

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 77

**Ymateb gan: Gwasanaeth Ieuenctid Ceredigion ac Uned Gofalwyr Ceredigion
Response from: Ceredigion Youth Service and Ceredigion's Carers Unit**

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.

Ceredigion County Council Porth Cymorth Cynnar: This is a combined response on behalf of Ceredigion Youth Service and Ceredigion's Carers Unit. Responses under each theme are in two parts, firstly representing Ceredigion Youth Service advocating on behalf of their Youth Council and secondly the voice of professionals representing the Young Carers Service, which forms part of Ceredigion's Carers Unit.

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

Ceredigion Youth Service: New National Curriculum for Wales and it's role to educate pupils around healthy relationships and sexuality

Following recent Ofsted research and analysis: Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges (10 June 2021); concerns were raised and discussed by Ceredigion Youth Council members regarding how schools could address the topic of inappropriate sexual behaviour between pupils. Youth Council members firmly believed that the new curriculum for Wales (being introduced from September 2022) presents an important opportunity to educate young people about this topic. Where it is recognised that RSE is one of the cross cutting themes for the new curriculum; the Ceredigion Youth Council would support that RSE is made a mandatory module within the new curriculum.



Therefore, we would support Welsh Governments proposals that all schools will have a duty to provide Relationship and Sexuality Education as part of the new curriculum for Wales. A priority should be to ensure that the guidance being proposed for schools provides a holistic and consistent approach to RSE in all schools in Wales; with consideration to the potential positive role of school based youth workers in supporting RSE delivery through thematic workshops and PSHE sessions.

Young Carers Service:

Young Carers (YC's) want increased awareness & understanding amongst primary and secondary school staff of the additional responsibilities that YC's carry out and the impact that these can have on their educational attainment.

There is a plethora of tools and resources made available to schools, however, take up of these is limited.

The Ceredigion Carers Unit worked with Welsh Government during the pandemic to create a Young Carers ID (YCID) card for Young Carers aged up to 18. It was launched in October 2020 ([Young Carer ID Card - Ceredigion County Council](#)).

How can the committee address them?

- Strengthen existing requirements on educational institutions to make staff more aware of the challenges faced by Young carers to enable YC's to reach their full potential.
- YC's, as a hidden/hard to reach group, to be named *explicitly* within the new curriculum of Wales – either in diversity or RSE.
- Ensure that school staff to be aware of the YCID card scheme in their local authority area and to recognise it when shown by YC's in schools.

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

Ceredigion Youth Service: Free University for Welsh Students

The topic of free university for Welsh students was seen as one priority for Ceredigion Youth Council in 2021. Where it was recognised that student fees supports Universities to offer a comprehensive undergraduate and post graduate programmes; it was mainly agreed by members that fees excluded a number of young people from all backgrounds from aspiring to study in higher education.

Youth Council members also discussed that Universities fees were also seen as a deterrent for some young people due to the level of debt studying at University would bring. This was amplified with the global pandemic and the question of 'value



for money' due to the online or blended approach to learning and the apparent decrease in the 'student life' experience.

Therefore, we would welcome a new review by Welsh Government regarding the viability of free university for Welsh Students.

Young Carers Service:

Young Carers are asking for increased awareness & understanding amongst FE and HE staff of the additional responsibilities that Young Carers carry out and the impact that those extra responsibilities can have on their educational attainment.

The Ceredigion Carers Unit worked during the pandemic to create an Adult Carers ID card ([Ceredigion Carer Card - Ceredigion County Council](#)) for adult Carers 18+.

How can the committee address them?

- Work with Higher Education Funding Council for Wales and it's FE equivalent to influence policy within HE and FE institutions across Wales to improve identification of YC's across all staff (not just those with welfare/pastoral responsibilities) in order to ensure YC's are supported to reach their full potential.
- Ensure that FE/HE staff to be aware of any Carer ID card scheme in their local authority area and to recognise it when shown by Young Adult and Student Carers.

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)

Ceredigion Youth Service – Young People's Mental Health

Young people's mental health and access to support services in schools and the community has been a reoccurring discussion point for the Ceredigion Youth Council. Youth Council members have expressed their concerns regarding how the pandemic will have a negative impact on youth mental health in the present and in the future. With the addition of school closures, online learning (2020) and lack of clarity regarding exams in 2022; this has amplified the need for appropriate levels of mental health support for young people both in schools and their community. The overall view of youth council members is that greater provisions need to be put in place with supporting young people's mental health.

Seemingly supporting this view is a report that is already in the public domain that followed the Children's commissioner for Wales Office: Coronavirus and Me 2 Survey. The report highlights how from those respondents aged 12 – 18; how feeling happy 'most of the time' had reduced from 50% in May 2020 to 39% in January 2021. Other



negative trends found in the results highlighted that feeling worried 'most of the time' had increased from 14% of respondents in May 2020 to 20% in January 2021.

Therefore, we would welcome as a priority a national policy that ensures that school pupils/young people have access to appropriate mental health support services in both school and their community; along with a national campaign that would help to remove the stigma around young people's mental health.

Young Carers Service:

Young Carers can present as hesitant to progress onto FE and HE *because* of their caring responsibilities. They are often unaware that social care can potentially support them to put things in place for the cared for person to enable them to feel confident enough to commit to FE/HE study or move away to access those educational opportunities.

How can the committee address them?

- Secondary schools, school careers services, social care and FE/HE institutions to work together more closely to raise awareness of ways in which YC's can be supported to follow their desire to go into FE or HE *at the point in which they are having those next steps conversations in schools*. We would like the committee to consider how they could strengthen this.

Provision of more more targeted/ring fenced funding from Welsh Government specifically for YC's. This would be to ensure that Young Carers service capacity can be strengthened to work with Young Carers (and all those partners listed above) across those transitional points when YC's are making such important decisions.

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

Ceredigion Youth Service: Supporting rural Children and Young People as a result of the Global Pandemic

It is apparent that the global pandemic has had a significant impact on Children and Young People across Wales and in Ceredigion. As a result, a number of local concerns have been raised by Ceredigion Youth Council regarding the long term impact of school closures on pupil's education and also, the impact on health and wellbeing due to a decrease in opportunities for social interaction and access to leisure activities, as a result of national lockdowns. This seemingly amplified for children and young people living in rural isolation and especially at times of school closures.



The Welsh index of Multiple Deprivation (2019) highlights the Service domain deprivation experienced by Ceredigion citizens due to the nature of its rural setting, (WIMD (2019) highlights that 50% of the LSOA's in Ceredigion ranked within the most deprived 10% ranks 1 – 191); services which includes access to superfast broadband or good digital connectivity.

As a result, we would call on Welsh Government to consider measures that removes barriers for rural children and young people to participate in meaningful activities. Measures such as free public transport schemes or subsidised access to cultural and leisure activities will empower young people to re-engage in meaningful opportunities. Therefore, promoting healthier lifestyles and improving the health and wellbeing of children and young people.

Further to this; the pandemic has highlighted the need for good digital connectivity in order to engage in online learning, youth support services or organised youth activities/platforms such as the Ceredigion Youth Council forum. Poor digital connectivity does put children and young people at a disadvantage regardless of the devices available to them. Therefore, prioritising this issue of improving rural digital connectivity would be seen as a priority for young people in a rural County such as Ceredigion.

