

Senedd Cymru
Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg

Welsh Parliament
Children, Young People and Education Committee

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

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

COV 159
Ymateb gan: Unigolyn

COV 159
Response from: Individual

I am writing to share my experiences and voice my concerns regarding the ongoing plans for a blended learning approach to education in September.

I am a full time working mum and my husband works full time as a key worker. Since lockdown began I have continued to work as an Educational Psychologist / University Lecturer at home whilst looking after my two children, aged 7 and 4. I feel fortunate to have been in a position to be able to continue working and being paid from home, whilst looking after my children. However, it is becoming increasingly untenable and I worry about how as a family we will cope if this continues long term.

Currently I manage my workload by waking early at 6am and working until late morning - around 11am. During this time my children are watching TV as it is the easiest way to keep them quiet. I will then sit down with my 7 year old to do his work. He is fairly engaged and with persuasion will do what has been asked. I'm fortunate to come from an education background myself so I feel I have skills in terms of supporting his learning (with the significant limitation of being a Welsh learner trying to educate my son through the medium of Welsh), but i cant make up for the lack of social interaction with peers as part of the learning experience. My daughter is in nursery so she is sent activities to do but she has no interest in learning in this way. Quite rightly she wants to explore and play in her own environment. I cant see this changing when she starts school in September. What frustrates me is that after I've done work and spent time completing my son's work, there is little time for her to have adult attention. By late afternoon the children are back on their devices so I can respond to any emails. As a university lecturer my workload has increased in response to the covid 19 pandemic. As a family this leaves us feeling guilty, frustrated and exhausted. I was happy to do this to support the NHS during the initial outbreak and I will continue to adhere to social distancing guidelines, however, if the expectation is for children to be at home in the longer term, I worry for our whole family's mental and physical wellbeing (too much screen time).

My children are fairly happy at the moment and we are just about getting along okay. I'm very mindful however of vulnerable children - school refusers, children with ALN, children whose families have low confidence / resources to educate, those hard to reach families that might be less likely to engage with what's on offer. You will be well aware of the impact of ACEs - we are effectively stripping away key protective factors for these children that promotes their resilience.

If a clear rationale can be provided that justifies keeping children away from school than I will be happy to read and try and understand it. The evidence I have seen however suggests children are not a significant factor in terms of the virus spreading.

I wanted my experience to be heard as all the plans for blended learning do not seem to consider the availability and skills of parents, or how children are actually engaging in this type of learning.