

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 31

Ymateb gan: Sophie Howe, Comisiynydd Cenedlaethau'r Dyfodol Cymru

Response from: Sophie Howe, Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

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

In a rapidly changing world, providing our children and young people with education and the opportunity to develop the right set of skills for their future is widely accepted as a significant determinant of life outcomes including health, socio-economic position and life expectancy. We need to react positively to these changes to ensure people have the right skills for our future Wales.

That is why 'skills for the future', which includes education, is one of the [policy areas of focus](#) that I have selected for my office following an extensive involvement exercise. Providing people with the right skills for their future and our future world has the potential to address multiple challenges that our current and future generations are facing and contribute to a number of the well-being goals set out in the Act.

The findings that emerged through my work on skills and education over the years include:



- There is a gap between the skills, qualifications and experiences currently gained by children and young people and the rapidly changing technological, environmental, social and political world. Without better long-term planning and faster action, children and young people in Wales will not be prepared for their future or the challenges facing our planet.
- The new curriculum provides a solid framework for realising the well-being of individuals in Wales, but teachers will need to be supported to deliver a whole school approach to well-being and the inspection regime will need to reflect this too.
- There will need to be a significant increase in the number of teaching staff and resources to deliver the new curriculum, if it is to reach its potential.
- The 'Schooling Re-imagined' review indicates a positive step towards a better understanding of how schools can contribute to well-being in its broadest sense.
- Local authorities and Welsh Government are missing opportunities to involve and engage education leaders and teaching staff in delivering the national well-being vision set out in the Act through the education system.
- Welsh Government should support schools to provide learning beyond the traditional teaching classroom. Public bodies should make more use of employers and business in their area to support teaching and learning in softer skills and work experience.
- Whilst things are improving, persistent inequalities remain in Wales when it comes to education and employment.
- Our education and skills system must seek to get us closer to one million Welsh speakers by 2050 and a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language.
- The Curriculum for Wales 2022 provides an opportunity to give more focus to environmental well-being in the education system.

Based on my existing advice and work, I would encourage the Committee to consider focusing their work on education around the following themes:

- **Skills must be seen as a driver of wider well-being.**
- **Championing the increasing demand for 'softer skills' like creativity, problem-solving and communication.**
- **Re-thinking examinations and qualifications to reflect skills for the future.**
- **Our education and skills system needs to be flexible to demographic change and work for everyone.**
- **Taking advantage of new environmental industries in Wales.**



More detail and advice in relation to education can be found in the Section on [Skills for the Future](#) in the Future Generations Report; my recent [analysis of Skills](#); my white paper, [Fit for the Future Education in Wales](#); and my paper, [A Fit For the Future Programme for Government](#). In September, I will also be publishing a report on future trends specifically related to inequalities, which may be of interest to the Committee as it includes trends that will have impact on children and young people.

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

Evidence, findings and context outlined above are relevant to this section as well, therefore I would encourage the Committee to consider focusing their work on further and higher education around the same themes:

- **Skills must be seen as a driver of wider well-being.**
- **Championing the increasing demand for 'softer skills' like creativity, problem-solving and communication.**
- **Re-thinking examinations and qualifications to reflect skills for the future.**
- **Our education and skills system needs to be flexible to demographic change and work for everyone.**
- **Taking advantage of new environmental industries in Wales.**

You may also be interested in our bite-sized product for Skills, which is available [here](#), as well as some of the case studies of good practice that I have been collecting, which are available [here](#).

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)

Preventing and mitigating the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences is a crosscutting theme and is essential to future generations' health and well-being and, as such, it is one of my [areas of focus](#).

By preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), we would significantly reduce harmful behaviours in future generations. These are complex issues that need to be addressed collectively, as no one person can resolve or respond effectively to Adverse Childhood Experiences and their impact in isolation.



In relation to the health and well-being of children, my advice, findings and recommendations can be found in the Sections on [Adverse Childhood Experiences](#) and [A Healthier Wales](#) in the Future Generations Report.

My findings include:

- The education system in Wales is taking steps to become 'ACE aware' and support mental health.
- Parts of the system in Wales have strengthened their focus on early intervention and prevention, particularly in the early years, but there are implementation gaps.
- Taking a public health approach can help kick start the change needed and ensure any change is based on evidence of what works.
- We are not always joining the dots between evidence-based interventions which are already in place, how they support the prevention of ACE agenda, and how they should be scaled across Wales.
- There are emerging examples of public services coming together to create an early help system for families, but some are still working in silos without anyone having a 'helicopter' view of how everything fits together.
- There does not appear to be a holistic way of measuring the impact of early intervention and prevention within the current system.
- Government could go further in putting kindness and compassion at the heart of public policy and service delivery in Wales.
- Mental health is a pressing concern for future generations, with poor mental health increasing across our society.

Based on my existing advice and work, I would encourage the Committee to consider focusing their work on cohesive communities around the following themes:

- **A joined up system focused on early intervention and prevention.**
- **All public service professionals need to be Adverse Childhood Experiences aware.**
- **Support for communities through an equal/reciprocal relationship with public services to provide the building blocks of resilience.**

Long-term, preventative spend. I agreed a [definition of prevention and preventative spend](#) with Welsh Government and continue to challenge them when they set budgets on its use and promotion amongst other public bodies.

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



Several of my recommendations and commentaries below are relevant to other Senedd Committees, but I wanted to flag them to you too because efforts should be made across Committees to integrate respective areas of work. Better integration of policy areas will ensure collective scrutiny, the ability to identify implementation gaps and offer solutions across the Senedd's work. You can find my letters to other Committees [here](#).

I would also like to suggest to you and to other Committees a cross-cutting area, which can be looked at jointly and in collaboration by some, or ideally all, Senedd Committees: Skills for a Green Recovery. This is an area my own team has recently explored, and you can find our latest publication [here](#). A prosperous, equal, green recovery from the impacts of COVID-19 means delivering good quality livelihoods to all, whilst supporting rapid decarbonisation and improving biodiversity. This starts with having the right education, curriculum and life experiences in place for children and young people to be equipped with the right skills for a rapidly changing world. During the last Senedd term, this Committee looked in some detail at the findings of my [Fit for the Future Education in Wales](#) report.

In May 2020, I published the first ever [Future Generations Report](#), which considered the progress made by public bodies in implementing the Well-being of Future Generations Act. It also set out the actions and recommendations public bodies should adopt as they further implement the legislation. I have highlighted for the Committee below the most relevant findings of the report for your consideration (see Annexe 1 for relevant recommendations). I would encourage all Committee Members to consider the report and in particular the sections on [Skills for the Future](#) and [Adverse Childhood Experiences](#), as well as my recent analysis of the skills needed for a green recovery, [Skills through Crisis: Upskilling and \(Re\)Training for a Green Recovery in Wales](#).

I would also suggest you consider the [upcoming second iteration of the Future Trends Report](#), which will be published later this year by Welsh Government. Annex 2 below provides you with some of the relevant future trends which could impact the Committee's remit.

I would also advise all Committees to consider how their chosen priority areas align with the objectives and steps within the published [Programme for government](#).

