

Written Statement - Marking the first anniversary of the publication of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's Concluding Observation report

12 July 2017

Carl Sargeant, Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children

A year ago today, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child published its 2016 report on the United Kingdom's progress in implementing children's rights since it last reported in 2008.

The report was informed by evidence from all parts of the UK. At the time, the Committee took note of Wales' progress in relation to children's rights, for example, our Together for Children and Young People programme to support improved mental health for children and young people, and efforts on coordinating a better response to child sexual exploitation. The Committee also praised how the right to play is promoted in Wales.

Our work on children's rights continues.

The Welsh Government is committed to putting the rights of children at the centre of our policy making here in Wales. The UN Committee's recommendations and concluding observations have given us another opportunity to review our work on

children's rights and consider how we can continue to improve.

The Committee's recommendations cover a number of areas, including general principles such as respect for the views of the child; violence against children; family environment and alternative care; disability, basic health and welfare; and education, leisure and cultural activities.

Some of the recommendations sit in non-devolved areas, and of course we will work with and seek to influence the UK Government as it considers those.

In Wales momentum is building in a number of the areas where we have the powers to make a difference. I have highlighted below some of the key areas where progress has been, or is being made.

Both the Welsh Government and the Assembly Commission are taking forward the objective of showing respect for the views of the child, through providing greater opportunities to participate in decisions which affect them.

Following a unanimous vote of support from Assembly Members on 19 October 2016, the Llywydd announced her intention to establish a Welsh Youth Parliament.

Since then the Assembly Commission has worked with a Youth Parliament Steering Group to develop and consult on a proposal for a Youth Parliament. We await the outcome of that consultation.

This will complement the work of Young Wales which engages with children and young people through youth groups, forums and councils, and through social media, enabling them to tell Welsh Government their views on issues of their own choice. Welsh Government will also consult young people on the issues around Brexit.

Giving 16 and 17 year olds the vote is a key issue for young people who want to have a say in what happens in local area and their nation. The Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government intends to consult shortly on proposals to lower the voting age to 16 for local elections. The Presiding Officer has established an expert panel to examine the voting age in relation to Assembly elections, following provisions in the Wales Act 2017 which, on commencement, will pass responsibility for the franchise of Welsh elections to the Assembly. It is my hope that we will see 16 and 17 year olds participating fully in the democratic process within the next few years.

We all agree that violence, abuse and neglect should not feature in any child's life.

That is why Welsh Government remains fully committed to introducing legislation to remove the defence of reasonable punishment. Our "Parenting – Give It Time" campaign promotes positive parenting behaviours, providing advice, guidance and signposting to support. Our early intervention programmes continue to work proactively with children and families to highlight and tackle issues, such as potential neglect, before they become a problem.

In relation to basic health and welfare, the Welsh Government recognises the importance of promoting emotional, mental and physical well-being for our children and young people.

That is why we are working across government to co-ordinate policies and programmes which can have a positive impact on children and young people's well-being, particularly across the Health, Wellbeing and Sport, Education, and Children and Communities portfolios. For example, the Healthy Child Wales Programme (HCWP) launched last October, is a service-led universal health programme for all families with 0-7 year old children. It includes a consistent range of evidence based preventative and early intervention measures, and advice and guidance to support parenting and healthy lifestyle choices.

In Flying Start areas, we have aligned the health elements of the programme with the HCWP so there is consistency in the timing of health visitor contacts. We are also learning from the Flying Start approach, where professionals are often co-located and work closely together to deliver holistic support services and interventions for local families.

Wales led research is providing a focus on the potential impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), and I am considering how we can best help to reduce the incidence of adverse experiences for children, and help children to build resilience.

As part of this focus, the Cabinet Secretary for Education, the Minister for Social Services and Public Health, and I are supporting the work of the ACE Support Hub to enable professionals and organisations, across sectors as diverse as education and housing and the police to become ACE informed. I have recently announced the five Children First pioneer areas. Reducing the impact of ACEs will form part of their approach, working with and listening to children and young people in an area, to make a positive difference to their life courses.

In relation to mental health, the Cabinet Secretaries for Health, Well-being and Sport and for Education are working together so that good mental health support can be provided to children and young people in schools. The aim is to help and support teachers in responding to children and young people who are experiencing difficulties such as anxiety, low mood, and compulsive, self-harm or conduct disorders and to build relationships which extend from the classroom to specialist mental health services.

