

Senedd Cymru
Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg

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

COV 193
Ymateb gan: Unigolyn

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 193
Response from: Individual

My name is XXXXXXXX and I have a learning disability. During the pandemic, it had brought to light the issue surrounding the current system especially when it comes to GCSE and exams.

Please find my concerns and recommendations below:

I am writing to you to express my concerns on the following issue detailed below. This is a very contentious issue that has affected me for the last few years. I have been in touch with the Welsh government minister for education about my concerns for next year's exams. Next year's students should be treated the same as this year's cohort until we get a vaccine. Whereby teaching assessment and coursework should be implemented, may I remind you these are not normal times, if you go back to the old system of using exams many students like myself will feel disadvantaged and devalued.

For all the students in 2020/2021, it has been a hard and difficult time for all of us with many of us not about to sit exams like previous students would have done in the past! I am writing to you as a current student studying in Cardiff - who feels strongly that the current exam system model that was used in 2019/2020 is not fit for purpose in current times, we find ourselves in currently. When I say 2019, I mean the "old system" that students would have had to use if they had to take. Students should have an option on whether they take an exam or they should have another option just like the students this year who had their exams cancelled!

It should not be based on student performance, it's not fair.

As I suffer with a learning disability and a medical condition, I feel quite stressed out by the current system and the old system that we are using to grade students, there should be a much better and fairer system.

To reduce stress and anxiety for future students taking A-levels and GCSE subject as well as those re-sitting, they think and pass on this petition to the UK government and other students, and parents to stronger consider whether maybe making students who feel stressed and anxious about taking exams would be able to do coursework instead or go for the 'OPEN book exam model', which therefore, enables students to take in textbooks, or prepared resources like class notes making it easier to recall information and less stress and anxiety.

Please help change the current way in which students like myself and many others are assessed at the end of their academic year during the summer. After the pandemic time for change! The old and current system is unfair and not fit for purpose - I know this, because I have been through the old system and it is not fair on people like myself who find coursework easier, and less stress and it can get you the same grades as A-level/GCSE's subject.

A new system should be put in place after the pandemic where by due tot the impact of the virus has made me feel on the way students are put under pressure and stress from doing exams in core subjects - therefore should be alternative in place. I feel very strongly and outraged that the system of which is being used this year and the traditional system of making students sit an exam is the wrong way to go! It does not help when you've been through mountains of pain and stress already!

Additional information:

Here are a few reasons why the old system should be scrapped:

- The old system is unfair and not fit for purpose, because, it does not look at the student as an individual and their circumstances.
- Next, the government in charge seem to think that exam's are the way forward - they are certainly not in my opinion, because, they leave the more disadvantaged feel more impact compared to other student's.

- Next they don't take all student's difficulties like: medical or learning disabilities which put them at greater risk in terms of their life chances.
- Finally, they don't give student like myself any other options but to sit exam's which leave you worse off. I have special educational needs which makes it even more difficult to get my qualifications.

You might ask how do I know this, because I have been through the old system and found it is not fair on people like myself who find Revising and remembering information especially challenging due to having multiple seizures

Goal:

My overall goal of this petition is to scrap/change the way in which student's are assessed in the winter and summer months. We need to protect student lives and prevent a second-wave of the virus. To reduce stress and anxiety for future students taking A-levels and GCSE subject as well as those re-sitting,

We should get more options like,

- Coursework
- open book exams
- An online exam this would reduce pressure on staff on student in years to come. Reduce the risk of Covid-19 infection in communities and an increase deaths.

What has the pandemic taught us?

The pandemic has shone a light on the floors the exam has had on many student's including myself - we must change it for the better. No student should be put at greater risk of getting Covid-19 from having to sit exams. There are fairer and much safer ways now during the pandemic to get the student's the grades they want. You don't need an exam paper to tell your future. It is a form of discrimination!

Stop winter and summer examination to reduce pressure on our healthcare system and protect lives of student's and the community they live in. Together we will bet the virus.

I would be very happy, if I can make my voice heard and change for the better in light of pandemic.

Please can some put in touch with Kevin Brennan, or a Kristy Williams herself. Can you get him to debate it in the Welsh parliament and Westminster, it is so important!