

Dear Sir/Madam

We hope that members of the Committee are well.

On behalf of parents and carers in Wales, we wish to inquire whether there will be another evaluation of the whole school approach that also consults with families in Wales by the Committee please?

You may recall we contributed to an evaluation in 2021 by the Senedd Committed in terms of our families' lived experience and outcomes for learners and families on emotional wellbeing.

There has been of course some great developments since 2021 but we still have concerns relating to the lack of pupil/family voice in the process of accessing the whole system, that schools can be a barrier as much as a gateway regards the inreach teams/whole system along with the disparity between communities.

I have concerns about some schools being expected to be the gateway for Neurodevelopmental assessments where the staff do not have the time nor the skills to make such clinical decisions and in my opinion are working outside of both their professional competency and guidelines of the Autism Code of Practice. The learner unduly left to journey down the mental health spectrum and the impact on the whole family.

Where there is discrepancy in opinion between families and schools about accessing in reach teams, families are told to go to the GP to bypass the school. This is sending families again hunting down services and conflicts with the No Wrong Door Approach.

There are many concerns raised by families that their children are reaching crisis, are absent from school and can no longer access emotional based support because they are not in school to access educational based interventions.

As we know, post COVID demand is outstripping capacity for CAMHS, Neurodevelopmental Services and Social Care but I fear that demand is far greater than the data reports and that we should now be including absent learners as part of this crisis in demand. Third sector has been a tremendous ally to statutory services in this regard but of course this may not be sustainable.

As I say there are some great developments and practices across schools in Wales and we are also working hard within communities and across services to improve awareness of relational practices, neurodivergence, inclusion and elevating the pupil/family voice in the whole system but I feel another robust evaluation by the Senedd Committee would be helpful.

As always I would be delighted to support the Committee and act as conduit for families if this would be of help.

Kind regards Informatio

Ceri Reed

Parents Voices in Wales CIC