Together 4 Children and Young People, alongside its work to improve access to clinical service when required, is mapping and evaluating programmes for prevention and early intervention through its Early Intervention and Enhanced Support to Vulnerable Groups work stream. This includes the role of Local Primary Mental Health Support Services to ensure that children and young people in need of targeted support receive this in a co-ordinated fashion.

We are also investing in quality childcare, both to support families with employment choices, and to ensure children receive the care and help they need to develop the skills needed in later life.

A key commitment for this government term is the delivery of our childcare offer, which will provide 30 hours of government-funded childcare and early education to the working parents of three and four year olds for 48 weeks of the year. Bringing together early education and childcare, we are supporting children with the transition to full time school whilst simultaneously enabling parents to access employment and improve families' prospects.

The Welsh Government will continue to take every opportunity to reinforce and strengthen our commitment to ensuring children and young people are able to live their lives in a way that allows them to flourish in a safe and nurturing environment. This will inevitably include all parts of government working closely together and with partners outside government, and I look forward to us making further progress in the coming years.

The UN Committee's report is available on the Welsh Government's website, a link is provided below. I ask everyone, especially those with an interest in children, young people and their families to take some time to consider the recommendations made

and the ways in which every one of us can help make these rights part of the fabric of our society.

Datganiad Ysgrifenedig - Nodi blwyddyn ers cyhoeddi Adroddiad Arsylwi Terfynol Pwyllgor y Cenhedloedd Unedig ar Hawliau'r Plentyn

12 Gorffennaf 2017

Carl Sargeant, Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gymunedau a Phlant

Flwyddyn yn ôl i heddiw, cyhoeddodd Pwyllgor y Cenhedloedd Unedig ar Hawliau'r Plentyn ei adroddiad 2016 ar gynnydd y Deyrnas Unedig o ran gweithredu ar hawliau plant ers yr adroddiad diwethaf yn 2008.

Mae'r adroddiad yn seiliedig ar dystiolaeth o bob rhan o'r Deyrnas Unedig. Bryd hynny, nododd y Pwyllgor gynnydd Cymru mewn perthynas â hawliau plant. Er enghraifft, nodwyd ein rhaglen Law yn Llaw at Blant a Phobl Ifanc, sydd â'r nod o gefnogi'r gwaith o wella iechyd meddwl plant a phobl ifanc. Nodwyd hefyd ymdrechion i gydlynu gwell ymateb i achosion o gam-fanteisio'n rhywiol ar blant. Yn ogystal, canmolodd y Pwyllgor ymdrechion Cymru i hyrwyddo'r hawl i chwarae.

Wrth gwrs, mae ein gwaith mewn perthynas â hawliau plant yn parhau.

Mae Llywodraeth Cymru wedi ymrwymo i roi hawliau plant wrth galon ein gwaith llunio polisiau yma yng Nghymru. Mae argymhellion Pwyllgor y Cenhedloedd Unedig a'i sylwadau terfynol wedi rhoi cyfle arall inni adolygu ein gwaith ar hawliau plant ac ystyried sut gallwn barhau i wella.

Mae argymhellion y pwyllgor yn cyffwrdd â nifer o feysydd, gan gynnwys egwyddorion cyffredinol megis parchu barn plant; trais yn erbyn plant; amgylchedd

teuluol a gofal amgen; anabled; iechyd a lles sylfaenol; ac addysg, hamdden a gweithgareddau diwylliannol.

Mae rhai o'r argymhellion yn ymwneud â meysydd nad ydynt wedi'u datganoli ac fe weithiwn, wrth gwrs, gyda Llywodraeth y Deyrnas Unedig a cheisio dylanwadu arni wrth iddi ystyried y materion hynny.

Yng Nghymru, mae momentwm yn datblygu mewn sawl maes lle mae gennym y grymoedd i wneud gwahaniaeth. Isod, rwyf wedi pwysleisio rhai o'r meysydd allweddol lle mae cynnydd wedi cael ei wneud neu wrthi'n cael ei wneud.

Mae Llywodraeth Cymru a Chomisiwn y Cynulliad yn bwrw ymlaen â'u hymdrechion mewn perthynas â'r amcan o barchu barn plant, a hynny drwy roi mwy o gyfleoedd i blant gyfrannu at y penderfyniadau sy'n effeithio arnynt.

