally affected.

A 'one size fits all' approach will not meet the equalities requirements of people with one or more protected characteristics. We need to recognise and act on the voices and experiences of people in Wales, including intersectional issues. Failure to make this fundamental shift in the way we address equality and diversity will leave many people in Wales at risk of discrimination, poverty and injustice.

Legislation, policy and practice must be co-produced with individuals representing the diversity of the Wales across all characteristics to ensure that it respects every individual and advances equality for all. There is significant evidence that legislative compliance is not reflected in people's experiences of barriers to accessing services and in discrimination in Wales. This implementation gap must be closed. Effective monitoring and ensuring that the public are directly involved in continually evaluating the effectiveness of steps taken to advance equality and human rights are vital.

Additionally youth groups and services should ensure that specific funding and support is available for LGBTAIQ+ youth groups in every local authority area in





Wales. Where this is needed or requested for other characteristics or communities this should also be provided. Additionally ensuring that mainstream youth groups and services receive comprehensive training in each protected characteristic, wider disadvantaged communities, and specific sub-groups is vital to ensuring accessibility and inclusion for all children and young people.



**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 104**

**Ymateb gan: Liz Williams**

**Response from: Liz Williams, The Royal College of Psychiatrists Wales**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

**Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

**Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

**Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

**Cefndir**

Yn 2018, nododd adroddiad Cadernid Meddwl y rhan allweddol mae ysgolion yn ei chwarae wrth feithrin poblogaeth emosiynol wydn o bobl ifanc. Galwodd am ymagwedd ysgol gyfan i leihau stigma a hyrwyddo iechyd meddwl da. Hefyd disgrifiodd y diwygiadau arfaethedig i'r cwricwlwm yng Nghymru fel 'cyfle unwaith-mewn-genhedlaeth' i ymgorffori lles ym mywydau plant. Cafodd y Bil Cwricwlwm ac Asesu (Cymru) ei gyflwyno ym mis Gorffennaf 2020.

Mae'r cymorth a roddir gan ysgolion, rhieni a chymunedau'n hanfodol i feithrin lles emosiynol. Mae dealltwriaeth dda o hyn yng Nghymru, a bydd angen y ddarpariaeth sydd wedi'i chreu wrth gynorthwyo ag atal problemau iechyd meddwl ac ag ymyrryd yn gynnar ynddyn.



Fodd bynnag, er y gwelir ffocws a gwelliannau ar 'ran flaen' y llwybr gofal, mae angen ffocws ar y diffyg darpariaeth i blant a phobl ifanc sydd angen cymorth mwy arbenigol, y rhai ag anghenion cymhleth a'r rhai sydd angen cymorth mewn argyfwng.

Ers amser maith mae gwasanaethau arbenigol wedi profi prinder staff ac adnoddau. Yn yr ymateb hon, rydym yn tynnu sylw at rai o'r effeithiau ar grwpiau gwahanol – a'r cyfleoedd sy'n bodoli i wella canlyniadau i fabanod, plant a phobl ifanc.

## **Argymhellion allweddol**

Mae Coleg Brenhinol y Seiciatryddion, Cymru yn galw am:

- Gwell darpariaeth o wasanaethau arbenigol Iechyd Meddwl Plant a'r Glasoed (sCAMHS) a mynediad atynt
- Gwell darpariaeth ar gyfer pobl ifanc ag anhwylderau bwyta
- Mwy o ffocws ar iechyd meddwl myfyrwyr Addysg Uwch
- Mynd i'r afael â heriau'r gweithlu a chraffu ar y Cynllun Gweithlu Iechyd Meddwl

## **Gwasanaethau arbenigol Iechyd Meddwl Plant a'r Glasoed (sCAMHS)**

Mae angen i ni sicrhau bod arbenigwyr gael y cyfle i weithredu ar ben uchaf eu trwydded, a chlywn yn gynyddol nad yw hyn yn wir ledled Cymru. Nid yw'r dull hwn yn gwerthfawrogi'r agwedd gyfannol tuag at seiciatreg na'r sgiliau unigol ac arbenigol y mae seiciatryddion plant a phobl ifanc yn eu cynnig, a bydd yn parhau i effeithio ar recriwtio a chadw seiciatryddion, ac argaeledd gofal arbenigol.

Mae angen iddynt hefyd gael y lefel briodol o gefnogaeth glinigol a chyfle i ymgymryd ag ymchwil trwy amser gwarchoddedig.

Mae angen i ni symud i ffwrdd o gyfeirio at wasanaethau arbenigol fel baich ariannol. Nid yw hyn yn helpu o gwbl ac mae'n creu mwy o stigma i'r grwpiau bregus hynny sydd angen y cymorth arbenigol hwnnw.

- Rhaid inni ehangu'r gweithlu CAMHS arbenigol a sicrhau bod lles y gweithlu yn cael ei gynnal.
- Rhaid i ni gynyddu gallu gwasanaethau CAMHS, gan gynnwys cynyddu capasiti cleifion mewnol a gwelyau ar gyfer lleoliadau anabledd dysgu
- Rhaid i seiciatryddion gael yr amser a'r cyfle i wneud gwaith ymchwil ac arwain prosiectau arloesol - mae prosiect CWTCH yn enghraifft o werth un yn unig o'r rhain. Prosiect dan arweiniad seiciatreg i gleifion ag anhwylder bwyta mewn CAMHS, a aeth ymlaen i lywio rôl gyfan ymgynghori trwy fideo ar draws y GIG a gofal cymdeithasol.



- Mae angen cydnabod yr angen am ymyrraeth arbenigol ar draws y gwasanaeth iechyd, a rhaid i arbenigwyr gael y cyfle i weithredu ar ben uchaf eu trwydded.

## **Darpariaeth ar gyfer pobl ifanc ag anhwylderau bwyta**

Mae'r pandemig Covid wedi creu cyd-destun byd-eang sy'n debygol o gynyddu risg a symptomau anhwylderau bwyta, lleihau'r ffactorau sy'n amddiffyn rhag anhwylderau bwyta, a gwaethygu'r rhwystrau i gael gofal. Mae'n bosibl y bydd y tarfu hwn ar drefn ddyddiol a chyfyngiadau ar weithgareddau awyr agored yn cynyddu pryderon am bwysau a siâp, ac yn cael effaith negyddol ar fwyta, ymarfer corff a phatrymau cysgu, a all yn ei thro gynyddu risg a symptomau anhwylderau bwyta. Yn yr un modd, mae'n bosibl y bydd y pandemig a'r cyfyngiadau cymdeithasol cysylltiedig wedi amddifadu unigolion o gefnogaeth gymdeithasol a strategaethau ymdopi ymaddasol, ac felly efallai'n cynyddu risg a symptomau anhwylderau bwyta trwy dynnu ymaith ffactorau amddiffynnol. Ffactor arall yw mwy o gysylltiad â chyfryngau sy'n ymwneud yn benodol ag anhwylderau bwyta neu sy'n achosi gorbryder, ynghyd â'r ofn am ymddygiad heintus.

Er mwyn sicrhau ein bod ni'n ymateb yn gynt i arwyddion anhwylder bwyta sy'n datblygu, mae angen inni:

- Sicrhau bod mwy o staff meddygol wedi'u hyfforddi i adnabod a chynorthwyo plant sydd ag anhwylderau bwyta. Mae'r Cyngor Meddygol Cyffredinol wedi cynnal arolwg o ysgolion meddygol yn ddiweddar ac wedi cadarnhau canfyddiadau blaenorol bod myfyrwyr meddygol yn cael llai na dwy awr o hyfforddiant ar anhwylderau bwyta yn ystod pedair i chwe blynedd o astudiaethau cwrs gradd.

Er mwyn ymdopi â'r galw cynyddol hwn, mae angen inni:

- Ehangu'r gweithlu anhwylderau bwyta arbenigol ochr yn ochr ag ehangu a chynorthwyo'r gweithlu CAMHS arbenigol.
- Buddsoddi'n sylweddol mewn ymchwil i driniaethau ar gyfer anhwylderau bwyta er mwyn rhoi inni syniad llawer gwell o'r hyn sy'n gweithio. Bydd angen i ymchwil yn y dyfodol ddefnyddio gwaith casglu data rheolaidd y GIG, a sicrhau bod gwasanaethau rheng flaen y GIG yn cael cymorth priodol i gasglu data o ansawdd da ac integreiddio ymchwil i arferion clinigol.



## **Canolbwyntio mwy ar Iechyd Meddwl Myfyrwyr Addysg Uwch**

Mae'r pandemig Covid wedi achosi cruglwyth newydd o broblemau y bydd angen eu hystyried yng nghyd-destun iechyd meddwl myfyrwyr. Bydd y rhain yn berthnasol i'r holl fyfyrwyr ond yn pwysu'n drymach ar y rhai â hanes o iechyd meddwl gwael. Efallai y bydd myfyrwyr o'r fath eisoes yn ei chael yn anodd integreiddio mewn amgylchedd cymdeithasol newydd ac i feithrin perthnasoedd gyda chlinigwyr, staff cymorth, staff academiaidd a'u cyd-fyfyrwyr.

Bydd yr anawsterau hyn yn cael eu dwysáu gan y cyfyngiadau sy'n deillio o Covid. Gall problemau godi yn y meysydd canlynol:

Mwy o orbryder cyffredinol a/neu iselder ymysg y boblogaeth myfyrwyr yn deillio o: gorbryder am gael Covid; effeithiau'r argyfwng Covid ar eu cwrs a'u hasesiadau; gorbryder am arian oherwydd bod llai o gyfleoedd i weithio am gyflog; gorbryder am gyfleoedd gyrfa yn y dyfodol; gorbryder am eu teuluoedd gartref yn wynebu risg Covid neu'n sâl ag ef; gorbryder am fyw mewn llety a rennir.

Er bod yna effeithiau niweidiol posibl oherwydd Covid, yn ddiau, mae'n bwysig sylweddoli y gall effeithiau buddiol mynd i'r brifysgol fod yn llawer mwy na'r rhain. Bydd y risg o gael salwch difrifol yn isel iawn i'r mwyafrif llethol o fyfyrwyr, a byddant yn elwa ar ddisgyblaeth bywyd myfyrwyr.

- Hefyd mae dyletswydd ar Lywodraeth Cymru, y prifysgolion a GIG Cymru i ddarparu gwasanaethau iechyd a lles i fyfyrwyr, er mwyn mynd i'r afael â'r galw cynyddol sy'n codi o'r helbulon newydd hyn.

### **Mynd i'r afael â heriau'r gweithlu a chraffu ar y Cynllun Gweithlu Iechyd Meddwl**

Mae'r cynllun gweithlu iechyd meddwl yn cynnig cyfle i greu gwasanaethau cynaliadwy sy'n sicrhau y gall pawb yng Nghymru gael cymorth iechyd meddwl priodol. Deallwn fod iechyd meddwl plant a phobl ifanc i fod yn faes ffocws allweddol yn y cynllun, ac felly byddai o gymorth mawr pe bai'r pwyllgor yn craffu ar weithlu iechyd meddwl y dyfodol ar gyfer babanod, plant a phobl ifanc, o bosibl ar y cyd â'r pwyllgor iechyd.

Yr hyn sy'n hollbwysig yw'r angen i ddiogelu a chynorthwyo ein gweithlu yn yr heriau a fydd yn cael eu gosod arnynt yn syth wrth fynd i'r afael â rhestrau aros ac ar yr un pryd rheoli chwythu plwc oherwydd gorweithio; lliniaru cyfraddau ymddeol ar ôl y pandemig; a hyn i gyd ar yr un pryd â chynllunio gweithlu tymor hirach a all reoli anghenion iechyd meddwl ein poblogaeth yn y tymor hirach.

- Galw ar y pwyllgor i graffu ar y cynllun gweithlu iechyd meddwl er mwyn sicrhau ei fod yn ystyried yr heriau a ddaw yn syth yn ogystal â'r weledigaeth hirdymor ar gyfer y gweithlu. Mae hyn yn cynnwys cynnydd tuag at fodloni



safonau Coleg Brenhinol y Seiciatryddion ar gyfer gwasanaethau iechyd meddwl amenedigol.

- Galw ar y pwyllgor i graffu ar y graddau y bydd y cynllun yn ymgysylltu ac yn ymgynghori'n helaeth ar draws grwpiau defnyddwyr gwasanaethau a grwpiau proffesiynol yn ystod camau datblygu'r cynllun.
- Galw ar y pwyllgor i sicrhau bod rolau arbenigol yn cael sylw ac ystyriaeth briodol yn y cynllun i fynd i'r afael â meysydd prinder darpariaeth, a gwneud hynny gan ddeall yr heriau hanesyddol sydd gan Gymru wrth recriwtio a chadw i rolau arbenigol.

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## Background

In 2018, Mind over Matter identified the key role schools play in building an emotionally resilient population of young people. It called for a whole-school approach to reducing stigma and promoting good mental health. It also described the planned reform of the curriculum in Wales as a 'once-in-a-generation opportunity' to embed well-being into children's lives. The Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Bill was introduced in July 2020.

The support given by schools, parents and communities is essential to developing emotional well-being. This is understood well in Wales, and the provision that's been created will be needed in supporting both prevention and early intervention of mental health problems.

However, whilst focus and improvements are now being seen at the 'front end' of the care pathway, there needs to be an additional focus on the lack of provision for children and young people who need more specialist support, those with complex needs, and those who need help in a crisis.

Specialist services have long experienced staff and resourcing shortages. In this response, we've highlighted some of the impacts on different groups – and the opportunities that exist to improve outcomes for babies, children and young people.

## Key recommendations

The Royal College of Psychiatrists Wales is calling for:

- Improved provision of, and access to, specialist CAMHS services (sCAMHS)
- Better provision for young people with eating disorders
- Increased focus on the mental health of higher education students
- Addressing workforce challenges and scrutiny of the Mental Health Workforce Plan



## **Specialist CAMHS services (sCAMHS)**

There have been historic vacancies in specialist CAMHS posts. We need to ensure that specialists are able to operate at the top of their licence, and we hear increasingly that this is not the case across Wales. This approach doesn't value the holistic approach to psychiatry or the individual and specialist skills that child and adolescent psychiatrists bring and will continue to affect recruitment and retention of psychiatrists, and the availability of specialist care.

They also need to be given the appropriate level of clinical support and opportunity to undertake research through protected time.

We need to move away from referring to specialist services as a financial burden, this is hugely unhelpful and further stigmatises those vulnerable groups who need to access that specialist support.

- We must expand the specialist CAMHS workforce and ensure the wellbeing of the workforce is supported
- We must increase the capacity of CAMHS services, including increasing inpatient and bed capacity for learning disability placements
- Psychiatrists must be given the time and opportunity to undertake research and lead innovative projects, this is to the advantage of future service delivery in Wales. An example of the value of just one of these instances is the CWTCH project. A psychiatry led project for ED patients in CAMHS that subsequently went on to inform the whole role of video consultation across the NHS and social care.
- The need for specialist intervention must be recognised across the health service, and specialists must be given the opportunity to operate at the top of their licence.

## **Provision for young people with eating disorders**

The Covid pandemic has created a global context likely to increase eating disorder (ED) risk and symptoms, decrease factors that protect against EDs, and exacerbate barriers to care. Disruption to daily routines and constraints to outdoor activities may increase weight and shape concerns, and negatively impact eating, exercise, and sleeping patterns, which may in turn increase ED risk and symptoms.

Relatedly, the pandemic and accompanying social restrictions may have deprived individuals of social support and adaptive coping strategies, thereby potentially elevating ED risk and symptoms by removing protective factors. Another factor is increased exposure to ED-specific or anxiety-provoking media, as well as fears of contagion.



In order to ensure we react earlier to signs of a developing eating disorder, we need to:

- Ensure that more medical staff are trained to identify and support children with eating disorders. The GMC has recently surveyed medical schools and have confirmed previous findings that medical students receive less than two hours of training on eating disorders over four to six years of undergraduate study.

To cope with this rising demand we need:

- To expand the specialist eating disorder workforce alongside expansion and support of the specialist CAMHS workforce
- To significantly invest in research into eating disorder treatments to give us a much better idea of what works. Future research will need to harness routine NHS data collection, and frontline NHS services should receive appropriate support to collect good quality data and integrate research into clinical practice.

### **Increased focus on the mental health of higher education students**

The Covid pandemic has highlighted a number of emerging challenges and issues in the context of student mental health. These will apply to all students but will weigh more heavily on those with histories of mental ill health. Such students may already find it difficult to integrate with a new social environment and to build relationships with clinicians, support staff, academic staff, and their fellow students. These difficulties will be exacerbated by the restrictions arising from Covid. Problems may arise in the following areas:

Increased general anxiety and/or depression amongst the student population arising from: anxiety about getting Covid; the effects of the Covid crisis on their course and their assessments; anxiety about finances because of fewer opportunities for paid work; anxiety about future career prospects; anxiety about family back home being at risk of, or ill with, Covid; anxieties about living in shared accommodation.

Whilst there are undoubtedly potential adverse effects of Covid, it is important to appreciate that the beneficial effects of going to university can far outweigh these. The vast majority of students will be at very low risk of serious illness and will benefit from the routine of student life.

- The Welsh Government, universities, and NHS Wales must provide appropriate and robust health and welfare services for students to address the increased demands arising from these new adversities.





## **Addressing workforce challenges and scrutiny of the Mental Health Workforce Plan**

The mental health workforce plan presents an opportunity to create sustainable services which ensure that all people in Wales are able to access appropriate mental health support. We understand children and young people's mental health is due to be a key focus area within the plan, and so it would be extremely helpful for the committee to undertake scrutiny on the future mental health workforce for babies, children and young people, potentially in conjunction with the health committee.

What's crucial is the need to protect and support our workforce in the immediate challenges that will be imposed upon them in tackling waiting lists whilst managing burnout; mitigating the rates of retirement post pandemic; all whilst planning a longer term workforce that can manage the longer-term mental health needs of our population.

- Call for the committee to scrutinise the mental health workforce plan to ensure it considers the immediate challenges as well as the long-term vision for the workforce, this includes progress towards meeting the Royal College of Psychiatrists standards for perinatal mental health services
- Call for the committee to scrutinise the extent the plan is engaging and consulting widely across service user and professional groups in its development

Call for the committee to ensure that specialist roles are given appropriate attention and consideration within the plan to address areas of shortage of provision, in doing so understanding the historic challenges that Wales has in recruitment and retention to specialist roles.

### **Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**

Rydym yn croesawu'r cyfle i ymateb i'r Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg ynghylch ei flaenoriaethau ar gyfer y Chweched Senedd.

#### **Ynghylch Coleg Brenhinol y Seiciatryddion**

Coleg Brenhinol y Seiciatryddion, Cymru, yw'r corff meddygol proffesiynol sy'n gyfrifol am gefnogi seiciatryddion trwy gydol eu gyrfaedd, o hyfforddiant yr holl ffordd at ymddeoliad, ac am osod a chodi safonau seiciatreg yn y Deyrnas Unedig. Nod y Coleg yw gwella canlyniadau i bobl sydd â salwch meddwl ac anabledau deallusol, ac iechyd meddwl unigolion, eu teuluoedd a'u cymunedau.



Er mwyn cyflawni hyn, mae'r Coleg yn gosod safonau ac yn hyrwyddo rhagoriaeth ym maes seiciatreg; yn arwain, yn cynrychioli ac yn cefnogi seiciatryddion; yn gwella'r ddealltwriaeth wyddonol o salwch meddwl; yn gweithio gyda chleifion, gofalwyr a'u sefydliadau ac yn eirioli drostynt. Yn genedlaethol ac yn rhyngwladol, mae gan y Coleg rôl hanfodol wrth gynrychioli arbenigedd y proffesiwn seiciatrig i lywodraethau ac asiantaethau eraill. Mae'r Coleg yng Nghymru'n cynrychioli mwy na 600 o Seiciatryddion Ymgynghorol a Seiciatryddion Dan Hyfforddiant sy'n gweithio yng Nghymru.

