

Agenda – Children, Young People and Education Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 1 – Senedd

Meeting date: Wednesday, 16

November 2016

Meeting time: 09.15

For further information contact:

Marc Wyn Jones

Committee Clerk

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09.15 – 09.30 – Informal meeting

1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

(09.30)

2 The implementation of the Review Successful Futures: Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales – evidence session 1

(09.30 – 10.30)

(Pages 1 – 21)

Professor Graham Donaldson

Attached Documents:

Research Brief



3 The implementation of the Review Successful Futures: Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales – evidence session 2

(10.30 – 11.15)

Pioneer Schools

Luke Mansfield, St Julian's Primary School, Newport
Dilwyn Jones, Ysgol Bryn Gwalia
Eirian Davies, Ysgol Y Strade

Break – 11.15 – 11.25

4 Inquiry into Statutory Advocacy Provision – evidence session 1

(11.25 – 12.10)

(Pages 22 – 44)

All Wales Children and Young People's Advocacy Providers Group

Deborah Jones, Chief Executive – Voices from Care Cymru
Jackie Murphy, Chief Executive – Tros Gynnal Plant
Sean O'Neill, Policy Director – Children in Wales
Emma Phipps-Magill, Service Manager – NYAS Cymru

Attached Documents:

Research Brief

CYPE(5)-11-16 – Papur | Paper 1 – All Wales Children and Young Peoples
Advocacy Providers Group

CYPE(5)-11-16 – Papur | Paper 2 – Letter from the Cabinet Secretary for
Communities and Children – Inquiry into Statutory Advocacy

5 Paper(s) to note

(12.10)

Letter from Children's Commissioner for Wales – additional information following meeting on 6 October

(Pages 45 – 47)

Attached Documents:

CYPE(5)-11-16 – Papur | Paper 3 – papur i'w nodi | paper to note

Letter from the Chair of the Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee to the Cabinet Secretary for Education – Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance Arrangements in Wales

(Pages 48 – 51)

Attached Documents:

CYPE(5)-11-16 – Papur | Paper 4 – papur i'w nodi | paper to note

Letter from the Committee Chair to the Minister for Lifelong Learning & Welsh Language – Future funding of CWVYS

(Pages 52 – 53)

Attached Documents:

CYPE(5)-11-16 – Papur | Paper 5 – papur i'w nodi | paper to note

Letter from the Minister for Lifelong Learning & Welsh Language to the Committee Chair – Future funding of CWVYS

(Pages 54 – 55)

Attached Documents:

CYPE(5)-11-16 – Papur | Paper 6 – papur i'w nodi | paper to note

Letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children – Additional information following the meeting on 2 November

(Page 56)

Attached Documents:

CYPE(5)-11-16 – Papur | Paper 7 – papur i'w nodi | paper to note

- 6 Motion under Standing Order 17.42(ix) to resolve to exclude the public from the meeting for the remainder of the meeting and for item 1 at next week's meeting.**

(12.10)

- 7 Welsh Government draft budget 2017 – 18 – consideration of draft letters**

(12.10 – 12.40)

(Pages 57 – 70)

Attached Documents:

CYPE(5)-11-16 – Papur | Paper 8 – preifat | private – Letter from Chair to Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children – Welsh Government draft budget 2017–18

CYPE(5)-11-16 – Papur | Paper 9 – preifat | private – Letter from Chair to Cabinet Secretary for Education and Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language – Welsh Government draft budget 2017–18

Document is Restricted

Agenda Item 4

By virtue of paragraph(s) vi of Standing Order 17.42

Document is Restricted

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

CYPE(5)-11-16 – Papur | Paper 1

Ymateb gan : Grŵp Darparwyr Eiriolaeth Plant a Phobl Ifanc Cymru Gyfan
Response from : All Wales Children and Young People’s Advocacy Providers
Group

Our Response

Member organisations of the **All Wales Children and Young Peoples Advocacy Providers Group** welcome the opportunity to provide written evidence to the NAFW Children, Young People and Education Committee (*thereafter* ‘Committee’) inquiry into statutory advocacy provision.

This response compliments our recent submission to the Committee’s previous request for key priorities to inform its forward work plan. In our response we expressed support for the Committee conducting an inquiry into advocacy provision for children and young people in Wales during the Fifth Assembly Term.

We have tailored our response to the focus of the inquiry, which is

- The latest position on the implementation of the National Approach to Statutory Advocacy for Children and Young People;
- Other issues relevant to the commissioning and funding of statutory advocacy provision;
- The impact of Part 10 of the Social Services and Well-being Act 2014; and
- Identifying other priority areas where progress is needed in respect of advocacy provision.

What are your views on the effectiveness of the Welsh Government’s approach to the delivery of statutory advocacy provision? If this is a concern to you, how should this be addressed?

Advocacy is about speaking up for children and young people, making sure that their rights are respected and their views heard. Advocates explain the views and needs of children and young people to decisions-makers and help them to get their rights met and to navigate their way around the decision-making process.

Advocacy is about **children’s rights** and **safeguarding**.