Yn dilyn pleidlais unfrydol gan Aelodau'r Cynulliad ar 19 Hydref 2016, cyhoeddodd y Llywydd ei bwriad i sefydlu Senedd ieuencid. Ers hynny, mae Comisiwn y Cynulliad wedi gweithio gyda Grŵp Llywio'r Senedd leuencid i ddatblygu ac ymgynghori ar y cynnig i sefydlu Senedd leuencid. Rydym yn aros i'r ymgynghoriad hwnnw ddod i ben ac i'w ganlyniadau gael eu cyflwyno.

Bydd hyn yn ategu gwaith Cymru Ifanc sy'n ymgysylltu ac yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc drwy grwpiau, fforymau a chynghorau ieuencid, a thrwy'r cyfryngau cymdeithasol, gan roi cyfle iddynt ddweud eu dweud wrth Lywodraeth Cymru am y materion sydd o bwys iddyn nhw. Bydd Llywodraeth Cymru hefyd yn ymgysylltu ac yn ymgynghori â phobl ifanc ar faterion mewn perthynas â Brexit.

Mae rhoi'r bleidlais i bobl ifanc 16 ac 17 oed yn fater o bwys i bobl ifanc sydd am gael llais a dylanwadu ar yr hyn sy'n digwydd yn eu hardal a'u gwlad. Mae Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyllid a Llywodraeth Leol yn bwriadu ymgynghori'n fuan ar gynigion i newid yr oedran pleidleisio i 16 ar gyfer etholiadau lleol. Mae'r Llywydd wedi sefydlu panel o arbenigwyr i ystyried yr oedran pleidleisio mewn etholiadau i'r Cynulliad. Mae hyn yn dod yn sgil darpariaethau yn Neddf Cymru 2017 a fydd, ar eu cychwyn, yn rhoi cyfrifoldeb am etholfraint etholiadau Cymru i'r Cynulliad. Rwy'n gobeithio y gwelwn bobl ifanc 16 ac 17 oed yn cymryd rhan lawn yn y broses ddemocrataidd yn y blynyddoedd nesaf.

Rydym oll yn gytûn na ddylai trais, cam-drin nac esgeulustod fod yn rhan o fywyd unrhyw blentyn. Dyna pam mae Llywodraeth Cymru'n parhau i fod yn hollol ymrwymedig i gyflwyno deddfwriaeth i ddiddymu'r amddiffyniad cosb resymol. Mae ein hymgyrch "Rhianta – Rhowch Amser Iddo" yn hyrwyddo technegau rhianta da,

gan roi cyngor a chanllawiau, a chan gyfeirio at gymorth. Mae ein rhaglenni ymyrryd yn gynnar yn parhau i ymgysylltu'n rhagweithiol â phlant a theuluoedd i bwysleisio a thaclo materion, megis esgeuluso plant, a hynny cyn iddynt droi'n broblem, gobeithio.

O ran iechyd a lles sylfaenol, mae Llywodraeth Cymru'n cydnabod pwysigrwydd hyrwyddo lles emosiynol, meddyliol a chorfforol ar gyfer ein plant a'n pobl ifanc.

Dyna pam rydym yn gweithio, a hynny ar draws y llywodraeth, i gydlynu polisïau a rhaglenni a all gael effaith gadarnhaol ar les plant a phobl ifanc. Mae hyn, wrth gwrs, o bwys mawr i'r portffolio Iechyd, Lles a Chwaraeon a'r portffolio Plant a Chymunedau. Er enghraifft, mae'r rhaglen Plant Iach Cymru, a lansiwyd mis Hydref diwethaf, yn rhaglen iechyd gyffredinol ar gyfer teuluoedd sydd â phlant 0-7 oed. Mae'n cynnwys ystod o ymyriadau cynnar, oll wedi'u seilio ar dystiolaeth, a chyngor a chanllawiau i gynorthwyo gyda rhianta a gwneud dewisiadau byw'n iach.

Mewn ardaloedd Dechrau'n Deg, rydym wedi alinio elfennau iechyd y rhaglen gyda rhaglen Plant Iach Cymru er mwyn sicrhau cysondeb o ran amseru ymweliadau iechyd. Rydym hefyd yn dysgu o'r ymagwedd Dechrau'n Deg; hynny yw, bod gweithwyr proffesiynol yn cael eu lleoli gyda'i gilydd ac yn cydweithio'n agos i ddarparu gwasanaethau cymorth ac ymyriadau holistaidd i deuluoedd lleol.

