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Y Gweinidog Plant a Gofal Cymdeithasol  
Minister for Children and Social Care



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: MA/DB/2844/25

Buffy Williams MS  
Chair of Children and Young People Committee

Jenny Rathbone MS  
Chair of the Equality and Social Justice Committee

27 November 2025

Dear Buffy and Jenny,

I am writing in response to your letter dated 5<sup>th</sup> November in relation to an update on implementation of “If Not Now Then When? Radical Reform for Care-Experienced Children and Young People” Report.

In your letter you asked for an update on the 20 Recommendations in the Report, including those accepted, in part, and rejected. I am proud of the progress we are making and attach an update on each Recommendation which demonstrates how this Report has driven change. However, we also recognise this work is multi-layered with many interdependencies so will need to continue into the next Senedd term.

Your letter also focused on the use of Deprivation of Liberty Orders which was raised by the Children’s Legal Centre. As your report correctly highlighted, there is limited data on these Orders in relation to children and we agreed to look into this further. We have provided an update on this under Recommendation 20. However, this is a matter I am concerned about and we are working with others to pursue this so we have reliable data collected regularly about Deprivation of Liberty Order applications relating to children from Wales, particularly applications by local authorities. We are also committed to support a Wales- wide approach to reduce the number of applications made through investment in earlier intervention and appropriate therapeutic support for children and young people with this level of need.

Yours sincerely,

**Dawn Bowden AS/MS**  
Y Gweinidog Plant a Gofal Cymdeithasol  
Minister for Children and Social Care

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

## Children, Young People and Education Committee – If not now, then when report

### Welsh Government update – November 2025

#### **Recommendation 1:**

The Committee recommends that:

The Welsh Government should introduce legislation using the legislative approach taken for the Nurse Staffing Levels (Wales) Act 2016 to place a duty on local authorities to calculate maximum caseloads for children’s social workers that enable effective, relationship-centred social work, and to take all reasonable steps to maintain those caseloads for all children’s social workers.

#### **Welsh Government response at time of report 2023: Reject**

- Caseloads are managed at an operational level, and the allocation of cases should be made in relation to the social workers’ knowledge, experience, workload and what matters to children and families. Complexity in cases varies considerably, and therefore it could be counterproductive to set a caseload maximum.
- Social Care Wales (SCW) is already undertaking a scoping exercise, looking at the workforce planning approaches in all 22 authorities. This includes interviews with key national organisations, stakeholders, and a review of best practice. SCW is also undertaking work to explore training, induction, and support arrangements for newly qualified social workers (NQSW) across Wales. Existing guidance for NQSW [First three years in practice \(socialcare.wales\)](https://socialcare.wales) includes complexity of work. A review is due later this year.
- In recognition of the points raised in this report relating to caseloads, Welsh Government, working with SCW and other social work stakeholders will consider how to best support caseload allocation and management. We will work with local authorities and other employers of social workers to better understand how they currently manage caseloads, including organisations in Wales and other areas where caseload policies are already in place and draw from evidence of what works. In doing so we would consider how to support what matters to children and families and the wellbeing needs of the social work workforce.

### **Welsh Government update – November 2025**

- Welsh Government, working with Social Care Wales (SCW) and other social work stakeholders, has been considering how to best support caseload allocation and management. Social Care Wales is currently working with all 22 Local Authorities to develop individual action plans to support their progress with workforce planning for social services. This includes developing a network of lead contacts responsible for workforce planning, to enable peer support, action learning and consider the development of national resources. The work is due to conclude in the spring of 2026.
- We continue to engage with social workers on the challenges they face, including caseloads. Further engagement will commence in the new year with the workforce and stakeholders to identify current concerns, strengths and good practice across Wales. This engagement will then inform the Social Work Workforce Delivery Plan, which will set out how we will support the challenges identified. This work is due to conclude in Autumn 2026.

### **Recommendation 2.**

The Committee recommends that:

The Welsh Government should begin consultation immediately on a comprehensive workforce sufficiency plan to inform the development and implementation of legislation on maximum caseloads of children's social workers. The sufficiency plan should draw and build on the findings of recently completed reports into the social care workforce, and include consideration of:

- routes into social work, including apprenticeships and other forms of vocational routes to qualification;
- pay, terms and conditions, including the feasibility and benefits of extending flexible working;
- career pathways, including how to retain front-line practice alongside progression into management or specialisation as a way to retain caseload experience and prioritise contact time with families; and
- a potential national approach to the pay and conditions of social workers, such as that which oversees the pay and conditions of teaching staff in Wales, to ensure consistency and harmonisation across local authorities.

### **Welsh Government response at time of report: Reject**

- Social Care Wales (SCW) is currently consulting on a Workforce Strategy Action Plan 2023-26 that will support implementation of the second phase of the 10 year Health and Social Care Workforce Strategy [Workforce strategy | Social](#)

[Care Wales](#), which includes social workers. The consultation allows social workers and stakeholders to contribute to the key issues affecting them, and feedback on whether the proposed priorities are the right ones. The Social Work Workforce Plan [Social work workforce plan: 2022 to 2025 | Social Care Wales](#) interprets the strategy for social work, and breaks it down into actions and goals. This is reviewed annually, and we will incorporate feedback from the wider workforce consultation.

- The workforce strategy looks at workforce supply and shape, and improvements have been made in a number of areas such as the increase to the social worker bursary. SCW is undertaking work with local authorities to ascertain current workforce planning approaches for social services and areas in need of development of the future. These findings will be published later in 2023. Scoping work is also being undertaken by the Welsh Local Government Association to explore a more consistent approach to social work terms and conditions.
- A wide range of work is being undertaken to improve the working conditions, training, and options for social workers, such as the social work qualifying (direct entry) sponsored positions for existing employees to progress into social work positions, and a pathway from the vocational social services practitioner (SSP) into gaining a Social Work practice qualification. We will continue to address the above factors raised in this recommendation working with our stakeholders.

#### **Welsh Government update – November 2025**

- Welsh Government, working with Social Care Wales (SCW) and other social work stakeholders, has been considering how to best support caseload allocation and management. Social Care Wales is currently working with all 22 Local Authorities to develop individual action plans to support their progress with workforce planning for social services. This includes developing a network of lead contacts responsible for workforce planning, to enable peer support, action learning and consider the development of national resources. The work is due to conclude in the spring of 2026.
- We continue to engage with social workers on the challenges they face, including caseloads. Further engagement work will commence in the new year with the workforce and stakeholders to identify current concerns and strengths and good practice across Wales. This engagement will then inform the Social Work Workforce Delivery Plan, which will set out how we will support the challenges identified. This work is due to conclude in Autumn 2026.

- The Social Work Workforce plan:2022 to 2025 interprets the strategy for social work specifically, and breaks it down into actions and goals. This is reviewed annually and Social Care Wales is currently developing a Social Work Plan 2026-2029. Engagement will commence with stakeholders in spring/summer 2026 to inform development of a refreshed social work delivery plan, to align with the wider Social Care Workforce Delivery plan. The aim is to publish the Social Work Delivery Plan by autumn 2026.
- A wide range of other work is being undertaken to improve the working conditions, training, and career options for social workers, such as the social work qualifying (direct entry) sponsored positions for existing employees to progress into social work positions, and a pathway from the vocational social services practitioner (SSP) into gaining a Social Work practice qualification. We have also continued our commitment to fund the social worker bursary. Early data for the academic year 2025-26 shows an increase in take up of the bursary.

### **Recommendation 3.**

The Committee recommends that:

The Welsh Government should lobby the UK Government to amend section 4 the Equality Act 2010 to add ‘care experience’ as a protected characteristic.

### **Welsh Government response at time of report: Reject**

- The Equality Act (2010) which determines protected characteristics, is a matter that is outside the Welsh Government’s legislative competence.
- The Welsh Government is aware of the stigma often faced by care-experienced children and young people in their day to day lives, this was an area Ministers discussed with the young ambassadors at the Inaugural Care Leavers Summit in December, last year. In signing up to the Care Leavers Summit Declaration on 10 May, Welsh Government has committed to working to eradicate this stigma.
- The Corporate Parenting Charter published on 29 June is our first step in achieving this. One of its key principles in the Charter which organisations will be signing up to deliver is to “**Eradicate Stigma** – we Will recognise care-experienced

children and young people for who they are, not just by their experience of being in care. This is because all children have a right not to be discriminated against”.

#### **Welsh Government update – November 2025**

- As I outlined in my letter of 15 April 2024 to the Children, Young People and Education Committee, we recognise the stigma felt by some care-experienced children and young people in their day to day lives. Through the Transformation Programme for Children’s Social Services and the Care Experienced Summits we have had direct conversations with children and young people with care experience and heard differing views and potential unintended consequences about introducing this. In particular, we heard about the potential to reinforce existing stigma for some care experienced young people, when assigning a protected characteristic.
- The Welsh Government supports local authorities should they wish to include “care-experienced” as a protected characteristic as part of its role as a corporate parent, and is aware both Newport and Bridgend have done so. When implementing this policy, local authorities will need to be aware there are differing views on this issue and potential unintended consequences of assigning care experienced as a protected characteristic.
- In sum we have respected the differing views on this matter and heard not all children and young people with care experience would welcome us progressing this matter with the UK Government. However, we will continue the dialogue and take any learning from Newport and Bridgend so we can understand the impact of introducing “care experience” as a protected characteristic.

