

Agenda – Children, Young People and Education Committee

Meeting Venue: Committee Room 3,
Senedd

Meeting date: 13 February 2025

Meeting time: 09.30

For further information contact:

Naomi Stocks

Committee Clerk

0300 200 6565

SeneddChildren@senedd.wales

On-site

Private pre-meeting

09.15 – 09.30

Public meeting

09.30 – 16.00

1 Appointment of a Temporary Committee Chair

09.30

2 Introductions, apologies, substitutions, and declarations of interest

09.30

3 Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Bill – Stage 2 proceedings

09.30 – 16.00

Mark Drakeford MS, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language

Bethan Webb, Deputy Director, Cymraeg 2050

Sioned Tobias, Lawyer, Welsh Government

Siwan Daniel, Lawyer, Welsh Government

Documents relevant to Stage 2 proceedings will be available on the [Bill page](#).



The Children, Young People and Education Committee agreed on 09 January 2025, under Standing Order 26.21, that the order of consideration for Stage 2 proceedings will be:

Sections 1–5; Schedule 1; Sections 6–36; Schedule 2; Sections 37–55 and Long Title.

Supporting documents:

[Marshalled list of Amendments](#)

[Grouping of Amendments](#)

[Welsh Language and Education \(Wales\) Bill](#) (as introduced)

[Explanatory Memorandum](#)

There will be breaks at appropriate times during the proceedings

4 Papers to note

4.1 Information from Stakeholders

(Page 1)

Attached Documents:

Email to the Children, Young People and Education Committee from a Religious Education teacher

4.2 Welsh Government Draft Budget 2025–26

(Pages 2 – 3)

Attached Documents:

Letter to the Chair of the Children, Young People and Committee from the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care, Minister for Children and Social Care and Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing

4.3 Qualifications Wales – Annual Report

(Pages 4 – 9)

Attached Documents:

Letter to the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee from the Chair and Chief Executive of Qualifications Wales

4.4 Implementation of education reforms

(Pages 10 – 12)

Attached Documents:

Letter to the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee from the Cabinet Secretary for Education

4.5 Welsh Government Draft Budget 2025–26

(Pages 13 – 14)

Attached Documents:

Letter to the Chief Executive of Medr from the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee

4.6 Routes into post-16 education and training

(Pages 15 – 16)

Attached Documents:

Additional information from NASUWT following the meeting on 29 January 2025

4.7 Care Inspectorate Wales: Annual Scrutiny

(Pages 17 – 19)

Attached Documents:

Letter to the Chief Inspector of Care Inspectorate Wales from the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee

4.8 Information from Stakeholders

(Page 20)

Attached Documents:

Information from Stakeholders

Agenda Item 4.1

Dear Friends of Cardiff University,

I am hopefully writing unnecessarily, as voices opposing the loss of the Religion and Theology programme (and other programmes) at Cardiff University are hopefully already being raised.

I would like to share my view and call on those with influence to take action.

(If this is not in your wheelhouse, please forward to those for whom it might be.)

I am a secondary Religious Education teacher who has often sent good students to study at Cardiff. I also care about Wales and its institutions.

My objection to the university's plans is as follows:

If a university wants to study the totality of the human experience, as opposed to just being an expensive technical college, it would support the teaching of our past (ancient history), our beliefs (religion and theology), our languages (modern languages), our culture (music), and our health (nursing). It would also not combine STEM subjects into blobs like the "School of Data Science."

For Wales's flagship university to do this is particularly outrageous. The university will leave unstudied the place of Wales in ancient history, its rich religious heritage, its music, and the place of Welsh among other languages. It will weaken the NHS in the land of its birth. Some subjects may not seem to contribute much on a spreadsheet, but they all contribute to a "university" as we once understood the word.

Regarding religion, Wales is the land of David and the Age of the Saints; of Bishop Richard and the Reformation; of William Morgan's Welsh Bible; of non-conformity and the Christian revival; and it is now the land of vibrant multi-faith communities. We do not study and teach religion because we are necessarily religious, we do it because religious literacy is vital in a world where religion still makes at least half of us tick. Where will Wales's voice be heard?

