

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i'r [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar gyfer yr ymchwiliad: [A oes gan blant a phobl ifanc anabl fynediad cyfartal at addysg a gofal plant?](#)

This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) for the inquiry: [Do disabled children and young people have equal access to education and childcare?](#)

AEC 21

Ymateb gan: Unigolyn

Response from: Individual

I'm a parent carer to my daughter who's aged [REDACTED] and has low functioning ASD. My experience is there isn't equal access to childcare provision for children with SEND:

Significant obstacles accessing childcare provision up to age 12:

My recent experiences accessing holiday childcare provision in [REDACTED] this year have been very difficult. I'm detailing what I've been told below:

- A local charity [REDACTED] is trying to establish itself but report they can't access suitable staff. Challenges they report are it's difficult to find staff who are qualified for school holidays or after school clubs. They've had to inform parents they're unable to provide a childcare service for summer school holidays 2023.
- It's very difficult to access mainstream childcare settings. Of 3 I approached two said they can access Extra Hands provision but it's too difficult to recruit SEND trained one to one staff, due to a shortage of staff in the sector. One setting is able to offer some sessions but is over 3 miles drive away.
- Childminders usually work as one individual and care for multiple children. They can't access Extra Hands provision. All but one childminder said they couldn't help. (I've eventually agreed provision with one childminder)

Gap in provision from age 12

Children with low functioning ASD or similar disabilities require childcare beyond the age of 12 i.e. to 18, before being eligible for adult care services. Mainstream childcare provision only caters up to age 12. Children without disabilities tend to be independent enough to arrange their own social and leisure interaction from age 13. For children with low functioning ASD and similar the development age is a lot lower. My daughter's speech and social interaction is equivalent to about age 3 for example. She requires ongoing childcare for school holidays and after school up to 18. For 13 to 18 there is no provision at all. This a huge gap in provision.

I've attached a presentation I prepared on this topic for the [REDACTED]

Some solutions I feel would be helpful are:

- Address the gap in childcare provision for children 13 to 18 who have significant disabilities.
- The Welsh Government could provide Councils with stable ring fenced funding for childcare for children with SEND provision for children 0 to 18.
- Welsh Gov support for enterprises such as the [REDACTED] to provide a stable childcare service
- Assistance for providers to recruit 121 staff, staff qualified in SEND

[REDACTED]

!

[REDACTED] ?

Sustainable funding for SEND Childcare to 18



What Childcare provision is there for Children with Low Functioning ASD / Challenging behaviour in Newport?

- Mainstream Settings require 'Extra Hands' funding and recruitment of SEND staff and say 'it's too difficult'
- Mainstream Age Limits usually 10 or 12
- Children with challenging behaviour require childcare to 18
- Childminder places for SEND 5 days pw rare
- Sitters cover when aren't in day jobs etc

What does the law say?

The Law

1.1 The Childcare Act 2006 (the 2006 Act) expands and clarifies in legislation the vital role local authorities play as strategic leaders in the provision of childcare locally. The 2006 Act reinforces the framework within which local authorities already work – in partnership with the private, voluntary, independent, community and maintained sector – to shape and secure children's services and focuses in particular on the provision of:

- sufficient, sustainable and flexible childcare that is responsive to parents' needs; and
- information, advice and assistance relating to childcare to parents, prospective parents and those with parental responsibility or care of a child,

Source: Welsh Government Childcare Statutory Guidance
Revised 2016

What is the Local Authority Duty?

2.6 The 2006 Act requires local authorities to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient childcare to meet local needs of parents, (albeit for working parents or parents undertaking education or training) to assist them to obtain work.

Source: Welsh Government Childcare Statutory Guidance
Revised 2016

The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment

Section 26 – Duty on local authorities to assess childcare provision

2.13 The Childcare Act 2006 (Local Authority Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2016, made under section 26 of the 2006 Act, requires local authorities to prepare assessments of the sufficiency of childcare provision (Childcare Sufficiency Assessment) in their area and to keep these under review.

What is a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment?

2.14 A Local authority Childcare Sufficiency Assessment must measure the nature and extent of the need for, and supply of, childcare in the area. Through this analysis, local authorities and their partners will be able to identify gaps in childcare provision where parents' needs are not being met and will allow local authorities to plan how to support the market to address the gaps identified.

2.15 A Childcare Sufficiency Assessment must include an Action Plan. Under the duty to secure sufficient childcare provision, local authorities should work with partners to develop and implement the Childcare Sufficiency Action Plans, that remove shortcomings and maintain the strengths identified in the Childcare Sufficiency Assessments. The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Action Plans should be kept under continuous review and updated and reported upon on an annual basis via progress reports. Each year local authorities should aim for continuous improvement in securing sufficient childcare provision.

Why is holiday and after school club important to children with SEND needs?

- Social interaction
- Suitable facilities: to play, leisure, cooking and arts & crafts
- Professional staff: trained in SEND needs, therapies, first aid etc



Why is it important to families?

- Allow parents to continue working and provide income for child and household... and pay the bills, rent or mortgage.
- Social opportunities for our children
- Professional supervision of children in the holidays.



Why stable funding is important

- Allow parents and children to trust in holiday club and ASC being available
- Invest in recruitment and training and keep the staff rather than lose them each time
- Job security for staff

Considering options

- How could funding for SEND childcare be provided to allow a stable service?
- Services for challenging needs don't fit private business models – mainstream funding unsuited, parents unlikely to have the money
- A Welsh Government Continuous funding stream for SEND childcare provision?
- A pot of funding from the Council dedicated to SEND provision?
- Other ideas?