It is now over 16 years since the publication of the **Waterhouse Report ‘Lost in Care’** (2000) which reported on the inquiry into abuse in state care in North Wales. The establishment of independent advocacy services was a key recommendation to help ensure that children’s rights were protected and that young people’s voices could be heard.

February 2017 will mark 14 years since the first **Children's Commissioner for Wales** published his report '**Telling Concerns**' (2003) with 25 recommendations which followed a national review of local authority statutory advocacy arrangements for children and young people in Wales.

Over the past decade or more, there have been a number of independent studies, reports, inquiries and reviews which have identified areas of concern in respect of the availability, accessibility and visibility of independent professional advocacy services for children and young people. Notably, this has included

- **'A Study of Advocacy Services for Children and Young People in Wales (2005)** undertaken by Cardiff University School of Social Sciences, the Social Inclusion Research Unit at University of Wales NEWI, Department of Child Health Wales College of Medicine.
- During the Third Assembly term, the NAfW Children and Young People Committee published a report with 12 recommendations following its inquiry into '[Advocacy Services for Children and Young People](#)' (March 2008). The Committee subsequently published a follow up report, '[Scrutiny of developments in the provision of advocacy services to children and young people in Wales](#)' (May 2009) with 5 further recommendations. In June 2010, further oral evidence was taken from key stakeholders with a report from this third inquiry, '[Further review of developments in the provision of advocacy services to children and young people in Wales](#)' published in September 2010 with 13 recommendations.
- Between 2012-14, the Children's Commissioner for Wales published a series of reports with recommendations - Missing Voices (June 2012, May 2013 & June 2014).

"Wales has been on an advocacy journey for over 10 years, following the publication of the Waterhouse Report, and yet it finds itself without a clear set of checks and balances to ensure that all children with an entitlement to advocacy also have a genuine opportunity to access it. This situation cannot be allowed to continue and must be addressed as a matter of urgency." Missing Voices (March 2012)

The Welsh Government has also released a number of publications, ministerial statements and non-statutory guidance, as well as establishing a number of advisory stakeholder groups with external representation. Some of the developments included

- A Study of Advocacy Services for Children and Young People in Wales (2005)
- New Service Framework for the Future of Advocacy Services in Wales (2008)
- National Independent Advocacy Board (2009)
- Model for Delivering Advocacy Services for Children and Young People in Wales (2009)
- Response to Commissioners Review (2012) and Progress (2013)

In February 2013, the then Minister announced her intention to establish a Ministerial Expert Group on Advocacy (MEGA) and a Young Person's Expert Group on Advocacy (YPEG).

As is evident from the quotes below, concerns were still being raised.

- **Chair of MEGA (December 2013)**

“There are examples of good practice but the overwhelming impression is one of a post code lottery..... and is based on “finger in the wind” calculations rather than any more scientific estimation of need”.

- **YPEG – Our Views, Our Story!!! (Consultation Event 2014) - Key Messages -**

“Make advocacy independent from local authorities....Encourage providers to increase the number of advocates so that there are no waiting lists... How advocacy is introduced to children and young people is important, highlighting how advocates can help young people”.

The MEGA, chaired by Dr Mike Shooter, presented its first report to Welsh Ministers in January 2014. The Report showed commissioning and provision of statutory advocacy services in Wales to be patchy and inconsistent. Whilst there were some examples of good practice there were also areas of concern.

Having considered five possible models of commissioning statutory advocacy services, the Expert Groups recommended a “hybrid” model as a first step, in which the commissioning of provision remains at a local or regional level while the Welsh Government assumes responsibility for a costing formula, collation and monitoring of statistics, setting standards and inspecting against them, training and registration of advocates, and promotion of advocacy.

MEGA also recommended that the Welsh Government consider a secondment opportunity for a senior and authoritative figure to facilitate any necessary changes, to promote consistent good practice in the delivery of these services and to ensure that practical outcomes are secured from high level engagement between MEGA, advocacy providers, commissioners and Ministers.

It was whilst appointing a secondee that Ministers announced a change in focus, a shift which included the Strategic Leadership Group (which included Mike Shooter) inviting local government to bring forward a model for securing a national approach to statutory independent professional advocacy for looked after children, children in need and other specified individuals (November 2014). This is discussed in our response to the next question.

Our organisations have maintained an effective working relationship with the Welsh Government and have welcomed the inclusive approach adopted in bringing together a range of external stakeholders to seek lasting solutions. However, despite the shared vision for quality, accessible and sustainable advocacy structures for children and young people throughout Wales, progress in addressing some the issues raised in previous Committee enquiries and by children and young people as recipients of advocacy services have been painfully slow. Challenges around demand, budgetary cuts/stagnation and competitive commissioning arrangements remain prevalent and only serve to frustrate the progress Wales has made in helping children access their rights and entitlements under existing statutory legislation. The messages and recommendations coming from more recent independent and commissioned reports, as evidenced above, provide a timely reminder that more needed to be done.

What are your views on the latest position in relation to the implementation of the National Approach to Advocacy Services?