A canard that needs dismantling is the idea that some degrees have little value in monetary terms. Setting aside the argument about the inherent good of learning, this is untrue for Cardiff. The average salary for a Cardiff Theology and Religion graduate is the same as the national average and the same as a student studying something "practical" like Accounting at a non-Russell Group university. What matters is the *reputation and quality of the university*, which Cardiff has. As a school teacher I can tell you that if you lose that reputation, it is gone forever. These savage cuts are a threat to exactly that.

It is not Cardiff's fault that there has been a catastrophic drop in foreign student numbers and a refusal to tackle university finance given stagnant domestic fees, but with cash reserves of £188m, Cardiff should ride out the storm. If it has to make cuts it should do so cautiously and protect learning above all else. It should also probably not pay its VC 10x the salary of its lecturers, but that's an issue that goes beyond Cardiff.

Agenda Item 4.2

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Iechyd a Gofal Cymdeithasol
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care

Dawn Bowden AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Plant a Gofal Cymdeithasol
Minister for Children and Social Care

Sarah Murphy AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Iechyd Meddwl a Llesiant
Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing

Buffy Williams MS
Chair
Children, Young People and Education Committee
Senedd Cymru



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

3 February 2025

Dear Buffy

Following the Children, Young People and Education Committee's Draft Budget scrutiny session on 9 January, we are writing to provide you with further information and the papers requested during the session.

Officials are currently developing the *Quality Statement on Children's Health*, which will set out our clear expectations about the high-quality services health boards are expected to deliver.

- The Welsh Government is working with the Children's Health Network to draft the quality statement
- Engagement with stakeholders will take place over the summer
- It is anticipated the quality statement will be published by the end of 2025.

The National Strategic Clinical Network for Child Health has been established in the NHS Executive and a National Clinical Lead has been appointed to bring specific focus to these areas. The Children's Health Clinical Lead will:

- Drive improvements in clinical outcomes and service quality.
- Collaborate with stakeholders, including health boards and other clinical networks, to develop and implement best practices and standards across Wales.
- Help to ensure children's health services in Wales are effective, equitable, and aligned with national priorities and standards.
- Work with the Welsh Government to produce the *Quality Statement for Children's Health*.

Funding for the vaccination of children and young people is part of health boards' core allocations. NHS organisations are responsible for managing funding and ensuring it is appropriately used to provide an equitable vaccination offer to all those eligible, in line with the principles set out in the *National Immunisation Framework*.

Public Health Wales (PHW) publishes an annual report which reports on the uptake of routine childhood immunisations (up to age 15) and summarises trends in socioeconomic inequalities and geographic variations. Although long-term trends in uptake remain stable in some areas, there has been a widening of socioeconomic inequalities in uptake in most age groups in Wales during 2023-24.

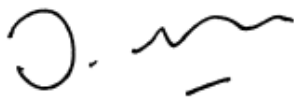
PHW has been tasked with putting in place measures to improve the quality and frequency of reporting in response to this to provide the NHS with intelligence to identify actions to address inequalities. This will support Vaccination Programme Wales (NHS Executive) working with a Clinical Leadership fellow to review the health boards' vaccine equity plans to identify national actions and support local delivery and actions to improve vaccine equity.

Welsh Government officials will work with PHW and the NHS Executive on opportunities to undertake targeted work building on the approach taken to increase MMR uptake during 2024 and changes to the childhood vaccination schedule in 2025-26.

While the paediatric training programme is being reviewed, Health Education Improvement Wales (HEIW) has not undertaken a specific review of the paediatric workforce. HEIW is developing a *Perinatal Workforce Plan* for NHS Wales and anticipate this will be launched in March 2025. The plan is multi-professional and will include the paediatric medical, nursing, and allied health professions pipeline to support neonatology services.

On 1 July 2024, we published a call for evidence in relation to the consumption of energy drinks in children. This followed a consultation in 2022 about proposals to end the sale of energy drinks to under 16s and asked for additional evidence in relation to several key areas of interest, including the health and wider societal impacts associated with energy drink consumption by children and the operability of current voluntary sales bans adopted by some retailers. A summary of responses to the call for evidence was published on 23 December and is available [HERE](#). We are considering these as part of the next steps going forward. We will keep the committee updated as this work develops.

