

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

—  
**Children, Young People  
and Education Committee**

Sue Evans  
Chief Executive  
Social Care Wales

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—  
**Welsh Parliament**  
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10 October 2023

Dear Sue,

### The use of agency staff in children's services

I write on behalf of the Committee to ask information relevant to our ongoing work on Services for care experienced children: exploring radical reform.

We have spoken to many young people across Wales to inform this work and they have consistently raised with us their concerns about the negative impact of having frequent changes of social workers has on their care. The instability of the workforce is clearly a factor in this and for some time we have scrutinised the data available to us and to further establish the facts and the scale of this issue.

#### 1. Clarification about data on the use of agency staff in children's services.

On 14 September 2023, we held a follow up scrutiny session with the Deputy Minister for Social Services and her officials about our report into Radical reform for Care Experienced Children. During that meeting there was confusion over some data provided to us by e-mail in April and following on from written information submitted by Social Care Wales in March 2023

At our request, in April 2023, Social Care Wales clarified to us by email that 49% of children's services staff were agency workers. (see annex to this letter). However, at our meeting on 14 September Welsh Government advised us they believed this figure was a number: that was 49 individual children's services staff were agency workers.

I would be very grateful therefore if you could you clarify the following:

1. Is this figure of 49 from April 2023 a percentage figure or is it the number of individual staff?
2. As of September 2023, what is the total number of children's social care staff in the workforce in Wales? (along with the vacancy rate and the percentage of agency staff)
3. As of September 2023, the total number of qualified social worker roles within the children's social care workforce in Wales? (along with the vacancy rate and the percentage of agency staff)

## 2. Responsibility for collecting and publishing workforce data, including agency data

4. Whose responsibility is it to collect and publish data on vacancy rates and use of agency staff in children's social care?
5. The frequency with which this data is collected.
6. Your views as to the merits of publishing annual data as in England and which agency would be responsible for taking that forward:
  - o Statistics: children's social work workforce
  - o Children's social work workforce: attrition, caseload and agency workforce
  - o Longitudinal study of child and family social workers.

Thank you for the information you have already provided us with. We would also be grateful for any other relevant workforce data you feel may be relevant to this inquiry.

Yours sincerely,



Jayne Bryant MS  
Chair

Cc: Julie Morgan MS, Deputy Minister for Social Services

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

Prynhawn da [REDACTED] Good afternoon [REDACTED]

I hope all is well.

The answer to your specific question is it that 56% then 49% of all children's services staff were agency workers.

More generally, statistics on use of agency staff will be collected by the 22 local authorities and reported to Welsh Government as I understand it. The data is not collected by Social Care Wales.

Best wishes,

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]



Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Ni fydd hwn yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh. This will not lead to a delay in responding.

Gwefan/Website: [gofalcymdeithasol.cymru](http://gofalcymdeithasol.cymru) / [socialcare.wales](http://socialcare.wales)



@GofCymdeithasol / @SocialCareWales

From: [REDACTED] (Staff Comisiwn y Senedd | Senedd Commission [REDACTED])

Sent: 11 April 2023 08:32

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: Correspondence from the Children, Young People and Education Committee

This is the first time you've received an email from this sender. Make sure this is someone you trust.

Good morning Sue and colleagues,

I hope that you're well and had a nice Easter break.

Thank you for providing written evidence to the Committee in relation to our inquiry into care experienced children. I was hoping you might be able to clarify something for me in relation to your submission, please. Page 6 [of your submission](#) states in relation to the use of agency workers:

*Some data suggests that the use of agency workers in children's services has decreased slightly over the course of the year from 56 in 2021 to 49 in 2022. 85.6% of all agency staff utilised in children's services were for qualified social workers. However, this data is collected through engagement similar to a census. This means it is dependent on the validity of the data provided and is a snapshot of that given day, therefore there are limitations to the reporting. Dependency on agency staff remains a key concern as does the risk of agency fees continuing to increase.*

Please could you confirm for me what the highlighted sentence means? Is it that 56% then 49% of children's services used agency workers? Or is it that 56% then 49% of all children's services staff were agency workers? Or something else?

If you could informally point me towards any more published stats on the agency workforce I would be really grateful.

Diolch, | Thank you,



[REDACTED]