Following the completion of the business case developed by the Task and Finish Group of the National Approach to Statutory Advocacy for Children and Young People in November 2015, we remain concerned that there has been a delay in its full implementation and from the proposed timescales.

We understand that further engagement with local authorities across Wales was required to help ensure that consent was secured, given that each local authority was responsible for ensuring compliance.

However, the Business Case report proposed a phased implementation, beginning with the North Wales region, following the launch of the National Approach in early 2016. The second region was due to commence in June 2016 with all regions adopting the new service model by March 2017 in line with their existing commissioning cycles. There have been a number of implications of this delay on commissioning arrangements.

We understand that an implementation or delivery plan is currently being developed to realise the components which make up the National Approach. However, we have not had sight of this plan and we are unclear of the timescales for this plan's publication or the revised timescales for its full implementation. Communication to external stakeholders, including local commissioners of advocacy services, and children/young people is urgently required.

There are three main areas aiming to be resolved by National Approach – **Visibility** (awareness) **Availability** (capacity) and **Quality** (standards and outcomes)

Visibility – National Approach seeks to improve the visibility of advocacy through the Active Offer, awareness raising sessions with professionals and age-appropriate literature and information for children and young people.

Availability – A Range and Level mechanism was designed to calculate service capacity requirements based on the eligible population.

Quality – A review of a previous draft version of the National Standards and Outcomes Framework was undertaken which forms one of the key components of the National Approach.

Each component of the National Approach is of equal importance. We would not wish to see any dilution from what was agreed and proposed, and continue to support all components of the National Approach being developed as set out in the Task and Finish Groups Business Case report. There is a need for a clear commitment to meet the funding obligations of the National Approach business plan in full

We are unclear about the governance and accountability arrangements to ensure that the implementation plan, once agreed, is delivered in full and to a revised and agreed timescale. We are clear however that there has to be a national lead in place to progress the Plan, working with the full support, cooperation and engagement from recognisable named leads in each of the six regions.

The proposal to review progress at the end of the first year of full implementation, and to report on achievements and any adjustments needed based on performance data and latest

population statistics, is essential. The Business Case did not set out how this would be achieved.

The delay in progressing the National Approach to Statutory Advocacy has meant that the revised National Standards and Outcomes Framework, developed as a key component of the National Approach and mapped to the Well-Being Statement, has yet to be made available and issued for public consultation. We understand that this is still the Welsh Government's intention which we would support. Following consideration of the responses of the consultation, we would also support the National Standards and Outcomes Framework being issued as a statutory document.

The role of the Welsh Government funded MEIC Helpline did not feature in the Business Case report. The potential role for this independent, bilingual, telephone/on-line service as part of a new commissioning framework has not yet been fully explored

A uniform and coherent implementation and adoption of the National Approach to Statutory Advocacy retains support amongst Advocacy provider services and the will for it to succeed remains. However, if the model is not delivered as effectively as intended, we are minded to call for consideration being given to utilising the work already undertaken and applying it to implementing a National Commissioning Model for Statutory Advocacy Services. We are reminded that a key Recommendation from the Committees earlier inquiry was that *'the Welsh Government should review if the consortia approach is realistic and achievable, or if a national model would be a better way forward'* (2010 – Recommendation 2)

A national advocacy service may also need to be considered if the national approach is implemented and once reviewed, is not seen as an efficient model. The Committee may wish to undertake a further review of advocacy services towards the end of this current Assembly Term to provide additional scrutiny of the implementation of the national approach.

What impact has Part 10 of the Social Services and Well-being Act 2014 had on advocacy provision?

Members of the All Wales Children and Young People's Advocacy Providers Group had previously identified the need for the Social Services and Well-Being Act to be seen as a key vehicle for taking forward existing statutory duties on local authorities and their partners. We welcomed the opportunity to inform the development of the Code of Practice in relation to Advocacy under Part 10 through our involvement in the Welsh Government Technical Group

Part 10 provides an opportunity to further extend access to advocacy services for children and young people beyond those recognised 'eligible' groups of children and young people entitled under the Children Act 1989.

Whilst we would accept that it is still early days in terms of full implementation, there are a number of points we would wish to make at this stage.

Local authorities have yet to fully commission advocacy services for the extended entitlement under Part 10.

There is potential for some children to benefit from having access to an advocate at the assessment stage which determines their needs, and any eligibility for a Care and Support Plan. Some advocacy services have been requested by some local authorities to provide advocacy at the assessment stage which is encouraging. Some advocacy services have also accepted those requests to provide advocacy at this stage. However, this has been through spot purchase arrangements. We do not consider this to be sustainable and not an appropriate means of delivering legislation in the long term.