#### **Recommendation 4.**

As part of umbrella reforms to corporate parenting (see radical reform #3), the Welsh Government should introduce legislation making specific provision relating to corporate parenting. The legislation should:

- set out which bodies are considered 'corporate parents', including at least local authorities, health boards, NHS trusts, the Welsh Ministers, the Children's Commissioner for Wales, the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research, and other such bodies as the Welsh Government sees fit following consultation;
- set out the general duties imposed on all corporate parents, including at least duties to: prepare and publish plans relating to the work as corporate parents; to work collaboratively where it would safeguard or promote the well-being of the child or

young persons to do so; publish reports on how they have exercised their corporate parenting responsibilities; provide reasonably requested information to the Welsh Ministers; and follow guidance or directions issued by the Ministers.

- align with further specific corporate parenting duties and recommendations against the relevant sections in this report. See: mental health (page 31), housing (page 94), and higher education (page 102).

#### **Welsh Government response at time of report: Accept in part**

- Welsh Government will be encouraging all public and private bodies to sign up to become corporate parents through the Corporate Parenting Charter which was published on 29 June. The Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (CTER) will not be a direct service provider to care experienced people in the manner of local authorities, local health boards or the higher and further education institutions which it will fund and regulate. So there is a question about whether it would be a suitable body to act as a 'corporate parent' on a statutory basis as described in the report. However, CTER will have its own statutory responsibilities for care experienced children and young people (see response to recommendation 27 below), and we expect that it will be a signatory to the Corporate Parenting Charter.
- To support the Charter, Welsh Government will strengthen guidance including a dedicated chapter on Corporate Parenting to support local authorities in their role as corporate parents within the Part 6 Code of Practice (Looked after and accommodated children) under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. Work is also taking place across Government to identify existing guidance which could also be strengthened to support delivery of the Charter by wider public bodies.

#### **Welsh Government update – November 2025**

- Welsh Government continues to encourage public bodies, third sector organisations and private organisations to sign up to the Charter. Our aim is for all organisations to truly understand corporate parenting, embrace and embed it, and provide the support needed by care experienced children and young people to have the same life chances as other young people in Wales.
- There are 68 organisations (as of November 2025) signed up including all 22 local authorities and all 7 local health boards.

- All organisations signing up to become corporate parents have been asked to complete a corporate parenting pledge detailing their offer to young people and the principles from the Charter they are working to achieve.
- Our intention is for young people to review a sample of the pledges and provide feedback to organisations and we are working with Voices from Care Cymru to arrange this.
- We have also been working to strengthen the guidance for local authorities through a dedicated chapter on Corporate Parenting within the Part 6 Code of Practice (Looked after and accommodated children) under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. A 12-week public consultation on the proposal to include in the chapter closed on 27 October and analysis of the responses is underway with the plan to lay a revised Code before the Senedd in the new year.
- Our intention alongside developing the corporate parenting chapter is to strengthen the voice of the child within care and support planning and placements in the Code of Practice; and to respond to the recommendations from care experienced children on undertaking placement moves and review meetings as outlined in the Lwc report and feedback from the annual Care Experienced Summits.

#### **Recommendation 5:**

As part of umbrella reforms to corporate parenting (see radical reform 3), the Welsh Government should introduce legislation to give all children the right to a specialist therapeutic mental health support service. They should have a statutory right to have their needs assessed at intervals and to have those needs met. That service should be available from the point at which they are removed from their birth parents to at least the point at which they cease to be defined as a care leaver. It should be separate and independent from existing mental health services and specialise in trauma-informed mental health support.

#### **Welsh Government response at time of report: Accept in part**

- The Welsh Government recognises the impact of the challenges faced by care experienced children, including the potential to be further traumatised by the systems which are there to support them if services are not delivered effectively.

- From a mental health perspective, all children in Wales have equal rights to the access of specialist therapeutic mental health support services under current mental health legislation. The Mental Health Measure (2010) has established positive rights for people with mental health problems, whether diagnosed or not, to obtain help at a sufficiently early stage avoiding the risk of further mental health decline.
- However, we recognise that children in care can face additional and complex challenges to their mental health and wellbeing and more needs to be done to intervene early and prevent, as far as is practicable, the disproportionate numbers of looked after children needing CAMHS and specialist mental health support.
- We have developed the NYTH/NEST framework which is a tool to help service providers develop and deliver services which enable them to hold onto babies, children and young people with trusted adults who are suitably trained, trauma informed and have easy access to expertise to support them. The framework aims to create a whole system approach with services integrating and working together so that resources and expertise can be co-ordinated to identify and provide the right mix of services needed to protect that child's health and wellbeing.
- Through local initiative and with the support of the Regional Integration Fund we are already seeing some excellent examples of services coming together to deliver holistic support in this way.
- Work is now underway to develop a service specification for CAMHS which will set out the Government's expectation of CAMHS services in Wales, and how it works with other services to establish the necessary arrangements to deliver integrated care. The National Framework for Children's Services will set out our similar expectations for Local Authorities around integration. As part of this and drawing on the best practice we are already seeing across Wales, our ambition is that we can set out a consistent approach using the key principles of NYTH/NEST to providing timely, integrated, person-centred care for all looked after children in Wales.
- In summary, we have work already underway that will strengthen support for children and young people but without the need for new legislation.

**Welsh Government update – November 2025**

- We have now published our all- age [Mental health and wellbeing strategy 2025 to 2035 | GOV.WALES](#), which outlines our approach to supporting mental health and wellbeing for the next 10 years. This strategy focuses on the importance of cross government working and this is particularly important when we are considering the needs of care experienced babies, children and young people.
- The new National Multi-Agency Practice Framework for Children’s Services in Wales has also been published, with the aim to improve consistency of practice across Wales and support a strengths-based way of working across agencies delivering children’s services. Alongside the Multi-Agency Practice Framework we also published Practice Guidance for services delivering therapeutic support to care experienced children and young people. The Practice Guidance steers therapeutic services working with care experienced children and young people to work in closer partnership across health, social care and third sector to ensure care experienced children and young people receive trauma informed therapeutic support at the right time, in the way that is right for them. This work compliments the work that has also been undertaken to develop a CAMHS specification as referenced in our previous reply.
- The national service specification for CAMHS sets out the Government’s expectation of CAMHS services in Wales, and how it works with other services to establish the necessary arrangements to deliver integrated care. We have also amended guidance to ensure that care experienced children moving health board areas are not disadvantaged and retain their waiting time status for CAMHS.
- Listening to the voices of those with lived experience and upholding children’s rights is central to our core values in Welsh Government. The guidance was developed in response to the feedback and voices of care experienced children and young people who told us they needed improved access to mental health and wellbeing support. The guidance has been co-designed with stakeholders, including foster carers, adoptive parents and practitioners. Workshops are being facilitated across Wales November 25 to February 26 to support the implementation of this guidance with the sector.
- We will provide routine updates on the implementation of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy, with the first of these expected in May 2026.

## **Recommendation 6.**

The Committee recommends that:

The Welsh Government should set out in statutory guidance, or otherwise, requirements for relevant public bodies, third sector and independent providers to routinely gather and publish data on all aspects of the care system in addition to that currently published, including the data gaps highlighted in this report. Stakeholders including academics must be consulted as a matter of priority to inform what's needed. The guidance should be sensitive to the concerns of many care experienced people about their care status and the stigma they face, and set out best practice data protection guidelines accordingly. The data should be verified by the Welsh Government and be published in an accessible format at least quarterly where it relates to the social care workforce, and at least annually for all other data.

### **Welsh Government response at time of report: Reject**

- The Welsh Government undertakes a range of data collections regarding children's social care. It has three annual data collections, two of which are at the individual level and cover all [children receiving care and support](#) and another focusing specifically on [children looked after](#). There is also a large data collection of local authority [performance and activity](#), which includes over 50 data items on children specifically. Care Inspectorate Wales will also speak to children and explore their experiences as part of their inspections.
- The Transforming Children's Services Delivery Group is currently reviewing data collation as part of its work on metrics for children's services to more effectively measure progress as we transform children's services in Wales.

### **Welsh Government update – November 2025**

- The Welsh Government continues to collect a range of data around children's social care, and meets regularly with local authorities and sector partners to review and improve these data collections. The data is not collected directly from children but is administrative data which is collected by local authorities in the provision of care and support. However, all the data collected adheres to best practice and guidance provided by the Office for National Statistics and the Government Statistical Service.

- The National Office for Care and Support continue to expand the range of publicly available data, and intends to make additional data available by the end of 2025/26. This may include quarterly or monthly data about the capacity and demand of children’s social care services.

**Recommendation 7.**

The Welsh Government should introduce legislation to give all care experienced birth parents a statutory right to intensive, wrap-around edge-of-care support to reduce the risk of children being removed from their care. The support should include specialist parental advocacy to navigate the social care and family courts systems and should be modelled on evidence-based services such as NYAS’ Project Unity. The support should be available from the 12-week scan of pregnancy (or the earliest point after 12 weeks at which a viable pregnancy is confirmed). If a child is ultimately removed from their birth parents, the support should continue beyond the child’s removal to support the birth parents to come to terms with their loss.

**Welsh Government response at time of report: Accept in part**

- The Welsh Government has, and will continue, to prioritise early intervention and prevention as part of the work of both the Children’s Board and the Transformation Programme of Children’s Services in Wales. We know that projects such as Project Unity play a valuable part in providing emotional and practical help to care experienced mothers and the Welsh Government has been able to provide annual funding of £340,000 for the programme until 2025 reflecting our commitment to supporting care experienced mothers and to keeping families together wherever possible.
- The Welsh Government accepts the recommendation in principle and will consider and explore its asks as part of the delivery of the Transformation Programme.

