

**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)**

**CYPE SP 67**

**Ymateb gan: Jane O'Toole, Prif Swyddog Gweithredol, Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs**  
**Response from: Jane O'Toole, Chief Executive Officer, Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs**

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

**Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education**

- 1) Improvements to **pastoral care** within Primary Schools to ensure physical and emotional wellbeing of pupils.
- 2) Priority given to the Framework '**Embedding a Whole School approach to mental health and emotional wellbeing**' as well as the **Race Equality Action Plan** to ensure that all students are supported and able to thrive within school age education
- 3) We recommend that **play remains a priority**, particularly within primary education but also for secondary age children and young people – play is just as important as education (if not more so) to support children's mental health and recovery following Covid-19, as well as being a valuable tool in learning. It is essential that any planned changes to school hours / break times/ holidays do not detrimentally impact children's right (and need) to play
- 4) Ensure that children (and families) are able to **access school age education in the language medium (English/ Welsh) they wish**



- 5) Ensure that there are sufficient, quality childcare opportunities available to wrap around the school day and meet the needs of working parents and children and that these childcare services are registered (Care Inspectorate Wales), sustainable and robustly governed (i.e. with access to suitable funding, and suitable support such as through CWLWM partners). **There needs to be parity in the focus given during the Sixth Senedd to the childcare needs of school aged children and not just those in early years childcare** (and also parity in the focus on childcare and education); families continue to require quality, regulated childcare when their child is 3-12 years old, and typically the working day for parents/carers is longer than the school day. This message around needing to have parity in the support for early years **and** school age childcare is supported by our CWLWM partners.
- 6) Ensure that when new housing developments are being planned, there is **sufficient space** for:
- Schools**, with room to grow to meet local needs and with a **community focus**, whereby a childcare provider can tender to operate on site. Parental preference is typically for on site childcare availability and it also supports sustainability (removes transportation costs). This community room/space needs to be available in the longer term – too often we see these spaces withdrawn when the school needs the space for their own purposes, which then does not meet community childcare needs. **Childcare needs to be considered from the early planning stages**, engaging with relevant stakeholders to ensure the space is designed in a CIW registerable way.
  - Community buildings, designed with registerable childcare in mind** and with a community focus to ensure affordable rental rates are charged to services that will benefit the community, including childcare.
  - Both of the above need to take account of existing childcare provision in the area to ensure Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) registered providers are not displaced, and are given the option to tender for more preferable local space.

## **Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education**

1. Sufficient opportunities for all students to access **mental health and wellbeing support services**, particularly to address the further burden added by Covid-19
2. Address actions that are given within the **Race Equality Action Plan** to support an anti-racist Wales



3. Sufficient opportunities for those interested in a career in Playwork/Childcare to access **funded apprenticeships/ qualifications** (Welsh and English medium). Continued investment in professionalisation of the sector: through suitable funding, equitable access to continuing professional development and qualification opportunities to keep building Manager / Committee Member / Playworkers' knowledge and skills. This needs to continue beyond the 2022 Playwork qualification deadline for the sustainability and continued quality of the sector, and to suit a range of eligibility requirements (e.g. working under 16 hours, working under 10 hours, working in a currently unregistered Setting).
  
4. **Encouragement of careers in Playwork / Childcare** – linking with the Social Care Wales Campaign – the Sector needs more passionate, qualified Practitioners, and those working in the Sector need to be viewed as professionals and recognised for their valuable contribution (the [National Conversation with the Childcare, Play and Early Years Sector Report](#) found many childcare, play and early years workers felt undervalued and underappreciated during the Covid-19 pandemic). **We would like to see a continued commitment to recognise the professional status of the workforce** (as outlined in the Childcare, Play and Early Years Workforce Plan, 2017) and consideration of ways in which pay could be brought in line to reflect this. Within our recent [State of the Sector Report](#), 39% of Out of School Childcare Settings envisaged needing to recruit staff in the near future to replace those who had left during the Pandemic. Currently, there are Settings having to run at reduced capacity due to difficulty recruiting suitably qualified staff; Settings who have not been able to open for this reason; Settings that are considering de-registering with CIW due to an inability to meet the qualification ratios, and Settings who are facing an increasing likelihood that they will have to close their doors permanently.
  
