

Jayne Bryant MS

Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee

Dear Jayne,

3 January 2024

Follow-up inquiry into childcare and parental employment

Our recent work on the Welsh Government's Draft Child Poverty Strategy benefitted greatly from your participation and it is likely that our approaches to several cross-cutting issues were strengthened as a result of our collaboration. The report indicated our intention to follow-up on the issue and we are now in a position to provide you with details.

We plan to follow-up on 'Minding the future: the childcare barrier facing working parents' our 2022 report on childcare and parental employment in the Spring of 2024. As well as examining progress in implementing the recommendations of that report, we will explore the extent to which childcare meets the varying needs of families across Wales. This will include how inequalities in accessing childcare faced by particular demographic groups and across different parts of the country can be addressed. You will find the full terms of reference in the Annex.

Subject to the availability of witnesses etc. we plan to undertake this work on the following dates:

26 February 2024	2 x panels of oral evidence
4 March 2024	1 x panel of oral evidence
11 March 2024	Morning: stakeholder session in the Senedd Afternoon: evidence session with the Deputy Minister for Social Services

We would like to invite you and the other Members of your Committee under Standing Order 17.49 to attend the oral evidence sessions and other planned activities, on the above dates and to any other meetings where substantive discussions as part of the inquiry may take place. If this would be of interest to you or any of your Members, I would be grateful if you could please confirm by 31 January 2024. I will also ask our Clerk to liaise with your Clerks as arrangements for the inquiry progress and so that all necessary practical considerations can be made.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jenny Rathbone". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial 'J'.

Jenny Rathbone MS

Chair, Equality and Social Justice Committee



Annex: Terms of Reference for the inquiry

- What progress has been made in implementing the recommendations in the Committee's report from early 2022 - [Minding the future – the childcare barrier facing working parents](#).
- The extent to which childcare provision in Wales provides high-quality provision which supports child development, tackles child poverty and supports parental employment. What changes might be needed to deliver these outcomes.
- What progress is being made towards achieving the Co-Operation Agreement commitment to expand 12.5 hours free childcare per week to all two-year-olds, with an emphasis on strengthening Welsh-medium provision.
- To what extent there is sufficient childcare available to meet the varying needs of families across Wales, and how inequalities in access to childcare faced by particular demographic groups and across different parts of Wales can be addressed.
- What approaches exist to integrate delivery of childcare provision in Wales, and how can best practice be spread widely.
- How childcare providers and the workforce have been impacted by cost-of-living pressures, and what effects these have had on the sector.
- What lessons can be learnt from other parts of the UK and international best practice to improve childcare policy in Wales.
- How financial and practical barriers need to be considered in developing future childcare policy.