

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 88

Ymateb gan: Catherine Rees, Cyngorydd Effaith Ymarfer a Pholisi, Achub Y Plant

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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

Rydym yn argymhell bod y Pwyllgor:

- Yn asesu'r trothwy cymhwyso ar gyfer Prydau Ysgol Am Ddim er mwyn sicrhau bod gan yr holl blant y mae eu rhieni yn derbyn Credyd Cynhwysol hawl yn ystod tymor yr ysgol a thrwy gydol gwyliau'r haf ac yn ystyried buddion hawl cynhwysol i bawb.
- Yn ystyried y ffordd orau o gynorthwyo ysgolion a darparwyr eraill y blynyddoedd cynnar i hyrwyddo pwysigrwydd cymorth i deuluoedd ac ymgysylltu rhieni.

Mae ymchwil yn dangos y gall ehangu darpariaeth ar gyfer Prydau Ysgol am Ddim fod yn offeryn hanfodol ar gyfer lleihau anghydraddoldebau iechyd a hybu cyrhaeddiad addysgol. Mae gan blant sydd yn derbyn prydau ysgol am ddim sicrwydd o un pryd iach y dydd yn ystod y tymor, gan sicrhau nad ydynt yn llwgu yn ystod y diwrnod ysgol. Gallant hefyd gryfhau cadernid ariannol teuluoedd incwm isel trwy leihau cyfran incwm yr aelwyd sydd yn cael ei gwario ar fwyd. Mae'r galw a'r cymhwysedd ar gyfer prydau ysgol am ddim wedi cynyddu o ganlyniad i bandemig Covid-19 ac mae mynediad at Brydau Ysgol am Ddim yn hanfodol i lawer o



deuluoedd. Fodd bynnag, nid yw llawer o deuluoedd sydd yn byw ar incwm isel yn bodloni meini prawf y trothwy incwm, sydd yn cyfyngu cymhwysedd ac ymgymriad, gan arwain at lawer o blant yn byw mewn tlodi heb hawl i dderbyn prydau ysgol am ddim.

Mae'r cyfnod pontio rhwng lleoliadau'r blynyddoedd cynnar ac ysgolion uwchradd yn cael ei godi'n gyson fel maes sydd yn peri pryder ymysg partneriaid sydd yn gweithio mewn ardaloedd o amddifadedd. Yng Nghymru, gwyddom y gall cynnydd o ran ymgysylltu teuluoedd mewn darpariaeth cyn-statudol gael ei golli pan fydd plant yn symud i mewn i leoliadau statudol. Mae rhieni'n dweud wrthym yn aml eu bod yn teimlo'n bryderus neu fod ganddynt ddiffyg hyder yn ymgysylltu ag addysg eu plant yn y feithrinfa neu'r ysgol. Mae angen bod cysondeb yn y system a chyfleoedd ar gyfer ymgysylltu â rhieni a gwranddo arnynt, yn gynnar yn ystod y broses.

We recommend that the Committee:

- Assesses the eligibility threshold for Free School Meals to ensure that all children whose parents are in receipt of Universal Credit are entitled during the school term and throughout the school holidays and considers the benefits of universal entitlement for all.
- Considers how schools and other early years' service providers, including through the allocation of specific funding, can be best supported to promote the importance of family support and parental engagement.

Research shows that widening provision for Free School Meals can be a vital tool for minimising health inequalities and boosting educational attainment. Children in receipt of FSM are guaranteed one healthy meal per day during term time, ensuring that they do not go hungry during the school day. They can also strengthen the financial resilience of low-income families by reducing the proportion of household income they spend on food. Demand and eligibility for FSM has increased as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and access to Free School Meals is a vital lifeline for many families. However, many families living on a low income do not meet the income threshold criteria, which restricts eligibility and take up, resulting in many children that are living in poverty not entitled to receive free school meals.