**Welsh Government update – November 2025**

- The Welsh Government has continued to promote and support preventative interventions to help families remain together. The national roll out of Parental Advocacy across Wales demonstrates our commitment to this.
- Project Unity is currently operating across all 22 local authorities. This year the service has provided 1:1 intervention to 135 young mothers or expectant mothers, offering trauma informed, wrap around support to each person accessing this.

**Recommendation 8.**

The Welsh Government should ensure universal, nationwide access to successful early intervention/edge of care/preventative services, such as Barnardo's Baby & Me, which have been shown to increase the chance of children being able to stay with their birth parents. Until the long-term cost benefits of these services have been realised, the Welsh Government should develop a long-term, national, sustainable funding model for them, recognising their potential for financial benefits across different public service bodies.

**Welsh Government response at time of report: Accept in part**

- The Welsh Government accepts and acknowledges the positive work being undertaken by Edge of Care Services such as Barnardo's Baby & Me, Reflect and Jig-So, and the benefit that these programmes have on new parents including care experienced young people. The Welsh Government will review the evaluation of these projects when deciding on next steps and future roll out.

**Welsh Government update – November 2025**

- The Welsh Government acknowledges the positive impact of edge-of-care services such as Barnardo's *Baby & Me*, Reflect, and Jig-So. Edge of Care Services play a vital role in supporting children and families including new parents and care experienced young people. As part of our commitment to ensuring these services are fit for purpose and families across Wales have access to evidence based, supportive interventions we are in the process of mapping the availability of Edge of Care Services across Wales.
- At the Multi-Agency Workshop for Children and Families held in September 2025, we highlighted some of these services and explored the work being undertaken to strengthen early intervention, and it was evident there is an appetite amongst public sector leaders to promote better multi-agency working within children's services.
- Through our Transformation Programme we have been working with stakeholders to finalise the Early Intervention and Prevention Framework for Babies, Children, Young People and Families so we have an overarching framework for the

system across Wales. This will form part of the Legacy Report from the Programme which will be published before the end of the Senedd term.

#### **Recommendation 9.**

The Committee recommends that:

The Welsh Government must work with local authorities, members of the judiciary and other relevant stakeholders to continue the roll-out of the FDAC model across Wales, subject to a successful evaluation of the Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan pilot.

#### **Welsh Government response at time of report: Accept**

The Welsh Government will review the evaluation of the Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan pilot to consider sustainable delivery models for a National Rollout. We will work with local authorities, members of the judiciary and other relevant stakeholder to ensure key partners are involved in advising and scoping future FDACs in Wales.

**Financial Implications:** Yes, any additional costs will be considerable and will have to be identified from existing budgets.

#### **Welsh Government update – November 2025**

- Following the evaluation of FDAC pilot in Cardiff and the Vale a working group was established to explore next steps. A discussion paper endorsed by the Family Justice Network in September 2025 highlighted the positive aspects of FDAC and proposed expanding a problem-solving court approach across care proceedings, beyond cases involving parental substance misuse. My letter of 16<sup>th</sup> October 2025 to the Chair of the CYPE Committee shares the working group's discussion paper and next steps for this work.
- We are also in regular communication with the Ministry of Justice and Department for Education to ensure alignment with developments in England, given the non-devolved elements of Family Justice.

**Recommendation 10.**

The Welsh Government should introduce legislation to give birth parents a statutory right to an 'active offer' of an independent support worker when the child is placed on the child protection register or made subject to pre-proceedings to support them to access early intervention services and navigate the social care and family court system. If a child is ultimately removed from their birth parents, the support should continue beyond the child's removal to signpost the birth parents to services that can come to terms with their loss.

**Welsh Government response at time of report: Accept in part**

- The Welsh Government currently provides annual funding of £300k to the National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) to deliver a Parental Advocacy Programme in Gwent, via our Sustainable Social Services Grant Scheme. The Programme pairs parents with advocates who assist them in understanding legislation, processes and systems in the child protection and care process. Additionally, advocates assist parents in communicating with their child's social worker. The programme will run until 2025.
- Our Programme for Government sets out that we are committed to expanding the provision of advocacy services to support parents whose children are on the edge of care, helping to avoid statutory social services involvement, escalation of needs and reducing the risk of children entering the care system.
- We are investing a minimum of £1.5 million of funding over the next 3 years, through the Care Experienced Children Change Fund. This funding will be used to scale up existing Parental Advocacy projects on a regional basis and to ensure new services are established in each of the seven regions in Wales as part of a national roll-out.
- To support consistent service delivery across Wales as part of a national roll out, we are developing a National Framework for Parental Advocacy with third sector partners. This describes the core service criteria that all regions must have in place.

- Academic literature and early reports show parental advocacy to be a promising route to reducing the number of children taken into care. We will use the learning from the Gwent initiative and from the national roll-out to determine whether universal access to parental advocacy should be put in place.

### **Welsh Government update – November 2025**

- Welsh Government is proud to report that parental advocacy is now available across all regions of Wales, with three providers enabling this: NYAS, TGP, and Mental Health Matters. In 2025-26, Welsh Government allocated £803,399 to these services.
- Welsh Government strongly supports parental advocacy, recognising recent research from CASCADE’s mixed-methods evaluation. This research found that advocacy helps parents feel heard, improves engagement with social workers, and can strengthen collaboration in child protection processes.
- As part of our next steps for Parental Advocacy, we will be seeking to establish a Parental Advocacy Forum and establish a clear framework that includes an accessibility criterion to ensure that a consistent offer of advocacy is available across all regions.

### **Recommendation 11.**

The Welsh Government should commission an independent review into the efficacy and availability of parenting assessment placements. The review should consider the ethics, utility and value for money of both residential placements and parent and child foster placements and identify what changes can be made to improve the process for families, and any barriers that need to be overcome to take those steps. The independent review should report no later than December 2023.

### **Welsh Government response at time of report: Accept in part**

- The Welsh Government is committed to seeing children and young people living securely with their families, with many fewer ever needing to enter care. For those children who do come into care, we want their stay to be as short as is consistent with meeting their needs, close to home and with strong links to their local community. To achieve this, and to ensure a sustainable network of provision, the shape, scale and structure of current arrangements for the accommodation

of and support for children and young people has to change fundamentally to ensure the development of stable, integrated and locally accountable provision. This will include models of care, wrap-around support and models of ownership.

- During this Senedd term, as part of this work, we will review the arrangements for parenting assessment placements in Wales, including efficacy, availability and models of ownership.

### **Welsh Government update – November 2025**

- As part of our commitment to transform services for children, work continues across local authorities to build a sustainable network of provision and to change the shape, scale and structure of current arrangements for accommodation and support for children and young people
- This work includes an assessment of the provision of parent and child placements across Wales, with Welsh Government funding being targeted to strengthen and improve sufficiency at regional and national level with a particular focus on the recruitment and development of parent and child foster carers.

### **Recommendation 12.**

The Committee recommends that:

The Welsh Government should introduce legislation to provide children in care and care leavers a statutory right to long-term, independent advocacy support on an 'opt-out' basis. Each child should be assigned an advocate when they enter the care system to provide long-term advocacy support across a range of issues, and continue until the child ceases to be a 'care leaver'. Children and young people could opt-out (and then opt back in later) if they wish but must have an allocated advocate or provider at all times during their time in care.

**Welsh Government response at time of report: Reject**

- Our National Approach to Statutory Advocacy already delivers a statutory right to long-term independent advocacy support that enables children in care and care leavers with the ability to opt in and out as they wish to. This is monitored by the National Provider Forum chaired by Welsh Government.
- A core component of the National Approach is the Active Offer which delivers an absolute long-term right to advocacy from a statutory Independent Professional Advocate (IPA) as part of a clear and consistent pathway deliver their rights and entitlements. This pathway is set out in detail within the [Legacy report](#) published by the Advocacy Task and Finish Group in the Summer of 2022. It ensures social workers inform children of their right to advocacy, helps them to understand the importance and benefits of advocacy and with the child's permission, facilitates independent contact between the child and the advocacy service.
- The advocacy service makes independent contact with the child to meet with them, to make the Active Offer and subsequently confirm to the local authority if the offer has been taken up or declined. The Legacy Report is clear and confirms that *“Opting out does not mean that the child or young person is no longer entitled to an advocate. If the child or young person decides at a later stage that they wish to access advocacy, the social worker will provide the advocacy service with their details to allow them to arrange an introductory meeting with the child or young person.”*
- We absolutely agree with the Committee's assertion that children voices must be heard. We share that position and continue to explore how we can continue to work to ensure that voice is both heard and listened to. The role of the Corporate Parenting Charter will play a critical role in championing children's voice and the Active Offer as part of the National Approach.

#### **Welsh Government update – November 2025**

- Our National Approach to Statutory Advocacy already delivers a statutory right to long-term independent advocacy support that enables children in care and care leavers with the ability to opt in and out as they wish to. This continues to be monitored by the National Approach to Statutory Advocacy Forum chaired by Welsh Government that meets bi-annually. Welsh Government also sits on the National Provider Forum with providers of advocacy services that meets quarterly.