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We welcome the opportunity to respond to the Children, Young People and Education committee around its priorities for the Sixth Senedd.

### **About RCPsych Wales**

The Royal College of Psychiatrists is the professional medical body responsible for supporting psychiatrists throughout their careers, from training through to retirement, and setting and raising standards of psychiatry in the United Kingdom. The College aims to improve the outcomes of people with mental illness and intellectual disabilities, and the mental health of individuals, their families and communities.

In order to achieve this, the College sets standards and promotes excellence in psychiatry; leads, represents and supports psychiatrists; improves the scientific understanding of mental illness; works with and advocates for patients, carers and their organisations.

Nationally and internationally, the College has a vital role in representing the expertise of the psychiatric profession to governments and other agencies. RCPsych in Wales represents more than 600 Consultant and Trainee Psychiatrists working in Wales.



**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 105**

**Ymateb gan:**

**Response from: National Day Nurseries Association Cymru**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

**Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

**Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

With policy changes around the Curriculum for Wales 2022 and the wider Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) agenda it is important that the revised childcare qualifications, both academic and vocational, continue to be relevant to the needs of learners and the sector. Keeping qualifications under review over the course of the Sixth Senedd will be important to ensure employers in the early years and childcare sector are able to recruit the number of staff they need. Research shows that the experience and qualification level of staff in early years settings is a significant driver of outcomes for children.

**Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**



## **Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**

### **Commitment to the ECEC approach**

The National Conversations: with the Child Care, Play and Early Years sector in Wales report highlighted that childcare, play and early years workers felt undervalued and underappreciated during the Covid-19 pandemic. A driving factor in this was that early years staff felt they weren't always seen as professional workers, unlike others working with children such as teachers. We would like to see consistency of messages between ministerial teams in education and social care departments and closer working to ensure that when key messages are shared reference to the childcare sector is made alongside education. This would recognise that learning in the early years of children's lives is a crucial stage of development and their education.

We would like to see an ongoing commitment to recognise the childcare sector for the valuable contribution they provide to children within their first 1000 days, supported by the commitment to the professionalisation of the workforce.

Whilst we welcome the ethos of the ECEC approach and recognise the importance of ensuring a more consistent approach within childcare and early years, it will be important that existing providers of childcare within the PVI sector are taken into consideration throughout. There are potential risks of displacement of existing high-quality provision if there is a focus on expanding one section of the sector. We believe it will be important to monitor developments in the sector as the ECEC approach develops. We would like to see parity between the PVI and education sector for example the terms of educational provision that they are able to provide and with regulation and inspection requirements.

### **Sustainability of the childcare sector**

We would like to see a commitment to continue to raise the need for funding within the sector to increase in line with inflation to ensure that childcare providers are able to continue to provide high quality childcare for children and their families. We welcome the Welsh government commitment to provide 100% business rates relief for childcare providers in Wales until 2025, however this alone will not support the sustainability of the sector.

### **Childcare, Play and Early Years Workforce Plan**

Since the pandemic there has been even more focus on the need to attract high quality new recruits into the sector. NDNA have recently carried out work with the Education Policy Institute and the recruitment crisis currently being experienced by the childcare sector was evidenced within the outcomes of this work. The report notes that 96% of those recruiting had tried to recruit at Level 3 and 21% said they found it difficult and 73% said very difficult to recruit at that level.



Therefore we would like to see that ongoing financial support is provided to ensure that programmes such as NDNA's Childcare Works project are able to continue to drive new high quality recruits into the sector.



**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 106**

**Ymateb gan:**

**Response from: Institute of Health Visiting**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

**Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

We confine our comments to pre-school age children as indicative of our sphere of professional competence and experience.

**Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

We confine our comments to pre-school age children as indicative of our sphere of professional competence and experience.

**Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

By Children and Young People (CYP) we include babies / infants and young children from conception, through birth infancy and early childhood to school entry. The First 1000 days (from conception to age 2). By health and well-being including social care we include those services and other environmental factors that have an effect on the



health, development, learning and wellbeing of CYP from before birth, through the course of childhood that set a life-long trajectory.

In order to focus priorities likely to have impact on Wales' Future Generations we conducted a small purposive enquiry of senior practitioners in the health visiting profession. We recognise that health visiting is part of a wider network and system of provision that needs to work together interdependently.

We asked our respondents about the First 1000 days of life. These are often overlooked in policy for CYP through the lens of 'Education' because (1) infants do not attend school; (2) they are not able to speak directly for themselves when they are pre-verbal and are therefore systematically excluded from otherwise creditable strategies to consult CYP themselves and hear what they have to say (3) the First 1000 days are more significant for learning, development, health and social outcomes than any other life-stage; (4) the First 1000 days are the most vulnerable across the life-course with the highest rate of homicide being in the first year of life, and setting inequalities that are hard to overcome; and (5) investment in the earliest years has the highest 'rate of return' economically (James Heckman) and for health outcomes (Sir Michael Marmot).

We asked our respondents:

## **1. What three priorities would you identify for the first 1000 days of Welsh children's lives to become a healthier future generation?**

**1.1 A holistic 360° vision for child health and wellbeing** for all children but especially for the first 1000 days. In complex societies services become specialised, separating their focus, but health, wellbeing and development in early childhood are experienced and influenced in an integrated way. A priority for government, its agencies, services and front-line practitioners is to be able to provide a supportive, holistic environment in which they can flourish. This is difficult when children's needs are viewed through administrative or institutional lenses such as home vs school; health vs social care; development vs learning or school readiness.

An ecological approach to early childhood should be a priority across government depts that should accept the challenge to orientate and coordinate their policy



through the lens of the experience of childhood. In this respect we commend the consultation's engagement with CYP but urge the perspective of the youngest children to be given equal priority.

Health visiting as a profession and a mode of practice is firmly rooted in this ecological approach.

They lead and deliver the Healthy Child Wales (HCW) programme and it should be a priority that it be implemented in ways that are not confined to trajectories of health that lead to medically defined diagnostic outcomes. These are important but the HCW programme needs to address the continuum of the interaction between infants' early experience of care and neurodevelopment, and later outcomes for all domains of development, including physical and mental health, psychosocial and employment function. These infants will become the parents of the future – it is how transgenerational risk is transmitted – a cycle to be broken with the right approach. The ecological approach supports healthy relationships between infants and their carers. Within the family and the wider network of community relations and resources that include services. This is why the health and wellbeing of parents and other siblings are also the focus for health visiting in the context of the home and community: a 360 perspective.

## **1.2 Resilience and a strengths-based approach:**

A healthy future requires a healthy start that provides the resilience to thrive even when health and other challenges are experienced. Resilience is not a property of the strong individual but of a network of relationships. Health visitors in Wales have been in the vanguard of this approach, exemplified by the development and use of the Family Resilience Assessment Instrument and Tool ([FRAIT](#)) created by health visitors for health visitors to use in their daily practice. However, this approach is not limited to one tool or technique. It requires the HV to prioritise the perspective of the unborn, pre or barely verbal infant with expert understanding of future outcomes emanating from the interaction between infant neurodevelopment and the environment of care. In the dyadic, biopsychosocial context, the environment of care is constructed by parental caregiving capacity and own history of being parented, safe and trusted support networks, financial and housing status, health and other factors. HVs apply this biopsychosocial approach in collaboration with parents to assess, create personalised care, and ultimately to support, promote and/ or protect infant outcomes across the lifespan.

Resilience is a function of a wider network of relationships beyond the immediate family. It is therefore a priority that families are connected to this network and, when they experience difficulties, to be supported to navigate their journey to the support





that they may need. This is a core capability of health visitors. They start a caring and compassionate journey with parents, building trusting relationships in order to provide holistic support, guidance and advice to help parents care for their developing child, ensuring that they are safe and healthy and identifying when this may not be the case.

In order to maximise their leadership potential at community level health visitors need to be free to engage with community networks from living room to boardroom to build on strengths reflective of particular contexts including inner city, post-industrial town, rural and coastal communities.

### **1.3 Reducing exposure to risk / Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)**

Wales has been at the forefront of making use of the insights of research into the prevalence and impact of [Adverse Childhood Experiences](#) . Health visitors welcome this as they have a proactive reach into every family when the impact of ACEs on parents in their earlier life often becomes evident as they make the transition to parenthood. Health visitors can adopt trauma informed approaches to working with families when they have the time and opportunity to win trust and explore family health needs with fathers and mothers. These needs can become evident in perinatal mental distress or other behaviours including problematic use of alcohol and other substances or domestic conflict or violence. These in turn can become ACE's for the young child at the most formative life stage that is the first 1000 days.

We encourage the Welsh policy makers to continue to support this work recognising that ACEs are not confined to pre-determined high-risk groups but are widespread throughout the population. This insight provides a powerful opportunity for prevention through the universal, non-stigmatising service provided by health visitors when they are supported and equipped through up-to-date training, supervision and appropriately weighted caseloads.

## **2. What three things do health visitors provide for babies, children and families in the first 1000 days to support better health and life chances for future generations?**

### **2.1 Providing and facilitating trusting relationships**

Recent research indicates that what parents most value about health visitors is that they get to know and be known by their health visitor and can rely on them for



sound evidence-based knowledge and support tailored to them and their circumstances. Moreover, the science of early childhood also supports the primary importance of the quality of relationship between the developing infant and their parent(s). Thus, evidence supports the power of health visiting to support healthy foundations for later development across a range of outcomes. A good example is early language and communication which is a key predictor of later educational, social and emotional outcomes.

Crucial to providing and facilitating trusting relationships is sufficient time to engage with each family at key points in their parenting journey and to respond proportionately to emerging needs in a timely manner. This requires caseloads reflective of the level of need in the particular community and the organisation of services to provide ready access and continuity of practitioner, avoiding the experience of fragmented depersonalised care.

## **2.2 Searching for and assessing needs**

Health visitors search for health needs and raise awareness of the child's and parental needs and factors that may impact on the child reaching their full potential. Part of this is identifying safeguarding concerns, parental capacity to care, identifying when a parent and child may require additional support and access to other services that may help.

## **2.3 Providing and mobilising support**

Health visitors provide interventional support based on the child and parents' individual needs. This can be short or long-term depending on parental capacity, their child's health and psychological needs and whether a child has emerging or additional needs or complicating factors such as parental capacity, or issues such as family conflict or material deprivation. Health visitors have the capability to develop and lead pathways to care both for individual families, vulnerable or minoritised groups and across communities. The iHV has identified 15 'high impact areas' in its vision for health visiting for England that was informed by best practice in all four UK nations.



### **3. What three things would enable health visiting services to have the greatest impact on the health and wellbeing of future generations in Wales?**

#### **3.1 Universal health visiting services must be weighted according to contemporary public health needs during the first 1000 days and early years and characteristics of the communities served** (inner-urban, rural, coastal etc)

The power of health visiting lies in its universal reach in contrast to most other services for families with young children that are either targeted or reactive. However, health needs are not evenly distributed but reflect wider inequalities. It is important to address inequalities in by ensuring that care of the child and family becomes needs-led and not a 'post-code lottery' which, for example, can disadvantage families with high level needs who do not fall into Flying Start areas. All health visitors need to have caseloads weighted to enable them to provide a proportionate responsive level of personalised care.

#### **3.2 A highly skilled workforce that has access to evidence-based interventions and training.**

The science of early childhood and research evidence for effective interventions is growing rapidly. As Specialist Community Public Health Nurses (SCPHN) health visitors are highly educated and able to assimilate and appraise new knowledge and practices, providing leadership for enhanced care and services. Specialist health visitors advance care for families with additional needs and support their health visiting colleagues and wider teams. Flying Start in Wales and Family Nurse Partnership in England provide examples of how a sustained programme of training, support and supervision underpins service quality, effectiveness and staff satisfaction. The iHV supports such as examples for all health visitors. The NMC will be publishing new standards for SCPHN that provide an ambitious vision for health visitors to exercise their expertise clinical skills as autonomous practitioners with leadership at community and system level. Realising this ambition will require continuing investment in the whole health visiting workforce to maintain and enhance their capabilities within an enabling environment.

#### **3.3 Organisation and leadership of health visiting services that are reflective of relationship focussed care**

Research supports a symmetry between the quality of care experienced by families and the organisation and leadership of health visiting services

There are a number of ways in which this can be articulated (e.g., compassionate leadership, restorative practice, trauma informed, sanctuary approach) but in each



case it is important that the organisation practices what it preaches and models what it expects of its front-line staff. This should include a high-trust high-support culture that sets high ambitions to 'make a difference' to the families and communities we serve.

The performance of services should be monitored, and improvement driven by relevant, proportionate and engaging data that motivates practitioners, service leads and policy makers towards collaborative learning and improvement. A concerted effort is required to capture data which reflect the issues that most concern parents and/ or are acutely relevant to infant wellbeing, and so engage HVs at every face-to-face contact during 1<sup>st</sup> 1000 days. Data collected are largely categorical/ quantitative and do not capture labour intensive HV activities that respond to early needs - these manifest qualitatively (e.g., parental difficulty in soothing infant; low parental sensitivity to infant; housing needs that impact health and safety; asylum seeker mothers with trauma; child protection). Sadly, the iHV finds that practitioners frequently report the experience of 'ticking the box, but missing the point'. We are engaging in research to investigate more appropriate approaches to analytics and commend efforts to move beyond onerous and demotivating methods.

We support meaningful career pathways for expert health visiting practitioners in 1<sup>st</sup> 1000 days with proven specialist training/ skills leading across care pathways or for vulnerable groups such as looked after children or minoritised groups in order to champion service improvement at system level.

#### **Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**



**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 107**

**Ymateb gan:**

**Response from: All Wales Diabetes Patient Reference Group-Chair**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

**Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

Children with Diabetes should be able to have the same opportunities as children who do not have it.

There should be Care plans for individual children so that staff have up to date guidance on how to deal with Hypoglycaemia and have a safe place for the children to inject themselves.

Consideration needs to be included when they are taking exams.

Diabetes should be included in the ALN Bill

**Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

All Children who go onto further Education should have access to a fridge in their rooms and there needs to be awareness and information available



### **Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

There needs to be Diabetes Awareness Training for all staff who look after cared for children which will need to include their emotional needs as well as diabetes.

There needs to be awareness about the prevention of T2 Diabetes and appropriate early access to support services such as weight management services.

Consideration needs to be given to those people living in areas of deprivation where ill health is poor.

More engagement of people in Communities where services should be based

### **Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**

There needs to be access to Psychological support for children with diabetes.

The Psychologist should have a special interest in diabetes and will need an understanding of how important it is to prevent complications of the condition.

There is an increased risk of developing in eating disorders and DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY.

We are aware that not all Health Boards provide this and it is imperative that this is available across Wales

There needs to be investment in this as it will save costs to the NHS in the future.

There needs to be an increase in the number of Training places for Psychologists- This needs to be looked at urgently.

Workforce planning – Paediatric DSN post needs to be looked at as numbers are going to decrease because of retirement-It is essential that children and young people are looked after by appropriate staff



**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 108**

**Ymateb gan: Katie Palmer**

**Response from: Katie Palmer, Programme Manager Food Sense Wales and Co-founder and secretariat for Food Policy Alliance Cymru**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

**Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

Covid 19 has simulataneously demonstrated the vulnerability in our food supply chain and the crucial role schools have to play in ensuring adequate nutrition for our school age children. Despite large rises in the number of FSM-eligible children in Wales, we continue to see [more children in poverty missing out on free school meals than in any other UK nation](#) .Additional safety nets Government put in place to ensure families eligible for free school meals were supported during the pandemic and the adaptations schools made to operate a safe meal service, have been vital. However, with many school meal services still constrained by operating safely in a Covid context, combined with increasing challenges in the food supply chain due to Brexit and the pandemic, the committee should consider how Government can ensure a secure and resilient school meal service that is delivering sustainable and nutritious meals to all children whilst benefiting the wider local supply chain.

**1. A review of the role of food in the school day.**

- To include a review of the social return on investment of integrating policy thinking and legislation across Government priorities such as developing the Foundational economy, Agriculture Bill and Community Food Strategy,



progressing the Social Partnerships and Public Procurement Bill and reducing educational inequalities through increasing eligibility of and ensuring access to free school meals (lunches and breakfasts) that are sourced locally and sustainably produced.

- To include aligning the forthcoming review of the Healthy Eating in Schools (Wales) Measure 2009 with developing the Food Foundational economy, accreditation and ensuring all school lunches contain a minimum of 2 portions of veg.
- To include a review on the free school breakfast scheme and its ability to reach those children most in need.
- To consider how to protect children's food security in future pandemics or emergencies
- To consider how the school meal service can be effectively monitored
- To consider how the proposed review of the structure of the school day and school year could optimise dining experiences for children

**2. A review of holiday provision** including how the School Holiday Enrichment Programme can be optimised to help meet government's ambition of reducing inequalities. Considerations could include:

- How SHEP could be funded and administered moving forward to eliminate the constraints on programme development of single year funding commitments
- Whether SHEP should become a statutory function of Local Authorities as seen as part of their Socio-economic duty to ensure all children that need the provision can access a scheme
- How the programme could be expanded (increased reach, eligibility and to cover all holidays) to ensure all children that would benefit from the programme could be offered a place. This should include a review of how the programme can support vulnerable children.
- The role of SHEP in supporting the development of Welsh Government's community school programme.
- Whether Government should support other types of holiday provisions and review the impact of providing free school meal provision over all holidays during the pandemic.

**3. Explore how food can be used in the new curriculum to ensure that every child in Wales is food literate and equipped to become good food citizens**

There are some great examples of how schools are using food to support the curriculum – from growing and cooking food to budgeting and learning about the sugar content of junk food or animal welfare issues. However schools need the appropriate training and resources to support deliver consistently across Wales. There are many potential resources that could be built upon including Council Education catering departments and Dietetic teams. A few are listed here:





- Nutrition Skills for Life Programme – Including the School Holiday Enrichment Programme where teaching assistants are trained and resources are mapped to the curriculum for literacy and numeracy
- Veg Power - <https://vegpower.org.uk/ways-to-use-eat-them-to-defeat-them-in-schools/>
- Cardiff's **Healthy Schools team** have produced a Power Up Your Pupils with Veg resource pack for teachers and a Peas Please Parent Pack, to engage primary school children with veg
- For a case study on how education catering, schools, suppliers and dietitians worked together in Wales during SHEP see pg 23 of the Peas Please [Feeding our Future](#) report
- Organisations such as Social Farms & Gardens, through their [School Farms Network](#) (these are education settings that hold livestock and do much more than just have food growing areas), have worked tirelessly for years to bring 'food education' higher up the curriculum agenda and the network now boasts over 120 school farm members

N.B it is recommended that the committee take note of the recommendations made in [Feeding our Future](#) (pg 36) also of relevance to Theme 3.

