

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i'r [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Llwybrau at addysg a hyfforddiant ôl-16](#)

This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) on the [Routes into post-16 education and training](#)

RET 08

Ymateb gan: Rhiant

Response from: Parent

Statement for parents Voices in Wales

Xxxxxx xxxxx, Parent of a neurodivergent 15 year old.

My daughter is now at the point where she will be transitioning from school in the near future. It's a difficult time because her options should be wide, but in reality, they are limited.

There is lots of information about the options available. Everyone wants to "sell" you these in lovely brochures and on websites, but what is less clear is how young people with ALN are supported in post 16 options. As a parent and a young person it's hard to find good information on this. Careers Wales input is limited to signposting and resources, such as personality profiling, and their input appears to very much be controlled by ALNCo's, who may or may not invite them to meetings about your child's future.

I have two children who attend the same Welsh medium school. One has an ALN, the other doesn't. Very different conversations happen around post 16 education. There seems to be little aspiration or expectation that my ALN daughter will go on to higher education, but my son is pushed towards Russel Group Universities. With the right support, I believe she would be able to gain a degree, but I don't think my view is supported by her school. This disappoints me because it feels they have already limited her post 16 options. Their aspirations for her are low. I think that's common with ALN children, even though they have so much potential.

Even with regards to employment, there have been no opportunities for work place visits, work experience and no businesses coming in to talk about work based opportunities such as internships or apprenticeships.

Better direct support and the development of flexible, needs led transition plans for young people is needed, as well as more options for direct work experience. Even if young people try a work experience and they do not like it, that's an important learning curve and can be used to recognise skills and target further opportunities. Projects like Engage to Change have shown that experience matters, and that young people can successfully transition into employment when the support is right. It is disappointing that this is no longer available.

My daughter needs an advocate to make sure her choice and voice is heard. Lack of opportunity outside of the classroom over the last few years due to Covid, has meant that her knowledge and experiences are limited. School has been difficult for her and not something she has enjoyed. She counts the days she has left there and is looking forward to moving on, but without good information it is hard for her to make an informed choice. Her equality of opportunity is not the same as her mainstream peers.

Looking to the future, she can work and will work, but will need support to find, learn and maintain a job. This will need to be needs led support, and much like school a whole-systems approach will need to be in place with the employer/ job support and family all having an understanding of what works best to support her. This is going to be hard to find and again, much like our experience of education, it will be a fight.

There are so many young people across Wales who are in the same position. We need statutory and further education to be better preparing young people for their adult lives. Careers Wales needs an overhaul and should be a more practical presence in school. Every school should have a qualified coach who can support young people with ALN to have work based experiences outside of the classroom. This will raise aspirations and confidence and allow young people to make better informed choices about the future they want to have.

Finally, the Welsh Government need to be speaking to young people with ALN directly. Their voices are the most important here.

Xxxxxx xxxxx, Parent.