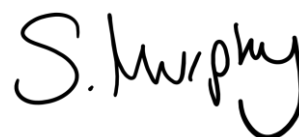
Yours sincerely,



Jeremy Miles AS/MS
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet
dros Iechyd a Gofal
Cymdeithasol
Cabinet Secretary for
Health and Social Care



Dawn Bowden AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Plant a
Gofal Cymdeithasol
Minister for Children and
Social Care



Sarah Murphy AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Iechyd Meddwl a
Llesiant
Minister for Mental Health and
Wellbeing

Agenda Item 4.3



4 February 2025

Dear CYPE Committee Chair,

QW response to CYPE Committee – questions from 11 December 2024

Following the scrutiny of Qualifications Wales' Annual Report 2023 – 2024 on 11 December, members requested further written information on some points that we were unable to cover in the time allocated for the session.

We have set out answers to the four questions raised in the attached annex.

If there's any further information that you require, then please let us know.

We look forward to working with you during 2025.

Gyda diolch

David Jones OBE DL
Chair

Philip Blaker
Chief Executive

Qualifications Wales
Q2 Building, Pencarn Lane
Imperial Park,
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NP10 8AR
☎ 01633 373 222




www.qualificationswales.org
Pack Page 4

Cymwysterau Cymru
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1. In response to the Steering Group's Report, Qualifications Wales published a report on its approach to increasing the number of Welsh-medium qualifications. Your report highlights a number of challenges around post-16 vocational qualifications, some relating to funding and others to awarding bodies. Have you identified any solutions to these challenges, and how are you working with Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol to address them?

We have established a strategic partnership with the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol. Through that partnership, we have agreed to work together on the vital matter of Welsh language qualifications for the benefit of learners and apprentices who choose to study and train in Cymraeg or bilingually. Our aim is to ensure that learners and apprentices who choose Welsh-medium and bilingual provision have accessible bilingual qualifications in relevant subject areas.

While we have made good progress in recent years, and remain committed to our role, we need to work with others who have responsibilities to facilitate an increase in the number of Cymraeg speakers and an increase in the use of Cymraeg in qualifications and assessment.

The Welsh Language and Education Bill recognises the key role that a number of bodies and partnerships have to play in supporting individuals on their journey along the language skills continuum. It identifies the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol's important role in ensuring that more learners in higher education, further education and apprenticeships have the opportunity to pursue their education through the medium of Welsh.

We will work closely with Medr and Coleg Cymraeg and contribute to a shared national plan for the Cymraeg in the tertiary education sector. We are committed to working with awarding bodies to extend the range of bilingual qualifications as demand increases.

A specific example of how we are working in partnership with others to address challenges in the post-16 sector is our work with the Federation of Awarding Bodies to build a database of Cymraeg-speaking assessors. The database, launched in September 2024, aims to support awarding bodies by connecting them with Cymraeg-speaking practitioners who are interested in opportunities to undertake Welsh-medium assessor roles. As it becomes more established, this resource will support awarding bodies who need to appoint and train Cymraeg-speaking assessors to ensure valid and reliable qualifications are awarded to Welsh-medium

learners. This will be key for awarding bodies to expand their Welsh-medium qualification provision and to provide an active offer for learners.

In recent years, we have refined our approach to making qualifications available in Welsh. As our recent [progress report](#) highlighted, one of the challenges we face in expanding the range of Welsh-medium qualifications is the funding and capacity constraints. Given the finite budget (£180,000 allocated within our overall budget) of our Welsh Language Support Grant, we need to target our funding to prioritise qualifications in areas of strategic importance to maximise the impact of our resource and capacity. Before engaging with the awarding bodies in our targeted Welsh-medium discussions, we gather feedback on our list of targeted qualifications from key stakeholders, such as the Coleg Cymraeg , Welsh Government, and CYDAG. This feedback allows us to further refine the list to reflect the needs of learners in the post-16 sector.

2. Although the number of incidents notified to you went down in 2023-24, it is still higher than in previous years. Last year, you said that the number of incidents is low in the context of the number of exams being sat and that the errors in papers are small. Has that been the case this year? Are you content that awarding bodies are addressing any identified issues?

Yes, in the context of the number of examinations and assessments that are taken by learners in Wales the error rate in assessment materials remains very small. The vast majority of the assessment error incidents reported had limited or no impact in Wales. A key part of our incident management process is to oversee the actions taken by awarding bodies to mitigate the impact on learners and on the actions, they subsequently take to prevent a recurrence. We do not close cases until we are satisfied that the awarding body has taken the necessary steps to understand the root cause of the error and identified actions to prevent a recurrence.