## **Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

### **Consider how to build the capacity of further and higher Education to deliver the agro-ecological supply chain training needed to support the development of a resilient Food System**

We need to ensure that food education in all its forms in further and higher education is attuned to a rapidly changing context. The most obvious example is in farming where the institutions need to set the pace in offering training that is appropriate to the kind of sustainable and regenerative farming we need to see in the future and that underpins WG policy objectives on climate change and biodiversity. To equip the next generation of farmers and growers with the skills they need for agroecological farming, a combination of on farm practical training and theoretical classroom learning is needed

Wales has a long and rich history in Wales of providing practical and class room support to our young farmers – mostly through further education settings and there are a number of colleges across Wales that deliver this blended learning which are a real stepping stone in to farming. However, Horticultural training at this level is very



limited across Wales and is only available at a very small number of sites. One of these is the Neath Port Talbot Group of colleges and in particular their Newtown College Campus which is now offering a Level 2 Horticulture course. They are using the community gardens adjacent for some of the practical learning environment whilst also equipping our future growers with 21<sup>st</sup> century skills by linking to the Controlled Environment Agriculture pilot site and utilising this technology and infrastructure as part of the course. They are also in the enviable position of having the ability to directly link horticulture with their catering training college, their own on-site catering and their publicly available restaurant.

Tyfu Cymru, Landworkers' Alliance and Cardiff University are currently piloting a Wales wide agroecological horticulture traineeship network, as part of the [Resilient Green Spaces](#) partnership hosted by Social Farms & Gardens. Trainees are placed with agroecological veg farms across Wales, where they receive practical training and experience. This is complemented by theoretical training from multiple different farmers & trainers both online and at the farms, enabling trainees to get a broad understanding of growing in different environments and business models. **We encourage the Committee to review the learnings from this pilot after the project ends in September 2023**

There could be more emphasis on healthy and sustainable secondary food production to foster the kind of skills that add value to our agricultural produce and strengthen local economic activity and supply chains. Meanwhile catering and hospitality education (currently under review by Qualifications Wales) needs a complete overhaul to offer a more rounded curriculum, closely tied to farming and food craft and that recognises that the nature of eating out has become more informal, and more diverse in character. Enterprise and business understanding needs to be woven into the fabric of all these courses

### **Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

One in four of reception age children are overweight or obese (PHW 2021) and those from poorer backgrounds are more likely to be an unhealthy weight. The Peas Please report, [Feeding our Future](#) and the accompanying report [The State of the Nation Wales](#) highlights that children's veg intake remains well below the recommended intake.



## **1. Consider how to optimize the Healthy start scheme in Wales**

Around 40% of beneficiaries are not taking up their entitlement in Wales. The committee could consider how public bodies are monitoring and supporting the uptake of healthy start vouchers locally and nationally consider what impact the scheme is having on providing nutritional support to low-income families.

## **2. Food environment / advertising**

Welsh Government is due to consult on the food environment as part of Healthy Weight Healthy Wales. Priorities of the HWHW delivery plan for 2021–2025 include working with stakeholders to promote positive marketing and restrict advertising of unhealthy food and drink, and consulting on mandatory calorie information for the out of home sector. Additionally, they intend to work with the UK Government on how to improve marketing and labelling on infant food and drink – something the UK Government committed to consult on in 2019 but has not actioned. They have also re-committed to launch a detailed consultation on takeaways located near schools (previously delayed due to Covid).

## **Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**

### **Ensuring Children’s Right to Food is upheld**

In conjunction with the Equality and Social Justice Committee the committee should consider how Children’s Rights Legislation and the Socio-economic duty can be deployed to ensure every child in Wales receives their Right to Food, eradicating children’s food insecurity in line with the Sustainable Development Goal of Zero Hunger by 2030. For example should there be accountability at a local authority level to measure, monitor and report on food insecurity and ensure strategies are in place to mitigate against it, as part of their socio-economic duty? The committee may like to take account of the evidence generated through the Welsh Government commissioned research on [strengthening and advancing equality and Human Rights in Wales](#)

The review of eligibility of Free School Meals is key to ensuring every child in Wales receives this right and the committee may like to consider research produced by the [Bevan Foundation and Antipoverty Coalition](#) and research from Sweden published in



June of this year which shows that children that received free school lunches during their entire primary school period [went on to have higher lifetime incomes](#).

The Committee may also like to note the work of Children's Right 2 Food and their report – [A Year of Children's Food](#) – which includes work from Wales' Young Food Ambassadors and charts the progress in all four Nations of the UK in ensuring Children's Right to Food



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3. Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)

That children's social care and health care need to be integrated. Children in social care will by default have ACEs that need to be considered. They need timely support to ensure any trauma and distress is addressed. Appropriate health care workers should work inhouse alongside social care workers to ensure their psychological needs are met. Eg. In residential settings. It's not about more access to MH services or more 1:1 therapy. We need psychosocially healthy systems. Better access to MH services is a **waste of tax payers** money if people go back to poor residential settings or other housing, DV, poverty & other dehumanising and demoralising circumstances. We need to address the social determinants of MH (See above). Services, like the families first programme also need to be better integrated and designed around the trauma recovery model ( <https://www.trmacademy.com/> ) and 3Rs principles ( <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uUAL8RVvkyY> - the model - <https://beaconhouse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/The-Three-Rs.pdf> )

Past research and early intervention programmes have focused on promoting positive parent–child relationships (predominantly mother–child relationships using behaviour-based interventions) as a primary method to address the impact of family stress on children. Emerging evidence, however, shows us that this picture is more complicated. Findings are demonstrating that it is the quality of the inter-parental relationship, and the quality of the primary attachment figures current secure base that is increasingly recognised as a main influence on effective parenting practices and children's long-term mental health outcomes and future life chances (Harold, et. al., 2017). As with findings from a randomised control trial (RCT) on relational parenting programmes it is the current state of the parent's sense of secure base and emotional health that indicates their ability to be able to provide an emotionally secure environment for their child (Cassidy, et. al., 2017). What this means is that the wider family environment is an important contextual factor that can both protect or exacerbate child outcomes. Therefore, interventions should look to create the conditions for psychosocial-ecologically health family and community environments that promote the psychosocial health and wellbeing of parents in order to ensure their children can thrive. In practice this means we need systems that support relationally informed whole family approaches. Interventions will need to focus on the whole family's needs; understanding the impact of transgenerational trauma and distress as well as inter-family relational patterns and ability to access good emotional regulation (Perry & Winfrey, 2021). This means not fragmenting a family by referring or sign posting one member to one separate service and another elsewhere. Where each system then have their own (usually long) waiting times and do not communicate with one another and in some instances do not ask about the circumstances of a person/child and how these might be linked to their emotional health and

wellbeing (for example, adult mental health services not asking if someone has children at home & child services not asking about adults MH).

### **Influences on Home Social and Emotional Environment**

Children raised in households exposed to acute or chronic economic strain, heightened levels of poor parent emotional wellbeing (e.g., depression, inter-parental conflict and violence) have been shown to experience a variety of negative psychological outcomes, including increased anxiety, depression, aggression, hostility, anti-social behaviour/criminality, and other outcomes. It is harsh economic conditions that affect parents' mental health (specifically their symptoms of depression), which adversely affects how parents are able to engage in relationships, which in turn affects parenting practices, which then affect children's symptoms of social and emotional distress. Environmental and economic influences impact a parents' ability to provide the type of home environment necessary for children's long-term well-being (Harold, et. al., 2016). In addition to these stresses parents may have their own childhood or community adversity experiences that have trapped them in a cycle of poverty and disadvantage in accessing educational and economic opportunities (Ridley, et. al., 2020; PAA, 2015). Policy action on mental health is vital, as is interdisciplinary research on the mechanisms that link poverty and poor mental health (Ridley, et. al., 2020).

### **Environmental and Economic Influences on Mental and Emotional Wellbeing**

Our social emotional and mental health are determined by the conditions in which we are born, grow, work, live, age along with the wider set of forces shaping the conditions of our daily lives (WHO, 2010). It's therefore not about what's wrong with you but about what's happened to you and then happening inside of you (Boyle & Johnson, 2018; Mate, 2021). Contrary to widely held ideas these are not issues of affluence. Those with the lowest incomes are typically 1.5 to 3 times more likely than the rich to experience depression or anxiety (Ridley, et, al., 2020).

Experiences of both shame and humiliation are endemic in poverty, due to the low status assigned to people on low incomes, and rhetoric that blames poor people for their own need. Humiliation has also been highlighted as a central experience for those affected by the changes to disability benefits. Both shame and humiliation are social emotions. Humiliation arises when people are made to feel that they are lesser in status or worth, while shame occurs when people are made to feel that they have violated a social or moral standard. These feelings have been compounded by the punitive benefits rhetoric used to drive through austerity policies, which has promoted the idea that those who use welfare benefits are worth less ('shirkers') than those who work ('strivers') (PAA, 2015).

### **Trauma and Relationally-Informed Service Provision**

In recognition that the prevalence, and multi-layered impact of trauma and adversity happens at an individual, family, societal, & organisational level we therefore need to ensure all of these ecological layers are culturally, adversity, and trauma-informed and responsive. Organisations need to focus on humanising systems and making them healthier, more relational, more integrated, more reflective, and more connected. It is about changing how systems do what they do, and who they are. Ensuring the environments and practice can be as psychosocially ecologically healthy as is possible. The one thing Beveridge regretted following the launch of the welfare state was that the system forgot about relationships (Cotton, 2018). The Victorian model of the time wrote out the one fundamentally important thing to human beings – relationships.

### **Adverse Community Experience**

Recognising the role that our social circumstances play in shaping our psychological health involves understanding that it's about what's happened or is happening to people and not about what's wrong with them (Johnstone et al., 2018). Multiple studies have found that levels of violence, crime, education, psychological distress, and various health problems are associated with place-based characteristics, particularly poverty (Eyerman et al., 2004; Thesnaar et al., 2013; Veerman & Ganzevoort, 2001).

The stresses of living with inadequate access to economic and educational opportunities, or a lack of opportunity itself, contribute to experiences of community level adversity. Trauma is therefore equally created by political, social and cultural processes when, for example, people and communities aren't able to have their basic emotional and physical needs met and are unable to live in safety or are disconnected from each other (WHO, 2014; Compton et al., 2020).

There are specific ways in which individual and community trauma impact our psychological health. These can be summarised as prolonged exposure to humiliation, shame, fear, distrust, instability, insecurity, isolation, loneliness and being trapped and powerless (PAA, 2015). Chronic exposure to these is detrimental to our physical and psychological health. A focus solely on the treatment of individuals can therefore only ever be one part of the solution to supporting people to flourish and overcome poverty. What we need to do instead is create psychosocially health environments for people to grow up and live in.

### **Place-based Approaches**

The predominant approach to dealing with trauma is screening and treatment, consistent with a medical model. Our systems, models and training practice are based on reductionist and dualist principles. However, given what we are dealing with it will be important to consider complexity theory. The really important thing here is making the distinction between complicated and complex problems. Complicated challenges are predictable and linear with good practice. But in complex problems there are not documents process,

definitive answers or an expert position. The approach requires diversity of experience and knowledge.

In complexity everything exists in relation to everything else and relationships are the operating principle. This is why upscaling often fails. You cannot upscale relationships as they are unique to place. This is why for issues of complexity you need place-based relationally informed approaches.

Alongside the Whole School Approach we need other whole system orientated practice. Prevention and Early intervention services, such as the Families First programme, need to be poverty and psychosocially informed as well. As a start these services need to house both health and social staff. They need applied psychologically trained practitioners in them as well. See the work by Gwent Community Psychology child & Fam psychology ABUHB (Dr Rhiannon Cobner @GwentCommPsych) and work in Cardiff with Ed Psychs in their provision. also see -

1 [Elections 2021 \(psychchange.org\)](https://psychchange.org/)

2 [Briefing paper: from poverty to flourishing - foundations for the best start in life | BPS](#)

3 [Building Resilience and Community Wellbeing \(psychchange.org\)](https://psychchange.org/)

4 <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29852822/> (SDMH)

5 <https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/volume-33/october-2020/poverty-flourishing-towards-2021>

We see the public health respond as needing to be more relationally and trauma rather than behaviourally focused. We need a public mental health response. Giving information to people when they are trapped by their circumstances & emotionally dysregulated by distress/stress will not help them be in a position to change that.

See <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/how-poverty-affects-peoples-decision-making-processes>

### **How we collect & define evidence is a barrier to innovation in health and social care**

See work by copro and other on complexity and limitations of traditional 'evidence-based' approaches to mental health and distress -

Report <https://collaboratecic.com/a-whole-new-world-funding-and-commissioning-in-complexity-12b6bdc2abd8>

Report <https://collaboratecic.com/exploring-the-new-world-practical-insights-for-funding-commissioning-and-managing-in-complexity-20a0c53b89aa>



Podcast explaining complexity - <https://markfoden.com/clockcat>

Why Public Service need a radical change & how to achieve

it: <https://www.newlocal.org.uk/publications/the-community-paradigm/>

7. Please choose one of the following options to confirm whether you would prefer that your name is not published alongside your evidence.

We will not publish the names of people under the age of 18.

I am aged 18 or over and I am content for you to publish my name alongside my evidence

I am aged 18 or over and I would prefer that you did not publish my name alongside my evidence.

I am under the age of 18

8. Please choose one of the following options to confirm whether you have agreement from any third parties referred to in your evidence that you can share information that may be used to identify them and that they understand that it may be published.

I confirm that any third party I have referred to in my evidence has agreed that I can share information that may be used to identify them, and that they understand that it may be published.

I do not have the agreement of one or more of the third parties I have referred to in my evidence.

I have not referred to any third parties in my evidence.

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)

This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)

**CYPE SP 110**

**Ymateb gan: Sean O'Neill**

**Response from: Sean O'Neill, Policy Director, Children in Wales**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

Children in Wales have compiled and submitted responses from the following professional networks we manage and facilitate. These provide more detail in relation to their specific areas of expertise and are to be considered alongside this response.

- **Wales UNCRC Monitoring Group**
- **End Child Poverty Network Cymru**
- **Early Years Action Group**
- **Third Sector Additional Needs Alliance**

We have also contributed to the response from the **National Children's NGO Policy Group**

### **Theme 1: School-age education**

Children have missed a significant portion of the school year, with disadvantaged and vulnerable children missing the most. Many faced multiple barriers, including access to IT, and the cost of digital technology, despite investment from WG to help tackle digital exclusion. Many children will now require additional support to help facilitate social interaction and address mental health challenges, with greater emphasis on pupil wellbeing and pedagogy required.

Socio-economic background continues to have a negative impact on attainment levels, with children in low-income households underperforming compared with their peers. Data shows that boys, children with additional learning needs, care-experienced children and some children with protected characteristics generally achieve lower attainment levels. Young carers have also been affected, having to balance caring responsibilities with schoolwork whilst at home.

Whilst there are many encouraging developments<sup>1</sup>, we are deeply concerned about the impact of the pandemic and the risk of pupils falling further behind. We believe that **reducing educational inequalities** should be a greater priority, and the current work to develop a whole school approach to improving pupil well-being and mental health should be accelerated.

A greater emphasis should be placed on **improving equity in education** and in developing **community schools**, emphasising partnerships and collaboration with third and public sector services. Improvements in **tackling bullying** are required as demonstrated by the children engaged through our report on child and family poverty<sup>2</sup>. Young people are also concerned about future arrangements for assessments and **qualifications**, and **human rights education** should be a mandatory part of the new curriculum.

The **Price of Pupil Poverty** project continues to work with many maintained primary and secondary schools to help identify no and low-cost solutions which support pupils from low-income backgrounds<sup>3</sup>. Working with Regional Education Consortia, the project is raising awareness of the barriers poorer children face and ways in which schools can enhance home-school relationships and identify solutions in respect of the cost of school uniforms, for example.

We fully support calls from the ECPN Cymru for reform of **Free School Meals**, and for the WG to increase the eligibility threshold to ensure that all children whose parents are in receipt of Universal Credit are entitled, and take steps towards universal entitlement.

### **Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

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<sup>1</sup> Of particular note is the new curriculum framework for 3-16 year olds; reform of RSE to help promote positive healthy relationships and contribute towards preventing gender-based violence, and the new duty placed on head teachers, school governors and local authorities to promote knowledge and understanding of the UNCRC and UNCRPD

<sup>2</sup> Children in Wales (2021) [Child and Family Poverty Survey Report](#)

<sup>3</sup> Children in Wales [The Price of Pupil Poverty Guides](#)

## **Health Inequalities**

A key priority which emerged from contributions from over 90 organisations to inform our State of Children's Rights in Wales<sup>4</sup> report to the UN was the urgent need to tackle **health inequalities in Wales**. It is evident that the pandemic has served to exacerbate existing inequalities in relation to physical and mental health amongst children, although many of the challenges pre-dated COVID-19. Socio-economic disadvantage is a particular determinant of health inequalities and is a strong correlation with childhood obesity<sup>5</sup>, higher dental decay,<sup>6</sup> smoking rates,<sup>7</sup> lower fruit and vegetable consumption,<sup>8</sup> sport participation<sup>9</sup>, increased exposure to air pollution<sup>10</sup>, and both child & infant mortality rates<sup>11</sup>

In our response to the HSC Committee, we have called for a cross-committee inquiry into health inequalities to examine ways to address the inequalities gap and improve access to primary care and specialist healthcare services for all children.

## **Health advocacy**

We continue to call for enhanced arrangements to enable children to access advocacy provision to support their physical and mental health. Pre-COVID, the previous WG established two task groups to take forward this work, but we are not aware of any work having progressed since then. We support the views reported through the previous Committee's Mind over Matter inquiry that advocacy provision should be extended across all health settings including for children receiving any tier of mental health support.

## **Mental Health**

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<sup>4</sup> Wales UNCRC Monitoring Group (2020) [State of Children's Rights in Wales](#), Children in Wales

<sup>5</sup> Public Health Wales (2018) [Child Measurement Programme for Wales 2017/18](#) (amongst children aged 4-5)

<sup>6</sup> WG (2017) [Taking Oral Health Improvement and Dental Services Forward in Wales](#)

<sup>7</sup> Ash Cymru/Wales (accessed 2020) <https://ash.wales/wales-smoking-statistics/>

<sup>8</sup> Hewitt G., Anthony R., Moore G., Melendez-Torres G.J., Murphy S. (2019) [Student Health and Wellbeing In Wales: Report of the 2017/18 Health Behaviour in School-aged Children Survey and School Health Research Network Student Health and Wellbeing Survey](#). Cardiff University, Cardiff.

<sup>9</sup> Sport Wales (2018) [School sport survey 2018: state of the nation](#)

<sup>10</sup> WG (2020) [Clean Air Plan for Wales](#)

<sup>11</sup> [ONS](#) – in 2018, Infant mortality rates were 3.8 deaths per 1,000 live births in England and Wales compared with 3.9 the previous year but significantly above the lowest rate of 3.6 recorded in 2014. infant mortality rates were 5.7 deaths per 1,000 live births in the 10% most deprived areas in Wales and RCPCH Wales – [State of Child Health](#) Children aged 1-9 years

We draw the Committee's attention to the **National Children's NGO Policy Group** detailed priorities and ask the new Committee to undertake a review of progress against the recommendations from Mind over Matter

#### **Theme 4: Children and young people**

We have published the following reports which will aid the Committee in determining their priorities, and which provide a comprehensive insight into the barriers children face in realising their rights and in safeguarding their wellbeing.

- **State of Children's Rights in Wales**<sup>12</sup>
- **Fifth Annual Child and Family Poverty Survey Report**<sup>13</sup>

We draw attention to these reports as it's not possible to incorporate all of the priorities our member organisations are engaged with within the word-limit of this response.

#### **Children's Rights**

We have submitted a response with, and on behalf of the **Wales UNCRC Monitoring Group** and fully support the recommendations within. Whilst acknowledging the progress being made by the WG following the Committee's 'Inquiry into Children's Rights' and legislation to abolish the defence of reasonable punishment, we believe that the UNCRC should be fully incorporated into law, thus strengthening the current due regard duty.

