

**Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc
ac Addysg**

**Children, Young People
and Education Committee**

Gillian Baranski
Chief Inspector
Care Inspectorate Wales

30 January 2023

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Services for care experienced children: exploring radical reform

Dear Gillian,

As you are aware, the Children, Young People and Education Committee is conducting an inquiry into services for care experienced children. The aim of our work is to identify the priority areas where policy change is needed to make the biggest difference to the lives of the children and young people who experience the care system in Wales, focusing on:

- Before care: Safely reducing the number of children in the care system
- In care: Quality services and support children in care
- After care: On-going support when young people leave care

We are currently taking evidence from a range of stakeholders to inform our work looking at what Welsh Government is doing to deliver its commitment in the Programme for Government to “explore radical reform of current services for children looked after and care leavers”.

We have already met extensively with those with direct experience of the system: birth parents, children currently experiencing care and young people who have left the system.

We have been struck by the significant issues that have already been raised with us which are relevant to the remit of Care Inspectorate Wales. We have also considered with interest your latest **Annual Report 2021-22** and the evidence you have to a recent meeting of the Health and Social Care Committee, which, as you know, I attended on behalf of the Children, Young People and Education Committee.

We are therefore keen for the views of Care Inspectorate Wales to inform our forthcoming scrutiny with the All Wales Heads of Children's Services and the Deputy Minister. We would be very grateful if you could submit a response to the points raised in the annex to this letter no later than **24 February 2023**.

I appreciate that this may be a challenging deadline. If you have any concerns please contact the Committee clerks (SeneddChildren@Senedd.Wales).

Thank you in advance for your support.

Yours sincerely,



Jayne Bryant MS

Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

Annex

The Committee requests the following information setting out the views of Care Inspectorate Wales based on the latest all Wales information you have available using the evidence base from your inspection, thematic reports, and national reviews, including the 'National overview report in relation to care experienced children and young people in Wales' and the 'National review of care planning for children and young people subject to Public Law Outline pre-proceedings 2016'.

- **Local Authority children's service and fostering services:** The extent to which local authority children's services are currently able to deliver their legislative requirements, commenting specifically and separately on all three aspects of our inquiry: before care, in care and after care.
- **Workforce:** The robustness of the local authority children's services workforce. commenting specifically on your evidence about staff pressures, turnover, the latest position on the appropriateness of case loads commenting specifically and separately on all three aspects of our inquiry: before care, in care and after care.
- **Placements:** The quality, care, and availability of for children living in residential care homes and foster placements in Wales. Unregistered care homes for children in Wales, the extent to which they are used and the level of concern you have about their use.
- **Advocacy Services:** commenting specifically and separately on all three aspects of our inquiry: before care, in care and after care: including parental advocacy, edge of care advocacy and independent professional advocacy. Any comments you have about the availability of residential visiting advocacy.
- **Concerns and enforcement:** The latest information on the level and nature of concerns raised with Care Inspectorate Wales as relevant to all three aspects of our inquiry and any trends you wish to draw to our attention in this regard. Any enforcement activity that you feel is relevant to our enquiry.
- **Corporate parenting:** Your views on the extent of support from agencies other than those you inspect in terms of supporting care experienced children. For example, we note the comments in your Annual Report that CIW (Care Inspectorate Wales) 'identified there was insufficient mental health support for children' and that there is a 'misunderstanding and miscommunication about roles between Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and the local authority.'

We would also welcome any recommendations you would like to draw to our attention as relevant to our inquiry.

You may also be interested in this [Senedd Research Statistical Briefing](#) on Care Experienced Children in Wales which has been drafted to inform the Cosmmittee's work.