- A core component of the National Approach is the Active Offer which delivers an absolute long-term right to advocacy from a statutory Independent Professional Advocate (IPA) as part of a clear and consistent pathway to deliver their rights and entitlements. This pathway is set out in detail within the [Legacy report](#) published by the Advocacy Task and Finish Group in the Summer of 2022. It ensures social workers inform children of their right to advocacy, helps them understand the importance and benefits of advocacy and with the child’s permission, facilitates independent contact between the child and the advocacy service.
- The advocacy service makes independent contact with the child to meet with them, to make the Active Offer and subsequently confirm to the local authority whether the offer has been taken up or declined. The Legacy Report is clear and confirms that *“Opting out does not mean that the child or young person is no longer entitled to an advocate. If the child or young person decides at a later stage that they wish to access advocacy, the social worker will provide the advocacy service with their details to allow them to arrange an introductory meeting with the child or young person.”*
- The National Approach to Statutory Advocacy Forum established two task and finish groups in September 2025: one to look at improving the data collection process for the ‘Active Offer’ and developing the current performance indicators to gain further insights into uptake rates and a better understanding of why the offer is not taken up by children and young people.
- The second task and finish group is reviewing the Range and Level Toolkit commissioned previously by Welsh Government that assists local authorities and advocacy providers to predict the allocation of advocacy based on numbers of children and young people in the area who are care experienced, on the Child Protection Register, receiving care and support. The task and finish group has been asked to review this toolkit and make recommendations on how this can be simplified and updated to Welsh Government.
- We are committed to ensuring that children’s voices continue to be heard, and the National Forum continues to consider ways to improve the offer and ensure all eligible children and young people have information about their rights to advocacy.

**Recommendation 13.**

The Committee recommends that:

The Welsh Government ensure that every child in a residential care home in Wales should have access to both residential visiting advocacy and individual advocacy by:

- revising the arrangements in place under the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 to make the provision of residential visiting advocacy in each and every children's home (by a contracted registered advocacy provider) a requirement for registration as a provider of children's care homes in Wales.
- working with other UK governments as necessary to ensure that every child domiciled outside Wales but placed in a Welsh residential care home is offered an individual advocate.

**Welsh Government response at time of report: Reject**

- Our National Approach to Statutory Advocacy provides access to an advocate to every looked after child in residential care within Wales and outside of Wales. Welsh Government has consistently re-affirmed that advocacy is essential to protect the rights of children and young people and to ensure their views, wishes and feelings are heard, respected and responded to. We have embedded those rights throughout our legislation and guidance across Ministerial portfolios and co-produced partnership arrangements that put those rights into practice through our National Approach to Statutory Advocacy to ensure our shared expectations can be delivered.
- Our National Approach includes a clear and unequivocal Active Offer of advocacy to all children in care, not just those in residential settings, but also to those in foster care or kinship arrangements. Our National Approach also secures the same rights to Independent Professional Advocacy for those who may be subject to safeguarding arrangements or inquiries, as well all children and young people as part of local authorities' wider duties to provide them with care and support under our Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.
- Good advocacy can have a profound effect on the lives of children and young people. Through the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act we have developed and delivered clear descriptors to regulate Independent Professional Advocacy prescribing the standards of both the service provision but also that of the service provider and the responsible individual. We have established and delivered other mechanisms to enable children to be listened to and their views, wishes and feelings acted upon. We are working to strengthen the role of the Corporate Parent through the Corporate Parenting Charter which was published on 29 June. Every child looked after has an Independent Reviewing Officer to listen to them and act as their personal champion in holding professionals and services to account and ensure the duties owed to those children are comprehensively and consistently delivered.

- Welsh Government will however discuss with other UK Governments the provision of advocacy to ensure that every child domiciled outside Wales but placed in a Welsh residential care home is offered an individual advocate.

### **Welsh Government update – November 2025**

- Through the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act we have developed and delivered clear descriptors to regulate Independent Professional Advocacy prescribing the standards of both the service provision but also that of the service provider and the responsible individual. Both advocacy service providers in Wales, NYAS and Tros Gynnal Plant, had their first inspections in the last year with positive outcomes. We have jointly reflected on the learning from this process.
- We have established and delivered other mechanisms to enable children to be listened to and their views, wishes and feelings acted upon. Every child looked after has an Independent Reviewing Officer to listen to them and act as their personal champion in holding professionals and services to account and ensure the duties owed to those children are comprehensively and consistently delivered. An Independent Reviewing Officer can also request the child be allocated an Independent Visitor.
- Local authorities in Wales are required to ensure every looked after child is entitled to an Independent Visitor. This requirement is part of the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014. An Independent Visitor (IV) is a volunteer who visits and befriends a child or young person who is looked after. Children and young people who are looked after have often experienced trauma and a lack of consistent adult relationships.
- The IV may be the one constant adult they have in their life. The unique role of an IV enables children and young people to have at least one consistent, trusting relationship that is built over time. The IV will endeavour to become and remain a stable adult in the child's life who doesn't change when placements or social workers change and will at all times stay child focused.

**Recommendation 14.**

The Welsh Government should work with Social Care Wales to fund and deliver (including to legislate as needed) a national register of foster carers, to be held by Social Care Wales. The register should set out details of foster carers' approval status, approval review date, local authority location, number of placements, and whether they are a local authority or independent provider. The development of that register should be carried out alongside key stakeholder, such as the Fostering Network, and should involve thorough consultation with foster carers and fostering services providers across Wales.

**Welsh Government response at time of report: Accept in part**

- Welsh Government recognises the potential benefits associated with a national register of foster carers and it is therefore something that the Welsh Government is keen to explore with the sector.
- A national register would increase the status of foster carers in the team around the child, allowing the role to be more recognised and valued within the sector and by the public. This is especially important as Welsh Government recognises that foster carers are an important part of the social care team supporting the child or young person. It will also address the difficulty foster carers experience when moving from one service to another, by offering a less bureaucratic method of transfer, reducing duplication and delays and will offer a robust safeguarding mechanism which will outline a foster carer's continued suitability to foster.
- However, introducing such a register is complex and will need to be undertaken in a timely and controlled way alongside ensuring it can be appropriately resourced. Initial discussions with the Fostering Network have taken place and the next step is to undertake a scoping exercise to establish what a national register could look like in Wales, any legislative requirements and operational feasibility. This will be done in consultation with our statutory and third sector partners, foster carers and service users.

**Welsh Government update – November 2025**

- We are continuing to consider the introduction of a national fostering register in Wales. This was included in our recent consultation on adoption, fostering, and kinship care, which closed on 27 October. The consultation sought views on how a register could improve transparency, portability for foster carers, and safeguarding, as well as provide national data to support planning and forecasting. We are currently analysing the responses to the consultation, and these will be published in early 2026.

#### **Recommendation 15.**

The Welsh Government must ensure that a review of the '4Cs' online database is undertaken, involving key stakeholders and frontline practitioners, to identify and implement improvements to the database to streamline the placement commissioning process.

#### **Welsh Government response at time of report: Accept in part**

- The Childrens Commissioning Support Resource (CCSR) was initially developed by Welsh Government with Data Cymru in 2005 as a database library for looking up providers. In 2012, the Childrens Commissioning Consortium Cymru (4Cs) subsequently chose the CCSR platform as an existing Welsh developed, owned and WLGA-managed platform which could be developed to meet commissioning, contracting and procurement needs. It developed an e-tendering portal to deliver the All-Wales Framework (residential and foster care) and to provide placement finding and matching capability.
- This part of the CCSR system is a layer of restricted access to Local Authority and Framework providers only, evaluated and quality assured by the 4Cs, who are compelled under the All-Wales Framework to keep their foster carer, care setting and vacancy information up to date. This is effective and is reviewed as part of daily contract management.
- CCSR does provide details of every foster carer who is a provider on the All Wales Framework plus vacancies, and the equivalent details of all Framework residential care settings and vacancies. This is monitored by 4Cs / Data Cymru and is up to date. It also includes Framework providers CIW inspection reports and provider statement of purposes. CCSR has the capability for all LAs to confidentially and securely add all of their foster carer and residential setting provision onto the system.

- CCSR also provides the details of foster carers from a small number of other agencies who are not on the Frameworks but still see the benefit of subscribing to the service (non-framework providers) but the annual subscription fee they have to pay for the service is a barrier to some smaller providers using the system.
- As this has restricted access, many providers who may have contributed to the committee discussions would not have access to this element of the database and therefore may not be fully clear on its functions or the live nature of its daily use. They would however have access to the high-level resource library which sits above the 4Cs tendering module and is visible to a wider range of stakeholders. The library is part of a forward redevelopment programme which will be informed by stakeholders.
- To support further implementation, Welsh Government will also consider whether it would be feasible to compel all fostering agencies to register on CCSR as part of their registration under RISCA. This work would need to align with our consideration of the introduction of a national fostering register in Wales.

#### **Welsh Government update – November 2025**

- We are continuing to consider the introduction of a national fostering register in Wales. This was included in our recent consultation on adoption, fostering, and kinship care, which closed on 27 October. The consultation sought views on how a register could improve transparency, portability for foster carers, and safeguarding, as well as provide national data to support planning and forecasting.
- Our ongoing work to explore whether all fostering agencies should be required to register on the Children's Commissioning Support Resource (CCSR) as part of their registration under RISCA is closely linked to this. We will continue to consider this option as we progress work on the fostering register and wider reforms to strengthen commissioning and placement arrangements.

