

Agenda – Children, Young People and Education Committee

Meeting Venue:

Hybrid – Committee room 4 Tŷ Hywel
and video conference via Zoom

Meeting date: 2 February 2023

Meeting time: 09.00

For further information contact:

Naomi Stocks

Committee Clerk

0300 200 6565

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At its meeting on 18 January, the Committee agreed a motion under Standing Order 17.42(ix) to exclude the public from item 1 of today's meeting

1 Services for care experienced children: exploring radical reform – Stakeholder events [invitee only]

(09.00 – 10.15)

(Pages 1 – 5)

There will be a private stakeholder event to discuss the second theme of the inquiry, 'In care: Quality services and support for children in care'.

Attached Documents:

Information for Members – In care: Quality services and support for children in care

Break

(10.15 – 10.45)

2 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

(10.45)



3 Services for care experienced children: exploring radical reform – evidence session 3

(10.45 – 11.30)

(Pages 6 – 58)

Sarah Thomas, Director, The Fostering Network Wales

Elizabeth Bryan, Head of Operations in Wales, The Fostering Network Wales

Matt Lewis, Therapeutic Fostering Services Manager Wales, Action for Children

Rhian Carter, Team Manager, Action for Children

Mike Anthony, Manager, TACT Cymru

Attached Documents:

Research Brief

Care Experienced Children – Statistical Briefing

Action for Children – CYPE(6)–04–23 – Paper 1

TACT Cymru – CYPE(6)–04–23 – Paper 2

4 Services for care experienced children: exploring radical reform – evidence session 4

(11.35 – 12.15)

(Pages 59 – 78)

Deborah Jones, Chief Executive, Voices from Care

Emma Phipps–Magill, Operations Director, Voices from Care

Sharon Lovell, Chief Executive Officer, NYAS Cymru

Ben Twomey, Director of Policy and Communications, NYAS Cymru

Jackie Murphy, Chief Executive Officer, Tros Gynnal Plant Cymru

Attached Documents:

Voices from care – CYPE(6)–04–23 – Paper 3

NYAS – CYPE(6)–04–23 – Paper 4

5 Motion under Standing Order 17.42(ix) to resolve to exclude the public from items 6 and 9 of this meeting

(12.15)

6 Services for care experienced children: exploring radical reform – consideration of the evidence
(12.15 – 12.30)

Break

(12.30 – 13.20)

Private pre-meeting

(13.20 – 13.30)

7 Scrutiny of Estyn Annual Report 2021 – 2022
(13.30 – 14.30)

(Pages 79 – 100)

Owen Evans, His Majesty's Chief Inspector, Estyn

Claire Morgan, Strategic Director, Estyn

Jassa Scott, Strategic Director, Estyn

[Estyn Annual Report 2021 – 2022](#)

Attached Documents:

Research Brief – Estyn

8 Papers to note
(14.30)

8.1 Inter-Institutional Relations Agreement

(Pages 101 – 103)

Attached Documents:

Letter from the Chair of the Health and Social Care Committee to the Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing – CYPE(6)-04-23 – Paper to note 1

8.2 Inter-Institutional Relations Agreement

(Pages 104 – 106)

Attached Documents:

Letter to the Chair of the Health and Social Care Committee from the Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing – CYPE(6)-04-23 – Paper to note 2

8.3 Inter-Institutional Relations Agreement

(Pages 107 – 108)

Attached Documents:

Letter from the Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing – CYPE(6)-04-23 – Paper to note 3

8.4 Peer on peer sexual harassment among learners

(Pages 109 – 116)

Attached Documents:

Letter from the Head of Education at the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) – CYPE(6)-04-23 – Paper to note 4

8.5 Information from Stakeholders

(Pages 117 – 119)

Attached Documents:

Letter from G-expressions – CYPE(6)-04-23 – Paper to note 5

8.6 Mental health inequalities

(Page 120)

Attached Documents:

Joint letter from the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee and the Chair of the Health and Social Care Committee to the Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing – CYPE(6)-04-23 – Paper to note 6

8.7 Forward work programme

(Page 121)

Attached Documents:

Letter from the Deputy Minister for Social Services – CYPE(6)-04-23 – Paper to note 7

8.8 Forward work programme

(Pages 122 – 123)

Attached Documents:

Letter from the Deputy Minister for Social Services – CYPE(6)–04–23 – Paper to note 8

8.9 Forward work programme

(Pages 124 – 125)

Attached Documents:

Letter from the Deputy Minister for Climate Change – CYPE(6)–04–23 – Paper to note 9