The transition between early years settings and primary schools is frequently raised as an area of concern amongst partners working in areas of deprivation. In Wales we know progress to engage families in pre-statutory provision can be lost when children move into statutory settings. Parents often tell us that they feel anxious or



lack confidence to engage with their children's education in nursery or school. There needs to be consistency in the system and opportunities for engaging with and listening to parents, early in the process.

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

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)

Rydym yn argymhell bod y Pwyllgor:

- Yn asesu darpariaeth bresennol addysg a gofal plentyndod cynnar ar gyfer plant sydd yn byw mewn tlodi ac yn ystyried newidiadau i'r system er mwyn sicrhau bod pob plentyn sydd yn byw mewn tlodi, waeth beth fo'u hoed a statws gwaith eu rhieni, yn cael mynediad at system addysg a gofal plentyndod cynnar cydlynol ac integredig, o ansawdd uchel.
- Yn ystyried darpariaeth bresennol i gynorthwyo rhieni i ymgysylltu ag addysg a datblygiad eu plant gartref. Mae angen i rieni allu cael mynediad at gymorth, gwybodaeth ac adnoddau, yn cynnwys adnoddau digidol, er mwyn cynorthwyo addysg eu plant gartref heb stigma.

Dylai fod gan bob plentyn ifanc yng Nghymru fynediad at addysg a gofal o ansawdd uchel, ac elwa arnynt. Mae cyflawni'r uchelgais hwn yn dibynnu ar gael polisi'r blynyddoedd cynnar fydd yn darparu Addysg a Gofal Plentyndod Cynnar (ECEC) o ansawdd uchel i bob plentyn ifanc tra'n parhau i gefnogi teuluoedd.

Ar lefel systemau, mae ymgysylltu teuluoedd a phlant wrth gynllunio a dylunio gwasanaethau yn allweddol i greu darpariaeth gyson, ddi-dor. Os nad yw safbwyntiau a phrofiadau yn cael eu hystyried, rydym yn gweld gwasanaethau tameidiog, wedi eu dyblygu nad ydynt yn siarad â'i gilydd. Mae rhai teuluoedd yn cael y cymorth sydd ei angen arnynt lle mae eraill yn mynd ar goll yn llwyr neu'n ei chael hi'n rhy anodd ffeindio eu ffordd drwy'r system gymhleth.

Gwyddom fod tlodi'n effeithio ar ganlyniadau plant a gallu rhieni i gynorthwyo addysg eu plant. Rhieni yw'r dylanwad pwysicaf ar fywyd plentyn ac addysgwr cyntaf plentyn. Gwyddom fod plant sydd ag amgylchedd dysgu cyfoethog ac amrywiol gartref yn gwneud yn well na'u cyfoedion, waeth beth yw lefelau incwm y teulu neu gyrhaeddiad addysgol y rhieni. Felly, mae'n hanfodol gwella addysg gynnar a chyfleoedd chwarae i blant trwy gynorthwyo rhieni i ddarparu amgylchedd dysgu



ysgogol ac ymatebol yn y cartref, o enedigaeth a grymuso a galluogi rhieni i barhau i ymgysylltu ag addysg eu plentyn wrth iddynt ddechrau'r ysgol.

We recommend that the Committee:

- Assesses current ECEC provision for children living in poverty and considers system changes to ensure that all children living in poverty, regardless of age and parental work status, have access to a high quality coherent and integrated ECEC system.
- Considers existing provision to support parents to engage in their children's learning and development at home. Parents need to be able to access support, information, and resources, including digital resources, to effectively support their children's learning at home without stigma.

All young children in Wales should have access to and benefit from high quality education and care. Achieving this ambition rests on having an early year's policy that ensures access to a system that will provide high quality Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) to all young children whilst continuing to support families.

At a systems level, the engagement of families and children in the planning and design of services is key to creating seamless, consistent provision. Where views and experiences are not considered, we see fragmented, duplicated services that don't talk to each other. Some families get the support they need whereas others are totally missed or find it too hard to navigate the complex system.