#### **Care experienced CYP / children at risk**

The number of children in care continues to grow<sup>14</sup>, and the gap between the numbers in Wales in comparison with other UK nations has widened<sup>15</sup>. There are growing concerns in relation to poor outcomes across a range of indicators, and the ability of the current system, described as in crisis<sup>16</sup>, to adequately provide for children whilst in care, and for when they leave. There has been a sharp increase in the proportion of new-borns becoming subject of care proceedings<sup>17</sup> with children more likely to enter

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<sup>12</sup> Wales UNCRC Monitoring Group (2020) [State of Children's Rights in Wales](#), Children in Wales

<sup>13</sup> Children in Wales (2021) [Child and Family Poverty Survey Report](#)

<sup>14</sup> At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020, there were 7,172 children looked after in Wales which is an increase of 5% on the previous year, and 36% over the past 10 years. 65% of children who enter care do so because of abuse or neglect WG (2020) [Children looked after by local authorities: April 2019 to March 2020](#)

<sup>15</sup> Wales Centre for Public Policy (2021) [Children looked after in Wales: Evidence Briefing Paper](#), Cardiff University

<sup>16</sup> Family Rights Group (2018) [Care Crisis Review](#)

<sup>17</sup> Nuffield Family Justice Observatory (2019) [Born into Care: new-borns and infants in care proceedings in Wales](#), the rate has doubled between 2015 and 2018 and infants less than 1 year old comprised around 30% of all Section 31 cases in Wales.

care from areas of high deprivation.<sup>18</sup> Variations persist in the number of children in care across local authority areas. Commitments to safely reduce the number of children in care have been made<sup>19</sup>, alongside future plans to pilot a universal basic income (UBI) pilot scheme for care leavers and to eliminate profit making from the care system – all of which we welcome.

The pandemic has had a profound impact on the lives of all children, especially those most vulnerable, including children in/leaving care, and those on the cusp of care as the Committee's inquiry into COVID highlighted. Figures show a 20% reduction in child protection orders, with fears that many vulnerable children may not have been seen and identified as being in need of care and support due to lockdown restrictions<sup>20</sup>. The number of Care Orders issued has been lower than for the corresponding period in the previous year. With restrictions gradually eased, there is concern that social services will witness an increase in referrals, placing additional pressure on an already overstretched system.

Fears around worsening mental health, the impact of missed education and the effects of experiencing trauma and distress due to isolation, separation and possible grief and bereavement are also being raised.

The previous PA Committee published recommendation from their inquiry into care experienced children<sup>21</sup> and the previous CYPE Committee took evidence on the impact of the pandemic on vulnerable children. The Committee may wish to consider both reports and the steps taken to address the high level of children in care and the adverse impact of the pandemic on vulnerable cohorts of children<sup>22</sup> and those with protected characteristics.

The Committee will wish to examine what progress is being made in respect of enhancing Corporate Parenting arrangements in line with Recommendation 28 of your report<sup>23</sup>

## **Child Poverty**

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<sup>18</sup> Elliott, M. & Scourfield, J. (2017) [Identifying and Understanding Inequalities in Child Welfare Intervention Rates: Comparative studies in four UK countries. Single country quantitative study report: Wales](#) - Children are 16 times more likely to come into care if they come from the most deprived 10% of areas than the least deprived 10% areas

<sup>19</sup> WG Oral Statement (2018): [Improving Outcomes for Children: Reducing the Need for Children to Enter Care, and the Work of the Ministerial Advisory Group](#),

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-politics-57142970>

<sup>20</sup> BBC News (2021) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-politics-57142970>

<sup>21</sup> NAFW Public Accounts Committee (2018) [Care Experienced Children and Young People](#)

<sup>22</sup> In addition to children with protected characteristics, we would also include some young carers and children living in poverty (not exhaustive)

<sup>23</sup> Recommendation 28 – CYPE Committee (2021) Impact of COVID-19 on children and young people

We have submitted a response with, and on behalf of the **End Child Poverty Network Cymru** and fully support the recommendations within. We believe that more should be done to both prevent and to tackle child poverty, and continue to be frustrated that there is no delivery plan nor a revised strategy to drive this forward. More should be done to ensure that statutory responsibilities placed on existing public bodies are being monitored and met.

The findings from our report into child and family poverty<sup>24</sup> are unacceptable, and describe yet again, families struggling to meet everyday costs, with the main issues reported being the impact of the benefit system, debt, childcare costs, food insecurity and employment instability/salary levels, leading to an increase in stress and anxiety amongst children.

### **Independent Statutory advocacy**

Children in Wales facilitates the C&YP Advocacy Providers Group who provided written and oral evidence to the previous Committee's 'Inquiry into Advocacy Services'. We have played a leading role in the development of the National Approach to Statutory Advocacy (NASA). Whilst there has been notable progress in its implementation, we believe there is value in an independent evaluation of the NASA to ensure it is delivering equitable access for every care-experienced child and that advocacy provider services are sufficiently independent. We are also concerned that there continues to be a lack of Residential Visiting Advocacy in children's homes which should be a requirement of registration and inspection arrangements.

### **Early Years**

We have submitted a response with, and on behalf of the **Early Years Action Group** and fully support the recommendations within. Delivering a national high quality integrated ECEC system should be a key component to recovery from the economic effects of COVID-19. We ask that the Committee examine the extent to which early years initiatives across government departments are integrated, which support greater shared understanding and communication across sectors to facilitate collaboration, and that budget allocations are scrutinised. The learning during the pandemic should include a specific focus on the lived experiences of babies and young children in the early years.

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<sup>24</sup> Children in Wales (2021) [Child and Family Poverty Survey Report](#)

## **Voice of Children and Young People**

Our Young Wales programme continues to provide opportunities for CYP to engage with policy developments, and throughout the pandemic, they have been consulted and met with a number of WG ministers. Over the past 6 months, young people have identified their top policy priorities as

- Participation and children's rights, including enhancing knowledge, understanding
- Climate Change
- COVID-19 recovery
- Tackling Inequality
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Education, qualifications and progression routes into employment & training
- Transport barriers

There is a need to ensure that the voice of younger children is at the heart of policy and decision making, and there should be appropriate and accessible avenues for views to be gathered at local and national levels. In the curriculum framework for children (3–7 years), participation is recognised as one of 12 pedagogical elements, yet there is little evidence that this is being routinely delivered.<sup>25</sup>

## **Family Support**

Families have access to a range of universal and specialist family support services, focused on early intervention and prevention, providing strength-based support to build resilience and self-reliance.<sup>26</sup> These services, complemented by a national parenting advice resource<sup>27</sup> offer a vital link between the home environment, statutory care services and education provision. The pandemic has highlighted the vital work that family support services do in helping families work through difficulties and to emerge stronger. The Committee will wish to consider reviewing the adaptations made by Family Support services during the pandemic and what more needs to be done to create an integrated wrap-around system to ensure children receive a full range of support to help prevent escalation of need.

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<sup>25</sup> Clement, J. (2019) [Spatially Democratic Pedagogy: Children's Design and Co-Creation of Classroom Space](#). A recent evaluation of the Foundation Phase identified children's participation as their ability to 'spontaneously direct their learning or their ability to 'choose which activity to engage with'. However, these participatory practices are framed by spaces that already have predetermined ways of being and overpower the intentionality of the child. Taylor, C. et al. 2015. [Evaluating the Foundation Phase: Final Report](#). Project Report. Cardiff: W/Government

<sup>26</sup> For example, [Families First](#) is a national programme providing multi-agency systems of support with a clear emphasis on early intervention, prevention and tackling child poverty

<sup>27</sup> ['Parenting Give it Time'](#) website providing parenting advice and support promoting the many benefits of positive parenting.



## **Additional Learning Needs**

We have submitted a response with, and on behalf of the **TSANA** and fully support the recommendations within. The previous Committee inquiry and report of the impact of Covid-19 drew attention to the need for sufficient resources to be available to implement the ALN Act<sup>28</sup>; for the full implementation of the reforms, and the need for clarity amongst the workforce, including with regard to IDP eligibility. TSANA have highlight the risk of inequitable access to ALP<sup>29</sup> contingent on the nature of the young person's ALNs.

We very much look forward to working with members of the Committee again during this Senedd term and happy to be contacted on any aspect of our work.

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<sup>28</sup> Recommendation 11 – CYPE Committee (2021) Impact of COVID-19 on children and young people

<sup>29</sup> Additional Learning Provision

## Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg ar Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd

This response was submitted to the Children, Young People and Education Committee consultation on Sixth Senedd Priorities

**CYPE SP 111**

**Ymateb gan:**

**Response from: Public Services Ombudsman for Wales**

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Rwy'n falch o gael y cyfle i ymateb i ymgynghoriad y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg ar eich blaenoriaethau.

### **Ein rôl**

Fel Ombwdsmon Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus Cymru (OGCC), rwy'n ymchwilio i gwynion a wnaed gan aelodau o'r cyhoedd sy'n credu eu bod wedi dioddef caledi neu anghyfiawnder drwy gamweinyddu neu fethiant gwasanaeth gan gorff o fewn fy awdurdodaeth, sydd yn ei hanfod yn cynnwys yr holl sefydliadau sy'n darparu gwasanaethau cyhoeddus sydd wedi'u datganoli i Gymru. Mae'r rhain yn cynnwys:

- llywodraeth leol (cyngorau sir a chynghorau cymuned)
- y Gwasanaeth Iechyd Gwladol (gan gynnwys Meddygon Teulu a deintyddion)
- landlordiaid cymdeithasol cofrestredig (cymdeithasau tai)
- Llywodraeth Cymru, ynghyd â'i chyrrff nodedig.

Gallaf ystyried cwynion am ofal cymdeithasol a drefnwyd yn breifat neu ofal cymdeithasol a ariennir, yn ogystal â gwasanaethau gofal lliniarol ac, o dan amgylchiadau penodol, agweddau ar ofal iechyd a ariennir yn breifat.

Rwyf hefyd yn ymchwilio i gwynion bod aelodau etholedig awdurdodau lleol wedi torri eu Codau Ymddygiad, sy'n nodi'r egwyddorion ymddygiad cydnabyddedig y dylai aelodau eu dilyn mewn bywyd cyhoeddus.

Bydd y pwerau ymchwilio ar ei liwt ei hun a roddwyd imi o dan Ddeddf Ombwdsmon Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus (Cymru) 2019 (Deddf OGCC 2019) yn fy nghaniatáu i ymchwilio pan fydd tystiolaeth yn awgrymu y gall fod methiannau systematig, hyd yn oed os nad yw defnyddwyr gwasanaeth eu hunain yn codi cwynion. Mae'r Ddeddf hefyd yn sefydlu'r Awdurdod Safonau Cwynion (CSA) i ysgogi gwelliant mewn gwasanaethau cyhoeddus trwy gefnogi ymdrin â chwynion yn effeithiol gan ddefnyddio gweithdrefnau enghreiffiol, hyfforddiant a chasglu a chyhoeddi data.

## **Sylwadau Cyffredinol**

Mae cwynion yn rhoi cyfle i bob gwasanaeth cyhoeddus ddysgu o ddefnyddwyr gwasanaeth, a gall gwasanaeth cwynion sy'n gwbl hygyrch roi llais i blant a phobl ifanc a chyfle i wasanaethau cyhoeddus ddysgu oddi wrthynt. Mae gan Blant a Phobl Ifanc gymaint o hawl i wasanaeth cwynion cynhwysfawr ac o safon ag oedolion ond, fel y gwelaf o'r llwyth achosion y mae fy swyddfa yn ei drin bob blwyddyn, mae plant a phobl ifanc yn parhau i gael eu tangynrychioli'n gyson yn y cwynion a dderbyniwn.

Mae proses gwynion Llywodraeth Cymru sy'n addas i blant, fel rhan o'u Cynllun Hawliau Plant 2021, yn gam rwy'n ei groesawu, yn enwedig os yw plant a phobl ifanc yn rhan o'i datblygiad. Mae'r cam rhagweithiol hwn yn unol ag Egwyddorion Ymdrin â Chwynion yr Awdurdod Safonau Cwynion a bydd yn darparu arfer defnyddiol y gallai gwasanaethau cyhoeddus yng Nghymru ei efelychu mewn manau eraill.

Mae'r modd y mae gwasanaethau cyhoeddus yn grymuso plant a phobl ifanc i gael llais yn y ffordd y mae eu gwasanaethau'n cael eu datblygu a'u gweithredu, yn enwedig pan fydd y gwasanaethau hynny'n methu, yn faes y byddwn am iddo fod yn destun craffu gan y Pwyllgor.

## **Themâu o'm Gwaith achos**

Mae fy nata gwaith achos yn fy nghaniatáu i nodi nifer y cwynion sy'n ymwneud â gwasanaethau mewn dau sector sy'n arbennig o berthnasol i blant a phobl ifanc: gwasanaethau cymdeithasol plant ac addysg.

Rhwng 2016 a 2021, ymdriniais â 520 o gwynion yn ymwneud â gwasanaethau cymdeithasol plant. Ymdriniais hefyd 346 o achosion yn ymwneud ag addysg.

Mae prif themâu cwynion gwasanaethau cymdeithasol yn ymwneud â chyfathrebu gwael, oedi wrth weithredu a chyfathrebu gwael. Ar gyfer addysg, mae'r cwynion yn aml yn ymwneud ag asesiadau annigonol neu oedi wrth gynnal asesiadau sy'n ymwneud ag anghenion dysgu ychwanegol a chlodiant ysgol.

Mae'n bwysig tanlinellu bod y cwynion hynny sy'n ymwneud â gwasanaethau cymdeithasol plant ac addysg yn cynrychioli dim ond cyfran fach o fy llwyth achosion cyffredinol. Yn 2020/21, roeddent yn cynnwys 5% ac 5% o gyfanswm y cwynion yr ymdriniwyd â hwy. Mewn cyferbyniad, roedd 39% o'r cwynion a dderbyniodd fy swyddfa yn y flwyddyn honno yn ymwneud ag iechyd. Ar hyn o bryd, nid yw'r system rheoli gwaith achos a ddefnyddir gan fy swyddfa yn caniatáu imi ddarganfod yn union pa gyfran o achosion o'r fath sy'n berthnasol i blant a phobl ifanc. Fodd bynnag, mae dadansoddiad o fy nghoflyfr yn dangos bod lleiafrif sylweddol o achosion yn ymwneud ag iechyd a gadarnhawyd gennyf dros y blynyddoedd diwethaf yn cynnwys plant a phobl ifanc. Rwyf hefyd yn cadarnhau mwy o achosion iechyd sy'n ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc na'r rhai sy'n ymwneud â gwasanaethau cymdeithasol ac addysg.

Mae'r prif themâu yn yr achosion yn cyfeirio at oedi wrth asesiadau a gwneud diagnosis, darpariaeth gofal annigonol, cadw cofnodion yn wael, a chyfathrebu

gwael rhwng y claf a'u teuluoedd a'r darparwr gwasanaeth. Mae fy adroddiad diddordeb cyhoeddus [Colli Cyfiawnder - Colli Cofnodion a Cholli Cyfleoedd](#), yn adlewyrchu ar yr effaith y caiff cyrff sy'n colli cofnodion neu sy'n cynhyrchu cofnodion annigonol ar drylwyredd ymchwiliadau i gwynion a'r ymatebion a ddarperir. Gall hyn arwain at broses gwyno hirfaith, oedi wrth ddarparu cyfiawnder a chwalu'r berthynas rhwng y darparwr gwasanaeth a'r defnyddiwr gwasanaeth.

Mae cam-drin cwynion yn rheswm cyffredin i mi gadarnhau llawer o gwynion yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc. Mae fy adroddiad diddordeb cyhoeddus 'Rhoi diwedd ar yr Un Hen Gân Feunyddiol: [Rhoi diwedd ar yr Un Hen Gân Feunyddiol: Dysgu Gwersi o Ddelio'n Wael â Chwynion](#) yn tynnu sylw at achosion lle bu trin cwynion yn annerbyniol ar draws pob sector o wasanaeth cyhoeddus yng Nghymru ac mae'n nodi rhai themâu allweddol sy'n gyson ag achosion eraill a dderbyniwn bob blwyddyn.

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[Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol Caerdydd a'r Fro a Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol Hywel Dda 201701479 & 201702267](#)

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[Cyngor Sir Ddinbych: Cyfeirnod 201701203 \[Addysg AAA\]](#)

Cwynodd Mrs X fod y Cyngor wedi methu ag ystyried cynnal asesiad o anghenion addysgol arbennig ("AAA") ei phlentyn, B, na'i hysbysu bod modd iddi wneud cais am asesiad o AAA B. Cwynodd Mrs X hefyd nad oedd y Cyngor wedi cwblhau asesiad o AAA B o fewn cyfnod o bum wythnos.

Deuthum i'r casgliad bod methiant y Cyngor i ddangos tystiolaeth ddogfennol ei fod

wedi ystyried asesiad o B, a'i fethiant i gyfathrebu'r rhesymau hyn yn gywir i Mrs X, yn gyfystyr â chamweinyddu.

Nid oeddwn o'r farn bod cytundeb lefel gwasanaeth y Cyngor ag asiantaeth gymorth yn cyflawni ei gyfrifoldeb yn llwyr gyflawni ei gyfrifoldeb i rymuso rhieni i gael gwybodaeth fanwl am hawl eu plentyn mewn perthynas â deddfwriaeth AAA. Cadarnheais y gŵyn hon i'r graddau y dylai'r Cyngor fod wedi hysbysu Mrs X ei bod yn gallu gwneud cais am asesiad ei hun a'i chyfeirio at y wybodaeth am y mater hwn ar ei wefan. Cadarnheais hefyd gŵyn Mrs X y dylai asesiad fod wedi'i gyflawni o fewn pum wythnos ac nad oedd hyn wedi digwydd.

### [Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr - 201906202](#)

Cwynodd Ms F ar ei rhan ei hun ac ar ran person ifanc, Ms G. Cadarnhaodd Ms G imi ei bod yn cefnogi'r gŵyn. Cwynodd Ms F nad oedd Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr wedi rheoli'n iawn y trefniant lle'r oedd Ms G yn byw gyda hi drwy egluro ei statws fel Gofalwr Maeth neu roi unrhyw beth yn ei le i gynnal y trefniant hwnnw, fel y Cynllun "Pan Fydda i'n Barod" (WIR) (mae hyn yn cefnogi pobl ifanc sy'n gadael gofal awdurdod lleol). Cwynodd nad oedd y Cyngor wedi rhoi digon o gefnogaeth a chymorth i Ms G ar ôl iddi adael ei gofal. Cwynodd hefyd ei bod yn anfodlon â'r ffordd yr oedd yn delio â chwynion.

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### **Sylwadau cloi**

Hyderaf y bydd fy sylwadau yn ddefnyddiol i chi. Os dymunwch drafod unrhyw un o'r pwyntiau a wnaed gennym, mae croeso i chi gysylltu â Tanya Nash, fy Mhennaeth Polisi ([tanya.nash@ombudsman.wales](mailto:tanya.nash@ombudsman.wales)).



**Nick Bennett**

**Ombwdsmon Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus Cymru**

**Medi 2021**

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## Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg ar Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd

This response was submitted to the Children, Young People and Education Committee consultation on Sixth Senedd Priorities

### CYPE SP 111

Ymateb gan:

Response from: Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

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Rwy'n falch o gael y cyfle i ymateb i ymgynghoriad y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg ar eich blaenoriaethau.

