

Comisiynydd Plant Cymru Children's Commissioner for Wales

Sally Holland

By email only

3 November 2016

Lynne Neagle AM
Chair - Children, Young People & Education Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff CF99 1NA

Dear Lynne

Thank you for chairing a stimulating scrutiny session of my Annual Report and Accounts on October 5 2016. During that session I agreed to provide further information with regards to the breakdown of cases dealt with by my office during 2015/16 and plans in relation to our strategic outreach programme.

Breakdown of the types of cases that have been dealt with by the Investigations and Advice team over the last year:

The Table below gives the primary classifications assigned to cases when they are taken on by my Investigations and Advice team. There were 520 cases dealt with in total but the primary classifications amount to more than this as some cases are classified with a number of issues dependant on the matters at hand.

Primary Classification	Total Count
CAFCASS	11
Education	293
Environment	51
Health	51
Housing	19
Immigration/Asylum	9
Legal	52
Local Authority (Other)	11
Police	13
Social Services	245

Highlights of our engagement work this year:

- Met, listened and spoke face-to-face to nearly 4000 children and young people from all 22 local authority areas
- 6000 children aged 3-18 responded to our Beth Nesa' / What Next survey (there is a breakdown of the sample within each of the detailed reports for each age group that took part in this large-scale survey – all are available on our website)
- 1000 children responded to our School Journeys 'Special Mission'
- 206 pupils from 80 schools took part in our Super Ambassadors celebration events, to help launch the new Commissioner
- 68 looked after children and care leavers, aged between 15 and 25, attended our north and south Wales events. They represented all 22 local authorities.

Key elements of our engagement work:

Super Ambassadors are one of the ways we listen to children and young people. Our School Ambassadors are primary school pupils who are elected by their peers; their job is to raise awareness about the Children's Commissioner for Wales and children's rights within their schools. Pupils are also required to complete special missions, canvassing opinions from peers on a wide range of issues; opinions which are then fed directly into our work. We now have nearly 200 active Super Ambassadors schools, and we have secured a direct link with existing Welsh Government programmes, such as the Welsh Network of Healthy Schools.

Community Ambassadors is a scheme based on the School Ambassadors concept, targeting children and young people living in areas of social deprivation and/or from disadvantaged groups. It offers opportunities for groups of children and young people who already meet together in non-formal education settings in communities in Wales. They include New Leaf, a Gypsy Traveller Forum in Cardiff, Mixtup, a mixed ability youth group in Swansea and Ebbw Fawr youth group based in a Communities First area in Blaenau Gwent, and Adamsdown Community First in Cardiff.

Webinars also feature heavily now in our direct engagement work with children and young people. We believe it is a cost-effective way of enabling a large number of pupils to engage directly with the Commissioner, helping us to gather pupils' views and raise awareness of the Commissioner and UNCRC. In February, we hosted a webinar where 23 schools logged on to and we recorded 430 online viewers. Partnership working has been a critical element of how we promote children's rights. Over the last seven years, we have worked with a number of partners including S4C on developing a dedicated TV series on our campaign See Me / Dyma Fi, a piece of work aimed at smashing the stereotypes of children and young people in Wales. We are also a member of the Welsh Government's Article 42 group that oversees all awareness work undertaken by Government in relation to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Membership of the group enables us to complement rather than duplicate efforts in relation to raising awareness of children's rights in Wales.

Supporting others to work with and listen to children and young people also features in our work plan. We have engaged with organisations including Kids in Museums, Welsh Ambulance and Welsh Government departments, offering them advice on participation and ensuring all engagement work with children and young people is underpinned by the UNCRC. Our staff also attend the national participation workers' network. This has enabled us to listen to issues being handled by participation workers across the country.

Page 3

Working directly with schools is another way of enabling children and young people to find out about their rights and have access to the Commissioner. We proactively arrange visits to schools and groups, covering every local authority in Wales, every year.

Ensuring others who run a similar programmes of visits, such as UNICEF's rights respecting schools, have up-to-date information about us and our work is another cost effective way of making information about rights and the children's commissioner accessible to as many children and young people as possible.

Strategic approach:

On an annual basis we measure awareness levels of the Commissioner amongst children and young people via an independent research company. The results enable us to target our awareness and engagement work.

My strategic equality plan outlines how I intend to ensure that my team and I work towards ensuring that children and young people in Wales grow up in a country where equality and children's human rights are central to the way in which public services are delivered. Equality considerations will continue to be built into the design of policies and the delivery of all my work, including our engagement work, and will be kept under constant review.

I hope you find this additional information useful to further inform the scrutiny of my annual report and the work of the office of the Children's Commissioner for Wales. As discussed during the session, the roles of the Committee and Commissioner are symbiotic in nature as we both play key parts in scrutinising the work of government and seeking improved outcomes for the children and young people of Wales. Our collaborative approach has invigorated a healthy dialogue and I look forward to building upon this relationship over the rest of our tenures.

Yours sincerely



Sally Holland
Children's Commissioner for Wales