We know that poverty impacts on children's outcomes and parents' ability to support their child's learning. Parents are the most important influence in a child's life and a child's first educator. We know that children who have a rich and varied home learning environment, do better than their peers, regardless of family income levels or parental educational attainment. Therefore, it is crucial to enhance early learning and play opportunities for children by supporting parents to provide a stimulating and responsive home learning environment from birth and empower and enable parents to remain engaged in their child's learning as they start school.

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

Covid-19

Rydym yn argymhell bod y Pwyllgor yn:



- Cynnal ymchwiliad i effaith tlodi plant yng Nghymru gan ganolbwyntio ar brofiadau bywyd teuluoedd a phlant mewn tlodi.
- Galw ar Lywodraeth Cymru i gyhoeddi Strategaeth Tlodi Plant diwygiedig ynghyd â'r angen am gynllun cyflenwi gyda cherrig milltir mesuradwy, clir a thargedau uchelgeisiol, a threfniadau adrodd tryloyw i adlewyrchu'r effeithiau hyn.
- Ymchwilio i'r ffordd y mae'r holl ddyletswyddau statudol presennol i fynd i'r afael â thlodi plant yn cael eu bodloni ar lefel leol a chenedlaethol er mwyn sicrhau nad oes unrhyw blentyn o dan anfantais oherwydd incwm teulu.
- Ystyried sut gellir cryfhau cymorth ariannol i deuluoedd yng Nghymru trwy system cymorth ariannol gydlynus ac wedi ei symleiddio sydd ar gael ac yn hygyrch i bob teulu ar incwm isel.

Mae cael mynediad at safon byw sydd yn ddigonol i wireddu datblygiad corfforol, meddyliol, cymdeithasol a moesol plentyn yn hawl yn unol ag erthygl 27 o Gonfensiwn y CU ar Hawliau'r Plentyn (UNCRC). Mae erthygl 4 yn datgan bod yn rhaid i bob llywodraeth wario "graddau eithaf yr adnoddau sydd ar gael" i ryddhau plant o fywyd o dlodi.

Hyd yn oed cyn argyfwng Covid-19, roedd bron un mewn tri (200,000) o blant yng Nghymru yn tyfu i fyny yng ngafael tlodi. Disgwylir i'r ffigur hwn gynyddu'n sylweddol o ganlyniad i'r pandemig.

Mae plant ifanc yn arbennig o agored i niwed oherwydd tlodi a'r effeithiau y gall eu cael ar eu llesiant corfforol ac emosiynol. Mae tystiolaeth barhaus, hirsefydlog sydd yn dangos perthynas arwyddocaol rhwng yr anfantais y mae plant sydd yn byw mewn tlodi yn ei wynebu a chanlyniadau addysg gynnar plant ifanc. Erbyn tair oed, mae tystiolaeth yn dangos na fydd plant sydd yn profi tlodi efallai'n cael yr un cyfleoedd i gyflawni eu potensial â rhai o'u cyfoedion mwy cefnog. Heb gymorth, gall hyn barhau trwy gydol eu haddysg ac yn nes ymlaen yn eu bywydau.

Bydd lefelau cynyddol tlodi plant yn gofyn am weithredu ymrwymedig, hirdymor er mwyn sicrhau ein bod yn mynd i'r cyfeiriad iawn yn lleihau'r effaith ar y genhedlaeth bresennol a chenedlaethau'r dyfodol. Mae angen cyhoeddi Strategaeth Tlodi Plant a Chynllun Cyflenwi wedi eu diwygio, gyda cherrig milltir mesuradwy, clir a thargedau uchelgeisiol, a threfniadau adrodd tryloyw. Gallai Cynllun Cyflenwi helpu i fynd i'r afael â chymhlethdod y system trwy ddod â'r amrywiaeth o weithgareddau a gynhelir gan adrannau gwahanol ynghyd o dan arweiniad Gweinidogion gwahanol ar draws y Llywodraeth a gallai helpu i ddangos yn glir sut mae pob adran yn cyfrannu, yn defnyddio eu cyllidebau i'r eithaf ac yn effeithio ar leihau tlodi plant.