The Code is clear in that “Local authorities **must** arrange for provision of an independent professional advocate when a person can only overcome any barrier(s) to **participate fully** in the **assessment, care and support planning, review and safeguarding processes** with assistance from an appropriate individual, but there is no appropriate individual available”

There is a key role for advocacy as one of the preventative services available to local authorities, helping to prevent escalation, safeguarding concerns and additional costs being incurred. The MEIC helpline also has a role in this regard, yet its potential has yet to be fully explored. The launch of MEIC as, initially a 24hr advocacy helpline for all children and young people in Wales has, in part, delivered on the Welsh Government’s commitment and intention for ‘*advocacy to be more accessible to all children and young people, but especially those most vulnerable*’. But as the Welsh Government has been keen to stress through formal correspondence, MEIC is in place to *compliment* rather than *replace* the need for face-to-face provision.

Section 20 of the Code of Practice for Part 10 considers ‘*Advocacy for looked after children and other specified children*’. This section is presently limited, due in part to the work undertaken under the National Approach having not been completed and agreed when the consultation on Part 10 was issued. We were informed that the outcome from the work of the Task Group ‘*will inform the final version of the Code*’ (3.2). The Code will need to be reviewed to ensure that new arrangements under the National Approach are incorporated and thus protected through statutory legislation.

Which priority areas in relation to advocacy provision for children and young people do you believe the Welsh Government should address? What do you think is needed to achieve that progress?

That there is

- Full implementation of the National Approach with strong strategic leadership to ensure all stakeholders are undertaking the actions required within the business case.
- For the National Approach to be resourced and funded in line with the population needs assessment analysis. The current looked after children population needs to be reflected within any revised figures.
- Robust governance and accountability arrangements for the National Approach to be in place, both at a national and regional level.
- For the National Approach to be monitored throughout and independently reviewed at the end of the first year implementation phase. This review should assess the effectiveness of the approach, seeking to identify/quantify improvements achieved in awareness/visibility and engagement/take-up at the various stages of implementation,

and determine what changes, if any, need to be made. The review should also assess any service quality improvements and any capacity issues encountered, whether any adjustment and or recalculation using the Range and Level mechanism needed to be undertaken. (I.e. using latest population numbers, Performance Management Reports).

- Engagement with children and young people has to be achieved as part of the implementation phase
- The re-establishment of a stakeholder advisory group to review progress.
- Full public consultation of the National Standards and Outcomes Framework
- Clear integrated link between the National Approach and Part 10 of the SS&WB Act
- Greater consideration given to the role and function of the MEIC helpline service, in terms of future commissioning arrangements, interface with independent face-to-face advocacy services, promotion and signposting to help ensure that all children and young people have entitlement to advocacy support (*ProMo Cymru, on behalf of the MEIC service, have submitted a more detailed response*)
- That the Committee give consideration to undertaking a further review of advocacy provision and the recommendations it makes from this inquiry during the latter stages of this Assembly term.

PLEASE NOTE: A number of the organisation represented on the All Wales Children and Young Peoples Advocacy Providers Group have also submitted responses on behalf of their organisations. We would wish to draw the Committee's attention to these and to the recommendations within.

This response has been submitted by Children in Wales, and developed in consultation and in partnership with the following organisations

Children in Wales

NYAS Cymru

Tros Gynnal Plant

Voices from Care Cymru

& with ProMo Cymru (*on behalf of the MEIC service*)

.....

About

Children in Wales has been working with our member organisations and the office of the Children's Commissioner for Wales to help realise the vision of established and sustainable independent advocacy services to help protect children from abuse and harm, and to ensure mechanisms are in place to enable their voices to be heard.

The **All Wales Children and Young Peoples Advocacy Providers Group** was established in 2004 to support our member organisations who deliver advocacy services to children and young people.

<http://www.childreninwales.org.uk/our-work/advocacy/>

Membership of the group consists of professionals and representatives from organisations and/or interest groups with clear responsibilities for promoting the rights and wellbeing of children looked after and other vulnerable groups who may benefit from advocacy provision.

November 2016

Carl Sargeant AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gymunedau a Phlant
Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: MA/P/CS/7126/16

Lynne Neagle AC/AM
Cadeirydd/Chair
Children, Young People & Education Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

8th November 2016

Dear Lynne

Your letter dated 13 October requested an update on progress with the National Approach to Statutory Advocacy for Children and Young People, and the impact of Part 10 of the Social Services and Well-being Act 2014.

The Welsh Government has fully supported the development of a national approach to advocacy. We have provided funding for a secondee to support the delivery of a National Approach and established a Strategic Leadership Group to advise and support delivery and decision making on development of the National Approach. Ensuring that the children who have a statutory entitlement to advocacy are receiving it is a high priority and I continue to take a personal interest in following the progress of the development and implementation of the national approach.

I have a meeting with Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) the Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS) Cymru and the Children's Commissioner on 24 November to discuss the implementation plan for the National Approach. The following response to your questions has been informed by my understanding of the current progress on the approach in advance of that meeting.