#### **Recommendation 16.**

As soon as possible, and no later than December 2023, the Welsh Government should consult with Estyn and other key stakeholders to examine the most recent attainment results relating to care experienced children, ascertain the extent to which

schools are following the Welsh Government's guidance as set out in its 2017 document 'Making a Difference', the barriers that schools face in implementing that guidance, and set out how the Welsh Government and others will improve the school experiences of care experienced children

- **Welsh Government response at time of report: Accept**

- The Welsh Government accepts the recommendation but needs to be undertaken alongside the evaluation of the Virtual Schools Model pilot.
- Every child and young person in Wales has the right to expect an excellent education regardless of their circumstances, including in cases where a child has experience of care. The Welsh Government recognises that good educational attainment can provide the gateway to future stability, security and an independent, fulfilling life. The Welsh Government is committed to equality of opportunity and equity of outcome, ensuring that all our learners are properly supported to achieve their full potential.
- Tackling inequality is a clear priority for the Welsh Government and this includes removing all inequalities in our education system, recognising that to achieve true equity of outcome, some children and young people will require additional, or different, support to achieve their full potential. The Welsh Government recognises that while some children and young people face barriers to learning for reasons of their individual circumstances, there are also systemic and institutional barriers to learning which many children and young people face across Wales. We are taking action to support all children and young people, to overcome these barriers and reach their full potential.
- The Virtual Schools Model is currently in its final year of a three-year pilot, supporting the educational needs of care-experienced children. Thirteen local authorities have been provided with £1m funding to date, with a further £240,000 expected to be allocated in 2023-24. Welsh Government officials are currently undertaking an internal research exercise of the pilot, which will inform the full evaluation phase of the model. In turn, this evaluation will inform the further development of the Virtual Schools Model.

**Welsh Government update – November 2025**

- Attainment data on children needing care and support, including children looked after, is published in the [Children Receiving Care and Support \(CRCS\) Census](#).
- We are committed to improving the educational outcomes of care-experienced learners. Our ambitions for education in Wales are set out in '[Our national mission: high standards and aspirations for all](#)'. They include a commitment to equity of outcome in education for every child and young person in Wales.
- We are working with local authorities and schools to embed good practice identified as being effective in promoting the education of care experienced learners. We are promoting this good practice through our National Delivery Group and through the production of a suite of guidance documents. These are intended to help local authorities and schools better understand and respond to the needs of care experienced learners and promote effective practice.
- We have commissioned Estyn to undertake a thematic review into the effectiveness of education provision for care experienced learners. The review will be used to identify and share effective practice to enhance outcomes for care experienced learners in Wales. It is anticipated the final report will be ready by the end of 2026.
- In this financial year we are also funding Adoption UK Cymru to provide training for teachers and other school staff to help them respond effectively to the social and emotional needs of care experienced learners.
- Between 2021 and March 2024 we provided £1.2m to local authorities to pilot a Virtual School Model in Wales, intended to promote the educational outcomes for care experienced children. We commissioned Miller Research to evaluate the pilot and the final report is expected to be published in December 2025. The findings from the evaluation will inform Welsh Government policy aimed to improve the educational outcomes of children looked after in Wales.
- Our commitment to care experienced young people's education is matched by a range of support in schools and for post 16 education. Through the [Pupil Development Grant](#), just over £5.6m will be available in this financial year to specifically support care experienced children in school. All children looked after in reception to year 11 also qualify for the School Essentials Grant. It can be used to buy essentials such as uniform, stationery and equipment.
- The Welsh Government also provides a range of financial support to enable learners to continue their studies in Further Education Institutions.

**Recommendation 17.**

The Welsh Government should consult care experienced children and young people, kinship carers, third sector organisations, local government and others to better understand the extent to which kinship care is being increasingly used as an alternative to placing children in foster or residential care, the experiences of children in kinship care, and the support needs of kinship carers. As part of that work, the Welsh Government should explore the potential of amending by regulations the criteria that kinship carers are required to meet to be entitled to the same financial support as foster carers.

**Welsh Government response at time of report: Accept in part**

- Our Programme for Government contains a number of key commitments about a new vision for how children's services in Wales are delivered. Over the course of this Senedd term, we will be working to radically reform children's services in Wales, to ensure they deliver the best possible outcomes for children who are in care. As part of this work, Welsh Government has set up a Special Guardianship Expert Group which will be looking at developing an improved and consistent needs-based approach to supporting Special Guardianship families across Wales. This group has representation from the statutory and third sector alongside service users and as part of its work it will look at ways of capturing the views of children and young people. The intention is to widen the scope of this group in due course to look at the use of and support available for kinship foster carers in Wales.
- In addition, Foster Wales is committed to ensuring that kinship foster carers receive the same support as mainstream foster carers and has launched its national commitment which is an agreed package of training, support, and rewards consistently available to all foster carers (mainstream and kinship) in Wales through all 22 local authority fostering agencies in Wales.
- Foster Wales is also committed to ensuring that kinship foster carers receive the same financial support as mainstream foster carers. One of the aims of our current work on fees and allowances is to ensure consistency, alongside other elements of the financial support to all approved foster carers. Currently all approved foster carers across Wales (including mainstream and kinship foster carers) are paid at least the national minimum allowance to meet the needs of children in their care. In addition, all local authorities pay an enhanced allowance/fee to mainstream foster carers.

- Through Foster Wales and the harmonisation of fees and allowances work, we are seeking to ensure that the availability of an enhanced allowance/fee is available to all approved foster carers (including both mainstream and kinship foster carers) providing they are assessed to meet the eligibility criteria as set out in the enhanced allowance eligibility policy.
- The current legal framework, under the Fostering Panels (Establishment and Function) (Wales) Regulations 2018, necessitates kinship foster carers reaching the same standard of suitability to foster as mainstream carers. The only difference for kinship foster carers is that they are approved to be a foster carer for a particular child under these regulations. Welsh Government is aware that many practitioners, panels and decision makers have struggled with the fitness for purpose of the current regulatory framework for kinship foster care.
- To aid the fostering sector, Welsh Government is currently undertaking a scoping exercise to consider legislative changes that could be introduced to enable an alternative and more ‘fit for purpose’ way forward for the assessment of kinship carers.

#### **Welsh Government update – November 2025**

- We have been working in partnership with Foster Wales to review the financial support provided to foster carers (both mainstream and kinship). This work builds on the findings of the 2021 report “*The Cost of Care – and the Cost of Not Caring Enough*”, which highlighted that current allowances often do not reflect the real cost of caring for a child. Feedback from carers and research by The Fostering Network confirm that financial support remains a key concern.
- Our current focus is on developing options to increase allowances, so they better reflect the true cost of care. The initial scoping exercise has identified significant financial implications, and Foster Wales has commissioned further modelling to explore how a phased approach to revised payment structures could be implemented.
- Alongside this, we are progressing changes to the Part 6 Code of Practice to provide clarity on how foster carers, both mainstream and kinship, can access enhanced allowances. These amendments will set out clear eligibility criteria linked to the fostering task and ensure transparency for carers at the point of approval.
- Further paragraphs will be added to the Code to explain arrangements for fully approved foster carers, kinship foster carers and temporarily approved carers under Regulation 26 of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (Wales)

Regulations 2015. This will help local authorities apply a consistent approach while maintaining flexibility to meet individual needs.

- In parallel, we are progressing regulatory changes to strengthen support for kinship carers and special guardians. For special guardianship, we are introducing a statutory requirement for local authorities to use the national Support Plan template to ensure consistency and clarity in the support offered to families across Wales. For kinship care, we are creating a dedicated kinship foster carer category within the fostering regulations, allowing for a more flexible and proportionate approach to assessment and ongoing support. These changes aim to recognise the unique circumstances of kinship arrangements while maintaining safeguarding standards. The consultation on these proposals closed on 27 October, and we are now reviewing responses with the intention of implementing changes by 1 April.
- In addition, we are working with the Law Commission on its Kinship Care Project, which is reviewing the legal framework to make it clearer and easier for families who care for children. The project aims to simplify the law, clarify rights and responsibilities, and explore reforms to ensure better support for kinship carers and children. Our engagement ensures that Welsh policy developments align with these wider reforms and deliver improved outcomes for children and carers, while also ensuring that Wales has a strong voice in shaping the future legal framework for kinship care.

#### **Recommendation 18.**

The Welsh Government and the Association of Directors of Social Services must jointly publish no later than December 2023 an action plan setting out how they will prevent the use of illegal, unregistered accommodation in Wales. The action plan must include an analysis of the number of times it has been used in the last 24 months, with clear timescales and funding allocations to develop safe alternatives.

#### **Welsh Government response at time of report: Accept in part**

- The Welsh Government remains committed to reducing the overall numbers of children looked after but recognises the challenges for some local authorities of finding or developing suitable placements to meet the needs of the children and young people in their care.

- This isn't just about increasing capacity. It is also about promoting trauma-informed models of care and ensuring there are appropriate joint commissioning arrangements in place between health, social services and education, so the needs of children are met, and they do not fall between different types of provision. We will continue to work with local authorities to ensure these challenges can be met.
- Under our Eliminating Profit Programme Board, we have established a local authority task and finish group to consider the issue of services operating without registration. This is to ensure placement choice and stability in registered provision meets the needs of, and secures positive outcomes for, our children and young people
- The group is undertaking a review of services operating without registration in order to gain an evidence-based end-to-end understanding of the issues, challenges, effective approaches and potential solutions as well as the associated impacts for children. The review is due to be commissioned shortly and will report later this year.