3. You say in your Annual Report that two awarding bodies declared non-compliance with your standard conditions of recognition. To what extent are there any grounds for concern, particularly in relation to the requirement for publication of a Welsh-medium qualifications policy statement?

Fourteen awarding bodies declared non-compliance with our conditions in 2023. Two of those declarations solely related to compliance in Wales. One was as a result of non-activity in Wales (we have a requirement that an awarding body must award a qualification to a Welsh learner within a two-year period to maintain compliance).

That awarding body has now submitted a surrender notice which is being processed. There is no impact on learners as a result of that non-compliance.

One awarding body declared non-compliance with our new condition regarding the publication of a Welsh-medium qualifications policy statement. The condition was introduced in 2023 but with a lead in period for awarding bodies to become fully compliant by September 2024. The awarding body did not technically need to declare non-compliance at that point in time. As part of their declaration the awarding body provided an action plan on how they would be compliant ahead of September 2024. This action plan is now complete and they are compliant.

Our monitoring plan for 2025-26 includes activity to check awarding body compliance with the requirement to publish a Welsh-medium qualifications policy statement. Of the remaining 12 awarding bodies that declared non-compliance with our and Ofqual's conditions 11 have now completed their action plans and have returned to full compliance. Alongside Ofqual, we continue to monitor one awarding body's completion of their action plan and will follow up on any actions during the 2024 statement of compliance. There is no impact on learners as a result of the ongoing non-compliance.

4. Is there anything else you want to highlight in terms of your own work our Committee's scrutiny work going forward into 2025?

We will soon be publishing our business plan for the period April 2025 to March 2026. This builds upon a number of ongoing priorities that we have set out in our corporate plan.

National 14-16 Qualifications

- Working with Welsh Government and WJEC, who have specific responsibilities in relation to the provision of resources and professional learning, deliver change management activities to support the implementation of new qualifications focusing on system readiness for the first teaching of the first wave of newWave 1 GCSEs in Sept 2025
- Complete the approval of the second wave of GCSEs, and start the approval process for the final set of National 14-16 Qualifications - comprising VCSEs, Skills Suite and Foundation qualifications)
- Start to monitor the new GCSEs and prepare for full monitoring as the full range of National Qualifications becomes available

- Collaborate with partners to support the successful introduction of new on-screen assessments
- Plan and commission evaluation of the 14-16 National Qualifications reforms

AS and A level review

- Oversee WJEC's high-level review of AS and A level qualifications to ensure alignment with the new GCSEs
- Undertake a full review of Cymraeg and Welsh Second Language AS and A levels so that they are able to meet developing policy needs

Strengthen the post-16 qualifications offer

- Continue to monitor and take action to protect the availability of UK-wide vocational qualifications for Wales
- Commence reforms for Essential Skills Wales qualifications in Communications, Application of Number and Digital Literacy
- Approve reformed post-16 further education and work based learning qualifications in travel and tourism, hospitality and catering, and secure the provision of land-based qualifications
- Commence a sector review of hair and beauty

Regulate to support the system

- Oversee standards and continue to monitor the summer and winter examination series
- Maintain regular regulatory oversight of awarding bodies and the qualifications system
- Continue work to investigate opportunities to modernise assessment making better use of technology
- Shape and publish our Cymraeg strategy to support Welsh Government's mission, and manage grants to support bilingual qualifications

Develop our organisation

- Maintain a communications and engagement approach that uses effective channels to share key messages and listen to views
- Implement new legislation into how we operate (well-being of future generations, social partnership and procurement, Welsh language standards, procurement reform)
- Deliver our people strategy to support our employees to develop their skills, working flexibly, efficiently and effectively, within an inclusive workplace and a culture built upon our values

- Deliver our equalities objectives, including our anti-racism plan
- Deliver our carbon reduction plan to support Welsh Government's net zero ambitions.

End

Agenda Item 4.4

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Buffy Williams MS
Chair - Children, Young People's and Education Committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

4 February 2025

Dear Buffy

Thank you for your letter of 11 December 2024 requesting more information on the scope and timetable of the review of the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) legislative framework.