- 1. What is the latest position in relation to the implementation of the National Approach to Advocacy Services? Is there a draft version of the National Approach? If yes, how long has a draft version been under consideration? Can a copy be provided to the Committee?**

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

In December 2015 local government shared with Strategic Leadership Group a draft business case which set out the following key components of a national approach:

- **National Standards and Outcomes Framework** - including an 'active offer' of advocacy and a draft National Standards and Outcomes Framework (NSOF) aligned to well-being under the 2014 Act.
- **Regional Performance Reporting Template** - delivering the evidence and statistics identified within the NSOF for service quality and performance monitoring purposes.
- **A Commissioning Framework** – providing consistent approach and aligned to the NSOF
- **Regional Service Specification** - providing consistent specifications for commissioning of services and aligned to NSOF.
- **A Range and Level Assessment Mechanism (Service Capacity)** - which when applied to the eligible population locally and regionally assists with gauging service capacity requirements and associated costs.

As components of the proposed national approach were developed individual members consulted with groups and organisations they were representing - this included consulting with children and young people. The business case was also subject to this consultative process.

The business case has been, and continues to be, subject to local government governance and accountability mechanisms.

Since the national approach was developed we have been liaising with Local Government through the Strategic Leadership Group about how they intend to deliver the National Approach and expect an implementation plan by 24 November.

2. How will the National Approach be fully implemented? What are the timescales for implementation?

Implementation will be led by Local Government in line with the implementation plan they are developing. Local Government has advised that an implementation plan, which will include timelines, to progress the National Approach will be available by 24 November.

3. What assessment has been made of the costs of implementing the National Approach? How will these costs be met?

A Task and Finish Group developed a 'Range and Level mechanism' that can consistently calculate the funding levels required to deliver the National Approach on a local, regional or national basis. It is based on the cost of an 'advocacy hour' plus average service running costs set against a target 'take up' percentage of the eligible population. Using figures from 2014 as a baseline the estimated cost of implementation of the National Approach is an estimated £1 million which incorporates the active offer at a cost of £247,553.

The provision of statutory advocacy is a local authority duty met from the revenue support grant. In recognition that the active offer is additional to the current provisions set out in legislation the Welsh Government has agreed to meet the full costs of the active offer. Full consideration of the level of funding provided by Welsh Government will be given when the implementation plan is received.

4. How will you assess the impact and outcomes for children and young people of a National Approach?

The National Approach set out in the business case includes a National Standards and Outcomes Framework which has been mapped to the Well-being Statement that underpins the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

In addition the business case has set out proposals for Welsh Government to commission an independent review of the National Approach to be undertaken at the end of the first year of implementation. The review would seek to identify improvements achieved in awareness and engagement at the various stages of implementation.

The review would also assess any service quality improvements and capacity issues encountered, whether any adjustment and or recalculation using the Range and Level mechanism needs to be undertaken (i.e. using latest population numbers, Performance Management Reports). I will consider this proposal further on the receipt of the implementation plan.

The impact of Part 10 of the Social Services and Well-being Act 2014

5. What are the implications of provisions in the Act on advocacy services for children and young people?

Welsh Government has published the Code of Practice on the exercise of social services functions in relation to Advocacy under Part 10 and related parts of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

Within the Code we are clear that local authorities and local health boards must use the outcomes from their shared population needs assessment to inform commissioning and partnership arrangements under the Act for the provision of advocacy services. Advocacy includes the full range of provision set out in the Code of Practice.

The first round of Population Needs Assessment reports are due in April 2017 which will provide a better understanding of the need for provision of advocacy services.

6. How will you assess the impact of provisions in the Act that relate to advocacy and the associated Code of Practice on Advocacy?

As we shift our focus from development of the statutory framework under the 2014 Act to delivering its commitments, I recognise that it is vitally important that we have adequate evaluation arrangements in place to be able to assess whether the Act is achieving what we set out to achieve.

The evaluation will be undertaken in three phases. The first will be about monitoring policies under the Act during the initial year of implementation. The second phase will involve on-going evaluation, through the national outcomes framework and local authority performance measurement frameworks. The third phase will be an independent long term one-off evaluation, commencing in the third year of the implementation of the Act.

The monitoring looks at the difference the Act in its entirety is making rather than focus on specific parts of the Act. Stakeholders welcomed the approach and the national direction set out in the national outcomes framework.

We will also continue to engage with stakeholders to ensure we have a clear understanding of how the requirements under Part 10 are operating in practice.

7. Do you have evidence that the provision relating to advocacy in the Social Services and Well-Being Act 2014 have resulted in better outcomes for children and young people?

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 commenced on 6 April 2016 and the National Outcomes Framework has been published. Welsh Government will be publishing its first annual report on the outcomes framework by March 2017. There will also be additional data from Local Authority Social Services in relation to children and young people which will be published by the autumn 2017. However, the data will not be specific to advocacy as there are no specific outcomes or measurements in place for this area at a national level at this time.

I expect to see significant progress on moving forward with the National Approach when the implementation plan is in place later this month.

Yours sincerely



Carl Sargeant AC/AM

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gymunedau a Phlant
Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children

Comisiynydd Plant Cymru

Children's Commissioner for Wales

Sally Holland

By email only

3 November 2016

Lynne Neagle AM
 Chair - Children, Young People & Education Committee
 National Assembly for Wales
 Cardiff Bay
 Cardiff CF99 1NA

Dear Lynne

Thank you for chairing a stimulating scrutiny session of my Annual Report and Accounts on October 5 2016. During that session I agreed to provide further information with regards to the breakdown of cases dealt with by my office during 2015/16 and plans in relation to our strategic outreach programme.

