

Our Ref/Ein Cyf:
Your Ref/Eich Cyf:

Date/Dyddiad:

Please ask for/Gofynnwch am:

Direct line/Llinell uniongyrchol:

Email/Ebost:

5th September 2011

Dr Chris Llewelyn

029 2046 8614

chris.llewelyn@wlga.gov.uk



WLGA • CLILC

Committee Clerk
Children and Young People Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

Dear Committee Clerk

Inquiry into children's oral health

The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) represents the 22 local authorities in Wales, and the three national park authorities, the three fire and rescue authorities, and four police authorities are associate members. It seeks to provide representation to local authorities within an emerging policy framework that satisfies the key priorities of our members and delivers a broad range of services that add value to Welsh Local Government and the communities they serve.

The WLGA welcomes the opportunity to respond to the inquiry into children's oral health in Wales. The WLGA recognises the vital importance of oral health in children and welcomes the committee's inquiry. As a representative body for local authorities we do not think we are best placed to answer all the questions posed in your letter. However, we would like to provide some comments on the issues of children's oral health in Wales and we hope that you find them useful.

Local authority services such as Flying Start will play an important role in ensuring adequate oral health in children 0-3 years old in Flying Start areas. Flying Start Co-ordinators are well placed to provide details on this issue and the WLGA would recommend that they are contacted as part of this inquiry. However, it is important to note that this will cover Flying Start areas and only children 0-3 years and addressing the needs of all children and young people is important.

Access to dental health is important and the WLGA are aware that in

Steve Thomas
Chief Executive
Prif Weithredwr

Welsh Local Government
Association
Local Government House
Drake Walk
CARDIFF CF10 4LG
Tel: 029 2046 8600
Fax: 029 2046 8601

Cymdeithas Llywodraeth
Leol Cymru
Tŷ Llywodraeth Leol
Rhodfa Drake
CAERDYDD CF10 4LG
Ffôn: 029 2046 8600
Ffacs: 029 2046 8601

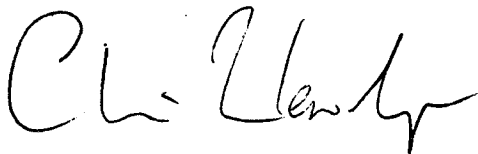
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some deprived areas this can be more difficult due to geography and potential transport issues. Access to Nation Health dentists is important and an issue that should be addressed.

The WLGA is also aware that there is a link made between poor dental health and increased levels of deprivation. Dental health is now a recognised indicator of wellbeing and we welcome the inclusion of proxy measures relating to oral health in the Children and Young Peoples Monitor (Wales) published in 2008 and 2011.

This inquiry is welcome in recognition of a prevailing problem in terms of improving the health of children in Wales and reducing health inequalities. The WLGA believe it will demonstrate how existing data such as that from the health and wellbeing monitor, and data collected by the Public Health Observatory Wales is informing policy, and where gaps in the knowledge are in order to improve targeting and implementation of relevant programmes.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Llewelyn', written in a cursive style.

Dr Chris Llewelyn
Director, Lifelong Learning, Leisure and Information