

**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 90**

**Ymateb gan: Emma Phipps, Rheolwr Llesiant, Voices From Care Cymru**

**Response from: Emma Phipps, Well-being Manager, Voices From Care Cymru**

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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**

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

**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)**

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

Voices From Care Cymru exists to improve the lives of care experienced children and young people in Wales by being an independent voice for the care community to influence systemic and long term change.

Over the past year we have worked with our care experienced community asking them to highlight what they feel should be the Senedd's priorities over the next term.

Based on their responses and the recent Manifesto led and co-production with care experienced children and young people. The following outlines key asks for our care community in Wales.



There are many reasons why children and young people are in care however all will say they have experienced trauma within their childhood. Many live in foster care (3,520 children) Residential Care (470 children) Kinship Care; with a family member (1,348 Children). They tell us they are regularly made to feel different and stigmatised because they looked after. Care experienced children and young people in Wales, want Wales to lead the way to provide care which enables them to thrive, feel secure and belong. Care experienced children and young people in Wales believe their Government has the opportunity to do this.

Voices from Care Cymru, in partnership with care experienced young people are calling on you to seek your commitment to listen to 1,000 care experienced children and young people from across Wales to coproduce a care system built on aspirations and relationships. Voices from Care Cymru would welcome supporting our Government in achieving this.

Care experienced young people have identified five key asks which they believe the education committee can ensure is progressed and committed to. Together as a care community family we want to see a care system which provides all children and young people with the stability, support and love they need to thrive. The care system can achieve this. However, we know for too many children and young people the system creates instability which compounds the trauma they have already experienced. In order to make strides in making a care system which provides the support and interventions needs to allow our care experience children and young people to reach their full aspirations. they have asked for the following:

**Legislation to ensure excellence in Corporate Parenting** *Ensuring an extension of Corporate Parenting duties in legislation to all public bodies in Wales.*

This support for care experienced children and young people must be enshrined in legislation. All Corporate Parenting bodies should develop a strategy which outlines how they will better understand, assess the needs, promote the interests and provide opportunities for care experienced children and young people. There should be a commitment by cabinet through the creation of a children and young people minister; who will act as a key defender of care experienced children's rights up to the age of 25.

**To provide the missing middle in mental health and wellbeing services** *Reform of Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing services for care experienced young people is required.*

Care experienced children have a right to mental health support, many care experienced children are let down by not being provided the right mental health support at the right time. Corporate Parents such as health, social services and education should be working together to provide a joined-up approach to emotional and mental health services for care experienced children and young people.



Reforming how we assess the wellbeing of care experienced children throughout their care journey. Having professionals confident in understanding trauma informed approaches. Earlier intervention is key to stopping young people bouncing from service to service, resulting in their issues never being fully addressed and therefore escalating into adulthood. For those most in need, dedicated CAHMS resources for care experienced children and young people is needed. Wales needs a comprehensive mental health and wellbeing service which plugs the current missing middle; whilst meeting the needs of our most vulnerable children.

### **Lasting Loving Relationships should be at the centre of a young persons looked after journey.**

Relationships should be a key consideration in all decisions made with and about a young person's care, providing consistency throughout childhood and into adulthood. Strong relationships provide young people with a sense of stability, identity and belonging. These relationships can include individuals from statutory agencies, past and present foster carers, family members and friends. A young person's care review should be empowering, allowing children and young people to identify who are important to them. Ensuring life journey work provides a young person with a sense of their whole identify; not simply family. Most importantly no young person should be separated from their siblings, only in exceptional circumstances and 'contact' with siblings should be afforded the same importance as with birth parents.

### **Creation of a Care Leavers Commitment Cymru:**

A national commitment led by the First Minister to our care leavers up to the age of 25. Drawing on support from Local and National Governments, private sector and the voluntary sector to create a benchmarked series of commitments to our care leavers, regardless of where they live in Wales. This includes greater transitional support into independent living, work experience, paid employment, innovative opportunities to broaden care leavers horizons. The offer of quality housing, so no care leaver is placed in unsuitable or unregulated accommodation. Further consideration is needed for the evaluation, impact and the expansion of 'When I Am Ready' provision and any costs of participating in education, training and employment is needed. Voices believe a care leaver charter can be created and used to standardised and infrom a gold standard care provision to our young care leavers.

### **Profit Free Placements**

Young people tell us they feel upset, angry and commercialised when conversations on the costs of placements become a factor in their life. Removing incentives of accruing profit can ensure that every penny is spent on building stable, supportive and sustainable placements, instead of being diverted to distant shareholders. This



could be a not-for-profit or full cost recovery approach. Any approach should be phased in to ensure existing placements are not disrupted.

Voices from Care Cymru and its members from the care community in Wales would welcome supporting our Government and this committee in achieving and progressing towards the above key asks.

The above response is submitted by by Voices from Care Cymru on behalf of its members, care experienced young people in Wales