5. An **active and effective sector skills council**, supporting the Playwork sector as an equal in the delivery of childcare alongside Early Years Workers.

**Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)**

1. **Holistic viewpoints in relation to funded schemes to ensure that Children's Rights and health and wellbeing are protected and supported**, without being a detriment to other priorities impacting on Children's Rights. For example, priorities linked to schemes such as School Holiday Enrichment Program and Holiday Hunger not being managed in a way that is of detriment



to the need for quality, sufficient, registered Childcare across Wales to support the poverty and health and wellbeing agendas.

#### **Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people**

- 1.** To review the **exceptions order** (National Minimum Standards) and ensure that changes are made to support **quality services and safeguarding** of children. All children have the right to access quality, regulated childcare facilitated by qualified staff and where suitable policies and procedures are in place to safeguard them.
- 2.** Continued **support/extension to the accessibility and sustainability of registered play and care provision** through initiatives that support both affordability and fair remuneration for Playworkers (e.g. Tax Free Childcare, The Childcare Offer, 100% rates relief). Schemes that support affordability of childcare must be promoted widely and with relevance to Wales. **Exploration of whether additional funding could be made available to support the affordability of childcare for school age children**, to encourage parents/carers to continue to utilise quality childcare provision, particularly when working from home. With the Scottish Government announcing a commitment to providing fully funded Out of School Childcare to lowest income families, we would welcome similar considerations in Wales to support affordability of childcare for school age children, to support positive outcomes for these children, and to support the sustainability of the sector.
- 3.** **To consistently and publicly support CIW registered, regulated childcare**, and the registration of unregistered childcare, as opposed to other schemes falling within the Exceptions Order, often used for childcare purposes. Our [State of the Sector Report](#) highlights the current challenges facing the Out of School Childcare Sector and the actions required to address these, particularly in relation to re-opening (with data from CIW corroborating this) and sustainability due to lower place take up with changes to working patterns. We welcome continued consideration within the Play Review and NMS Review to ensure our sector is supported and strengthened.
- 4.** **To make funding and support available for all types of childcare** (Out of School Childcare, childminders, day nurseries, playgroups/cylch's) as well as all management types (limited companies, sole traders, unincorporated committees, charities and CIOs) to ensure that no one 'falls through the cracks'



post Covid-19 and to prevent any further closures that will impact communities across Wales. Parents and children have a right to choose the childcare they wish to use (e.g. childminder versus after school club, or standalone after school club versus club based within a day nursery), and so **it is essential that the variety in services and in management types (and language type) is celebrated and supported.** It is essential that funding is accessible and not overly burdensome to apply for – [many Settings who have accessed funding during Covid-19 have found the process to be a burden](#))

5. **Ensure that the implementation of ECEC across Wales does not negatively impact the Out of School Childcare or Play sector.** Considered effort must be made to mitigate any potential unintended consequences regarding confusion for Providers of both early years and Out of School Childcare, on the availability of school age childcare places or the sustainability of school age childcare provision.
6. Participation –**Ensure that children remain involved and engaged in decisions that affect them** – the best way to support change and to achieve positive outcomes is to address the needs they report themselves. Children’s views should be heard and considered in all processes, even those processes that at first glance appear to not be relevant to children.
7. Address no funding or minimal funding levels across Wales to support **inclusion and accessibility of services**, particularly when focusing on 1:1 support for children to access Childcare and play opportunities.
8. Promoting play, leisure, relaxation of children and young people in a positive way and educating adults in the community as to the **benefits of play** and the importance of positive communication and engagement.
9. Ensuring that **play spaces are provided for all**, from babies, toddlers, school age, young people and those with additional needs; all need to feel that they belong to their community and have a space and a voice.

