

CYPE(5)-24-19 - Paper to note 19



ADSS Cymru

Yn arwain Gwasanaethau
Cymdeithasol yng Nghymru
Leading Social Services in Wales

Lynne Neagle AM
Chair of Children, Young People &
Education Committee National Assembly for
Wales Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

14th August 2019

Dear Lynne

RE: Improving outcomes for children

Thank you for your letter in relation to expectations for reductions in the numbers of looked after children and I apologise for the delay in this response. I am pleased to relay that since your letter in June, good progress has been made developing the context and narrative of this issue between social care professionals both in local and national government.

Initially, while we fully understood the policy direction that came directly from the First Minister in wanting to safely reduce the numbers of children in need of care, ADSS Cymru as an organisation and our members, as individual Social Care Directors and Heads of Children's Services, did express concerns about setting specific targets for reducing care numbers and how this would be practically implemented and administered.

ADSS Cymru was extremely keen to have a dynamic and positive presence in any technical group that Welsh Government established to take this policy agenda forward and I am pleased we have achieved that in having four representative members – myself, as President, Andrew Jarrett (Director of Social Services at Neath Port-Talbot and ADSS Lead Director for Children), Marian Parry Hughes (Head of Children's Services in Gwynedd and Chair of the All Wales Heads of Children's Services [AWHoCS], one of ADSS Cymru's lead executive policy groups) and Anthony Maynard (Head of Children's Services in Pembrokeshire).

Welsh Government and ADSS Cymru have both wanted to ensure that we worked closely together and therefore adopted a consensual approach. This has resulted in a reshaping of the language being used and also influencing the overall policy framework, with the aim of collectively securing support to allow Welsh Government to achieve its policy goal. The narrative now is very much about shared aspirations, outcomes and reduction strategies, something that the Minister set-out in her oral statement to the National Assembly on 2nd July 2019.

In that statement, the Minister also made reference to a national planned learning event, which will take place on 9th October and will be co-chaired by ADSS Cymru and Welsh Government. This will be followed up by two regional events, co-produced by Care Inspectorate Wales and Social Care Wales.

This national event will be drawing together the key themes that have come out of the visits to local authorities by Welsh Government and will also give examples of good practice across Wales.

As President, I would like to assure you that ADSS Cymru is well placed to represent the thoughts and views of the leadership of social care within local government and in doing so, we will continue to make sure that we are doing the right thing for children and young people, make the right decisions to keep them safe and strive for positive outcomes.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sue Cooper', written in a cursive style.

President, ADSS Cymru