

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 46

Ymateb gan: Jonathan Evans

Response from: Jonathan Evans

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

See Theme 4.

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

See Theme 4.

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 4.

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

Embedding Poverty Aware Practice in Services to Children

The issue I would like the Committee to consider cuts across all of the themes in this consultation.



I would invite the committee to consider how 'poverty aware practice' can be embedded in all services to children'. Such services should include education, health, social services and youth justice.

There is a long tradition of practice in this area, but I would draw attention to recent examples that may be of interest: the British Association of Social Workers and Child Inequalities Project's *Anti-Poverty Practice Guide for Social Workers* (BASW and CWIP, 2019); the *Anti-Poverty Practice Framework for Social Work in Northern Ireland* (www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/doh-anti-poverty-framework); the British Psychological Society (<https://www.bps.org.uk/poverty-flourishing>); and the work of social work academics (see, for example, Krumer-Nevo, 2020).

It may be worth mentioning that my particular area of interest concerns youth justice; an area of service delivery not currently devolved fully to Wales but nevertheless relying heavily upon the devolved services of social work, education, health, housing and youth services. Although the Wales Youth Justice Advisory Panel offers guidance on youth justice policy and practice, the ragged edges of the current constitutional settlement do leave something of an accountability deficit in relation to youth justice services in Wales; a point that was made by the Thomas Report in relation to the Blueprints (Commission on Justice in Wales, 2019:465)

As discussed in paragraphs 4.219-4.221, blueprints for youth justice and female offenders developed jointly between Ministry of Justice bodies (HMPPS Wales and the Youth Justice Board) and the Welsh Government, announced in May 2019, are even further from providing a solution. They are aimed at securing further improvements through closer partnership working, without changing responsibilities for the policies, legislation or resources involved. The aspirations, approaches and principles they set out are ones which accord with our analysis. However, crucially, it is not clear who will be held to account for results. The implementation plans contain commitments to explore and consider options, but no firm commitments to investment or to achieving a measurable impact. There is no overall accountability, no overall financial control and no guarantee that they will remain unaffected by changes in policy at UK Government level. The legal aid, court and tribunal and probation reforms introduced by the UK Government are a salutary reminder of the adverse impacts such policy changes can have.

It is against this background that children in conflict with the law may be at risk of being overlooked or marginalised. I would therefore urge the Committee to include youth justice in its review of the theme of poverty aware practice.

Whilst I believe there is good work being undertaken in the domain of youth justice practice, there is need to ensure that the key principles of poverty aware practice applied proactively, consistently and systematically. I would suggest three areas should be prioritised in terms of taking evidence.



1. How are children and families that come into contact with the youth justice system assessed in terms of their finances and to what extent are they duly linked to income maximisation programmes, resources and routes into education, training, employment, and leisure (which should, of course, include local authority and voluntary sector programmes and resources)?
2. Why does the Welsh Government's Combating Poverty Team strategy not include a section on youth justice? Although these service users will share the profile of many children in need, youth justice service users have specific characteristics that need to be considered (e.g., criminal records/enhanced disclosures can impede pathways into employment, education, training, and other areas; there are often acute resettlement issues on leaving custody; and, given the over-representation of care experienced children in the youth justice system, the alignment of services is especially important).
3. Embedding good practice in terms of 'recognition' and 'representation' is important. We know that those who experience poverty and discrimination value practitioners who recognise the realities of their lives. The way in which these challenging realities and experiences constrain the choices available to young people, particularly in low-income neighbourhoods, should be understood and represented fairly in assessments and pre-sentence reports. How is this being addressed in practice and are children satisfied that the challenging realities of their lives are both recognised and represented fairly?

In conclusion, I wish to emphasise the point that I regard poverty-aware practice as being an important theme across all services to children. I would simply exhort the Committee to include youth justice within its terms of reference.

References:

BASW and CWIP (2019) *Anti-Poverty Practice Guide for Social Work*, Birmingham: British Association of Social Workers

Commission on Justice in Wales (2019) *Justice in Wales for the People of Wales*, Cardiff: The Commission on Justice in Wales

Krumar-Nevo, M. (2020) *Radical Hope: Poverty-Aware Practice for Social Work*, Bristol: Policy Press