#### Ein rôl

Fel Ombwdsmon Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus Cymru (OGCC), rwy'n ymchwilio i gwynion a wnaed gan aelodau o'r cyhoedd sy'n credu eu bod wedi dioddef caledi neu anghyfiawnder drwy gamweinyddu neu fethiant gwasanaeth gan gorff o fewn fy awdurdodaeth, sydd yn ei hanfod yn cynnwys yr holl sefydliadau sy'n darparu gwasanaethau cyhoeddus sydd wedi'u datganoli i Gymru. Mae'r rhain yn cynnwys:

- llywodraeth leol (cyngorau sir a chynghorau cymuned)
- y Gwasanaeth Iechyd Gwladol (gan gynnwys Meddygon Teulu a deintyddion)
- landlordiaid cymdeithasol cofrestredig (cymdeithasau tai)
- Llywodraeth Cymru, ynghyd â'i chyrrff nodedig.

Gallaf ystyried cwynion am ofal cymdeithasol a drefnwyd yn breifat neu ofal cymdeithasol a ariennir, yn ogystal â gwasanaethau gofal lliniarol ac, o dan amgylchiadau penodol, agweddau ar ofal iechyd a ariennir yn breifat.

Rwyf hefyd yn ymchwilio i gwynion bod aelodau etholedig awdurdodau lleol wedi torri eu Codau Ymddygiad, sy'n nodi'r egwyddorion ymddygiad cydnabyddedig y dylai aelodau eu dilyn mewn bywyd cyhoeddus.

Bydd y pwerau ymchwilio ar ei liwt ei hun a roddwyd imi o dan Ddeddf Ombwdsmon Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus (Cymru) 2019 (Deddf OGCC 2019) yn fy nghaniatáu i ymchwilio pan fydd tystiolaeth yn awgrymu y gall fod methiannau systematig, hyd yn oed os nad yw defnyddwyr gwasanaeth eu hunain yn codi cwynion. Mae'r Ddeddf hefyd yn sefydlu'r Awdurdod Safonau Cwynion (CSA) i ysgogi gwelliant mewn gwasanaethau cyhoeddus trwy gefnogi ymdrin â chwynion yn effeithiol gan ddefnyddio gweithdrefnau enghreiffiol, hyfforddiant a chasglu a chyhoeddi data.

## **Sylwadau Cyffredinol**

Mae cwynion yn rhoi cyfle i bob gwasanaeth cyhoeddus ddysgu o ddefnyddwyr gwasanaeth, a gall gwasanaeth cwynion sy'n gwbl hygyrch roi llais i blant a phobl ifanc a chyfle i wasanaethau cyhoeddus ddysgu oddi wrthynt. Mae gan Blant a Phobl Ifanc gymaint o hawl i wasanaeth cwynion cynhwysfawr ac o safon ag oedolion ond, fel y gwelaf o'r llwyth achosion y mae fy swyddfa yn ei drin bob blwyddyn, mae plant a phobl ifanc yn parhau i gael eu tangynrychioli'n gyson yn y cwynion a dderbyniwn.

Mae proses gwynion Llywodraeth Cymru sy'n addas i blant, fel rhan o'u Cynllun Hawliau Plant 2021, yn gam rwy'n ei groesawu, yn enwedig os yw plant a phobl ifanc yn rhan o'i datblygiad. Mae'r cam rhagweithiol hwn yn unol ag Egwyddorion Ymdrin â Chwynion yr Awdurdod Safonau Cwynion a bydd yn darparu arfer defnyddiol y gallai gwasanaethau cyhoeddus yng Nghymru ei efelychu mewn manau eraill.

Mae'r modd y mae gwasanaethau cyhoeddus yn grymuso plant a phobl ifanc i gael llais yn y ffordd y mae eu gwasanaethau'n cael eu datblygu a'u gweithredu, yn enwedig pan fydd y gwasanaethau hynny'n methu, yn faes y byddwn am iddo fod yn destun craffu gan y Pwyllgor.

## **Themâu o'm Gwaith achos**

Mae fy nata gwaith achos yn fy nghaniatáu i nodi nifer y cwynion sy'n ymwneud â gwasanaethau mewn dau sector sy'n arbennig o berthnasol i blant a phobl ifanc: gwasanaethau cymdeithasol plant ac addysg.

Rhwng 2016 a 2021, ymdriniais â 520 o gwynion yn ymwneud â gwasanaethau cymdeithasol plant. Ymdriniais hefyd 346 o achosion yn ymwneud ag addysg.

Mae prif themâu cwynion gwasanaethau cymdeithasol yn ymwneud â chyfathrebu gwael, oedi wrth weithredu a chyfathrebu gwael. Ar gyfer addysg, mae'r cwynion yn aml yn ymwneud ag asesiadau annigonol neu oedi wrth gynnal asesiadau sy'n ymwneud ag anghenion dysgu ychwanegol a chlodiant ysgol.

Mae'n bwysig tanlinellu bod y cwynion hynny sy'n ymwneud â gwasanaethau cymdeithasol plant ac addysg yn cynrychioli dim ond cyfran fach o fy llwyth achosion cyffredinol. Yn 2020/21, roeddent yn cynnwys 5% ac 5% o gyfanswm y cwynion yr ymdriniwyd â hwy. Mewn cyferbyniad, roedd 39% o'r cwynion a dderbyniodd fy swyddfa yn y flwyddyn honno yn ymwneud ag iechyd. Ar hyn o bryd, nid yw'r system rheoli gwaith achos a ddefnyddir gan fy swyddfa yn caniatáu imi ddarganfod yn union pa gyfran o achosion o'r fath sy'n berthnasol i blant a phobl ifanc. Fodd bynnag, mae dadansoddiad o fy nghoflyfr yn dangos bod lleiafrif sylweddol o achosion yn ymwneud ag iechyd a gadarnhawyd gennyf dros y blynyddoedd diwethaf yn cynnwys plant a phobl ifanc. Rwyf hefyd yn cadarnhau mwy o achosion iechyd sy'n ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc na'r rhai sy'n ymwneud â gwasanaethau cymdeithasol ac addysg.

Mae'r prif themâu yn yr achosion yn cyfeirio at oedi wrth asesiadau a gwneud diagnosis, darpariaeth gofal annigonol, cadw cofnodion yn wael, a chyfathrebu

gwael rhwng y claf a'u teuluoedd a'r darparwr gwasanaeth. Mae fy adroddiad diddordeb cyhoeddus [Colli Cyfiawnder - Colli Cofnodion a Cholli Cyfleoedd](#), yn adlewyrchu ar yr effaith y caiff cyrff sy'n colli cofnodion neu sy'n cynhyrchu cofnodion annigonol ar drylwyredd ymchwiliadau i gwynion a'r ymatebion a ddarperir. Gall hyn arwain at broses gwyno hirfaith, oedi wrth ddarparu cyfiawnder a chwalu'r berthynas rhwng y darparwr gwasanaeth a'r defnyddiwr gwasanaeth.

Mae cam-drin cwynion yn rheswm cyffredin i mi gadarnhau llawer o gwynion yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc. Mae fy adroddiad diddordeb cyhoeddus 'Rhoi diwedd ar yr Un Hen Gân Feunyddiol: [Rhoi diwedd ar yr Un Hen Gân Feunyddiol: Dysgu Gwersi o Ddelio'n Wael â Chwynion](#) yn tynnu sylw at achosion lle bu trin cwynion yn annerbyniol ar draws pob sector o wasanaeth cyhoeddus yng Nghymru ac mae'n nodi rhai themâu allweddol sy'n gyson ag achosion eraill a dderbyniwn bob blwyddyn.

Yn ogystal â'r dystiolaeth uchod, dymunaf dynnu sylw at ystod o enghreifftiau o achosion unigol er mwyn darparu mewnwelediad i straeon y bobl go iawn sydd tu ôl i ystadegau'r cwynion. Mae'r achosion hyn yn tynnu sylw at achosion lle mae camweinyddu a methiant gwasanaeth gan gyrff cyhoeddus yn parhau i effeithio ar blant a phobl ifanc yng Nghymru. Mae'r wybodaeth isod ar gael i'r cyhoedd ar fy ngwefan ac mae'n cael ei rhannu ag achwynwyr cyn ei chyhoeddi.

[Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol Caerdydd a'r Fro a Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol Hywel Dda 201701479 & 201702267](#)

Cwynodd Mr B fod ei fab C (a oedd yn 11 oed) wedi aros am ddwy flynedd a hanner i gael llawdriniaeth bediatrig frys (llawdriniaeth i dynnu aren). Dywedodd Mr B fod yr aros hwn yn ddiangen a'i fod wedi cael effaith sylweddol ar ansawdd bywyd C. Yn ystod yr amser hwnnw roedd C yn dioddef heintiadau'n aml, ac yn gorfod eu trin â gwrthfotigau, ac roedd rhaid gorchuddio clwyf agored ar ei ochr dair gwaith yr wythnos. Nid oedd C yn gallu gwneud pethau yr oedd yn eu mwynhau eu gwneud gyda'i ffrindiau, fel chwarae pêl-droed neu nofio, gan na allai wneud unrhyw weithgareddau cyswllt. Achosodd hyn straen a gofid i C. Roedd tystiolaeth bod C wedi methu â ffynnu yn ystod yr amser hwn. Canfûm fod yr oedi hwn yn annerbyniol; ac y bu camweinyddu yn y ffordd yr oedd y ddau Fwrdd Iechyd dan sylw wedi delio â C fel claf. Dywedais hefyd na ellid tanamcangyfrif effaith yr oedi wrth drin y cyflwr gwanychol, na allai wella heb llawdriniaeth, ac y gallai hawliau dynol C fod wedi eu peryglu. Derbyniodd y ddau Fwrdd Iechyd y canfyddiadau yn yr adroddiad, gan gydnabod eu rôl ym methiannau'r achos hwn.

[Cyngor Sir Ddinbych: Cyfeirnod 201701203 \[Addysg AAA\]](#)

Cwynodd Mrs X fod y Cyngor wedi methu ag ystyried cynnal asesiad o anghenion addysgol arbennig ("AAA") ei phlentyn, B, na'i hysbysu bod modd iddi wneud cais am asesiad o AAA B. Cwynodd Mrs X hefyd nad oedd y Cyngor wedi cwblhau asesiad o AAA B o fewn cyfnod o bum wythnos.

Deuthum i'r casgliad bod methiant y Cyngor i ddangos tystiolaeth ddogfennol ei fod



wedi ystyried asesiad o B, a'i fethiant i gyfathrebu'r rhesymau hyn yn gywir i Mrs X, yn gyfystyr â chamweinyddu.

Nid oeddwn o'r farn bod cytundeb lefel gwasanaeth y Cyngor ag asiantaeth gymorth yn cyflawni ei gyfrifoldeb yn llwyr gyflawni ei gyfrifoldeb i rymuso rhieni i gael gwybodaeth fanwl am hawl eu plentyn mewn perthynas â deddfwriaeth AAA. Cadarnheais y gŵyn hon i'r graddau y dylai'r Cyngor fod wedi hysbysu Mrs X ei bod yn gallu gwneud cais am asesiad ei hun a'i chyfeirio at y wybodaeth am y mater hwn ar ei wefan. Cadarnheais hefyd gŵyn Mrs X y dylai asesiad fod wedi'i gyflawni o fewn pum wythnos ac nad oedd hyn wedi digwydd.

### [Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr - 201906202](#)

Cwynodd Ms F ar ei rhan ei hun ac ar ran person ifanc, Ms G. Cadarnhaodd Ms G imi ei bod yn cefnogi'r gŵyn. Cwynodd Ms F nad oedd Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr wedi rheoli'n iawn y trefniant lle'r oedd Ms G yn byw gyda hi drwy egluro ei statws fel Gofalwr Maeth neu roi unrhyw beth yn ei le i gynnal y trefniant hwnnw, fel y Cynllun "Pan Fydda i'n Barod" (WIR) (mae hyn yn cefnogi pobl ifanc sy'n gadael gofal awdurdod lleol). Cwynodd nad oedd y Cyngor wedi rhoi digon o gefnogaeth a chymorth i Ms G ar ôl iddi adael ei gofal. Cwynodd hefyd ei bod yn anfodlon â'r ffordd yr oedd yn delio â chwynion.

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### **Sylwadau cloi**

Hyderaf y bydd fy sylwadau yn ddefnyddiol i chi. Os dymunwch drafod unrhyw un o'r pwyntiau a wnaed gennym, mae croeso i chi gysylltu â Tanya Nash, fy Mhennaeth Polisi ([tanya.nash@ombudsman.wales](mailto:tanya.nash@ombudsman.wales)).



**Nick Bennett**

**Ombwdsmon Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus Cymru**

**Medi 2021**

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**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 112**

**Ymateb gan:**

**Response from: Matt Sedgebeer on behalf of DCC Blakeman (Gwent Police) and DPCC Thomas (Gwent OPCC), Gwent Police Detective Chief Inspector Public Protection**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

**Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

Understanding and responding to the impact of Covid on mental health and well being.

This will have an impact on wider social issues such as poverty (access to food) and being a direct/indirect victim of crime.

**Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

It is vital that there are clear pathways and support available such as suicide prevention, trauma etc to support children, young people and their families. This often results in children and young people coming to police attention from a mental health, victims and perpetration perspective.

**Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**



Understanding patterns of referrals and themes post covid is important so that services can be shaped to meet the needs of the population.

## **Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**

### **Criminalisation of children**

Offending by children and young people is often a symptom of other challenges they are facing in their lives. This can have a disproportionate impact on children and young people who are looked after and/or those from black, Asian and minority ethnic groups.

Ensuring that young people are not unnecessarily criminalised, and every opportunity is taken to divert them away from offending should be one of the priorities for the Committee during the Sixth Senedd.

This approach will deliver a more equal Wales by reducing the impact that criminalisation has on equal access to jobs and opportunities, as well as improved outcomes for the individual, their family and communities.

We would welcome the opportunity to work with and support the committee to develop preventative strategies which focus on the needs of the individual. This could include:

1. The development of effective diversion schemes for children and young people.
2. Multiagency local and national protocols to reduce the unnecessary criminalisation of children in care and care leavers.
3. The establishment of remand and custody accommodation for children and YP to avoid them staying in police custody due to a lack of appropriate accommodation. A pilot is currently being conducted in the South East Wales area with the ambition to provide similar accommodation across Wales.
4. Creating effective education and diversion schemes for children and young people who come to the notice of the police using illegal drugs.

Ensuring that disproportionality within youth justice is identified, explained and responded to effectively. There is an opportunity to build on the Newport Youth Justice Board pilot to level the playing field on disproportionality.



**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg ar Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 113**

**Ymateb gan:**

**Response from: Dai Davies, Professional Practice Lead, Wales – Royal College of Occupational Therapists**

**Sally Payne, Professional Adviser Children, Young People and Families, Royal College of Occupational Therapists**

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The [Royal College of Occupational Therapists](#) (RCOT) is the professional body for occupational therapy representing over 33,500 occupational therapists across the UK. Occupational therapists in Scotland work in the NHS, Local Authority social care services, housing, schools, prisons, care homes, voluntary and independent sectors, and vocational and employment rehabilitation services.

Occupational therapists work with people of all ages, who are experiencing difficulties through injury, illness or disability or a major life change. Occupational therapists consider the relationship between what a **person** does every day (**occupations**), how illness or disability impacts upon the person and how a person's **environment** supports or hinders their activity (PEO Model). Using this approach, we help people to continue or re-engage with participating fully in daily life, including work, social activities and maintaining roles and responsibilities.

**Theme 1: School-age education**

**Focus on early intervention**

Children starting school are at a disadvantage due to the limited exposure to a variety of early social and physical experiences due to COVID-19. It is important that they have increased opportunities across all areas of development such as social play, sensory-motor play, and fine and gross skill motor development. Actions to achieve this include:

- Adapting the national curriculum to support the development of foundation social, motor, play and emotional skills. The development of these skills needs to be prioritised with clear targets for monitoring impact.
- Funding to increase collaborative working across education and occupational therapy. This will ensure the children's workforce are equipped to intervene early and embed

opportunities to promote physical and mental health into the school day rather than waiting for difficulties to escalate, requiring specialist referrals/interventions.

### **School buildings should be accessible and enable participation of all children in the wider school curriculum**

To enable this to happen, the Royal College of Occupational therapists is calling for:

- Investment in school buildings and play areas to ensure they are 'fit for purpose' and meet the needs of the school population, including investment to enable schools to develop more outdoor learning opportunities.
- Funding for adaptations to older buildings to be more readily available/easily accessed to ensure buildings comply with the Equality Act 2010 and can be accessed by children with a range of additional needs/disabilities.
- Occupational therapy input into planning/development of new buildings to ensure they enable participation of disabled children/young people and those with additional needs in the wider school curriculum.
- Consultation between schools and community health therapists (e.g. Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, Speech and Language Therapists) when re-designing the layout of a classroom, school yard or space to ensure the environment will not hinder a child or young persons' education or reduce participation in daily activities.

### **Appropriate, accessible educational provision for young people with ALN**

- Every child in Wales should have the opportunity to access education that meets their individual needs, cognitively, physically and emotionally. Monitoring is required to ensure each school has clear and documented Additional Learning (ALN) provision appropriate for the age/stage of the learner.
- Appropriate differentiation between the types of school placements to available for children and young people with ALN.
- Review of the oversubscription of Additional Learning Needs (Special) Schools
- Inclusive educational environment close to home for children/young people with ALN.
- Impact of removal of Communication Disorder Units within mainstream schools on wider outcomes, not just those related to language/communication.
- Focus on life skills alongside an inclusive academic curriculum.

### **Improved partnership between health and education**

- Appropriate school staff training, delivered in partnership with health providers including occupational therapists, to meet the needs of children and young people with ALN and support the development of foundation skills to support learning.
- Assessment of the risk/impact of adverse childhood experiences on education/participation due to the pandemic and measures in place to address these.
- Provision of learning and development opportunities that children/young people have missed due to Covid 19.

## **Theme 2: Further and higher education**

### **Transition support**

The ALN Bill mandates that health, education and social care work together to support young people as they transition into higher education. Occupational therapy services have no

dedicated resource to support young people with ALN as they transition into higher education meaning they are often moving into this new environment unprepared and without appropriate support.

Occupational therapists work with young people until their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday while the ALN Bill covers young people to the age of 23. Occupational therapy has a key role to play during these transition stages. If the young person is known to Continuing Care, support can come from this service; if they are not there are limited opportunities for education and occupational therapy to collaborate.

RCOT is calling for a review of transition services to:

- Establish a dedicated transition service for young people with input from health, education and social care, including occupational therapy.
- Clear transition pathways and information on resources to be provided to young people and parents/carers.
- Better investment and support for young people transitioning to higher education, and their parents/carers.
- All educational settings to have clear and documented Additional Learning Provision appropriate for the age/stage of the learner. To include preparation and transition training for teachers of school-aged young people (leavers).
- Focus on life skills alongside an inclusive academic curriculum.
- Inclusive educational environment local to their home.
- Identification and improvement of gaps in provision for those children transitioning from children to adult services.

### **Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

#### **Review of Neurodevelopmental services**

We are calling for a short inquiry into the current Welsh Government funded demand and capacity review of all-age neurodevelopmental services. Given current issues within services, it is vital that the review incorporates the views of the broad range of stakeholders and that the findings support the development of long-term solutions. We believe additional scrutiny focused on identifying bottlenecks and pinch points within services and formulating recommendations as to how services may meet demand for all ND services regardless of diagnosis, could be extremely beneficial.

MSs will be well aware from their post bags of the high demand for neurodevelopmental services and long waiting lists exacerbated by the pandemic. Members working in these services have fed back to us significant concerns about the sustainability of services and ability to meet need. This featured strongly within scrutiny of the proposed Autism bill during the last Senedd term. A recent Welsh Government funded [Scoping Study for the Alignment and Development of Autism and Neurodevelopmental Services](#) also highlighted significant workforce sustainability concerns.

