

10 October 2024

Young carers

Dear Lynne,

On 23 September I met with representatives of Carers' Trust to talk about the issues facing young carers in Wales. We discussed [the census data](#), which shows there are around 8,000 carers aged 5 to 17 in Wales, and the impact of education services on the lives of these children.

We discussed Carers' Trust's recently published report, '[Carers and classes: the education gap for young carers](#)', which finds that, in England:

- In 2022/23, young carers missed on average more than a month of their education (23 days of school), compared to 14 days for other pupils.
- Almost half (46%) of young carers at secondary school in England were persistently absent in 2022/23. This means they missed at least 10% of school. That's one day of school every fortnight.
- Almost half (48%) of young carers reported being bullied in the past year.
- More than two in five (44%) young carers frequently struggle to study for tests or exams because of the demands of their caring situation.

Unfortunately, the basic data underpinning these findings are not available in Wales as we do not have data that identifies young carers in education. In England, young carers were added to the school census for 2022-23, enabling us to understand better the potential educational impacts of having caring responsibilities for school-age children (and, consequently, to put in place interventions to help these children achieve their potential).

I note that Estyn's 2019 review stated that "there is a lack of reliable data to identify how many young carers there are in schools, PRUs and colleges across Wales", and that the Welsh Government committed subsequently to explore how to collect national data about young carers. However, I heard that little progress has been made in doing this. I understand, of course, that the pandemic has inevitably delayed the progress of work like this. However, it is now over 5 years since that commitment was made.

Please can you provide us with an update on this area of work? We would appreciate information about why there has been a delay in implementing the changes to the school census and the Welsh Government's next steps, including the timetables for implementing any proposed changes.

I would be grateful for your response no later than 22 November 2024.

Yours sincerely,



Buffy Williams MS

Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg
We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English