The review is considering the clarity and accessibility of the legislative framework to inform policy and legislative solutions on areas of the ALN Act, Regulations and Code.

This is alongside the detailed research activity and findings of the 4-year evaluation of the ALN system, undertaken by Arad Research. This includes the scoping report, a practitioner survey (due in February 2025) and a survey of parents and carers that is underway.

An iterative process of evidence gathering has commenced to examine a range of issues including;

- The clarity and accessibility of the Act and statutory guidance.
- Ensuring the legislative framework reflects the policy intent.
- Identification of any inconsistencies and areas where greater clarity may be required.
- Understanding how the legislative framework translates into practice.
- Identifying policy and legislative solutions.

We are currently requesting evidence from the key partners and stakeholders including the Education Tribunal Wales, local authorities, local health boards, further education institutions, early years, representatives of the third sector and parents. They are being asked to provide information under the headings;

- a) Definition and identifying Additional Learning Needs (ALN)
- b) Definition and identifying Additional Learning Provision (ALP)

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
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Correspondence.Lynne.Neagle@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

- c) UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- d) UN Convention on the Right of Persons with Disabilities
- e) Advice and information about ALN and the ALN system
- f) Duty to prepare an Individual Development Plan (IDP), to include the duty on schools, further education institutions (FEI) and local authorities (LAs).
- g) Children under compulsory schools age – LA duty to maintain an IDP
- h) Children over compulsory schools age - LA duty to maintain an IDP
- i) Young people at FEIs – duty on FEI and LA to maintain an IDP
- j) Young people not at a maintained school or FEI – duties on LAs
- k) Content of an IDP
 - a. ALN Section 2A
 - b. ALP Section 2B including outcomes
 - c. ALP Section 2C to be secured by an NHS body
 - d. Education placement Section 2D
 - e. Provision in Welsh
- l) Children and young people resident in Wales but educated in England
- m) Children and young people receiving education otherwise than at school (EOTAS)
- n) Children and young people Electively Home Educated and Child/ren looked after (looked after children)
- o) Ceasing to maintain an IDP
- p) Children and young people lacking mental capacity
- q) Transition of SEN provision to ALN
- r) Tribunal procedures and powers

We are also interested in observations on

- 1) The status of the ALN Code and interplay between the ALN Act, the ALN Regulations and ALN Code in decision making and application of the law.
- 2) Any apparent mismatches between the ALN Act and the ALN Code, or any confusion by stakeholders in respect of the ALN Code's meaning.
- 3) Any other observations that fall outside the headings and issues raised above

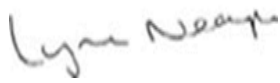
The existing evidence and reports from the Committee will be considered in this review. I am interested to know whether you would like the Committee to have further input into this process.

This work will continue into 2025 and I expect to update the Senedd on the progress and findings of the review by early July 2025. This is a complex piece of work and we have to get it right and I would prefer to get it right than to rush the work.

Meanwhile, as I made clear in the Committee debate on 13th November 2024 work to improve implementation continues alongside the Review. The Welsh Government is facilitating joint working between health and education partners to improve multiagency working towards common goals. Officials have been actively listening to the concerns from parents over the last six months and are delivering actions to improve the accessibility and availability of information about the ALN system. Termly meetings with individual local authorities continue, creating structures for key delivery partners to raise challenges and plans of improvement locally. Finally, work is underway to better understand what is 'generally available' to all learners in Wales.

I am determined that meeting the needs of learners remains at the heart of our education reforms and do not underestimate the importance of this review in achieving that aim.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lynne Neagle". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Lynne Neagle AS/MS
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education

Simon Pirotte
Chief Executive, Medr

04 February 2025

Recommendation in report on the Welsh Government Draft Budget 2025-26

Dear Simon,

On Monday 3 February we laid our report on the Welsh Government Draft Budget 2025-26. I would like to draw your attention to paragraphs 169 to 171 and recommendation 10 in particular:

"Recommendation 10. Medr should provide us with information about its proposed budget for 2025-26, and work with us as we establish a pattern of annual scrutiny of both its proposed budgets and its annual report and accounts to ensure that Medr is held to account for how it uses public funding to support tertiary education across Wales."