We would welcome scrutiny of the current Welsh Government funded demand and capacity review of all-age neurodevelopmental services. Given current issues within services, it is vital

that the review incorporates the views of the broad range of stakeholders and that the findings support the development of long-term solutions. We are calling for a short one day inquiry to understand bottlenecks and pinch points within services, and provide recommendations as to how services may meet demand for all ND services regardless of diagnosis.

We are of the view that such an inquiry should include feedback from neurodiverse people, representative service user organisations and professional bodies representing the range of health care professionals working in ND teams. We work closely with other professional bodies working in this area and would be very keen to discuss and support further.

### **Health inequalities**

We are calling for an inquiry across all Senedd Committees on tackling wider health inequalities in Wales. Health inequality is the result of many and varied factors. While COVID-19 has revealed and exacerbated pre-existing health inequalities, there have been many detailed and well-evidenced reports on health inequalities in recent years. In just the past year, many reports have called for system-wide action on health inequalities including the Welsh Health Equity Status Report initiative, [Placing health equity at the heart of the COVID-19 sustainable response and recovery](#) (Public Health Wales and Welsh Government), [Mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on health inequalities](#) (British Medical Association), [The Marmot Review 10 Years On](#) (Institute of Health Equity and the Health Foundation) and the most recent [Unequal pandemic, fairer recovery](#) (the Health Foundation). Every one of these reaffirms the need for coherent, coordinated activity across all delivery partners and in COVID-19 recovery, there is an opportunity to create a healthier, more resilient society, by addressing the root causes of poor health and invest in people and their communities – their jobs, housing, education and communities.

Health inequalities are the result of many factors and arise as a result of the social and economic inequalities that shape the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, learn, work and age. For too long, we have looked to the health service to address these challenges in isolation, but the NHS alone simply doesn't have the levers to make the changes we know are vital to creating the conditions necessary for good health and wellbeing. Meaningful progress will require coherent, strategic efforts across all sectors – using their available resources, expertise and relationships – to close the gap. It will also be important that we are able to understand and measure our collective progress to ensure that we achieve the outcomes that matter most.

In April 2021, the Welsh NHS Confederation's Health and Wellbeing Alliance published a short paper, [Making the difference: Tackling health inequalities in Wales](#). In this paper, they suggest initial steps that the new Welsh Government should take in their first year to respond urgently to health inequalities and make the greatest possible impact by coordinating renewed commitment from all partners:

- Welsh Government leadership: sustained, focused and coordinated action across all Government departments to tackle the root causes of health inequalities.
- Invest in preventing health inequalities: rebalance spend away from crisis to long-term prevention over the next Senedd term and provide the necessary transition funds to support the long-term shift to a preventative approach. Investment should be targeted at infrastructure and services that offer sustainable solutions to the

underlying causes of health inequalities, such as community-based support, quality homes, and access to education and skills at all ages.

- Working in partnership: The Welsh Government should facilitate an enabling, responsive, and innovative operating environment that includes citizens, communities, public bodies, not-for-profit and third sector partners, and the private sector. Priorities should include giving people a greater voice in defining solutions and making partnerships fit for purpose.

Through having a cross-Committee Senedd inquiry it will enable all Committees to consider what action each Welsh Government department is doing to tackle the root causes of health inequalities.

### **Mental health and well being**

RCOT is calling for a review of mental health provision for children/young people in Wales.

- There are currently gaps in support for mental health, emotional and wellbeing services for young people and children. Improved should include a diverse range of support and interventions (e.g. parental support, clinic and community input, development of therapeutic interventions, increased joint working across MDT).
- Addressing the increase in children being referred with adverse childhood experiences (ACE) and trauma-related difficulties. There is a lack of specialist trained services resulting in children's families being bounced between services and not receiving adequate, timely care.
- Addressing the increase in requests for support for children/young people with mental health issues, which Primary mental health and CAHMS cannot accommodate. Children and young people need access to mental health support and CAMHS services with a full Multidisciplinary team, including specialist occupational therapists and other therapies that specialise in trauma and attachment.
- Improved provision re: physical wellbeing to assess and address the impact of minimal movement, poor diet, poor sleep, behaviour challenges as a result of the pandemic. Joint working across MDT needed.

### **Housing, handling and social prescribing**

- A growing number of children/young people/families are waiting excessive amounts of time for appropriate housing and/or for housing adaptations, impacting on their health, independence and wellbeing of the child and family. Processes and funding for adaptations to homes/buildings and advice for the individual child are complicated and inaccessible. Processes for accessing information and support need to be reviewed and improved.
- Moving and handling - Improved multi-disciplinary working between local health therapy services and Local Educational Authority to ensure that appropriate equipment and interventions are being delivered universally, and that parents, guardians and carers feel supported to meet a child or young person's moving and handling needs.
- Social prescribing - Development of and information about local social prescribing services/interventions for children and young people to promote health and wellbeing should be readily available to children, young people and families



- Specific support for families of refugees with regards to accessing appropriate health and social care services and housing should be provided.

#### **Theme 4: Children and young people**

During COVID-19, early years services and activities that support typical development for children/young people and practical/psychological parenting needs have been extremely limited. This has led to an increased number of parents raising concerns regarding the development of their child. It is predicted there will be an increase in referrals to specialist agencies due to these concerns.

RCOT is calling for a review of:

- Availability and accessibility of preventative/universal interventions and advice provided by health care professionals into early years settings e.g. Flying Start. By having a wider variety of professionals inputting into these settings, occupational therapy could offer timely support to children and young people whose developmental outcomes are 'at risk'.
- There is a population of children that have not accessed health services due to the pandemic and who are at risk of developmental delay or mis-diagnosis. Opportunities to highlight concerns e.g. safeguarding may also have been missed. Urgent investment in occupational therapy and other health services is required to address the backlog of cases and increased demand for specialist assessment.
- An urgent review of unmet needs to inform workforce planning is required to ensure a suitably skilled workforce is available to support children's participation and performance in the short and longer term.

RCOT is also concerned that inequalities in accessing services and support via Education and Health, vary by location. Each local area has a different core offer, meaning services are not equitable across Wales. Including children, young people, parents/carers and families in service evaluation and using feedback for service improvement would ensure the best interests of children and young people are at the core of Senedd decisions.

**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 114**

**Ymateb gan:**

**Response from: Steffan Evans, Policy and Research Officer, Bevan Foundation**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

**Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

The Bevan Foundation are pleased that the Welsh Government are currently undertaking a review into the eligibility criteria for Free School Meals (FSM). There is now a broad body of evidence that demonstrates the positive impact expanding provision would have for children living in poverty and that expanding provision is both affordable and practically possible.

We were delighted to see that there was cross-party support for enhancing current FSM provision during the Senedd election campaign. Given this cross party support and the potential significant impact of expanding provision we believe that the committee should make scrutinising the Welsh Government's decision in this area a priority. We believe that there is value in the committee prioritising FSM even if the Welsh Government do decide to proceed with expanding provision.

Consultation is needed with local authorities and schools to maximise the benefits of any reforms, and the Committee could play a valuable role in facilitating this process.

**Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**



We believe that exploring the financial support available to learners in further education from low income families should be a priority for this committee over the coming Senedd term.

The Bevan Foundation's [\*Learning a living, better support for post 16 learners\*](#) report highlighted that the value of support provided through the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) has not increased since the scheme was introduced in 2004/05. We calculated at the time that had EMA increased in line with inflation, it would have stood at £45 per week in 2020 a significantly higher than the £30 young people are actually entitled to.

It is not just the value of the support provided that has been cut in real terms. The income thresholds for EMA and the Welsh Government Learning Grant (Further Education) have not increased in over a decade. A student's family must therefore be over £4,000 poorer in real terms to receive EMA today than they were a decade ago.

The pandemic has heightened the need for the current support system to be reviewed. The economic impact of the crisis disproportionately affected industries where there are a high proportion of workers are young people, whilst there remains considerable uncertainty about the future of the labour market.

### **Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

### **Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**

We believe that the Committee should undertake a review into the Welsh Government's childcare offer. Whilst the childcare offer is highly valued by thousands of families all over Wales, the Bevan Foundation and others have unearthed a number of shortcomings with the policy as it is currently implemented.

Our research has shown that the scheme as currently designed is not flexible enough to support parents working non standard hours or shift work, whilst many parents who are trapped in poverty are denied access to any support at all as they do not work sufficient hours. The fact that the scheme is restricted to 3 year olds also severely limits the effectiveness of the programme.

We believe the committee should undertake an inquiry to better understand the limitations of the current system and to consider options for reform.



**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 114**

**Ymateb gan:**

**Response from: Steffan Evans, Policy and Research Officer, Bevan Foundation**

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Consultation is needed with local authorities and schools to maximise the benefits of any reforms, and the Committee could play a valuable role in facilitating this process.

**Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**



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### **Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

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Our research has shown that the scheme as currently designed is not flexible enough to support parents working non standard hours or shift work, whilst many parents who are trapped in poverty are denied access to any support at all as they do not work sufficient hours. The fact that the scheme is restricted to 3 year olds also severely limits the effectiveness of the programme.

We believe the committee should undertake an inquiry to better understand the limitations of the current system and to consider options for reform.



**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 115**

**Ymateb gan:**

**Response from: Jeremy Jones**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

**Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

I would respectfully ask the Committee to look at the increasingly perilous provision for Modern Foreign Languages in secondary schools in Wales, a situation that has worsened significantly since the creation of the new Curriculum for Wales. Languages such as German, that are important for the economy of our country are disappearing from the curriculum in our secondary schools leaving a language diet in schools that is not broad and balanced as promised by the AoLE LLC, but shallow and narrow, and we are losing language language opportunities that will affect Wales for generations. I have attached a letter that I wrote to the Committee in March 2021. It has been endorsed by language professionals and colleagues in both the secondary and Higher Education sector. It has also been endorsed by a Welsh MP knowledgeable about language learning.

**Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

**Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

**Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**



**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 116**

**Ymateb gan:**

**Response from: Liz Williams, Royal College Mental Health Expert Advisory Group**

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What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

**Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

**Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

**Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

The Royal College Mental Health Expert Advisory Group brings together partners from across health and social care services and acts as a source of independent and impartial, evidenced-based expert advice for policy and decision makers.

The group also aims to ensure a sharper focus and understanding on the current and necessary support for the people we collectively represent in social care and in primary, community, and secondary care mental health services.

The advisory group has established common work areas of Covid Recovery (including workforce wellbeing), the Mental Health Workforce Plan, and Community Mental Health Services as initial priorities. These priority areas intend to offer scrutiny and guidance to compliment areas of national focus.



However, this is not exhaustive, and the advisory group will be keen to develop and receive further areas of interest.

The current, full membership is made up of:

- Royal College of Psychiatrists Wales
- Royal College of Nursing Wales
- Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists
- Royal College of Occupational Therapists
- Royal College of General Practitioners Wales
- Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health
- Royal College of Physicians Wales
- Royal College of Surgeons England
- Royal College of Surgeons Edinburgh
- The Royal Pharmaceutical Society
- Chartered Society of Physiotherapy
- British Psychological Society

Additionally, the Group works closely with other forums such as the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges on areas that can sometimes sit outside of typical mental health service discussion, but span across health and social care i.e. workforce wellbeing.

### **RCMHEAG response**

We welcome the opportunity to respond to the committee's consultation on its forward workplan.

The Royal College Mental Health Expert Advisory Group is calling for the Children, Young People and Education committee to give focus to the following:

- Increased recognition for the need to resource specialist mental health services for children and young people
- Post-legislative Scrutiny on the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Act (ALNET)
- The sustainability of the neurodevelopmental services workforce
- Mental health workforce for babies, children and young people
- Continued monitoring of Mind over Matter
- Specialist CAMHS services (sCAMHS)
- Scrutiny and monitoring of existing work programmes

#### **1) Increased recognition for the need to resource specialist services for children and young people**





In 2018, Mind over Matter identified the key role schools play in building an emotionally resilient population of young people. It called for a whole-school approach to reducing stigma and promoting good mental health. It also described the planned reform of the curriculum in Wales as a 'once-in-a-generation opportunity' to embed well-being into children's lives. The Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Bill was introduced in July 2020.

The support given by schools, parents and communities is essential to developing emotional well-being. This is understood well in Wales, and the provision that's been created will be needed in supporting both prevention and early intervention of mental health problems.

However, whilst focus and improvements are now being seen at the 'front end' of the care pathway, there needs to be a focus on the lack of provision for children and young people who need more specialist support, those with complex needs, and those who need help in a crisis.

Specialist services have long experienced staff and resourcing shortages, and these challenges must be addressed to improve outcomes for babies, children and young people.

## **2) Post-legislative Scrutiny of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Act (ALNET)**

As the committee is well aware, this autumn will see the roll out of the ambitious new legislation for children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN). We believe strongly that the committee has a key role to play in scrutinising the implementation of the legislation and ensuring the best possible outcomes for children and young people with ALN. We feel a review of implementation of the legislation and impact of the lives of children and young people would be timely at a halfway point within the Senedd term. Given the staggered nature of implementation, we are of the view that lessons from such a review could inform implementation moving forward.

We believe such a review should bring together the perspectives of children and young people, their families and carers, education and health professionals and the third sector. It should consider;

- Identification of and support for children and young people with ALN including participation of children and young people in the process.
- Outcomes achieved by children with ALN
- The transition from statements of special educational needs, School Action, School Action Plus and Learning Disability Assessments to Individual Development Plans
- The level and distribution of funding for ALN provision



- Dispute resolution including the role of the Education Tribunal for Wales
- The roles of and collaboration between education, health and social care sectors
- Provision for 16-25-year olds including support for independent living; transition to adult services; and access to education.
- Welsh language provision

### **3) The sustainability of the Neurodevelopmental Services Workforce**

Demand and capacity within neurodevelopmental (ND) services: we want to highlight the need to understand ND services as a whole so that we have a better picture of demand and capacity throughout Wales, not just of autism services but the whole ND pathway. During the consultation and development of the [Code of Practice on the Delivery of Autism Services](#), several stakeholders raised concerns about capacity within ND services. Now that the Code has been published, it would be timely to investigate this. Outputs could include a review with evidence gathering; and a report to understand bottlenecks and pinch points within services, with recommendations as to how we can ensure services can meet demand not just for autism services but for all ND services, regardless of diagnosis.

### **4) Mental health workforce for babies, children and young people**

We welcomed the Fifth Senedd Children, Young People and Education Committee's focus on mental health and the significant progress made in driving forward the whole school approach. We now feel in terms of next steps that it would be extremely helpful for the committee to undertake scrutiny on the future mental health workforce for babies, children and young people, potentially in conjunction with the health committee.

We view the upcoming mental health workforce plan as a real chance to remodel current provision and create sustainable services which ensure that all people in Wales are able to access appropriate mental health support. We understand children and young people's mental health is due to be a key focus area within the plan.

What's also crucial is the need to protect and support our workforce in the immediate challenges that will be imposed upon them in tackling waiting lists whilst managing burnout; mitigating the rates of retirement post pandemic; all whilst planning a longer-term workforce that can manage the longer-term mental health needs of our population.



- Call for the committee to scrutinise the mental health workforce plan to ensure it considers the immediate challenges as well as the long-term vision for the workforce
- Call for the committee to scrutinise the extent the plan will drive change and include a wide range of professions considered given recruitment challenges in the traditional workforce and engages widely across service user and professional groups
- Call for the committee to ensure specialist skills and training are valued across the MDT.

## **5) Continued monitoring of Mind over Matter**

Continued monitoring by the CYPE Committee of delivery of the Mind Over Matter report and the impact of the pandemic on children's mental health, picking up where the previous CYPE Committee left off. One of the original Mind Over Matter recommendations was around training all professionals working with children and young people on basic skills around mental health: it would be helpful to understand progress on this and the report's other recommendations.

## **6) Specialist CAMHS services (sCAMHS)**

There have been historic vacancies in specialist CAMHS posts, yet there are increasing instances where by professionals aren't being able to undertake work in the manner they are trained or specialist in. We need to ensure that specialists are able to operate at the top of their licence, and we hear increasingly that this is not the case across Wales.

This approach doesn't value the holistic approach to the individual and specialist skills that child and adolescent professionals bring, and will continue to affect recruitment and retention and the availability of specialist care.

We need to move away from referring to specialist services as a financial burden, this is hugely unhelpful and further stigmatises those vulnerable groups who need to access that specialist support.

- We must expand the specialist CAMHS workforce and ensure the wellbeing of the workforce is supported
- We must increase the capacity of CAMHS services, including increasing inpatient and bed capacity
- Professionals must be given the time and opportunity to undertake research and lead innovative projects, this is to the advantage of future service delivery in Wales



- The need for specialist intervention needs to be recognised across the health service, and specialists must be given the opportunity to operate at the top of their licence.

## **7) Increased scrutiny and monitoring over existing work programmes**

- Long term strategy and delivery for children's mental health: the Together 4 Children and Young People programme (T4CYP) has a relatively short term funding model as we understand it. It may be helpful to take evidence from stakeholders to understand the Welsh Government's long term thinking and planning around children and young people's mental health and the services that support them.
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs): we would hope to see ongoing scrutiny of work to develop 'trauma informed' programmes and to ensure that key stakeholders are working in a joined-up way, particularly given the changes and challenges to youth services over the period of the pandemic.

### **This response has been endorsed by the following members of the group:**

- The Royal College of Psychiatrists Wales
- Chartered Society of Physiotherapy
- Royal College of Nursing Wales
- Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists
- Royal College of Occupational Therapists
- Royal College of General Practitioners Wales
- Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health
- Royal College of Physicians Wales
- The Royal Pharmaceutical Society

We would be keen for further engagement with the Committee on the detail highlighted in our response, as well as further issues and areas the Committee may wish to seek our guidance and advice on.

### **Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**



**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 117**

**Ymateb gan:**

**Response from: British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

**Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

**Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

**Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

Following on from the Mind over Matter report produced by the committee in 2018, it would be useful to review the impact on the pandemic on CYP mental health, specifically in relation to school and community-based counselling. The landscape has greatly changed within the last two years, with a workforce of children and young people trained counsellors now competent and proficient to deliver counselling online, providing more choice of delivery styles for young people who may opt for these services (digital poverty and access to confidential spaces remaining an issue). Client choice re mode of delivery would therefore be one priority to look at for school aged children.

It was noted in the 2018 report that young people felt there was "nowhere near enough counselling" available (p23), with other concerns highlighted that GP's "bounce" young people back to school for support (p59). Having wider access to counsellors within GP surgeries would be worth exploring, as well as further investment



in training opportunities for additional children and young people counsellors (including access to Welsh speaking counselling courses).

Children and young people should continue to be consulted to find out where they would like counselling services to be provided, then help shape provision.

Regarding the key recommendations of the 2018 report, BACP are supportive of government funded access to counselling for primary aged children and believe the committee should prioritise children's voices to highlight the need for such provision as early as possible.

Priorities for the next five years include reviewing the evidence and key recommendations from the Cardiff University School and Community Counselling Evaluation (which includes feedback from counsellors, school staff and young service users) and potentially hold an inquiry to talk about counsellor's experience of provision considering the pandemic.

#### **Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**



Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)

This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)

**CYPE SP 118**

**Ymateb gan:**

**Response from: National Education Union**

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### **NEU Cymru's response**

NEU Cymru welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation from the Children, Young People and Education Committee. Our members include teachers, lecturers, leaders and support staff, committed to working tirelessly to support learners in a variety of education settings across Wales.

