

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 52

Ymateb gan : Dinas a Sir Abertawe

Response from : City and County of Swansea

**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?

Priorities during the term of the Assembly.

We believe the Assembly should give priority to early years work and the relationship and support links with the Health Service. This work should include Flying Start areas and all other catchment areas. It should concentrate on enabling parents to develop the skills needed to ensure children are school-ready, and on ensuring that the skills learnt are transferable to support the development of siblings. We are particularly concerned that speech and language support should begin in the first few weeks of a child's life. Support programmes should not focus just on the child but must engage and challenge parents/carers, recognising that most children spend the largest proportion of their time with the family. This should therefore be the most cost-effective focus for intervention.

Wellbeing, emotional support and behavioural support linked to a visible and accessible CAMHS provided by the Health Service is a matter which must be addressed. Consultations with our young people identified this as the top priority. Access to CAMHS for a diagnosis is a major concern of parents. We would like to see joint training with the Health Service to enable education and social services staff to feel confident that the support they offer is beneficial to the young person and not damaging.

The Schools Building Programme drivers should be linked to improving attainment, providing space for family learning, community use and work readiness. These drivers apply to both primary and secondary and all-through schools. The present programme of reducing surplus places for school children is limiting opportunities for family learning, and for entrepreneurial and work skills.

As Cabinet Members we are concerned at the lack of knowledge and interest among children and young people in the Westminster government, the Assembly and local government. Participation rates in all elections in the younger age group of citizens needs to be improved for a healthy democracy. The Committee is well placed to provide a lead on this issue.

**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.

Priorities for the first twelve months:

1. The 30 hours free childcare for 3- and 4-year-olds for 48 weeks a year has the potential to become a real mess without urgent clarification.

How is it to be paid for? If a family has children aged 2 and 6, for example, will they be eligible? 48 weeks of the year is longer than schools are open. We would not wish to see the same problems that England is facing over free child care repeated in Wales.

2. Home Educated Children must be made more visible to ensure their safety, wellbeing and preparation for adulthood. The Committee must consider how these children can be safeguarded.

3. Listening to the voice of young people will help design better services. There are many children and young people who do not want to engage with formal youth councils or parliaments. There are many informal settings which could be used as locations for consultations or focus groups to listen to young people's opinions, perceptions of policy and aspirations. We think that the Committee should encourage this approach in the first twelve months. We think this would assist you in testing and monitoring proposals for children and young people.