#### **Welsh Government update – November 2025**

- Working towards the minimal use of unregistered placements is about reducing the demand for placements, increasing capacity and building resilience into arrangements for the provision of suitable placements. These issues are being considered in the context of our wider transformation agenda for children's services and the range of work currently underway to ensure the development of stable, integrated and locally accountable provision.
- A review of specific services operating without registration (OWR) was undertaken to gain an understanding of the types of accommodation and placements that were needed, provision through the OWR arrangement, the age profile of the children, what led them to be supported through OWR arrangements and to establish identified strengths and learning for the future.
- Alongside this, the Association of Directors of Social Services Cymru (ADSS Cymru) commissioned Cardiff University to undertake research on the experiences and views of 11 young people in Wales who have lived in residential care home services operating without registration (OWRs). This addressed a gap in understanding the lived experience of those who have resided in OWR settings including understanding the journey of the young person and how to appropriately manage OWR arrangements where there is no viable alternative. The subsequent report is currently being finalised and is

expected to be published shortly following final consideration by members of Workstream 1 (Expanding and Developing New Local Authority/ Regional Provision) under the Eliminating Profit Programme Board.

- The findings from both pieces of work will be used to inform decision-making around the use of OWR arrangements and their ability to safeguard children and young people and meet their needs.

#### **Recommendation 19.**

The Welsh Government should carry out and publish an analysis of the use of unregulated accommodation across Wales for children in care and care leavers up to the age of 21. The analysis should identify the numbers of children and young people in unregulated accommodation, and clearly break that down between accommodation that it considers to provide quality accommodation and support (such as supported accommodation which is required to meet housing standards), and accommodation that does not (such as bed and breakfasts, AirBnBs, hostels, etc.). The analysis should further break down that data into the age and legal status of the children and young people to clearly indicate how many are subject to care orders and how many are care leavers. Once complete, the Welsh Government should set out its policy position in relation to unregulated accommodation, including the action it intends to take alongside local authorities to reduce the use of inappropriate unregulated accommodation in Wales.

#### **Welsh Government response at time of report: Accept in part**

- The Welsh Government collects data on the number of children aged 16 and over leaving care by age and accommodation at date of ceasing to be looked after. Our published statistical data for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 shows of the 700 young people aged 16 and over who left care between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, 670 (96%) were in suitable accommodation at the date they ceased to be looked after. Accommodation is regarded as suitable if it provides safe, secure and affordable provision for young people. The proportion of young people in suitable accommodation has increased from 92% in 2016-17 when data began being collected.
- 28% of young people in suitable accommodation were with parents or relatives and 26% were in ordinary lodgings without formal support. The proportion of young people in ordinary lodgings without formal support has generally increased since 2018-19, as has the proportion in semi-independent transitional accommodation (about 18%). The proportion of young

people with parents or relatives, in independent living and in suitable supported lodgings have generally decreased over this time.

- Bed and breakfasts are considered unsuitable accommodation, in addition, other types of accommodation are considered to be unsuitable if they clearly expose the young person to risk of harm or social exclusion. The number, and the proportion, of care leavers in unsuitable accommodation has decreased in recent years. The number of care leavers in unsuitable accommodation decreased by 5 (14%) from 35 to 30 compared with the previous year, equating to 4% of care leavers being in unsuitable accommodation at the point of leaving care during 2021-22. This is the lowest proportion since data began being collected in 2016-17.
- Whilst it is difficult to see in what circumstances a child under 16 would be placed in an unregulated service as they would be in need of care which would mean the service would need to be registered, we are keen to learn from England's experiencing of prohibiting under 16s being placed in unregulated placements and will keep this under review.

#### **Welsh Government update – November 2025**

- Working towards the minimal use of unregulated placements is about reducing the demand for placements, increasing capacity and building resilience into arrangements for the provision of suitable placements. These issues are being considered in the context of our wider transformation agenda for children's services and the range of work currently underway to ensure the development of stable, integrated and locally accountable provision.
- The Homelessness and Social Housing Bill which is currently making its way through the Senedd inserts a new duty into the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 for local authorities to take reasonable steps to ensure that suitable accommodation is available for care leavers as they transition from care, it also creates reasonable preference for care leavers as they transition out of support under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (effectively prioritising them for social housing). It is our policy intention to end default use of the homelessness system as a route out of care through these provisions. The Bill requires social services and homelessness teams to establish a protocol for delivering services to care leavers, 16- and 17-year-olds and those leaving the secure estate. It also creates a regulation making power to define the meaning of suitable accommodation so that we can work with the sector to design appropriate accommodation for young people.

### **Recommendation 20.**

The Welsh Government should carry out an immediate analysis of the use of Deprivation of Liberty Orders across Wales for the past 24 months, broken down by local authority which has responsibility for the child, age of the child and the length of the order, and which should be published no later than December 2023. The Welsh Government and the Association of Directors of Social Services should jointly publish no later than December 2023 an action plan setting out how they will reduce the use of Deprivation of Liberty Orders in Wales. The action plan must include clear timescales and funding allocations.

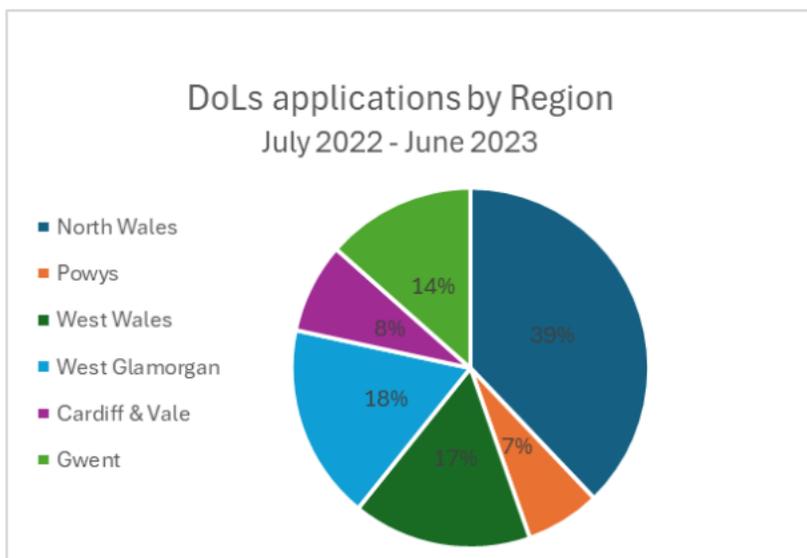
### **Welsh Government response at time of report: Accept in part**

- The Welsh Government will carry out an analysis of the use of Deprivation of Liberty Orders across Wales for the past 24 months, broken down by local authority which has responsibility for the child, age of the child and the length of the order.
- The results of this analysis will feed into the Welsh Government's Transformation Programme for Children's Services.

### **Welsh Government update – November 2025**

- There is a cohort of children and young people with highly complex histories and with multiple intersecting needs, whose behaviours are seen as too risky and challenging to be suitable for most children's settings, including children with complex mental health needs who do not meet criteria for detention under the Mental Health Act. In recent years in England and Wales this has led to an increase in the use of Deprivation of Liberty (DoL) Orders under the inherent jurisdiction of the High Court.
- Our Transformation Programme already included two important strands to reduce the need for DoL Orders: to develop alternative therapeutic homes for children with complex needs and to provide additional specialist support for children with complex needs who may be on the edge of care. This is to ensure that where it is safe, families stay together and where children cannot remain with their families they are cared for, in safe and appropriate accommodation, as close to home as possible.

- We found very little data was available on the use of DoL Orders in Wales as this is not part of the annual data collection and the information available from the Ministry of Justice is limited.
- During our exploration of the data available we were fortunate to learn from a report by the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory in 2023. Between June 2022 and June 2023, the Observatory collated and analysed children’s cases with DoL Orders in England and Wales to produce the [Children Subject to Deprivation of Liberty Orders Report](#). This exercise showed there had been 71 applications for children’s DoL Orders in Wales during that period.
- In terms of geographical splits, there were only 5 local authorities who had not applied for any DoL Orders during that period – the following chart shows the spread by region, and the table ranks local authorities by the range percentage of the total orders.



Percentage of all DoL Orders	Local Authorities within range of DoL Orders
0%	Gwynedd, NPT, Vale of Glamorgan, RCT, Blaenau Gwent

<b>1-3%</b>	<b>Denbighshire, Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire, Merthyr, Torfaen, Monmouthshire</b>
<b>4-6%</b>	<b>Anglesey, Flintshire, Caerphilly, Newport</b>
<b>7-8%</b>	<b>Powys, Ceredigion, Swansea, Cardiff</b>
<b>10-13%</b>	<b>Conwy, Bridgend</b>
<b>15%</b>	<b>Wrexham</b>

- In the same period, 44% of the children under DoL Orders were 13-15 years of age, followed by 35% who were 16–17-year-olds and 21% were 12 and under. Unfortunately, the length of orders was not provided in the data for Wales. However, in the wider research Nuffield found that most children under DoL Orders in England and Wales between July and August 2022 (68.3%) were still subject to a DoL Order almost six months later.
- Nuffield concluded the increase in DoL Orders in England and Wales is likely to be due to rising numbers of older children coming into care coupled with reductions in children placed in custody, closure of secure children’s homes, and falling numbers of inpatient child mental health beds. Likewise, another contributing factor is an increase in local authority awareness about the need to apply to the court for permission to restrict the liberty of children. Finally, there is some evidence that the needs of children referred to secure children’s homes have become more complex, and homes are struggling to meet these needs and keep children safe.
- Nuffield’s research also painted the first accurate picture of what is happening to these vulnerable children, by concluding that:
  - Often there were no alternative placements for these children and the risks due to their own behaviour or the behaviour of others, are so immediate and severe that depriving them of their liberty is the only way they can be kept safe.
  - The children have multiple and complex needs that are not being met, including mental health problems, behavioural and emotional difficulties, and difficulties with education.
  - Their behaviours are often linked to early and ongoing childhood adversity such as abuse, neglect, poverty, racism, and complex trauma.
  - Children deprived of their liberty have little say over what happens to them.

