

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)

This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)

CYPE SP 09

Ymateb gan: Gareth Evans, Cyfarwyddwr Polisi Addysg, Prifysgol Cymru y Drindod Dewi Sant

Response from: Gareth Evans, Director of Education Policy, University of Wales Trinity Saint David

Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education

Pricipally, there are two clear priorities for the Committee to consider in relation to school-age education: the system's recovery post-Covid and our new Curriculum for Wales. Whilst there is a strong argument to suggest that one (e.g. curriculum) can support the other (e.g. Covid recovery), these should not be considered the same priority – indeed, both need equal attention and suitable resourcing. Our immediate response to Covid requires a clear action plan/Covid recovery strategy, detailing its aims/objectives and key deliverables. This plan/strategy should include achievable milestones/benchmarks, through which Committee members and others will be able to gauge relative success against key targets. Additional funding without clarity around how that money will be spent has potential to be wasted money. Current recovery plans lack detail – and specifics.

In relation to the second, and related priority, there remains much work to be done with regards our new national curriculum. Guiding documents and overarching frameworks have been published, but success of the new curriculum is almost entirely reliant upon the education workforce being able to deliver on it. This, in effect, requires a significant upskilling of the teaching profession in Wales – and



equality of opportunity to high-quality professional learning, which will be essential in supporting teachers through this unprecedented period of change. Currently, the professional learning offer available to teachers varies wildly across Wales, and there is no truly 'national' plan through which all teachers in all schools will be upskilled in the delicate art of curriculum design/curriculum-making.

More here: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10833-021-09422-6>

In addition, the future of qualifications in Wales – specifically those related to GCSEs and A-levels – remains undecided and is therefore an ongoing hindrance to curriculum development, particularly at a secondary level (secondary teachers being unable to plan effectively their class and school-level curricula, without clarity over how their learners will be assessed at 16 and 18). The Welsh Government, in collaboration with Qualifications Wales and WJEC, needs to address this major shortcoming as a matter of urgency.

The potential for variation and/or contradiction in what children and young people learn, dependent on where they live and study in Wales, should be fully explored – and with it, the notion of a 'core curriculum' involving so-called 'powerful knowledge' to which all pupils should be given introduction as a matter of course. The balance between prescription and teacher agency is finely trodden, but at very least, practitioners require clearer direction as to what leeway they will be afforded when selecting preferred curriculum content and schemes of working. At the moment, these significant decisions are very much open to individual interpretation – and discussion should be had regarding the extent to which pupils will be allowed to learn different things, and to what end.

The new Curriculum for Wales has great potential – but the job is not nearly done. Its development must be subject to ongoing review and evaluation so as to inform intelligently future planning.

Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education

The Committee should consider how best the FE and HE sectors can consolidate their offers, particularly given ongoing challenges in relation to Covid-19/Brexit and other financial restrictions. Closer and more effective collaboration between institutions should be explored and a more seamless transition between FE and HE encouraged.

The skills agenda should be prioritised, and closer links between post-16 and employers/business established. Universities and colleges need to be developing in



learners the skills that employers need and demand. A genuine parity of esteem between vocational and more academic pathways needs to be achieved – and this must start in the institutions themselves.

Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)

See 'Theme 1' – Covid recovery should focus on supporting children and young people emotionally, physically and pastorally, as well as consideration of potential learning loss and known gaps in knowledge. Covid and its subsequent lockdowns brought into sharp focus the inequalities that exist in our education system – in terms of resourcing, parental support and access to technology. We need to consider what more we can do to support learners who face additional barriers to learning through no fault of their own. This includes exploring opportunities for better alignment between sectors – and breaking down some of the well-established silos that exist between government departments at all levels.

Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people

See themes 1 and 3. Children and young people need social, emotional and pastoral support as we emerge from the Covid crisis. This extends too to parental support and we should consider what more can be done to support our children and young people at home. The impact of Covid on younger generations should not be underestimated. If we do not invest in them now, there is little doubt that society and our country at large will suffer in years to come.