Breakdown of the types of cases that have been dealt with by the Investigations and Advice team over the last year:

The Table below gives the primary classifications assigned to cases when they are taken on by my Investigations and Advice team. There were 520 cases dealt with in total but the primary classifications amount to more than this as some cases are classified with a number of issues dependant on the matters at hand.

Primary Classification	Total Count
CAFCASS	11
Education	293
Environment	51
Health	51
Housing	19
Immigration/Asylum	9
Legal	52
Local Authority (Other)	11
Police	13
Social Services	245

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Highlights of our engagement work this year:

- Met, listened and spoke face-to-face to nearly 4000 children and young people from all 22 local authority areas
- 6000 children aged 3-18 responded to our Beth Nesa' / What Next survey (there is a breakdown of the sample within each of the detailed reports for each age group that took part in this large-scale survey – all are available on our website)
- 1000 children responded to our School Journeys 'Special Mission'
- 206 pupils from 80 schools took part in our Super Ambassadors celebration events, to help launch the new Commissioner
- 68 looked after children and care leavers, aged between 15 and 25, attended our north and south Wales events. They represented all 22 local authorities.

Key elements of our engagement work:

Super Ambassadors are one of the ways we listen to children and young people. Our School Ambassadors are primary school pupils who are elected by their peers; their job is to raise awareness about the Children's Commissioner for Wales and children's rights within their schools. Pupils are also required to complete special missions, canvassing opinions from peers on a wide range of issues; opinions which are then fed directly into our work. We now have nearly 200 active Super Ambassadors schools, and we have secured a direct link with existing Welsh Government programmes, such as the Welsh Network of Healthy Schools.

Community Ambassadors is a scheme based on the School Ambassadors concept, targeting children and young people living in areas of social deprivation and/or from disadvantaged groups. It offers opportunities for groups of children and young people who already meet together in non-formal education settings in communities in Wales. They include New Leaf, a Gypsy Traveller Forum in Cardiff, Mixtup, a mixed ability youth group in Swansea and Ebbw Fawr youth group based in a Communities First area in Blaenau Gwent, and Adamsdown Community First in Cardiff.

Webinars also feature heavily now in our direct engagement work with children and young people. We believe it is a cost-effective way of enabling a large number of pupils to engage directly with the Commissioner, helping us to gather pupils' views and raise awareness of the Commissioner and UNCRC. In February, we hosted a webinar where 23 schools logged on to and we recorded 430 online viewers. Partnership working has been a critical element of how we promote children's rights. Over the last seven years, we have worked with a number of partners including S4C on developing a dedicated TV series on our campaign See Me / Dyma Fi, a piece of work aimed at smashing the stereotypes of children and young people in Wales. We are also a member of the Welsh Government's Article 42 group that oversees all awareness work undertaken by Government in relation to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Membership of the group enables us to complement rather than duplicate efforts in relation to raising awareness of children's rights in Wales.

Supporting others to work with and listen to children and young people also features in our work plan. We have engaged with organisations including Kids in Museums, Welsh Ambulance and Welsh Government departments, offering them advice on participation and ensuring all engagement work with children and young people is underpinned by the UNCRC. Our staff also attend the national participation workers' network. This has enabled us to listen to issues being handled by participation workers across the country.

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Working directly with schools is another way of enabling children and young people to find out about their rights and have access to the Commissioner. We proactively arrange visits to schools and groups, covering every local authority in Wales, every year.

Ensuring others who run a similar programmes of visits, such as UNICEF's rights respecting schools, have up-to-date information about us and our work is another cost effective way of making information about rights and the children's commissioner accessible to as many children and young people as possible.

Strategic approach:

On an annual basis we measure awareness levels of the Commissioner amongst children and young people via an independent research company. The results enable us to target our awareness and engagement work.

My strategic equality plan outlines how I intend to ensure that my team and I work towards ensuring that children and young people in Wales grow up in a country where equality and children's human rights are central to the way in which public services are delivered. Equality considerations will continue to be built into the design of policies and the delivery of all my work, including our engagement work, and will be kept under constant review.

I hope you find this additional information useful to further inform the scrutiny of my annual report and the work of the office of the Children's Commissioner for Wales. As discussed during the session, the roles of the Committee and Commissioner are symbiotic in nature as we both play key parts in scrutinising the work of government and seeking improved outcomes for the children and young people of Wales. Our collaborative approach has invigorated a healthy dialogue and I look forward to building upon this relationship over the rest of our tenures.

Yours sincerely



Sally Holland
Children's Commissioner for Wales

Agenda Item 5.2

Kirsty Williams AM, Cabinet Secretary for Education
 Cathays Park

4 November 2016

Dear Cabinet Secretary

Diamond Review

Following the publication of the Independent review of higher education funding and student finance arrangements (Diamond Review) the Economy Infrastructure and Skills (EIS) Committee were keen to explore how this work will impact on areas in our remit.

