

Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg | Children, Young People and Education Committee

Gwasanaethau i blant sydd wedi bod mewn gofal: archwilio diwygio radical | Services for care experienced children: exploring radical reform

Ymateb gan TACT Fostering | Evidence from TACT Fostering

1. Before care: Safely reducing the number of children in the care system

Please outline a **maximum of three** top priorities for radical reform of services for safely reducing the number of children in the care system:

Priority 1:

Reinvest in communities, youth clubs, family centres, hubs etc. This provides extended family support to isolated families/children, additional role models: as parental figures or eg positive male role models, as well as safeguarding measures in monitoring and picking up on potential risky behaviours.

Priority 2:

Join up the various services which young people use (see all SCR outcomes about communication)

Priority 3:

Develop all schools to be trauma informed and avoid re-triggering the trauma experienced by looked after children.

2. In care: Quality services and support for children in care

Please outline a **maximum of three** top priorities for radical reform of services for children in care:

Priority 1:

More joint working initiatives and alliances between third sector providers eg the North Wales Partnership between TACT, Action For Children and Barnardo's. This enables them to concentrate on their competitive and comparative advantages, their ethical values and to prevent waste, duplication and inefficiency.

Priority 2:

Specialist placements committed to family reunification eg Parallel Parenting with carers using their experience to act as coaches and mentors to parents. (there could be scope to use trained foster carers with birth families pre-care too)

Priority 3:

Provide direct payment for older young people in care managed by their foster carers/ residential staff etc. so that therapy and mental health support can be bought rather than rely on waiting lists. Similar to direct payments in adult services. (It also replicates what many middle class families do for their own children.)

3. After care: On-going support when young people leave care

Please outline a **maximum of three** top priorities for radical reform of the on-going support provided when young people leave care:

Priority 1:

Extend fostering arrangements based on an assessment of the child's emotional age and ability rather than their chronological age. When I'm Ready would only apply to young people who are genuinely ready and we would also suggest that the WIR service be brought within the Provider's domain in order to continue to provide the support to the carers and young people.

Priority 2:

Extend the role of providers beyond early adulthood to provide advice, emotional social practical support extending beyond corporate parenting eg we have 'TACT Connect', a commitment and connection for life, or a genuine corporate parenting commitment (parenting doesn't end at 25 etc).

Priority 3:

Make all university education free for care leavers, student loans would be grants that do not have to be paid back.

4. Anything else

Do you have anything else you would like to tell us?

As a fostering service we wouldn't necessarily feel our strengths lie in the pre care service but as we are advised we must include priorities within this category we have included some thoughts on this.