I would be very grateful if you could respond to this recommendation before the debate on the Welsh Government Final Budget on 4 March 2025.

In the meantime, I welcome your constructive engagement with us in relation to your appearance before Committee on 6 February. I look forward to working with you for the remainder of your tenure, and with your successor throughout the rest of the Senedd.

Yours sincerely,



Buffy Williams MS
Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

Agenda Item 4.6

- 1. NASUWT agreed to provide any available information on whether an equivalent to the Baker clause in England would help address the issue of access to schools in Wales.**

The Baker Clause in England allows FE colleges and training providers access to every learner in years 8 to 13 to discuss non-academic routes. Our members report to us that the variance in access, provision and experiences across the country is likely due to the natural variation between populous areas compared to rural (as discussed in the session). FE establishments do engage with schools – either via timetabled sessions or attendance at Yr.11 parents or careers evenings. The extent that this occurs will vary according to local demography, relationships between establishments, staffing and availability.

The Baker Clause also states that schools need to impartially promote the full range of FE / training qualifications and apprenticeships. As mentioned in the session, schools with 6th forms will predominantly promote their own subjects over FE establishments so as to retain learners and therefore retain the associated finance that will help ensure the future of the school in these times of shrinking budgets – *but this is only when the courses offered are identical* (for example, if the learner wants to follow an A Level Maths course, and both the FE provider and the school offer this course, then the school will naturally advocate their own course over the FE course.) We have no evidence that schools promote their own subjects over FE courses they do not also offer, and so more research would be required on such a scenario.

In any case, it is important to note that the EPI report¹ notes that Post-16 participation is generally high across all four nations as well as that a much larger share of young people studied in colleges in Wales (53%) whilst there was a lower level of 16-17 year olds in school sixth form provision (35%) in 2022. It is therefore fair to claim that FE access concerns do not appear in the data.

- 2. Since 2015, Careers Wales has no longer managed a work experience placing service meaning these arrangements, including any safeguarding assessments, have to be done by the school. Have you noticed a decrease in the work experience opportunities for learners in schools since then? What impact has this had on learners when deciding on their options after year 11?**

The range of work experience opportunities varies across the country, with rural areas having limited placement options as well as a narrower range of experiences than populous,

¹ <https://epi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/UK-Nations-post-16-Report-1-FINAL.pdf>

industrialised areas. Whilst this narrows the range experiences available, it does not necessarily decrease the amount of opportunities.

With workplace arrangements made by the school, the usual arrangement is that a teacher with a TLR for such duties will be responsible for the vetting of places, the subsequent safeguarding and risk assessments, and all associated paperwork. This workload is on top of the daily teaching load, and can result in schools having a portfolio of tried and tested workplaces that they use every year. The aforementioned workload in vetting new placements may mean that schools rely upon these regulars rather than proactively seek new placements over time. Some learners ask for work placements further afield and this can cause logistical problems for the parent school in terms of overseeing the location and the vetting, and may be a logistical step too far for the individual responsible. Having Careers Wales oversee the administration had a positive impact on schools and learners.

3. To what extent is there capacity within schools for staff to liaise with further education colleges and employers? Both in terms of work experience, and careers advice and guidance.

There is capacity within school staff to liaise with FE and employers, and it readily occurs so that careers advice and guidance is provided in specific events such as parents' evenings, options evenings and so on.

4. What are your views on whether there should be re-centralisation of work experience planning services? Do you think that such a service should be run by a central body such as Careers Wales, as it was previously?

See the response to Q2. Having Careers Wales oversee the administration had a positive impact on schools and learners, as their overreach and greater resources provided a wider range of options and experiences than perhaps individual schools could provide on their own. Conversely, it is possible that a centralised service would not be fully aware of local offers and experiences, and so perhaps a hybrid arrangement between schools and a central body might better serve all learners.

Our members inform us that proper support from a career advisor, on a one to one basis is crucial for children with any ALN. This would lead to learning the wishes of the young person, and supporting the correct pathway into employment and to work experience planning. It is fair to ask if schools have capacity to do this.

Gillian Baranski
Chief Inspector, Care Inspectorate Wales

06 February 2025

Formal 'concerns' about children's day care providers

Dear Gillian,

Thank you for giving evidence to us on 9 January 2025 about your annual report. We found the session useful and informative.

