

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 87

Ymateb gan : Barnardo's Cymru

Response from : Barnardo's Cymru

1. Information and working context of Barnardo's Cymru

Barnardo's Cymru has been working with children, young people and families in Wales for over 100 years and is one of the largest children's charities working in the country. We currently run over 80 diverse services across Wales, working in partnership with 18 of the 22 local authorities. Every year we work with in the region of 8,000 children, young people and families directly and a further almost 20,000 through less direct work; including open groups and outreach work. Barnardo's Cymru services in Wales include: care leavers and youth homelessness projects, young carers schemes, specialist fostering and adoption schemes, family centres and family support, parenting support, family support for children affected by parental imprisonment, domestic abuse and parental substance misuse, short breaks and inclusive services for disabled children and young people, assessment and treatment for young people who exhibit sexually harmful or concerning behaviour and specialist services for children and young people at risk of, or abused through, child sexual exploitation and young people's substance misuse services.

Every Barnardo's Cymru service is different but we always strive to secure better outcomes for more children. We use the knowledge gained from our direct work with children to campaign for better childcare policy and to champion the rights of every child. We believe that with the right help, committed support and a little belief, even the most vulnerable children can turn their lives around.

- **This response may be made public.**
- **This response is on behalf of Barnardo's Cymru.**

Barnardo's registered Charity Nos. 216250 and SCO37605
Rhifau Cofrestru'r elusen Barnardo's 216250 a SCO37605

1. Issues for consideration in the next 12 months of the Fifth Assembly and rationale

- 1.1. Our response is informed by our position as a provider of services to some of the most vulnerable children and young people in Wales including children and young people exposed to parental conflict and domestic abuse; children and young people at risk of or abused through child sexual exploitation; children and young people with sexually harmful behaviour and care leavers with complex needs who have not enjoyed a stable care experience or who have entered care in late adolescence.
- 1.2. Evidence suggests that these children and young people are negatively affected by experiences of childhood trauma, abuse or bereavement. There is a growing body of evidence on the need for trauma informed practice that recognises the impact of childhood experiences and family circumstances. Responses are needed which provide children and young people with effective and timely therapeutic support in conjunction with appropriate interventions with parents and carers.
- 1.3. At this time many of these children and young people do not receive a response until issues have reached a critical point. This may result in an inappropriate referral into the CAMHS service which may not be able to provide the therapeutic response needed or to address the wider family context issues. For young people this may also mean responses to risky behaviours which focus on safety but do not address the underlying issues.
- 1.4. We do not believe another inquiry into the CAMHS service will resolve this position.
- 1.5. For care leavers with a childhood history of trauma or abuse, who have entered care in adolescence or who have experienced an unstable care history of placement breakdown there is too little support to meet their needs and many will not benefit from the When I am Ready Scheme. They experience a set of compounding poor well-being outcomes and require more robust support well into early adulthood including support for their emotional well-being and mental health.
- 1.6. There are provisions in place and being developed elsewhere in the UK to provide for the support of care leavers up to the age of 25 years.

2. Priority issues

We believe that the following issues should be the subject of Committee Inquiries over the next 12 months:

- 2.1 Inquiry into the provision of appropriate, timely and child-centred therapeutic responses in the community to children and young people who have experienced trauma, abuse or bereavement.
- 2.3 Inquiry into the needs of and current provision to support care leavers with additional and/or complex needs into early adulthood who are not supported through stable 'When I am Ready' arrangements or similar arrangements.