



Unit 1,
Coopers Yard,
Curran Road,
Cardiff,
CF10 5NB

Jenny Rathbone MS
Equality and Social Justice Committee
Senedd Cymru / Welsh Parliament
Pierhead Street
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

**Equality and Social Justice Committee Report:
Their Future: Our Priority? Follow up inquiry into childcare provision in Wales**

31/07/2024

Dear Jenny,

On behalf of Early Years Wales, I would like to say thank you for the recent report published by the Equality and Social Justice Committee into the current state of childcare provision in Wales. I was really encouraged to see the inclusion evidence from Early Years Wales on pages five, 48, 51 and 54 of the report, shining a light on key issues the sector is facing regarding recruitment and retention of staff, fair pay, and the impact of a lack of sustainable funding on quality and capability.

Early Years Wales would like to thank you for all nine recommendations made in the report, as we feel that each, working in tandem, will make a huge difference to our sector, rectifying the issues faced day in day out by stakeholders at all levels within childcare. In particular, recommendations three and nine stand out to us in terms of fixing short term, as well as improving the longer-term resilience of the sector.

☎ 02920 451242

✉ info@earlyyears.wales

🌐 earlyyears.wales / blynyddoeddcynnar.cymru



Recommendation three, covering pay and working conditions, will enable providers to feel that their work is valued by wider society, providing huge benefits in terms of financial assurance to tackle cost of living concerns, and easing financial worries which will have vast benefits in the field of mental health and wellbeing. Degree qualified practitioners will also have the immediate effect of improving development for children, as specialist support in those crucial early years of advancement will have a lifelong impact on wellbeing and job prospects.

Recommendation nine will be crucial for the sector in the long term, as financial sustainability will create stability and security of income, ensuring that settings will be able to envisage a long-term future of providing support to children and families in their local communities. This also makes employment an attractive prospect for individuals who wish to work within the sector, as well as reducing the overall impact and uncertainty caused by high staff turnover as we see currently.

Taken together, the recommendations work in tandem to help with key policy developments within the sector, as financial assurance and a more qualified workforce enable greater resilience in the sector, giving providers time to properly engage with changemakers in the Senedd, enabling greater understanding of the impact of child centered policies both for the politicians creating them, and the individuals these policies will benefit.

Furthermore, we were pleased to see, in point 22 of the report, reference to a visit you undertook to Enfys Fach Nursery in Brecon seeing first-hand the positive impact of the [Creative Learning in the Early Years project](#). This is a jointly funded initiative involving Early Years Wales, the Arts Council of Wales, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, and joined this year by Mudiad Meithrin. The project was designed to explore the impact of working with creative practitioners in early years settings on the staff's perception of creativity and enhancing the children's experiences of creativity. Analysis of the project



shows huge benefits for both children and staff, and we were pleased to see this reflected in the report from your visit.

Lastly, Early Years Wales would like to offer our continued support to the Committee going forward. As you know, we have an extensive membership within the sector, who's views and expertise we can draw upon to help develop policy. We are also passionate about ensuring these individuals and organisations are kept informed about the latest developments impacting the sector. In support of your report, we issued a [press release](#) summarising the recommendations. We have a duty to support providers, practitioners, and most importantly, ensuring all children have a fair start in life. I know we share this passion, and I am glad to see this reflected in the committee's report.

I would once again like to thank you for the report, and I look forward to seeing how policy develops in this space going into the future.

Yours sincerely,

Dave Goodger
CEO, Early Years Wales