One of the questions we asked was about formal 'concerns' about children's day-care providers. We asked for your comments about the substantial increase in 'concerns' from 324 in 2020-21 to 552 in 2023-24. This data was taken from StatsWales, and is set out in figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Care Inspectorate Wales concerns about children's day care providers. Source: StatsWales, 'CIW Services and Concerns by Setting, Type and Year.'

Setting type	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Children's Day Care (total)	324	528	549	552
Childminders	80	92	83	72
Creches	1	2	-	-
Full Day Care	210	379	385	382
Open Access Play Provision	-	2	-	1
Out of School Care	10	22	14	20
Sessional Day Care	10	32	28	17
Children's Day Care - Not Known	14	-	37	6

In response, you told us:

"Interestingly, the concerns in 2022-23 were at 591, in 2023-24 they were 526, and this year, to date, we're on 392, compared to 534 and 576. So, we are actually starting to see a decrease in concerns in our childcare and play work, which we found quite encouraging."

We would be grateful if you could clarify to which setting(s) your figures relate, and why there appears to be a difference between your own internal figures and those published online by StatsWales.

The same data source also indicates that the total number of 'full day care' places specifically has risen from 39,134 in March 2021 to 42,629 in March 2024. The number of concerns about 'full day care' providers over that same period has increased considerably, although it has remained relatively stable since 2021-22. See figure 2 below.

Figure 2. Care Inspectorate Wales concerns about 'full day care' providers specifically, set against the total number of places provided by 'full day care' providers. Source: StatsWales, 'CIW Services and Concerns by Setting Type and Year'; StatsWales, 'CIW Services and Places by Setting Type and Year'

'Full day care' settings only	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Total number of places (as at March)	39,134	39,412	40,510	42,629
Formal 'concerns'	210	379	385	382
Concerns as a percentage of places	0.54%	0.96%	0.95%	0.90%

These new childcare places are very welcome. However, we would appreciate your views on what appears to be a sharp increase in the proportion of concerns relative to total places between 2021 and 2024. Specifically, what is the reason for this and is there any link between the rise in concerns about 'full day care' providers and the demands of expanding the Childcare Offer for Wales and Flying Start Childcare?

If you would like any further information or clarity of the source of the figures above please don't hesitate to contact the Committee clerks at any time. Otherwise, we look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



Buffy Williams MS

Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

Agenda Item 4.8



Buffy Williams MS
Chair, Children, Young People and Education Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff

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5 February 2025

CALL FOR COMMITTEE INQUIRY INTO CARDIFF UNIVERSITY COURSE CLOSURES AND THE CRISIS IN WELSH HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING

Annwyl Gadeirydd,

As the trade union representing academic staff at Cardiff University, we are writing to ask the Children, Young People and Education Committee to conduct an urgent inquiry into the funding crisis facing universities in Wales. Your committee will be acutely aware of Cardiff University's recently-announced [plans](#)¹ to cut 400 full-time academic jobs and close several departments and courses, including ancient history, modern languages and translation, music, nursing, and religion and theology. As a Union, we are deeply concerned about the impact that these cuts will have on staff, students, and educational provision at Wales' largest university, and the damage to Wales's reputation on the world stage.

An inquiry into this topic will provide committee members a valuable opportunity to scrutinise the Welsh Government on what steps it is taking to solve the financial difficulties facing universities across Wales. An inquiry could also be used to question Cardiff University's senior management team about their plans to impose major cuts to jobs and courses. This includes questions about the rationale behind the cuts at a time when the resources available to the University have grown significantly in the last twelve months. The University's recently-released annual report and financial statement, for example, [reveals](#)² that in one single year (2023-24) the University's cash or cash equivalent reserves *increased* by £69.2m.

We believe that an inquiry by the committee into both Cardiff University's unnecessary and devastating cuts and Welsh higher education funding policy more generally is urgently needed. Such scrutiny would contribute to a more informed and evidence-based investigation into the mounting problems facing the HE sector in Wales, as well as a possible solution to the funding crisis that continues to loom large over Welsh higher education.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter.

Yr eiddoch yn gywir,

Undeb Prifysgol a Choleg Cymru | University and College Union Wales

¹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c0k5n0k101lo>

² https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/2894974/CU_AnnualReport2024_Final.pdf