Mae gwaith a arweinir gan Gymru yn ymchwilio i effeithiau posibl profiadau niweidiol yn ystod plentyndod, ac rwyf i'n ystyried sut orau i leihau'r achosion o brofiadau niweidiol yn ystod plentyndod, a helpu plant i fod yn gydnerth a gwydn. Fel rhan o hyn, mae Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg, y Gweinidog Iechyd y Cyhoedd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol a minnau'n cefnogi gwaith y Ganolfan Gymorth Profiadau Niweidiol yn ystod Plentyndod i alluogi pobl broffesiynol a sefydliadau, ar draws sectorau mor amrywiol ag addysg, tai a'r heddlu i ddysgu mwy am brofiadau niweidiol yn ystod plentyndod, a'u heffeithiau. Yn ddiweddar, cyhoeddais bum ardal arloesi Rhoi Plant yn Gyntaf. Bydd lleihau effeithiau profiadau niweidiol yn ystod plentyndod yn rhan o'u gwaith; byddant yn gweithio gyda phlant a phobl ifanc yn lleol, ac yn gwrandao arnynt, er mwyn ceisio gwneud gwahaniaeth cadarnhaol i gwrs eu bywydau.

O ran iechyd meddwl, mae Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Iechyd, Lles a Chwaraeon ac Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg yn gweithio gyda'i gilydd i sicrhau y gall cymorth iechyd meddwl o safon cael ei ddarparu i blant a phobl ifanc yn yr ysgol. Y nod yw helpu a chefnogi athrawon i ymateb i blant a phobl ifanc sy'n cael anawsterau megis pryder, iselder, hunan-niweidio, neu anhwylderau cymhellol neu

ymddygiadol, a datblygu cysylltiadau defnyddiol sy'n ymestyn o'r ystafell ddosbarth i wasanaethau iechyd meddwl arbenigol.

Mae Law yn Llaw at Blant a Phobl Ifanc, ochr yn ochr â'i waith i wella mynediad at wasanaeth clinigol pan fo'i angen, yn mapio a gwerthuso rhaglenni atal ac ymyrryd yn gynnar drwy ei ffrwd gwaith Ymyriadau Cynnar a Gwell Cymorth i Grwpiau sy'n Agored i Niwed. Mae hyn yn cynnwys Gwasanaethau Cymorth Iechyd Meddwl Sylfaenol Lleol, sy'n gwneud gwaith i sicrhau bod plant a phobl ifanc sydd angen cymorth penodol yn ei gael mewn ffordd gydlynol.

Rydym hefyd yn buddsoddi mewn gofal plant o safon, er mwyn cefnogi teuluoedd â'u dewisiadau, a sicrhau bod plant yn derbyn gofal a chymorth er mwyn iddynt allu datblygu'r sgiliau sydd eu hangen arnynt i lwyddo mewn bywyd.

Mae cyflawni ein cynnig gofal plant yn un o brif ymrwymadau'r llywodraeth ar gyfer y tymor hwn: 30 awr o ofal plant ac addysg gynnar wedi'i ariannu gan y llywodraeth i rieni sy'n gweithio ac sydd â phlant tair a phedair blwydd oed, a hynny am 48 wythnos y flwyddyn. Gan ddod ag addysg gynnar a gofal plant at ei gilydd, rydym yn cefnogi plant i bontio i addysg llawn amser ac, ar yr un pryd, yn galluogi rhieni i gael mynediad at gyflogaeth gan wella rhagolygon teuluoedd.

Bydd Llywodraeth Cymru yn parhau i fanteisio ar bob cyfle i gryfhau ac ategu ein hymrwymiad i sicrhau bod plant a phobl ifanc yn gallu byw eu bywydau mewn ffordd sy'n eu caniatáu i ffynnu a llwyddo, a hynny mewn amgylchedd diogel sy'n helpu i'w meithrin. Bydd hyn yn golygu y bydd angen i bob rhan o lywodraeth weithio gyda'i gilydd a chyda phartneriaid y tu allan i lywodraeth, ac rwyf innau'n edrych ymlaen at ein gweld yn gwneud cynnydd pellach yn y blynyddoedd i ddod.

Mae adroddiad Pwyllgor y Cenhedloedd Unedig ar gael ar wefan Llywodraeth Cymru, wele ddolen isod. Gofynnaf i bawb, yn enwedig pobl sydd â diddordeb ym maes plant, pobl ifanc a'u teuluoedd, i ystyried yr argymhellion a wnaed a sut gallwn ni i gyd helpu i sicrhau bod hawliau plant yn greiddiol i'n cymdeithas.