

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

**Children, Young People
and Education Committee**

Julie Morgan MS
Deputy Minister for Social Services

20 December 2023

Data relating to children's services agency staff

Dear Julie,

In our report on radical reform for care experienced people, we quoted Social Care Wales, who had informed us that in 2022, 49% of all children's services staff were agency workers, with 85.6% of those agency workers filling vacancies for qualified social workers.¹ When you gave evidence to us on 14 September, you suggested that these figures may be incorrect.²

During the drafting of our report, the Committee clerks queried directly with Social Care Wales whether the 49 figure quoted in Social Care Wales' written evidence³ represented individuals or a percentage. Social Care Wales replied to confirm that it was a percentage. Since our meeting on 14 September, we have again queried the figure with Social Care Wales.⁴ They have since acknowledged that "The confirmation of this figure as a percentage in the subsequent email [the email responding to clerks] was an error by Social Care Wales."⁵

¹ Welsh Parliament, 'If not now, then when? Radical reform for care experienced children and young people', May 2023, page 30

² Children, Young People and Education Committee, 14/09/23, Record of Proceedings, paragraphs 118-123

³ Written evidence, Social Care Wales (additional information)

⁴ Welsh Parliament, 'Letter from the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee to the Chief Executive of Social Care Wales', 10/10/23

⁵ Social Care Wales, 'Re: The use of agency staff in children's services', 27/11/23, page 2

Based on the briefing note provided to us by Social Care Wales in their letter dated 27 November, we understand that, **as of September 2023, 17.5% of children's services social workers (429 individuals) were primarily employed by an agency.**

It is unfortunate that the Committee was provided with inaccurate information. However, the fact that 17% of children's services social workers are agency staff is alarming and explains the considerable disruption in the lives of the care experienced children and young people we spoke to. We reiterate our conclusions and recommendations as set out in our report.⁶

As I stated during our meeting on 14 September, errors such as these demonstrate clearly why data transparency is so important.⁷ On this issue too, we reiterate our calls for formal data collecting duties to be placed on relevant public bodies, and for that data to be collated, verified and published by the Welsh Government.⁸

A quality, stable children's social care workforce is vital. We have invited Social Care Wales to discuss workforce matters further with the Committee and I have copied them into this letter.

Yours sincerely,



Jayne Bryant MS
Chair

Cc. Sue Evans
Chief Executive, Social Care Wales

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

⁶ Welsh Parliament, '[If not now, then when? Radical reform for care experienced children and young people](#)', May 2023, pages 35-38

⁷ Children, Young People and Education Committee, [14/09/23, Record of Proceedings](#), paragraph 128

⁸ Welsh Parliament, '[If not now, then when? Radical reform for care experienced children and young people](#)', May 2023, pages 49 - 54