At a meeting of the Children, Young People and Education (CYPE) committee on 12 October, Hefin David and I took an opportunity to question Professor Sir Ian Diamond on his report as it relates to the EIS committee's remit.

The following day EIS Committee held a stakeholder session to gather reactions. We were grateful that senior officials from Welsh Government attended this event in order to hear responses directly and feed back to you.

The event heard discussions on the likely impact on the Welsh economy, post-graduate research and the development of higher level skills. To close we also asked for general comments. This letter sets out our conclusions and recommendations arising from that meeting.

Conclusions

The Diamond recommendations have been well received by a wide cross-section of stakeholders. There is particular enthusiasm for the notion that all students – not just those undergraduates aged 18 plus in full-time education – will be



eligible for support based on need. The idea that Wales could lead the way in this approach has been very popular.

It is especially popular with regard to upskilling the existing workforce, many of whom would find support for part-time study alongside their work particularly attractive.

While the Diamond recommendations are seen as a solution to the specific remit given to the review group, there is widespread acknowledgement that there remain other issues in higher education – like recruitment and retention of staff – which will still require further thinking and action.

We are aware that, following their meeting with Professor Diamond, the Children, Young People and Education Committee has recommended that the Diamond recommendations are implemented in full and fully funded for the duration of this Assembly.

Recommendations

We recommend that:

- The implementation of the Diamond recommendations should be integrated with the work going on to ensure that our education system enables individuals to develop the skills which will be needed in the Welsh economy, and the work on a new Economic Strategy;
- Further work will be required to address reforms in higher education which are outside the scope of the Diamond Review;
 - this may include measures to offset the impact of Brexit on overseas recruitment of both students and teaching staff;
 - but also consideration of measures to address the significant impact on lecturers' workloads, especially considering the already high number of international students, particularly postgraduates.

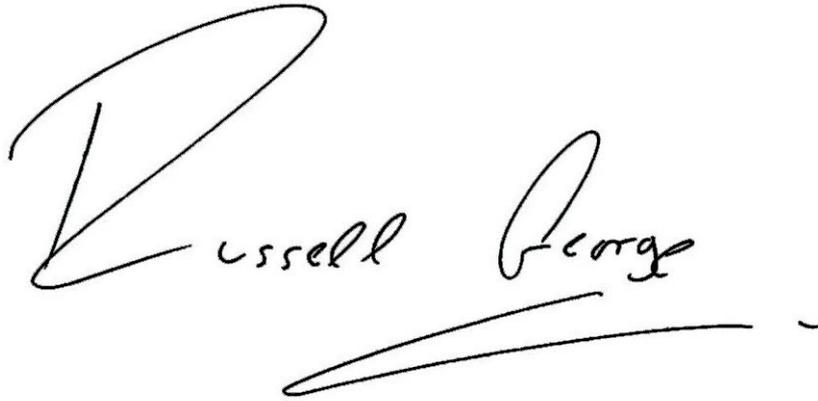


- The Minister for Skills and Science reviews the Welsh Government’s level of support for innovation projects and that the Cabinet Secretary for Education considers how effectively entrepreneurial skills are nurtured in higher education. Committee Members heard that small amounts of financial support for innovation projects can reap significant rewards;
- The Welsh Government actively promotes a more “dynamic” relationship between further education and higher education, including reviewing and evaluating different models of FE/HE collaboration and partnership, which complement rather than replicate. The potential benefits of this are to:
 - encourage the progression of individual students;
 - increase the number of learners attaining higher level skills;
 - encourage more flexible pathways between education/learning (full and part-time); economic inactivity; and employment (full and part-time); and
 - help to regenerate communities with high levels of economic inactivity and deprivation.
- The Welsh Government reviews the ways in which SMEs engage with the higher education sector and ways in which this can be made more effective. SMEs often lack the time, resources and understanding of how to engage with the higher education sector effectively.
- The Welsh Government evaluates the impact of the Diamond Review recommendations. We think this should take place three years after implementation of the changes.

I understand that the Welsh Government will be issuing its response to the Diamond recommendations in the coming weeks, and I trust that the Committee’s consideration of the issues and recommendations will be helpful to you.



Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Russell George". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'R' and a long horizontal flourish underneath the name.

Russell George AM

Chair

Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee

Cc: Alun Davies AM, Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language (including Further Education)

Cc: Julie James AM, Minister for Skills and Science

Cc: Lynne Neagle AM, Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee



Alun Davies AM
Minister for Lifelong Learning & Welsh Language

02 November 2016

Dear Minister

Inquiry into Youth Work

The Committee has been made aware of correspondence between your officials and the Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Organisations (CWVYS) stating that its grant will expire on 31 March 2017. You will understand that the Committee has serious concerns about these developments and is seeking urgent clarification about the decision you have made.

When you attended the Committee's meeting on 12 October, you informed us that the previous Minister had commissioned work exploring future models for youth work provision. You said you would discuss the issues with the Ministerial youth work reference group in December – your first meeting with the group – before making a decision on a future model.

