

Senedd Cymru
Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg

Ymchwiliad i effaith argyfwng Covid-19
ar blant a phobl ifanc yng Nghymru

COV 64
Ymateb gan: Coleg Brenhinol Pediatreg
ac Iechyd Plant Cymru

Welsh Parliament
Children, Young People and Education Committee

Inquiry into the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak on
children and young people in Wales

COV 64
Response from: Royal College of Paediatrics and Child
Health Wales

RE: Your call for evidence on the impact of Covid 19

The Covid-19 pandemic is unfolding and having a major impact on services across Wales. This extra-ordinary time has led to Health Boards facing unprecedented pressure, mostly in adult and critical care. Children are less likely to be significantly affected by Covid, but their routine conditions such as infectious disease will continue to occur. Paediatricians have helped this national effort by transferring junior staff to adult areas, closing paediatric wards to allow adult patients a greater footprint and working in novel and unusual ways. The RCPCH is concerned that children may suffer more from “collateral damage” and unintended consequences from the restrictions due to Covid 19 epidemic than from the infection itself.

There is a need to plan for recovery within health services and to meet the needs of children and young people. We are in contact with Welsh Government officials to help them understand the dynamics that require consideration.

The specific issues we have highlighted include:

- **Community paediatric neurodevelopmental service.** Work reallocation, redeployment of staff and pausing some community services during Covid 19 mean that there will be a backlog in assessments, particularly for neurodevelopmental conditions which cannot always be addressed with video consultations.
- **Safeguarding services including child protection medical assessments** must be maintained to protect children coming to harm from physical, emotional or sexual abuse. Some presentations are achieved through detection and reporting frequently provided by health visitors and school nurses - some of whom are currently redeployed. There was a major concern about a rapid drop off of referrals for children with concerns. The RCPCH is working towards developing a position statement setting out high level principles around child protection during this period, which I will forward to you upon publication.

We are also working towards a position statement on ensuring the health needs of children are met during school closures and how these considerations should be built in to the process of re-opening schools. Again, I will forward this to you upon publication.