Er bod llawer o raglenni a mentrau unigol addawol sy'n ymdrin â thlodi, mae'n anodd dangos yn aml bod gweithgareddau presennol yn gwneud gwahaniaeth cadarnhaol cronol i fywydau plant a theuluoedd. Dylai unrhyw Gynllun Cyflenwi felly fod yn destun prosesau monitro cadarn fyddai'n galluogi cynnydd i gael ei olrhain a'i gofnodi, gan ddod yn 'ddogfen fyw'.

Mae angen i unrhyw bolisi a gweithredu i leihau tlodi fod yn gynhwysol i bob plentyn, dylai teuluoedd allu cael mynediad cyfartal i'r holl gymorth ariannol sydd ar gael ar eu cyfer gan Lywodraeth y DU a Chymru. Mae angen nodi unrhyw gyfleoedd ychwanegol i ddarparu systemau cymorth ariannol cydlynus a chydlynol ar gyfer teuluoedd yng Nghymru, a sicrhau bod teuluoedd yn gallu defnyddio'r system yn hawdd ar adegau pennaf o angen.

Mae angen i leisiau uniongyrchol plant a'u teuluoedd ar y ffordd y maent yn profi byw mewn tlodi gael eu cynrychioli ac mae angen sefydlu system ymgynghori a phroses cymryd rhan fel rhan o gyflwyno, monitro a gwerthuso'r strategaeth.

We recommend that the Committee:

- Hold an inquiry into the impact of child poverty in Wales focusing on the lived experiences of families and children in poverty.
- Call on Welsh Government to publish a revised Child Poverty Strategy along with the need for a delivery plan with clear measurable milestones and ambitious targets, and transparent reporting arrangements to reflect these impacts.
- Investigates how all current statutory duties to tackle child poverty are being met at a local and national level to ensure that no child is disadvantaged because of family income.
- Considers how financial support for families in Wales can be strengthened through a simplified and cohesive financial support system that is available and accessible for all families on a low income.

Access to a standard of living adequate to fulfil a child's physical, mental, social, and moral development is a right under article 27 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Article 4 states that all governments must spend to the "maximum extent of available resources" to free children from a life of poverty.



Even before the Covid-19 crisis hit, nearly one in three (200,000) children in Wales were growing up in the grip of poverty. It is expected that this figure will rise significantly as a result of the pandemic.

Young children are especially vulnerable to poverty and the effects it can have on their physical and emotional wellbeing. There is long-standing, consistent evidence that shows a significant relationship between the disadvantage faced by children living in poverty and young children's early learning outcomes. By the age of three, evidence shows that children that experience poverty may not have the same opportunities to fulfil their potential as some of their better off peers. Without support this can continue throughout their education and later life.

Rising levels of child poverty will require long term, committed action to make sure we are going in the right direction in reducing the impact on current and future generations. The publishing of a renewed Child Poverty Strategy with a Delivery Plan, with clear measurable milestones and ambitious targets, and with transparent reporting arrangements is required. A Delivery Plan could help address the complexity of the system by bringing together the breadth of activities being undertaken by different departments led by different Ministers across Government and could help clearly demonstrate how each department is contributing, maximising their budgets and impact towards child poverty reduction.

Whilst there are many programmes and promising single poverty related initiatives, it is often difficult to demonstrate that existing activities are making a cumulative positive difference to the lives of children and families. Any Delivery Plan should therefore be subject to robust monitoring processes which would enable progress to be tracked and recorded, becoming a 'living document'.

Any policy and action to reduce poverty needs to be inclusive for all children, families should have equality of access to all financial support that is available to them from UK and Welsh Government. There is a need to identify any additional opportunities to provide a cohesive and coherent financial support systems for families in Wales, and to ensure that families are able to access the system easily at times of most need.

The direct voices of children and their families on how they experience living in poverty needs to be represented and a consultation and participation process system be in place as part of the delivery, monitoring and evaluation of the strategy.