It is worth emphasising that even though we are in a very different place than we were twelve months ago, Wales' schools, colleges, and other education settings, are not back to business as usual. Covid-19 is still with us.

For our members, that means that there are some immediate, as well as longer term, priorities for education. Our members' need to be kept safe in their jobs, as vital key workers. But they are also passionate about keeping children and young people and the wider community as safe as possible.

Our manifesto<sup>1</sup>, created ahead of the Senedd elections, sets out what our members identify as key challenges<sup>2</sup> for this Welsh Government. We have been pleased that the Welsh Government are taking forward many of our asks. However, it remains critical that in Wales we ensure the Welsh Government does everything it can to:

- Make learning fair and equitable
- Reduce the cost of going to school and college
- Support the education workforce

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<sup>1</sup> <https://neu.org.uk/neu-cymru-manifesto>

<sup>2</sup> <https://neu.org.uk/neu-cymru-manifesto>

## **Education Recovery Plan**

In February, we published our Education Recovery Plan for Wales<sup>3</sup>. We have been pleased with some of the actions already taken by Welsh Government, set out in the plan.

These include:

- CO<sub>2</sub> monitoring for all education settings
- Implementation of the new curriculum to be more flexible for secondary schools
- Implementation of the ALNET Act to be slowed down, to give everyone more time to prepare
- Renew and Reform<sup>4</sup>, which has some of the same priorities as the NEU Cymru plan

However, some key elements of NEU Cymru's plan remain outstanding, not least the need to focus on support for disadvantaged learners and their families.

The Education Recovery Plan<sup>5</sup>, together with our manifesto, sets out some immediate and longer-term priorities for our members. However, we have learnt more since these were published in February.

We recognise that Wales is not funded in a way which truly reflects need. But Welsh Government will need to find resources to ensure that Wales' education system is truly valued as it should be, and can support our future generations of young people.

**We have set out a series of priorities for education which we believe the Committee should consider below as a response to your consultation. These priorities apply across the schools and post-16 sectors:**

### **Workload and wellbeing**

This last year has had a huge impact on the education workforce in terms of workload and wellbeing. Work intensity has shown to be significantly high in for teachers, and is understood to be impacting on wellbeing.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> <https://neu.org.uk/wales-education-recovery-plan>

<sup>4</sup> <https://gov.wales/renew-and-reform-supporting-learners-wellbeing-and-progression-html>

<sup>5</sup> <https://neu.org.uk/wales-education-recovery-plan>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03054985.2020.1847719>



Whilst Covid-19 has inevitably had a massive impact on everyone in Wales, the education workforce are critical workers, supporting young people with their learning. Schools and colleges have not been operating on a 'business as usual' basis.

**We have welcomed the Welsh Government's commitment to tackle workload<sup>7</sup> and the associated resources, from the Education Support Partnership<sup>8</sup>.**

Over the coming academic year, we will be working with our members to help them understand how, as union members, they can challenge excessive workload in the workplace. It is time that everyone in education in Wales values educators and the critical role they do.

Tackling wellbeing, whilst of the utmost importance, cannot happen without tackling workload. We would welcome the Committee undertaking a review/impact assessment of the workload of the education workforce. If we are going to be focusing on implementation of the new curriculum in the coming months, it is critical that the education workforce is enabled to focus on their learners, rather than any accountability regimes.

### **Workplace wellbeing and safety**

As trade unions we have a social partnership with the Welsh Government, and are consulted about changes to workplace guidance. We have been pleased with the level of consultation since the beginning of Covid-19, as it is in everyone's interest to ensure that education settings are safe places to work and learn.

We have largely welcomed the Welsh Government's approach to mitigating the impacts of Covid-19 in schools and colleges – schools and colleges have been through significant changes to support their learners.

Whilst many people have now been vaccinated, our members are concerned that as we return to school this autumn, **we have mitigations in place to protect the workforce, learners and wider community from Covid-19.**

Our members don't want another year of disruption to education. It is critical that we ensure there are measures in place to help ensure there

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<sup>7</sup> <https://hwb.gov.wales/professional-development/workload-and-well-being/workload-and-well-being-overview>

<sup>8</sup> <https://teachershub.educationsupport.org.uk/>

is no steep rise in Covid-19 infections, which could inevitably impact on education, wellbeing and learning.

NEU Cymru have welcomed the roll-out of CO<sub>2</sub> monitors across schools and colleges in Wales. We look forward to seeing plans for mitigating poor ventilated spaces. It is critical that funding is available to mitigate the impact of any problems with ventilation which the monitors identify.

Whilst the vaccination of young people is an important tool, it is not a sufficient measure in itself to prevent Covid-19 causing disruption to education. We therefore believe that effective safety measures remain important, particularly ventilation, in order to both reduce the extent to which the virus is spread within education settings and within the wider community, and to reduce the extent that staff and students are absent due to Covid or suffer its ill-effects, including those of Long Covid.

### **Qualifications 2022**

We called for centre assessed grades in August of 2020, in our petition “Ensure Fairness for students taking exams in 2021”<sup>9</sup>. Young people have worked hard this year, supported by their teachers and lecturers, and it is right that we celebrate their grades. But no one wants a repeat of the last two years, which is why we have called for a “Plan B”.

The delay in decision making and actions taken during 2020/21 meant uncertainty for everyone in education. Consequently, workload has been incredibly high for teachers and lectures with qualifications cohorts. We welcomed the ‘rebate’ to centres this year, which Welsh Government supported, but our members involved in the assessment process do not want to see a repeat of this year.

Despite WJEC planned adaptations to exams for 2022<sup>10</sup>, our members believe that we still need a Plan B for this coming academic year, and that it is critical that any decisions are made now.

Whilst schools and colleges will look more ‘normal’ this coming term, there will need to be arrangements in place for those young people who miss large amounts of their study. This could still be significant numbers of young people absent with Covid-19, and it is right that we have plans in place year to meet their needs. And sufficient time for the education profession to plan, and have all the moderation processes in place, so any excessive workload can be avoided.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://petitions.senedd.wales/petitions/244133>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.wjec.co.uk/articles/summer-2022-adaptations-to-gcse-and-as-a-level-qualifications/>

## **Qualifications for the future**

As we move to implementing the new curriculum, we must take this opportunity to reflect on any positives for young people in capturing their learning from the last two years. Exams, and high stakes accountability, are not for everyone. They simply show what someone did on a particular day.

We have welcomed the principles behind the new curriculum and would welcome a qualifications system which shows what learners can do. We also need to review the use of the algorithm. Everyone in education needs to know their results reflect their own work, and are not simply a reflection of what everyone else did.

To that end, we believe that now is the time to de-couple the qualifications system from accountability mechanisms. As we know, some young people will have huge advantages to others. We need to give education professionals the space to support all their learners, and not falsely focus on improving some grades.

As we have stated above, the qualifications system is a relative one, and as such there will always be winners and losers. The system as it stands does not support disadvantaged learners. We welcome that Qualifications Wales is looking at Qualifications for the new curriculum.

NEU has been working with the Independent Assessment Commission to consider what “Equable, Reliable Assessment” looks like<sup>11</sup>. We believe these findings will be helpful in informing the assessment of the new curriculum in Wales.

As NEU Cymru said in our manifesto<sup>12</sup>, we need a national conversation in Wales now to support a change in the qualifications system which is fit for the future. We believe this is something the Committee could help facilitate.

## **New curriculum and ALNET Act implementation**

We have welcomed the principles behind the ALNET Act and the new curriculum. We have also welcomed that Welsh Government has made some moves towards slowing down implementation, in order to create more time in the system to get this right.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.neweraassessment.org.uk/findings>

<sup>12</sup> <https://neu.org.uk/neu-cymru-manifesto>

Our members are clear, that if we are going to take progressive and positive steps here in Wales, they must be done well. Only the time and space for education professionals to ensure they can fulfil the ambitions of the new curriculum will mean young people are prepared for a future Wales.

NEU Cymru is clear that educators need the space to develop the new curriculum. The education workforce has not been able to take full advantage of the extra INSET days which they have had, as Covid-19 has meant the time has been taken with important matters. Wales' education workforce will need extra time to train and prepare for the extra challenges of the new curriculum. Resources must be made available to ensure this happens.

We do believe there are exciting opportunities to have a new curriculum which truly reflects the needs of learners in Wales. **For example, NEU have developed an anti-racism charter<sup>13</sup>, and we would like every educator to be empowered to embed anti-racism across the curriculum.**

We would welcome continued monitoring of the implementation of these pieces of legislation, in order that they remain true to the intentions of the Donaldson review.

### **Welsh Language**

We support the Welsh Government's target of 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050. But if we are going to achieve this, Welsh Government needs to ensure there is training available to the whole workforce. This will mean funding and providing training opportunities and cover support for those who need time outside the classroom to undertake this training.

Our members believe the language is important and are pleased to see Welsh Government has embedded the Welsh language within the new curriculum.

However, the new curriculum is also underpinned by pedagogical practices, and will require experienced education professionals to ensure that young people are enabled to engage in their learning.

This undoubtedly means that not everyone in the education system will have the Welsh language skills required. Welsh Government should

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<sup>13</sup> <https://neu.org.uk/anti-racism-charter>

therefore fund places for education professionals to learn Welsh to the level required. We need people who can speak Welsh delivering the curriculum, but we also need experienced education professionals to ensure that everyone is supported in their learning.

### **Support mental well-being for all children and young people**

As we said in our manifesto, NEU Cymru is increasingly concerned that the coronavirus pandemic and the unprecedented measures taken to contain its spread has disrupted nearly every aspect of children's lives, including their health, development, learning, behaviour, physical and emotional wellbeing, the economic and social security of their families, and their protection from violence and abuse.

We want Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to be as effective as possible. To be effective, Welsh Government needs to support CAMHS to work in a multi-disciplinary way with General Practitioners. We also believe that learners must have access to all the support they need, especially the education psychologist service. We would also ask for relevant training for educators to ensure they are able to support and sign-post young people appropriately.

In an NEU Cymru member survey conducted in March 2021, **99%** of respondents thought the Welsh Government should support mental well-being for all children and young people.

In response to what can the Welsh Government do to support the mental well-being of children and young people:

**80%** said more funding for schools and support agencies.

**71%** said less focus on tests and exams.

**85%** said better access to CAMHS and to allow them to work closer with GPs.

**77%** said increased accessibility to the education psychologist service.

**66%** said more funding for local authorities to increase provision of Specialist Teaching Facilities and special placements.

**70%** said provide all local authorities with ring fenced funding for the appointment and ongoing training of Mental Health Champions in every school.

Our members echo the concerns of the Youth Parliament report<sup>14</sup> which shows that young people need access to mental health support. We believe the school and college systems alone cannot support young

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<sup>14</sup> <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/58e7b1b717bffc1056c5949b/t/5f7f7828b2794336984f34cc/1602189394419/WYP-mental-health-E-digi.pdf>

people, they need support from a fully funded and improved CAMHS system, with proper signposting for those who do not meet the threshold.

As Welsh Government has looked at a whole school approach to mental health, we welcome this in principle. We believe that training and resources must be made available to ensure

**Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (CTER)**

Planned changes for the post-16 sector need careful consideration, to ensure they will deliver the best possible outcomes for young people, and those working in the sector.

Any changes should be in line with Welsh Government aims around Fair Work<sup>15</sup>. Again, support for learners with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) will need careful consideration and significant investment and support, to deliver choices in terms of education, training, and employment in the post-16 sector, including the plans for the Young Person's Guarantee.

NEU Cymru is happy to make this response public.

For more information please contact:

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<sup>15</sup> <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-05/fair-work-wales.pdf>

**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg ar Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd**

**This response was submitted to the Children, Young People and Education Committee consultation on Sixth Senedd Priorities**

**CYPE SP 119**

**Ymateb gan:**

**Response from: RhAG**

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Ymateb Rhieni dros Addysg Gymraeg i

**Ymgynghoriad ar Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd  
Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg**



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## **Rhieni dros Addysg Gymraeg**

Mudiad yw RhAG sy'n cynrychioli rhieni disgyblion mewn ysgolion Cymraeg a rhai sydd am weld twf ysgolion Cymraeg ac addysg Gymraeg. Caiff RhAG ei ariannu'n rhannol gan Lywodraeth Cymru. Mae RhAG yn credu, fel y gwna Llywodraeth Cymru, mai ysgolion Cymraeg yw'r model ysgol gorau o ran rhoi sgiliau llawn mewn dwy iaith i bob disgybl.

Mae RhAG yn falch o'r cyfle i gyflwyno'r sylwadau canlynol ar flaenoriaethau ar gyfer y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg yn ystod chweched tymor Senedd Cymru.

Fel mudiad sy'n gweithredu er lles hyrwyddo Addysg Gymraeg, byddwn yn cyfyngu ein sylwadau i faterion sy'n ymwneud â'r maes penodol hwnnw.

## **CREU SIARADWYR CYMRAEG NEWYDD: materion allweddol ar gyfer 2021 ymlaen**

Mae RhAG am weld cytundeb ar draws pob plaid wleidyddol, wrth i Gymru anelu am filiwn o siaradwyr Cymraeg, ac am filiwn o bobl yn defnyddio'r iaith bob dydd, erbyn 2050. Nod RhAG yw gwneud addysg Gymraeg yn hygyrch i bawb a'i mynno, trwy sicrhau

- bod addysg Gymraeg yn hwylus ac o fewn pellter rhesymol i deuluoedd ym mhob cymuned;
- cydraddoldeb ystyrlon o ran dewis a chyfleoedd;
- bod gwybodaeth am addysg Gymraeg a manteision dwyieithrwydd yn hysbys i bawb;
- cefnogaeth i rieni wella eu sgiliau Cymraeg neu ddysgu.

## **CYFFREDINOL**

Mae'r Llywodraeth wedi cyhoeddi targed o gynyddu'r gyfran o bob grŵp blwyddyn ysgol sy'n cael eu haddysg drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg o 22 y cant (sy'n seiliedig ar 7,700 o ddysgwyr saith oed yn 2015/16) i 30 y cant (tua 10,500 ym mhob grŵp blwyddyn) erbyn 2031, ac yna i 40 y cant (tua 14,000 ym mhob grŵp blwyddyn) erbyn 2050.

Yn dilyn cyhoeddi Strategaeth y Gymraeg a nod Llywodraeth Cymru o greu miliwn o siaradwyr y Gymraeg erbyn 2050, rydym yn galw ar i'r Pwyllgor sicrhau cynllunio gofalus a chydlynus er mwyn cyrraedd y nod uchelgeisiol hwn.

Mae cyflymu twf yr ysgolion Cymraeg, sef y prif ddull o gynyddu niferoedd siaradwyr Cymraeg, dros y tri deg mlynedd nesaf, yn gwbl allweddol os ydym am wireddu'r targedau hyn.



## **BLAENORIAETHAU**

Mae RhAG eisoes wedi cyhoeddi ein blaenoriaethau ar gyfer cyflymu twf Addysg Gymraeg ar ffurf ein dogfen maniffesto, *Creu Siaradwyr Cymraeg Newydd: materion allweddol ar gyfer 2021 ymlaen*, a gyhoeddwyd cyn etholiadau'r Senedd yn 2021.

Gellir crynhoi ein prif gasgliadau fel a ganlyn:

### **Mesurau i gyflymu twf ysgolion cyfrwng Cymraeg**

#### **CYNLLUNIAU STRATEGOL Y GYMRAEG MEWN ADDYSG**

Mae Awdurdodau Lleol ar hyn o bryd yn llunio eu Cynlluniau Strategol y Gymraeg mewn Addysg. Rydym yn croesawu bod y Cynlluniau hyn yn mynd i roi nodau twf dros 10 mlynedd i awdurdodau lleol. Rydym hefyd yn croesawu ymdrech y Llywodraeth i roi targedau penodol i bob sir. Mae'n hanfodol, fodd bynnag, bod cyllid digonol ar gael i awdurdodau i gyrraedd eu nodau.

#### **DATBLYGU DULLIAU AMRYWIOL O SEFYDLU YSGOLION CYMRAEG**

Mae angen i awdurdodau lleol ddatblygu dulliau newydd o sefydlu ysgolion Cymraeg. I wneud hyn, mae angen polisi cenedlaethol fydd yn rhoi arweiniad cadarn a chlr ar:

- ei gwneud yn hwylus i ysgolion unigol drosi'n ysgolion Cymraeg;
- mynnu, lle mae nifer o ysgolion Saesneg mewn ardal, bod un neu ragor yn cael eu trosi'n ysgolion Cymraeg;
- sefydlu dosbarthiadau cychwynnol

Nodwn fod y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg wedi ymgymryd ag *Ymchwiliad i Gynlluniau Strategol Cymraeg mewn Addysg* yn ystod y pedwerydd Cynulliad. Cyhoeddwyd adroddiad yn crynhoi cyfres o argymhellion. Gofynnwn i'r Pwyllgor ailymweld â'r argymhellion hynny, fel sail i ymchwiliad newydd ar y don nesaf o Gynlluniau ar gyfer y cyfnod 2022 - 2021, er mwyn pwysu ar y Llywodraeth i weithredu.

### **Cyllid cyfalaf**

Nodwn fod Llywodraeth Cymru wedi ymrwymo i fuddsoddi mwy nag £1.5 biliwn yng ngham nesaf Rhaglen Ysgolion a Cholegau'r 21ain Ganrif. Ond beth fydd cyfran y gwariant hwnnw ar addysg Gymraeg? Amlygodd ymchwil gan RhAG bod gwariant ar addysg Gymraeg yn ystod cyfnod ariannu Band A o gwmpas traean hynny a wariwyd ar brosiectau addysg Saesneg.

Mae angen i Lywodraeth Cymru ehangu'n sylweddol eu rhaglen cyllid cyfalaf i fuddsoddi mewn ysgolion cyfrwng Cymraeg. Mae canfod arian cyfatebol yn aml yn rhwystr sydd wedi llesteirio sawl sir rhag gweithredu cyn hyn. Os yw'r Llywodraeth o ddifrif am weld miliwn o siaradwyr Cymraeg erbyn 2050, mae'n rhaid rhoi rhaglen o dwf cyflym ar waith ac mae sicrhau cyllid digonol i wireddu hynny yn gwbl allweddol. Galwn ar y Llywodraeth felly i gynyddu'r cyllid cyfalaf a referniw sydd ar gael er mwyn galluogi'r siroedd i weithredu.

Byddem yn dymuno gweld adolygiad llawn o gyfnod ariannu Band B. Mae angen adnabod cyfanswm y cyllid sydd wedi'i ddyrannu i'r sector cyfrwng Cymraeg fesul sir, pa brosiectau sydd wedi eu gwireddu, neu sy'n debygol o gael eu gwireddu, a oes angen mwy o gyllid i gwblhau prosiectau penodol? Rhaid cael trosolwg o'r sefyllfa bresennol, yng ngoleuni Brexit a phandemig Covid, i adnabod beth yw'r heriau sy'n wynebu Awdurdodau Lleol. Mae cynnal ymarferiad o'r fath yn hanfodol cyn i gyfnod ariannu Band C ddechrau ar ganol y ddegawd hon.

### **Diffiniadau ieithyddol ysgolion**

Cynhaliwyd ymgynghoriad ar gategoreiddio ysgolion yn ôl y ddarpariaeth cyfrwng Cymraeg gan y Llywodraeth ar ddechrau'r flwyddyn hon.

Mae RhAG wedi galw am adolygu'r polisi categoreiddio ers dros ddegawd ac felly'n croesawu bwriad y Llywodraeth i weithredu ar hyn.

Mae angen sefydlu trefn sy'n cynnig eglurder i ddisgyblion, rhieni, ysgolion ac awdurdodau lleol gyda'r nod o gynyddu'r ddarpariaeth addysg Gymraeg.

Bydd yn ofynnol i'r categorïau newydd hyn alinio yn esmwyth gyda'r Cwricwlwm newydd a fydd yn rhoi mwy o bwyslais ar feithrin sgiliau Cymraeg ar draws y system addysg gyfan, yn ogystal â'r dyletswyddau statudol sydd wedi eu gosod ar Awdurdodau Lleol i gynllunio ar gyfer cynnydd a thwf mewn addysg Gymraeg yn y siroedd drwy gyfrwng y CSCAau, fel y prif offeryn erbyn hyn ar gyfer cynllunio addysg Gymraeg. Ac i lawer o'r siroedd, y categorïau ieithyddol newydd fydd y sbardun ar gyfer cyrraedd eu targedau yn eu Cynlluniau unigol.

O safbwynt RhAG, y prif egwyddor a ddylai yrru'r gwaith yw'r angen i'r holl rhanddeiliaid – a rhieni yn arbennig – i gael gwybodaeth glir am yr hyn yw ysgolion Cymraeg a'r sgiliau a enillir trwy eu mynychu.

Cytunwn yn gryf hefyd gyda'r argymhelliad yn *Adroddiad yr Adolygiad Annibynnol i ail-ddiffinio ysgolion yn ôl eu darpariaeth addysg cyfrwng Gymraeg* - Cwmni LinguaNi Cyf (WG41371, Rhagfyr 2020), mai un o'r egwyddorion creiddiol ddylai fod nad yw ysgolion yn medru cynnig llai o ddarpariaeth Gymraeg yn y dyfodol nag a wnaethpwyd yn y gorffennol. Cwbl hanfodol felly yw diogelu statws ysgolion Gymraeg yn y categorïau newydd.

Tra bod yr hyn a gynigir, ar yr olwg gyntaf, yn annog ysgolion i gynyddu eu darpariaeth Gymraeg trwy symud ar hyd y continwmm, mae'n ofid gennym y gallai'r diffiniadau sydd wedi eu cynnig hyd yma, oherwydd yr amwysedd cyffredinol sy'n eu nodweddu, danseilio'r amcanion sylfaenol.

Y cynnig mewn perthynas a'r uwchradd sy'n peri'r gofid mwyaf i ni fel mudiad ac mae'r disgrifiad o'r categori hwn fel categori 'ysgol cyfrwng Gymraeg' yn gwbl annerbyniol. O dan y drefn bresennol, mae Categori 1 a 2A yn dysgu o leiaf 80% o'r cwricwlwm trwy'r Gymraeg i bob disgybl'. Mae'r diffiniad newydd sy'n cael ei gynnig yn hepgor yn llwyr unrhyw sôn am ysgol Gymraeg. Dylid cynnwys categori arall, i sicrhau parhad o'r drefn bresennol, a fyddai'n nodi bod o leiaf 80% o'r cwricwlwm yn cael ei ddysgu trwy'r Gymraeg i bob disgybl. Credwn y dylai'r categori newydd hwn gynnwys dau is-gategori: (i) i ddiogelu ysgolion sy'n barod yn cyflwyno popeth trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg, ac eithrio'r Saesneg fel pwnc, i bob disgybl, a chategori (ii) sy'n dysgu o leiaf 80% o'r cwricwlwm trwy'r Gymraeg i bob disgybl. Gyda phwyslais penodol ar ethos Gymraeg yr ysgol.

Mae'n hollbwysig nad oes trefn newydd yn cael ei sefydlu a fyddai'n gorsymleiddio patrymau ieithyddol yr ysgolion, gan arwain at ganlyniadau anffafriol i addysg Gymraeg.

Mae'r egwyddorion gwaelodol a'r deiliant terfynol yn ganmoladwy ond ofnwn bod y dull o gyrraedd y nod yn ddiffygiol ar hyn o bryd ac o'u gweithredu y gallent agor y drws i ganlyniadau all fod yn andwyol i addysg Gymraeg a thanseilio'r enillion a gafwyd hyd yn hyn.

Pwyswn ar y Pwyllgor i gadw golwg ar y gwaith o ddatblygu'r categorïau hyn gan eu bod yn garreg sylfaen anhepgorol i dwf addysg Gymraeg.

## **Cludiant**

Mae angen i awdurdodau lleol weithredu'r Mesur Teithio gan Ddysgwyr (Cymru) 2008 gan sicrhau bod cludiant yn hyrwyddo addysg Gymraeg.

Mae pellter ysgolion Cymraeg o gartrefi disgyblion yn fwy na phellter ysgolion Saesneg o gartrefi ar gyfartaledd. Dylai fod dyletswydd ar Awdurdodau Lleol i ddarparu cludiant i wneud iawn am y gwahaniaeth hwn.

Mae ymchwil RhAG yn dangos fod sicrwydd trafndiaeth cyn bwysiced os nad yn bwysicach na chael cludiant am ddim. Mae'r ymchwil hwnnw hefyd yn awgrymu y gallai'r sector Cymraeg 16+ chwalu oni bai bod cludiant ar gael yn ôl amodau'r sector -16.

Mae rhai siroedd yn codi cannoedd o bunnoedd ar ddisgyblion sy'n teithio i gael Addysg Gymraeg 16+. Mae'r darlun cenedlaethol yn anghyson ac anghydradd, gyda'r drefn bresennol yn loteri cod post ac addysg Gymraeg yn cael ei effeithio yn anghymesur.

Mae'r Mesur Teithio gan Ddysgwyr (Cymru) 2008 yn nodi bod dyletswydd ar awdurdodau addysg i ddarparu cludiant mewn modd sy'n hyrwyddo addysg Gymraeg. Mae angen eglurder ar hyn ac ar y camau y gall Llywodraeth eu cymryd os na fydd Awdurdodau Lleol yn gweithredu'n unol â hyn.

I gael cydraddoldeb ar addysg Saesneg, mae addysg Gymraeg yn dibynnu ar gludiant 3 - 18 oed. Ar hyn o bryd caiff llawer o rieni addysg Gymraeg eu cosbi'n ariannol oherwydd eu bod yn byw'n bell o ysgol Gymraeg. Er bod Mesur Teithio gan Ddysgwyr (2008) yn nodi bod angen i awdurdodau lleol ddarparu cludiant i hyrwyddo addysg Gymraeg, nid oes cyswllt anhepgor wedi'i wneud rhwng darparu cludiant ac addysg Gymraeg. Mae'r cyswllt hwn yn hanfodol i barhad sawl ysgol Gymraeg, yn arbennig yn y sector 16+. Mae diffyg cludiant statudol i rai o dan 5 yn llesteirio twf addysg Gymraeg yn y sector meithrin ac yn cael effaith andwyol ar ddilyniant.

Galwn am adolygiad cenedlaethol o bolisi a threfniadau cludiant ysgol i'r cartref presennol gan arwain at warant o gludiant am ddim i'r ysgol Gymraeg agosaf o 3 - 18 oed.

### **Dechrau'n Deg**

Mae gwaith ymchwil gan RhAG wedi dangos nad yw'r ddarpariaeth yn dod yn agos at y canrannau presennol sy'n derbyn addysg Gymraeg. Mae hyn yn milwrio yn erbyn ehangu Addysg Gymraeg yn hanner siroedd Cymru.

Mae'r Llywodraeth wedi datgan ei fwriad i ehangu'r Gymraeg yn y blynyddoedd cynnar. Bydd hynny'n golygu buddsoddiad ariannol sylweddol gan Lywodraeth

Cymru. Dyma faes allweddol sy'n gorgyffwrdd â chylch gorchwyl sawl Gweinidog, gan gynnwys Trechu Tlodi, Gofal Plant ac Addysg. O ganlyniad mae angen arweiniad a chyfarwyddyd polisi cenedlaethol o'r canol mewn perthynas â statws y Gymraeg o fewn y rhaglen ac ymrwymiad gan y Llywodraeth i sicrhau fod y Gweinidogion perthnasol yn gweithredu'n unol â hynny.

### **Cefnogi rhieni**

Mae angen i rieni gael cefnogaeth lawn wrth iddynt anfon plant i ysgolion Cymraeg. Mae angen cynnig rhaglen ddwys o ddysgu a gloywi Cymraeg i rieni a darpar rieni, gan flaenoriaethu rhieni sy'n awyddus i droi iaith y cartref i'r Gymraeg. Awgrymwn y gellid cyllido rhaglen o'r fath ar ffurf Cytundeb Iaith / y Gymraeg, yn cynnwys ymrwymiad ymarferol i'w cefnogi ar y daith ieithyddol. Mae lle amlwg i gydweithio rhwng Y Ganolfan Dysgu Cymraeg Genedlaethol ac ysgolion. Dylid cyflogi rhwydwaith o swyddogion maes pwrpasol i siarad wyneb yn wyneb gyda rhieni ac i weithredu fel dolen gyswllt rhwng y cartref, Cylchoedd Meithrin a'r ysgolion.

Mae'n angenrheidiol pwysleisio pwysigrwydd swyddogaethau'r partneriaid Cymraeg eraill hefyd i wneud y Gymraeg yn fwy nag iaith Addysg – Mudiad Meithrin, y Ganolfan Dysgu Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, yr Urdd a'r Mentrau Iaith.

### **Hyrwyddo addysg Gymraeg a manteision dwyieithrwydd**

Prin iawn yw'r marchnata sy'n digwydd i hyrwyddo addysg Gymraeg. Mae rhieni'n aml heb gael gwybodaeth am y dosbarthiadau meithrin Cymraeg a'r ysgolion Cymraeg yn eu hardal. Mae hyn yn wir yn aml hyd yn oed pan gaiff ysgol newydd ei sefydlu neu pan gaiff dosbarthiadau eu cychwyn.

Mae angen ymgyrch genedlaethol gynhwysfawr i'w chynnal yn flynyddol ac wedi ei chyllido'n ddigonol, i rannu negeseuon a gwybodaeth glir am addysg Gymraeg a manteision dwyieithrwydd i ddarpar rieni, rhieni a gofalwyr. Rydym yn argymhell fod angen datblygu hwb canolog ar ffurf gwefan ynghyd ag adnodd digidol ar ffurf Ap, a fydd yn caniatáu i rieni a gofalwyr gael mynediad rhwydd a chyflym at wybodaeth er mwyn eu harfogi i wneud penderfyniadau gwybodus; creu a darparu pecyn gwybodaeth i deuluoedd newydd sy'n symud i Gymru; dyfeisio rhaglen arbennig er mwyn hyrwyddo manteision addysg Gymraeg ymysg cymunedau lleiafrifoedd ethnig Cymru.

Mae angen i rieni gael gwybodaeth glir am yr hyn yw ysgolion Cymraeg a'r sgiliau a enillir trwy eu mynychu. Mae'n hanfodol gwahaniaethu rhwng ysgolion Cymraeg a mathau eraill o ysgolion, gan mai ysgolion Cymraeg yn unig sy'n darparu sgiliau cyflawn yn y ddwy iaith i bob disgybl ac sy'n rhoi amgylchfyd Cymraeg cyflawn iddynt.

Galwn am ymchwiliad penodol i adolygu'r drefn bresennol.

### **Staffio a chynllunio'r gweithlu**

Nid gormodiaeth yw datgan fod y sefyllfa bresennol yn canu clychau enbyd. Mae'n hysbys bod prinder gweithlu cyfrwng Cymraeg i ddiwallu anghenion y sector, fydd yn tyfu'n sylweddol dros y blynyddoedd nesaf, yn unol â'r cynnydd disgwylidig o ganlyniad i'r CSGAau.

Mae'n allweddol sicrhau bod llif digonol o athrawon i gynnal addysg Gymraeg a'r Gymraeg mewn ysgolion eraill. Rhaid ehangu'n sylweddol y rhaglen hyfforddiant iaith i athrawon cynradd ac uwchradd sydd am droi i addysg Gymraeg a chefnogi rhwydwaith cenedlaethol o ganolfannau iaith ar gyfer hwyrdyfodiaid.

Yn ychwanegol at hynny, rhaid sicrhau bod strategaeth mewn lle i gynllunio'n briodol ar gyfer yr holl ystod o staff sy'n angenrheidiol i gynnal a thyfu'r sector cyfrwng Cymraeg, o'r blynyddoedd cynnar hyd at y sector addysg uwch. Mae diffyg penaethiaid hefyd yn her gyson a sylweddol.

Bydd angen cydweithredu rhwng y prif bartneriaid allweddol: sy'n cynnwys y Ganolfan Genedlaethol Dysgu Cymraeg, colegau a phrifysgolion Cymru ac eraill, i gyflawni hyn ac i bennu targedau penodol fel rhan o gytundebau cyllido darparwyr hyfforddiant er mwyn cynyddu'r gweithlu i ddiwallu'r angen a'r galw wrth i'r sector ehangu. Mae angen sicrhau bod gan staff sgiliau ieithyddol digonol. Er bod rhai cynlluniau cadarnhaol i roi hyfforddiant iaith i athrawon, nid yw'r rhain yn rhan o dargedau uchelgeisiol sy'n angenrheidiol ar gyfer gwyrddroi addysg Gymraeg.

Mae angen ymchwiliad penodol fydd yn galw am dystiolaeth gan y rhanddeiliaid allweddol er mwyn amlygu'r heriau presennol a chyfrannu at ddatrysiad brys i'r argyfwng hwn.

### **Addysg Dysgu Ychwanegol**

Rydym yn croesawu ymrwymiad y Llywodraeth i weithredu'r Ddeddf Anghenion Dysgu Ychwanegol newydd.

Mae'r ddarpariaeth bresennol o safbwynt y Gymraeg, yn parhau'n ddifffygiol mewn sawl rhan o Gymru, ac mewn rhai meysydd yn fwy nag eraill.

Ceir o hyd enghreifftiau o 'arbenigwyr' yn cynghori rhieni i symud eu plant o'r sector cyfrwng Cymraeg i'r sector Saesneg gan ddatgan y byddai'r plentyn 'ar ei

ennill' o wneud hynny. Mae hyn yn ddull o beidio darparu gwasanaeth Cymraeg, ac mae'n gwrthod hawl disgybl o gael addysg yn ei ddewis iaith.

Mae angen gwneud awdit cyffredinol o'r ddarpariaeth fesul sir, a sicrhau bod cydweithio rhyngsirol yn cael ei hwyluso i roi tegwch i ddisgyblion sydd eisoes yn dioddef o anabledau neu anawsterau dysgu. Byddai adolygiad cychwynnol o wir effaith y Ddeddf newydd o safbwynt y Gymraeg yn fanteisiol iawn.

### **Adolygiad i waith y Consortia Addysg**

Credwn fod angen cynnal adolygiad llawn a chynhwysfawr o waith y consortia addysg. Dylai hynny gynnwys gorolwg o'u statws presennol fel endidau, eu cylch gorchwyl, cysondeb eu gwaith ledled Cymru, lefel y gefnogaeth a ddarperir i'r ysgolion, eu blaenoriaethau presennol ac yn y dyfodol. A yw'r drefn o ganoli'r gwasanaeth yn ei ffurf bresennol yn gweithio? Beth yw effaith hyn ar safonau?

### **Cefnogaeth ychwanegol i'r Gymraeg**

Rydym yn croesawu'r cyhoeddiad diweddar am gynlluniau'r Llywodraeth i gefnogi hwyrddyfodiaid i'r Gymraeg, fel rhan o raglen cefnogi ôl-cofid. Ond mae cwestiynau'n parhau ynghylch a fydd y cyllid hwn ar gael yn yr hirdymor? Yn achos mewnddyfodiaid i wledydd Prydain, mae'r Llywodraeth yn cynnig gwersi iaith Saesneg am ddim. Dylai hyn ddigwydd i fewnddyfodiaid i Gymru, gyda gwersi Cymraeg yn cael eu darparu am ddim. Os yw'r Llywodraeth o ddifrif am weld miliwn o siaradwyr Cymraeg erbyn 2050, mae'n rhaid rhoi rhaglen o dwf cyflym ar waith ac mae diogelu cyllid gwasanaeth pwysig y Canolfannau Iaith yn elfen cwbl allweddol o wireddu'r polisi cenedlaethol hwn.

Credwn fod dirfawr angen craffu ar y gefnogaeth i'r Gymraeg yn y cyfnod ôl-cofid.

### **Deddfwriaeth**

Mae Llywodraeth Cymru eisoes wedi cydnabod bod y ddeddfwriaeth bresennol mewn perthynas ag addysg Gymraeg yn ddiffygiol. Mae RhAG hefyd o'r farn fod y ddeddfwriaeth sy'n berthnasol i addysg Gymraeg yn ddarniog, yn annigonol, neu wedi'i hymgorffori mewn deddfau eraill. Mewn rhai meysydd mae canllawiau ond nid deddfau, ac mewn ambell faes, nid oes deddfwriaeth yn bodoli.

Dros y blynyddoedd diwethaf, bu RhAG yn galw am lunio Bil Addysg Gymraeg er mwyn cryfhau'r seilwaith deddfwriaethol presennol. Credwn y byddai llunio fframwaith cyfreithiol o'r fath yn rhoi'r amodau gorau i addysg Gymraeg ffynnu a datblygu.

Felly rydym yn croesawu ymrwymiad y Llywodraeth i ddeddfu er mwyn cryfhau a chynyddu'r ddarpariaeth mewn addysg Gymraeg yn ystod tymor y Senedd hwn.

Er bod nifer o Ddeddfau, Rheoliadau a Chanllawiau yn gefnogol i addysg Gymraeg, nid oes eglurder ar sut i weinyddu neu orfodi'r rhain. Mae'n amlwg hefyd fod rhai sy'n tanseilio, neu'n cael eu gweithredu mewn modd sy'n afresymol neu anghymesur mewn perthynas ag addysg Gymraeg.

Mae dyletswyddau Awdurdodau Lleol yn gallu bod yn amwys, a hyd yn oed os gwelir eu bod yn gweithredu'n ddiffygiol neu'n negyddol, nid oes llwybrau amlwg i'w dal i gyfrif.

Daeth yn amlwg hefyd fod gormod o benderfyniadau pellgyrhaeddol yn cael eu gwneud yn y maes addysg yng Nghymru ar sail asesiadau ieithyddol cwbl ddiffygiol.

Mae'r model amgylcheddol yn fodel da, ble ceir cyfreithiau manwl iawn o ran beth sydd angen ei asesu wrth adeiladu rhywbeth a'i effaith ar yr amgylchedd, ac yn esiampl o ran y cyd-destun ieithyddol, Mae bylchau mawr i'w llenwi o ran y cyd-destun ieithyddol gyda maes cynllunio ac addysg yn ddau faes all gael effaith mawr ar y Gymraeg.

Byddai llunio canllaw ar sut i gynnal asesiad effaith ieithyddol ar sail statudol yn gosod sylfaen llawer mwy cadarn i'r drefn bresennol.

Ymhellach at hynny, credwn fod angen eglurder ac arweiniad cenedlaethol ar swyddogaeth y Safonau Iaith a Bil Llesiant Cenedlaethau'r Dyfodol o ran y ffyrdd y gallant hwyluso cyrraedd targedau'r Llywodraeth mewn perthynas â'r Gymraeg.

Byddai ymchwiliad penodol ar yr holl agweddau hyn, fel gwaith paratoadol i'r broses o lunio'r darn hwn o ddeddfwriaeth, yn werthfawr iawn.

Sylwadau cryno a gyflwynir yma ond byddem yn croesawu'r cyfle i ymhelaethu arnynt yn ôl yr angen.