On 31 October CWVYS was issued with the letter informing it that it will not receive grant funding for the financial year 2017–18.

In the light of these developments, the Committee would be grateful if you could answer the following questions –

- 1) On what date did you decide that CWVYS would not receive funding for 2017–18?
- 2) What discussions took place with CWVYS, the youth work reference group or the wider sector before you took that decision?



- 3) On what evidence did you base your decision not to fund CWVYS for 2017-18?
- 4) Why did you change your mind about waiting until December to take a decision on a future model?
- 5) What plans do you have for an alternative provision to undertake the functions of CWVYS?
- 6) Why was it necessary to make the decision before the Committee had concluded its inquiry into Youth Work?

You will be attending a meeting of the Committee on 10 November to discuss the draft Budget. The Committee may wish to ask further questions on this issue during that meeting. Therefore, I would be grateful if you could respond to this letter by the end of Monday 7 November.

I have copied this letter to the Cabinet Secretary as a courtesy, as she will be attending the meeting on 10 November with you.

Yours Sincerely



Lynne Neagle AC / AM
Cadeirydd / Chair

Cc Cabinet Secretary for Education





Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref MAP/ARD/6906/16

Lynne Neagle AM
Chair of the Committee
Children, Young People & Education Committee

9 November 2016

Dear Lynne,

Thank you for your letter of 2 November seeking clarification regarding funding arrangements for the Council for Wales Voluntary Youth Organisation (CWVYS).

When I attended Committee on 12 October I explained that I would be attending the Ministerial Youth Work Reference Group in December and would use that opportunity to discuss different models for youth work delivery, this follows from work commissioned by my predecessor Julie James, following the launch of the Wales Charter for Youth Work. This remains my intention.

I want to move to a more open and flexible approach to delivering appropriate and effective support for the youth work sector. Part of delivering on that vision requires us to rethink the way we fund support for the voluntary sector. I believe that this is the right direction of travel.

My officials and previous Ministers, have maintained regular engagement and dialogue with CWVYS and the Youth Work Reference Group. Officials met with the Chief Executive of CWVYS in December 2015, there was a further informal meeting with officials and the Chair during the period when grant objectives were being negotiated. Current and future funding arrangements with CWVYS were not discussed with the Youth Work Reference Group, or the wider sector, this was felt to be inappropriate.

Best practice requires us to evaluate funding programmes at least every 3-5 years. Our Third Sector document highlights that we have a commitment to maximise the period of funding where ever possible, to minimise any administration costs and improve efficiency of the funding.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Our National Youth Work Strategy (2014-18) sets out that grant funding for CWVYS would be retained for at least two years, at which point it would be reviewed in line with development of support to the broader voluntary sector. It has, in fact, received three years of funding. It is therefore timely that we review and consider the most effective way to achieve our objectives in an efficient and cost effective manner.

The landscape, in terms of number and variety of stakeholders and in terms of funding streams, across the voluntary youth work sector in Wales is complex. It is my desire that we move to a more streamlined, open and flexible approach to delivering appropriate, representative and effective support for the sector. Part of delivering on that vision requires us to rethink the way we fund this support.

However, in view of the representations that have been made I am willing to review my approach to this transition.

I have therefore asked my officials to make the necessary changes to the funding model to allow sufficient time for more detailed discussions on an action plan that supports CWVYS as an organisation to become self-sustaining. They will also commence work, in partnership and consultation with relevant stakeholders, to consider the options for delivering future support.

I have, today, written to CWVYS setting out my revised approach to this transition. I reiterate my absolute support for the valuable role of youth work in Wales and the vital work the voluntary sector organisations undertakes in its delivery and look forward to meeting with the Youth Work Reference Group in December. In the interim I intend to meet with the Chief Executive and Chair of CWVYS to discuss how we can work effectively with them to the best advantage of voluntary organisations and young people in Wales.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alun', with a horizontal line underneath.

Alun Davies AC/AM

Gweinidog y Gymraeg a Dysgu Gydol Oes
Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language

CYPE(5)-11-16 - Papur | Paper 7 - papur i'w nodi | paper to note
Agenda Item 5.5

Carl Sargeant AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gymunedau a Phlant
Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref MA – P/CS/7437/16

Lynne Neagle, AM
Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff CF99 1NA

Lynne.Neagle@assembly.wales

 November 2016

Dear Lynne

At the meeting of the Children, Young People and Education Committee on 2 November, I agreed to provide information to the Committee about future funding for Play Wales.

The Welsh Government strongly believes in the importance of play in children's lives and the benefits it gives to their health, happiness and well-being. I value the support that Play Wales provides to the Welsh Government, local authorities and the play sector in creating a play friendly Wales to benefit our children and their families.

We have provided funding to Play Wales to undertake this role for a number of years and I am minded to continue to provide financial support to the organisation. However, no commitment can be made until the Welsh Government's budget for 2017-18 has been agreed next month. I will keep the Committee updated on this matter.

Yours sincerely



Carl Sargeant AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gymunedau a Phlant
Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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