

CYPE(5)-17-20 - Paper to note 2

Julie Morgan AS/MS
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services

Lynne Neagle
Chair
Children, Young People and Education Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

30 June 2020

Dear Lynne

Thank you for your letter of 27 May in which the Committee asks for specific details on the steps Welsh Government is taking to ensure that children who may not be known to services but are vulnerable, or could become vulnerable, are provided with information on how to access support.

I am encouraged that the number of vulnerable children attending school has increased since lockdown. During the week of 15 June to 19 June just over 1,500 vulnerable children attended, representing 6.3% of all vulnerable children within the current definition. Local authorities have assured us they are prioritising support for vulnerable children whether that be in a hub or at home during this time.

Officials are working with the Children's Commissioner for Wales and the National Independent Safeguarding Board, in consultation with external stakeholders, to develop a range of information and resources to support the identification of hidden harm or abuse, to promote the reporting of concerns and support disclosure by children and young people as lockdown is eased. This will include a public facing campaign, advice to practitioners across agencies and information and advice for children and young people themselves. Further details are set out below: -

- On 6th July the "Together We Can Keep People Safe" campaign will launch. The campaign will encourage people to contact their local social services or call 101 if they are concerned that a family member, friend or neighbour is at risk of abuse, neglect or harm. The campaign will run until 16th August and use social media, radio advertising, and digital advertising to spread the message. Comedian Rhod Gilbert is lending his support to the campaign by voicing the radio ads and filming himself talking about the importance of making a call to social services if you have a concern about child, young person or adult.

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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.

- A multi-agency practice guide has been developed to support practitioners in identifying harm, abuse and neglect; report safeguarding concerns and manage disclosures by children and young people. The guide links directly to the national Wales Safeguarding Procedures, which promote evidence based and consistent safeguarding practice. This guide is due for publication on 6 July subject to Ministerial approval and will be widely promoted by the regional Safeguarding Boards and through sector specific networks. As we move into recovery we will respond to evidence in relation to the need for any further support for safeguarding practice as new ways of working are agreed.
- In addition we aim to produce information for children and young people to let them know that it is 'safe to tell', what will happen if they disclose harm, abuse or neglect and to assure them that they and their families will get help and support. This information will be age appropriate, with information designed to engage children and young people of different ages. This work is being developed directly with the office of the Children's Commissioner for Wales, the National Independent Safeguarding Board and with Cardiff University. We have engaged a range of external stakeholders to inform this work. We are identifying opportunities to directly involve children and young people in the production of materials and decisions about how best to communicate messages. We are working to complete these resources for issue on 7 September. A communications plan will be agreed with partners to ensure that this information reaches as many children and young people as possible.

With regards to your request for ongoing access to data; the document 'COVID-19 -Social Care Checkpoint - Children and Families Checkpoint 8- 24th June 2020' is attached at annex 1. I will ensure that the Committee is added to the circulation list for the checkpoint data document. The conditions related to the Welsh Government request for this data means that the information is shared for the purpose of the Committee scrutiny of measures being taken to manage the impact of Covid-19 on vulnerable children only. The data should not be used for any other purpose without prior permission from the data owner. This means that the data must not be shared, or published in any way without prior permission. If additional people need access to the data, please email Welsh Government to obtain consent. For all enquiries and consents to use the data outside of the original stated purpose, please contact owen.davies005@gov.wales.

I trust you have found this further information helpful.

Yours sincerely



Julie Morgan AS/MS

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Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services

COVID-19

Weekly Social Care Checkpoint - Children and Families
Checkpoint 8 - 24th June 2020

Total Number of Respondents - 22

1. As of today, how would you class your ability to operate:		
GREEN	We have some staff absence, but are managing to provide cover for most services.	100%
AMBER	We have staff absent and some services are being moderately affected, but we are still able to provide cover.	0%
RED	We have significant numbers of staff absent and are only able to cover critical services.	0%

2. How many contacts have you received in children's services in the last 7 days?	3,791 ↑
Is this an increase, about the same, or a decrease in what you would usually expect at this time of year?	36% reported an increase 50% reported a decrease 14% reported no change 0% unable to answer
How many of the above related to a safeguarding issue?	887 ↑
Is this an increase, about the same, or a decrease in what you would usually expect at this time of year?	27% reported an increase 41% reported a decrease 23% reported no change 9% unable to answer

3. As of today, how many children looked after are there in your local authority?	7,264 ↔
Has this increased, stayed the same, or decreased in the last 7 days?	45% reported an increase 41% reported a decrease 14% reported no change

4. As of today, how many children are there in your local authority placed on the child protection register?	3,100 ↔
Has this increased, stayed the same, or decreased in the last 7 days?	59% reported an increase 36% reported a decrease 5% reported no change

5. How many placements for children looked after have broken down due to suspected or confirmed Covid-19 in the last 7 days?	0↓
How many of these were in a foster placement?	0
How many of these were in a residential placement?	0
How many of these were with family or friends?	0

6. Are you able to continue to make contact with those children requiring care and support at this time?		
GREEN	Yes, we have arrangements to contact all children who require care and support, either in person or through the use of technology.	86%
AMBER	We are not meeting any children face to face unless absolutely necessary and conduct all of our business electronically where possible. Because of this, some things have been affected.	14%
RED	We have made arrangements to contact only the most vulnerable children and families at this time.	0

7. Are your social workers and personal advisers able to continue to make contact to care experienced children and young people at this time?		
GREEN	Yes, we have arrangements to contact all care experienced children and young people, either in person or through the use of technology.	91%
AMBER	We are not meeting any young people face to face unless absolutely necessary and conduct all of our business electronically where possible. Because of this, some things have been affected.	9%
RED	We have made arrangements to contact only the most vulnerable young people at this time.	0

8. How many care experienced young people have reported financial hardship over the last 7 days?	32 ↓
Has this increased, stayed the same, or decreased in the last 7 days?	23% reported an increase 36% reported a decrease 41% reported no change

9. How many care experienced young people have reported issues with housing or accommodation over the last 7 days?	15 ↓
Has this increased, stayed the same, or decreased in the last 7 days?	14% reported an increase 27% reported a decrease 59% reported no change