- DoL orders are often intended to be temporary, but many children will continue to have their liberty deprived while living in often unsuitable and illegal placements far from home and their communities.
- In terms of these children's care histories, Nuffield's research concluded that:
  - Social care, health, education and other systems are failing to respond to their needs – during crisis and at earlier stages in their lives and throughout adolescence.
  - This is not the fault of any one agency or service – children and their families are being pushed around different systems with different ways of working, different criteria for accessing support and different legal frameworks.
  - This is a national issue, with many local authorities using DoL orders to keep children safe.
  - There is not one simple solution; we must start with what we know about the children's needs and their circumstances to identify the kind of care they need to meet their needs, keep them safe, and support them to flourish.
  - Changes are required to services so they better meet the needs of children subject to DoL orders.
- Since July 2023 the Ministry of Justice published quarterly data quarterly about DoL Order applications under the inherent jurisdiction of the High Court. However, the data on which local authority was making the application was unreliable so this data is no longer published which means we no longer have regional data.
- We recognise there is further work to capture this data in Wales and we are working with others to pursue this so we have reliable data collected regularly about Deprivation of Liberty Order applications relating to children from Wales, particularly applications by local authorities.
- We are also committed to support a Wales wide approach to reduce the number of applications made through investment in earlier intervention and appropriate therapeutic support for the children and young people with this level of needs.
- Due to the long-standing problems accessing local accommodation for children with complex needs, in 2023 we undertook a review of services and implemented a more robust monitoring framework to strategically identify and link developments from a capital stage through to operational via our funding streams. In addition, we have established a Good Practice Forum with a membership of over 180 practitioners across the sector, that is contributing to develop a good practice toolkit.

- Welsh Government has been investing heavily in the development of therapeutic residential accommodation and specialist services for this cohort through the Regional Partnership Boards. In 2024/25 we invested £12.9m of Housing with Care Fund in homes for children and young people.
- Our monitoring across Wales shows a baseline in 2021 of 24 in-house residential homes for children with complex needs providing 105 beds, whilst in the last 2 years that has increased by 21 new in-house homes providing an additional 67 beds. In 2024/25 a total of 13 new in-house homes with 39 beds were opened and 16 new in-house homes are expected to open in 2025/26 to provide a further 64 beds.
- We are also committed to supporting vulnerable families to remain together by providing early intervention and specialist support through the local authorities' Edge of Care services. The Health and Social Care Regional Integration Fund is a 5-year fund to deliver a programme of change through the Regional Partnership Boards until March 2027. This aims to develop integrated care models, including the Supporting families to stay together safely and therapeutic support for care experienced children with complex needs. We invested nearly £23m last year in this model of care and we are expecting the level of spend for 2025/26 and 2026/27 to be similar. This funding helps to support around 6,500 children and their families each year.

#### **Recommendation 21.**

In its response to this report, the Welsh Government should respond to the concerns raised by NYAS Cymru in oral evidence on 15 February 2023, and by the Children's Society in their written response to our consultation, in relation to incidents of children missing from care. In doing so, it should set out clearly its expectations of local authorities, the police, and other statutory partners in their response to incidents of missing children, and its views on their calls for statutory return home interviews.

#### **Welsh Government response at time of report: Accept**

I wholeheartedly agree with the Committee's conclusion of the absolute imperative to talk to children and young people to try to find out the reasons that led them to decide to take the actions they did. Clear and consistent pathways to raise issues, worries and concerns are equally important to prevent children concluding there is no option but to go missing, as are the subsequent

conversations about why they chose to do so and understand why they believed there was no alternative decision they could take. The outcome of those preventative and post-event conversations share the same outcome which is to help to identify and put in place support to help them with whatever they are going through, and making it less likely that they will make the choice to run away again.

The risks to children and young people when they are missing are clear. There is unanimity across the sector on those risks as there is that it is crucial for everyone to deploy every resource to help children and young people to be able reach a different decision and mitigate episodes where they go missing. We welcome the evidence from NYAS and Children's Society on this issue. We hear the clear messages they have provided in their evidence to the Committee and as part of our continuing work with partners from across the sector to reach consensus and a shared position wherever possible. This is a challenging issue and one where there is not yet consensus on how to resolve opposing views on the policy and practice around missing children. We have brought together third and public sector organisations, as well as the four Police and Crime Commissioners as part of a round table event on this topic.

As a consequence, Welsh Government commissioned Children in Wales to gather the views of children and young people who have been supported because of going missing alongside a separate project to review policy, practice and procedures to see how we may better achieve consensus. Officials are collating and considering the information and conclusions the projects have identified. Initial analysis suggests that children and young people themselves had varying opinions on the value of return home interviews. However, they can be useful if run well and an important way for professionals to help identify patterns of behaviour and put solutions in place. The evidence and opinions that Wales follow the approach elsewhere of mandating Return Home Interviews appears to remain limited. The next step is to share the findings of this work with partners and explore how we can best achieve our shared intention, impact and outcomes as part of coherent and consistent arrangements that empower and enable proportionate approaches that keep children and their views, wishes and feelings at the centre.

#### **Welsh Government update – November 2025**

- An analysis of the research referred to in the original response to the Committee led to the establishment of a multi-agency Steering Group for Children who go Missing from Home or Care in September 2024. The group's work plan included

- revising the All Wales Practice Guide for Safeguarding Children who go Missing from Care and the Out of Area/Cross Border guidance in relation to children and young people who are placed outside of their local authority area within Wales or placed in England;
  - develop and agree a core multi-agency dataset; and
  - map the current arrangements for the provision of return home interviews/missing debrief meetings.
- The All Wales Practice Guide and Out of Area Cross Border guidance are nearly completed, and we are discussing a re-launch of both with the Wales Safeguarding Procedures Project Board currently. For the first time, the All Wales Practice Guide will include an expectation that all children and young people who go missing, whether that is from home or care, are offered the opportunity to discuss this experience. We have been assisted by NYAS and Llamau in this to ensure there is sufficient guidance within the document that regardless of whoever the child identifies as the person they want to speak to, they have some level of knowledge of the purpose of this meeting and the way in which to conduct it that benefits the child.
  - Six months following the re-launch of these guidance documents, we will be consulting with key partners including children, caregivers and professionals to consider how well this is being embedded in practice.
  - In mapping the provision across Wales, we have identified disparity in how return home interviews/missing debrief meetings are held and by whom they are delivered. In some areas, this meeting is undertaken by police officers, in other areas there are commissioned services in place like NYAS and some local authorities have their own 'in-house' provision. In the All Wales Practice Guide we have included an expectation that all children will be offered the opportunity to meet with someone of their choice following a missing episode to consider the reasons they went missing, identify any further safeguarding issues or individual needs that should be addressed and identify ways in which further missing episodes can be prevented.
  - Setting the expectation is the first phase of this work. We will continue to work with key partners to further understand the provision of return home interviews/missing debrief meetings across Wales and explore the implementation of the guidance documents that will assist us in determining the next steps to improve consistency of multi-agency approaches to this.
  - NYAS and Llamau will be invited to join the multi-agency group we will be establishing in Spring 2026 to develop a core data set for child sexual abuse under the ten-year National Strategy for Preventing and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse

due to the strong correlation between going missing and experiencing or being at risk of experiencing child sexual exploitation.

- Additionally, we will be working with NYAS, Llamau and the Innovation and Analysis team in the National Office for Care and Support and other Welsh Government branches involved in data collection and analysis to explore how we can achieve a multi-agency data set for children who go missing from home or care. This group will gradually broaden to encompass other key partners such as police and health.

**Recommendation 22.**

The Committee recommends that:

The Welsh Government should introduce legislation to raise the upper threshold for all of the support offered to care leavers until they are 21 (as set out in sections 103 to 118 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, associated regulations, guidance and codes of practice, including the When I am Ready scheme) to 25 for category 3, category 5 and category 6 care leavers.

**Welsh Government response at time of report: Accept**

- The Welsh Government is committed to legislate in this Senedd Term to ensure all care leavers have an entitlement to a Personal Advisor up to the age of 25. These changes can be made via Regulations under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. The Welsh Government has previously written to local authorities about this and the expectations for the funding provided.

**Welsh Government update – November 2025**

- Any young person will face challenges in the transition to adulthood with more responsibilities and independent living. We recognise that young people who are care experienced often have additional challenges. These can be about managing changes when leaving care including the expectation to enter ‘instant adulthood’ and have financial and residential independence, where other young people may have parental support to help navigate these challenges.

- Care experienced young people often feel unprepared, experiencing a cliff-edge in support. This means they are often experiencing inequalities in outcomes compared to their peers.
- Since 2017/18 local authorities have received an additional £1m funding to extend Personal Adviser (PA) support for all care leavers aged 21-25.
- Last year we undertook a survey of care leaver services across Wales to establish how many were offering services to care leavers up to the age of 25. The survey concluded that 90% were offering the personal adviser's service to care leavers up to the age of 25, although some confirmed this was on a needs-basis.
- We remain committed to reviewing our secondary legislation in respect of care leavers, including extending care leavers entitlement to a PA up to the age of 25, but intend to do this as part of our wider review of the Part 6 Code of Practice. We await the outcome of current research by CASCADE which is due to report next year, as well as the evaluation of the Basic Income Pilot due in November 2026 to inform this work; any will progress our work co-productively with stakeholders, including care experienced children and young people.

