

# Statement by the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee

<b>Title</b>	Statement by the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee: Future inquiries and engagement work
<b>Date</b>	25 January 2017
<b>By</b>	Lynne Neagle AM – Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee

Thank you Llywydd, I welcome this opportunity to update Members on the work of the Children, Young People and Education Committee. As Chair of the Committee, I am delighted by the progress made in scrutinising key areas of policy and legislation over such a short period of time.

Over the summer, we consulted on what our Committee's priorities should be. I was pleased to see diverse and detailed submissions from nearly 90 organisations and individuals from across Wales. This led to the Committee embarking on two inquiries which stakeholders had identified: Statutory advocacy services for children and young people; and educational outcomes for Gypsy Traveller and Minority Ethnic learners. We have finished taking evidence on both of these subjects and will be reporting soon.

Looking further ahead and more strategically, our Committee, in the process of its planning, set out principles and ambitions for our work over the Fifth term of this Assembly. Underpinning everything will be the involvement of children and young people. Through our work we will ensure the views and experiences of children and young people are captured in a useful, sensitive and constructive way.

In our snapshot inquiry into Youth Services in Wales, more than 1,500 young people gave us their views on the services they use. Their input formed an essential part of our findings and recommendations, which were published in December. The feedback from young people was incredibly clear – when youth work provision disappears from a young person's life, the impact is considerable. These services are often a catalyst to help them develop skills and confidence and make better choices in their lives.

It continues to be essential for us to work with stakeholder organisations, carers, teachers and parents. And I am wholly committed to ensuring we are an outward

facing and engaging Committee. During our Stage 1 scrutiny of the Additional Learning Needs Bill, our Members will be hosting events with parents and carers in north and south Wales.

I am also pleased to inform Members there will be a series of workshops taking place for young people with additional learning needs. This will be an important part of our work scrutinising the Additional Learning Needs Bill and I look forward to seeing the views of young people guiding our work. We will also be holding a conference for practitioners and stakeholders working with children and young people to tell us their views on the Bill.

It would be remiss of me not to thank TSANA and SNAP Cymru for their fantastic partnership working with our Committee over the past few months. This partnership has allowed us to meaningfully engage with those who will be directly affected by the legislation.

Our partnership work and outward facing approach through the course of this legislative scrutiny will ensure service users' needs are at the heart of our work. Scrutiny of the ALN Bill will form the substantive part of our work until the end of spring.

Llywydd, the committee members and I are committed to undertaking work which will make a substantial contribution to improving the lives of children and young people in Wales.

In one of our current consultations, we are examining the importance of the First 1,000 days of a child's life. From pregnancy through to the 2nd birthday. This formative time is a critical part of a child's upbringing and sets the stage for intellectual development and lifelong health.

The Committee will consider the extent to which Welsh Government policies and programmes support the early parent role in the first 1,000 days. And crucially how effective these are in supporting children's long term emotional and social capabilities and development.

This important inquiry will, I hope, set the stage for a major national conversation about how we can really set our future citizens up for happy and healthy lives.

The Committee is seeking input from teachers and other education professionals for our inquiry into Teachers' Professional Learning and Education. The Welsh Government is reforming the way new teachers are trained before they qualify and also their ongoing professional development throughout their careers.

These professionals are sometimes locked into inflexible schedules and due to capacity and planning issues often cannot get the time to further themselves professionally. This cannot continue given the ongoing changes to the Welsh education system, so we will be looking specifically at:

- Arrangements for continuing professional development for the current workforce;
- The role of initial teacher education; and
- The sufficiency of the future workforce.

As part of our consultation we will be working with the Public Accounts Committee to jointly engage with the teaching profession as part of their work into consortia.

Members will be pleased to hear that our Committee will not just be undertaking a series of fixed pieces of work, but also ensuring that ongoing scrutiny of developing areas of policy takes place. To that end, we are continuing to closely examine the implementation of both the Donaldson and Diamond reviews. This will play a crucial role in delivering success of the important reforms being put forward. Linked to our ongoing scrutiny of curriculum reforms, we will be examining more closely Wales' performance in PISA and examining exactly how curriculum reforms will impact on our international standing.

Child health will play a big part of our work over the coming years. I very much look forward to working with organisations like the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health and welcoming the Welsh Government's Chief Medical Officer to the Committee in March to outline his vision for improving child health.

Members of the Committee are incredibly passionate about the quality and provision of mental health services for young people. The Committee has already undertaken scrutiny of the Cabinet Secretary for Health, Wellbeing and Sport, and I am sure he is aware that we will be continuing to focus on this vital area. The Committee will continue to examine the support available to young people in crisis, and in particular delays in accessing CAMHS as well as the support available to children and young people who do not reach the threshold for specialist services.

The Youth Parliament initiative being led by the Llywydd is a genuinely exciting moment in the history of the Assembly. Not only is it one that should create meaningful and long lasting ties between schools, young people and the Assembly, but it is a true recognition of the value children and young people have in our democracy. I want to offer our Committee's full and unwavering support to the establishment of the Youth Parliament, and I look forward to us playing a full role in getting it off the ground.

In closing my statement today Llywydd, I would like to thank the young people, carers, parents and experts who have readily contributed to our broad remit of work

since the establishment of the Committee. I hope that over the fifth term of this Assembly, the Children, Young People and Education Committee will be a real conduit for the voices of young people to shape policy and legislation in Wales. Thank you.

**ENDS**

**Check against delivery**

**Embargoed until after *Lynne Neagle AM – Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee* has delivered the statement.**