

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales
Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg | Children, Young People and
Education Committee

Blaenoriaethau ar gyfer y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg |
Priorities for the Children, Young People and Education Committee

CYPE 21

Ymateb gan : Cyngor Gofal Cymru

Response from : Care Council for Wales

Care Council for Wales – background

The Care Council for Wales is a Welsh Government sponsored body. We been responsible for elements of workforce development within the early years and childcare sector since 2005. We play a significant role in supporting and delivering the Welsh Government’s early years and childcare agenda. This includes supporting the implementation of the Tackling Poverty Action Plan, Building a Brighter Future: The Early Years and Childcare Plan, and the Draft 10–year Plan for the Early Years, Childcare and Play Workforce in Wales.

Question 1 – Within the remit set out above: what do you consider to be the priorities or issues that the Children, Young People and Education Committee should consider during the Fifth Assembly?

Services for “looked after children”

A child is “looked after” if they are in the care of the local authority. The evidence regarding the well–being and educational attainment of children who are looked after suggests that the quality of public services they receive would be an appropriate priority for the committee. For example, a recent report by the Children’s Social Care Research and Development Centre at Cardiff University found a “a pervasive gap” between the educational attainment of looked after children and other children at all key stages of education¹.

In April 2017 the Care Council will be renamed Social Care Wales and will have responsibility for service improvement. We will be joining

¹ [Looked after children and education](#), Cardiff University, 2015

forces with our colleagues at the Social Services Improvement Agency (SSIA) in order to achieve this. A recent consultation on key areas for service improvement suggested provision for looked after children as a priority area.

The Social Services and Well-being Act 2014 defines well-being as including physical, mental and emotional development. The committee could within this area consider the early intervention and prevention approach across all services to promote good mental health and resilience in children and young people. A recent report by Children's Commissioner highlights gaps in the provision of mental health support for looked after children, especially those in residential care².

Early years and childcare

It is important that policy makers do not to lose sight of the social care aspects of early years and childcare (EYCC) settings in the drive to make children "school ready". Whilst the "school ready" approach can ease and aid transition, it is important not to lose sight of the child's safety, overall well-being and parental engagement which can determine a child's future development. A child who is abused or does not feel safe, is unlikely to be able to learn and develop to their full potential. There are some innovative examples of how Local Authorities are using their Early Years Pupil Deprivation Grant to this effect.

There is an issue within the EYCC sector in relation to financial sustainability. There is evidence that settings are unable to remain open unless they are Flying Start or Foundation Phase providers. The proposed introduction of an increased free childcare offer provides an excellent opportunity for universal roll out to aid sustainability in the sector and provide more parental choice.

² p44, [The Right Care: Children's rights in residential care in Wales](#) (PDF), Children's Commissioner for Wales, 2016

Question 2 – From the list of priorities or issues you have identified, what do you consider to be the key areas that should be considered during the next 12 months (please identify up to three areas or issues)? Please outline why these should be considered as key priorities.

Improving Outcomes for Looked after Children.

There is an opportunity for Wales to lead the way in showing what positive public care can achieve for vulnerable and troubled children. Cross sector partnership working to improve outcomes could make a significant difference to children and young people's lives.

Social care aspects of early years and childcare

Whilst educational attainment is important, the emotional social and behavioural well-being aids development of well-rounded resilient future citizens

Financial sustainability of provision in early years and childcare

Improvement in quality of EYCC settings including workforce, cannot be attained without considering financial sustainability. The proposals to expand the free childcare offer would aid greater parental choice and suitable provision.