### **Recommendation 23.**

The Welsh Government should amend section 108 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and regulations, guidance and the code of practice relating to the When I am Ready scheme to:

- extend the age limit for all young people who wish to participate in the scheme to 25; and
- remove barriers to the scheme, including the potential for foster carers' approval to be removed; the reduction in payments to fosters carers; and
- consider how young people could enter the scheme and receive all of the support available to them without being required to enter into tenancy agreements with their foster carers.

### **Welsh Government response at time of report: Accept in part**

- Welsh Government recognises that the transition into adulthood can be more difficult for care leavers than many of their peers of a similar age. It is therefore important that these young people experience continuity when they reach adulthood.

This will help ensure they do not experience a sudden disruption to their living arrangements which could have a negative impact upon their emotional stability, education, training or employment, or upon them developing independent living skills.

- The Welsh Government is therefore committed to supporting the When I'm Ready scheme and ensuring that all young people who are in foster care are offered the opportunity to continue living with their foster carers beyond their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, up to the age of 21, or up to age 25 if they are completing an agreed programme of education or training.
- We are aware there are some challenges with the scheme and during this Senedd will undertake a full review of the When I'm Ready scheme, drawing upon the intelligence that has been gathered about what is working well and what isn't, and collaborating with our stakeholders and service users across Wales in relation to required changes.
- As part of this review, we will consider whether there is a need to amend existing legislation and existing guidance to introduce changes that will further benefit our young people and the carers who support them, alongside providing a firmer footing for the When I'm Ready scheme in Wales. At the same time, we will look at ways of monitoring implementation to ensure a more consistent approach across Wales.

#### **Welsh Government update – November 2025**

- We will shortly be commissioning a full review of the When I'm Ready scheme. This review will take the form of a two-stage evaluation during 25/26 and 26/27 and will set out options and recommendations for improving the scheme and, ultimately, enhancing the lives of care-experienced children and young people in Wales.

#### **Recommendation 24.**

The Welsh Government should carry out a review alongside care experienced young people and other key stakeholders to ascertain how When I am Ready can be extended to young people in residential care, the barriers to that extension and what actions can be taken to overcome those barriers. The review should report no later than December 2023

**Welsh Government response at time of report: Accept in part**

- Welsh Government has committed to undertaking a full review of the When I'm Ready scheme during this Senedd term, drawing upon the intelligence that has been gathered about what is working well and what isn't, and collaborating with our stakeholders and service users across Wales in relation to required changes. As part of this review, consideration will be given to the feasibility of young people in residential care being able to access When I am Ready provision.
- The work will be undertaken during this Senedd term with a view to making any necessary legislative changes during the next Senedd's legislative programme.

#### **Welsh Government update – November 2025**

- As part of the review referenced above consideration will also be given to the feasibility of enabling young people in residential care to access When I'm Ready provision.

#### **Recommendation 25.**

The Committee recommends that:

As part of umbrella reforms to corporate parenting the Welsh Government should bring forward legislation to;

- Amend the Housing Act 1996 to provide that care experienced people have priority in housing allocation.
- Amend the Housing Act 1996 to state that 'local connection' should be disregarded for care experienced people at their election.
- Amend the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 to ensure that care experienced people over the age of 21 retain "priority need" status when homeless.
- Amend the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 so that care experienced people facing homelessness cannot be referred to another local authority due to 'local connection' if they do not wish to be.

#### **Welsh Government response at time of report: Accept in part**

- Our Programme for Government contains a commitment to reform housing law and implement the Homelessness Action Group's recommendation to fundamentally reform homelessness services to focus on prevention and rapid rehousing.

- To progress this commitment an Expert Review Panel is in place to review and make recommendations for legislative reform. The panel was convened in August 2022 and will report in August 2023.
- As part of their deliberations, the panel have considered the experience of homelessness for those who are care leavers and what targeted prevention measures, either facilitated through legislation or via broader policy led mechanisms, would better prevent homelessness for this group.
- Following receipt of the Expert Review Panel's final report the Welsh Government will publish a White paper, setting out our proposals for legislative change to ensure that homelessness is prevented for the majority of those at risk and that, where it cannot be prevented, it is rare, brief and unrepeatable.
- The recommendations of the Children, Young People and Education Committee have informed the ongoing deliberations of the panel and the parallel development work on the White Paper and we are committed to taking action to prevent homelessness for those who are care experienced through these reforms.

#### **Welsh Government update – November 2025**

- The Homelessness and Social Housing Allocation (Wales) Bill, introduced on 19 May 2025, will transform the response to those who are homeless in Wales and fundamentally change our homelessness system, to focus on earlier intervention and prevention.
- In recognition of the increased risk of homelessness that care leavers face, the Bill delivers a package of measures that are collectively designed to end use of the homelessness system as a route out of care and improve the transition from care to independent living.
- Social services and local housing authorities will be expected to work together to develop joint protocols for young people, and the Bill will require social services to take reasonable steps to ensure that suitable accommodation is available for occupation, for certain care leavers once they leave care.
- Care leavers owed these duties will be recognised as a group that must be allocated reasonable preference and, therefore, prioritised for social housing allocation.

- This is likely to be a more effective approach to ensuring young people transition from care to independent living without becoming homeless.

### **Recommendation 26.**

The Welsh Government must carry out a review of the support offered to young people by Young Person's Advisors. The review should consider:

- the concerns set out in this report relating to Young Person's Advisors and the pathway planning process;
- the likely impacts on the collective workload of Young Person's Advisors of the reforms set out in this report (particularly those relating to upper age limit for support for care leavers and those relating to opt-out advocacy services for children in care and care leavers); and
- any action required as a result.

### **Welsh Government response at time of report: Accept**

The Welsh Government will carry out a review as detailed by the Committee in this recommendation. This review will inform the work outlined in the response to recommendation 22 which will be to legislate in this Senedd Term to ensure all care leavers have an entitlement to a Personal Advisor up to the age of 25.

### **Welsh Government update – November 2025**

In August 2024 we surveyed local authorities about the services they provide to care leavers, asking for information on current number of PAs, post vacancies, caseloads, recruitment, job description and training specification. This is what we learnt:

- 52% proposed suggestions to improve the PA role or the service, and only 8 local authorities or 38% felt that PAs functions as currently set out were appropriate and current.
- There were 142 full-time equivalent PAs (in 21 local authorities) with caseloads ranging from 10 to 56 cases per PA.
- Most of the local authorities (81%) were either actively recruiting or would need more PAs.
- The vast majority (90%) were offering PAs to care leavers up to the age of 25, although some confirmed this was not universal and was on needs-basis.

- The PA job description varies substantially across Wales and the level of skills and qualifications required seem to be lower than other equivalent professions.
  - Reflective practice or supervision is also not generally used and the caseloads, the number of PAs and the team structure for each local authority also vary considerably.
- We are engaging with care leavers' teams across Wales to create a peer group that will contribute to the development of guidance around the following themes suggested by responses to the surveys:
    - A clear definition of a PA to reduce postcode lottery; including role description, caseloads, supervision, qualifications, training, etc.
    - Accessibility and effectiveness: entitlements for young people, best practice examples, outcome tracking tools, clarification of categories, forecasting demand, etc.
    - Inter-agency working and transition into adult services.
    - Voice of young people in defining the service: what young people need from a PA, preferred terminology and how best to meet their needs.
  - This will ensure the guidance is evidence-based and will encompass best practice for the support care leavers receive including a set of measurable outcomes.
  - In addition, CASCADE is undertaking a study to understand the experiences of young people leaving care, PAs and other stakeholders, about the support from PA teams during the leaving care process. The study will collaborate with participants through co-produced and participatory research methods to develop practice guidelines, future research related to PA practice and improvements in outcomes for care leavers. We are engaging with the study to avoid duplication and ensure we incorporate its findings to the guidance.
  - This work will also inform the review of our secondary legislation relating to looked after and accommodated children.

**Recommendation 27.**

The Committee recommends that:

As part of umbrella reforms to corporate parenting (see radical reform 3), the Welsh Government should amend the Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Act 2022 to:

- impose a duty to promote tertiary education to care experienced people;
- and add a mandatory registration condition relating to the promotion of the participation, retention, reduction of attainment gaps and support for care experienced people.

**Welsh Government response at time of report: Reject**

- The Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Act places a duty on the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (CTER) to promote tertiary education to “underrepresented groups” and requires CTER to have a registration condition for providers relating to the participation, retention, reduction of attainment gaps and support for “underrepresented groups”. “Underrepresented groups” is defined in the Act as “groups that are under-represented in Welsh tertiary education as a result of social, cultural, economic or organisational factors”.
- This description is purposely inclusive of care experienced people, and the committee’s report further underlines the need for CTER to work with higher and further education institutions to promote participation by, and equality of opportunity for, care experienced people in tertiary education. The Act as passed will require it to do so.

**Welsh Government update – November 2025**

- The Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Act already places clear duties on Medr (the established CTER) to promote participation, retention, and attainment for underrepresented groups, which includes care-experienced learners. To strengthen delivery, we will work with Medr to ensure guidance and monitoring explicitly reference care-experienced learners as one of the captured under-represented groups. Medr’s ongoing consultation on its’ new regulatory system proposes enhanced registration conditions to embed equality of opportunity and learner success, including tailored support for care-experienced learners. Welsh Government will continue to work collaboratively with Medr to ensure alignment with wider commitments such as the Corporate Parenting Charter and the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan.