

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 Annibynnol | Evidence from Individual

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

Priority 2

Priority 3

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

as the current WSP part 5 is woefully inadequate to acknowledge the voice of children looked after (CLA), the permanency in the c&s plan and safeguarding investigations are not executed in a comprehensive and timely manner.

As a result, most of the CLA are moved from the placement without seeking their voice or a risk assessment, foster carers left in a confused limbo for many months without financial support and placements left vacant.

Prior to a decision to terminate the placement due to an allegation, new procedures need to require a risk assessment of the CLA in placement, confirmation of the CLA voice and oversight by the head of children's services, as many CLA are automatically removed from the placement and not returned to the placement at the end of the investigation.

A national policy is needed for foster carers to receive a weekly retainer upon termination of the placement. As there are lengthy delays in the police investigation, there is also an urgent need for new police procedures confirming priority fast tracking of the police investigations into foster carer allegations.

Examination is required of current practices into:

(i) foster carers moving out of the foster home,

(ii) foster carers who are grandparents asked to have supervised contact with their grandchildren and (iii) those CLAs who have been moved, prevented from having communication with members of the foster family or contact, such as receiving birthday presents.

The duration of many safeguarding investigations and then reports to Fosterling Panel are months long, resulting in:

- (i) no account taken of the 'voice' of the CLA,
- (ii) major disruption to the lives of CLA, uncertainty in their care and support plan and major disruption in their lives including schooling and contact with the foster family terminated,
- (iii) the foster carers are barred from further placement until report back to Panel (iv) emotional and financial turmoil for the foster family with limited support and (v) worries of vulnerability in deciding to continue to foster sometimes resulting in submitting their resignation.

An additional dynamic not receiving sufficient attention, is evidence describing the threats from the CLA to foster carers in making false allegations against the foster carers for the sole purpose of being moved from the placement. This results in major disruption to the care and support plan and tying up safeguarding and police investigation resources in responding to such allegations.

Priority 2

Priority 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

Priority 2

Priority 3

Anything else