9 Scrutiny of Estyn Annual Report 2021 – 2022 – consideration of the evidence

(14.30 – 14.40)

Document is Restricted

Agenda Item 3

By virtue of paragraph(s) vi of Standing Order 17.42

Document is Restricted

Care Experienced Children

Statistical Briefing

January 2023



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Care Experienced Children

Statistical Briefing

January 2023

Authors:

Siân Thomas, Helen Jones and Joe Wilkes





Introduction

Content: This is a statistical briefing on care experienced children in Wales. It sets out some of the characteristics of ‘children looked after’, parental factors, social services expenditure and workforce information. It also sets out outcomes for children and young people where these are measured and published. It uses data sourced from a range of publications and the voluntary sector to supplement official statistics published on [StatsWales](#). It identifies some aspects of the policy area where data is not published.

Policy context: The Senedd’s Children Young People and Education Committee is looking at what Welsh Government is doing to deliver its Programme for Government commitment to ‘[explore radical reform for care experienced children](#)’. The Committee is considering priorities for radical reform in the following three stages of the care system:

- **Before care:** Safely reducing the number of children in the care system
- **In care:** Quality services and support children in care
- **After care:** On-going support when young people leave care

Terminology: Whilst the term ‘care experienced children’ is now widely used, current Welsh Government statistics refer to ‘children looked after’. This has a legal meaning and refers to children under 18 who are ‘looked after’ by local authorities. This briefing therefore uses ‘children looked after’ and ‘looked after children’ when referring to that data.

Disclosure: The [StatsWales](#) data relating to children looked after may be rounded to the nearest 5 to avoid disclosure. The totals of some tables may therefore not match.

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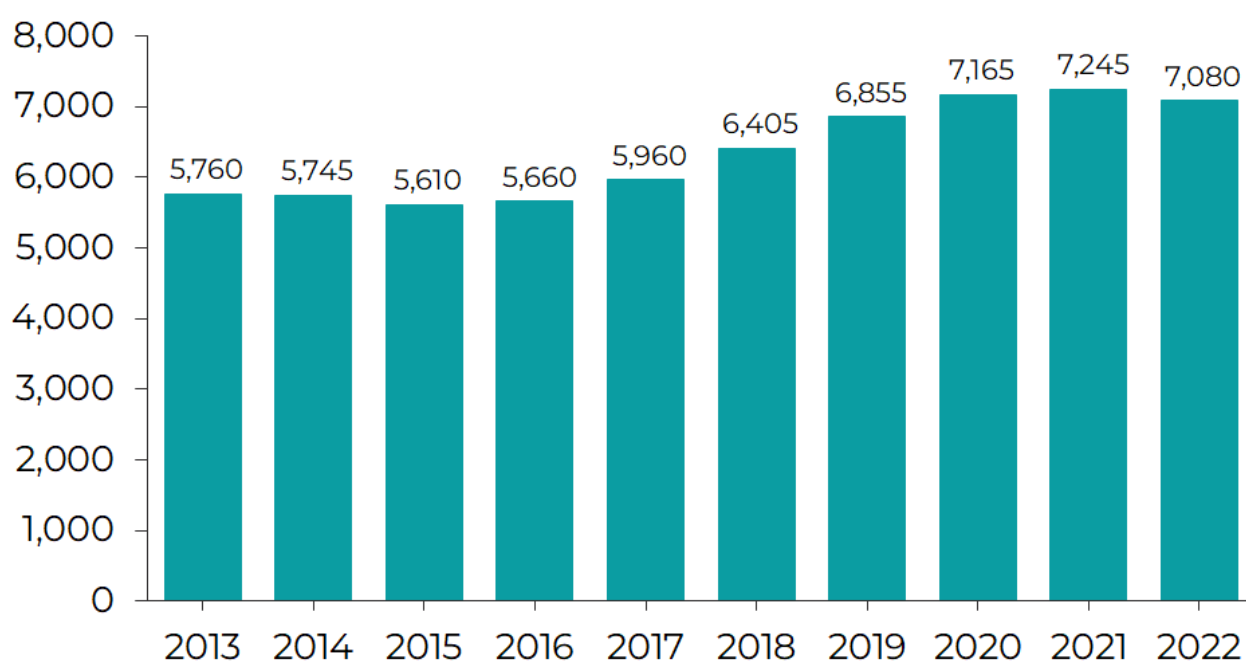
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1. Entry into care

The number of children looked after

As at 31 March 2022 there were **7,080** children looked after in Wales, which compares to 5,760 on 31 March 2013, an **increase of 22.9%**. In 2021 there were 7,245 looked after children in Wales, the highest number recorded since 2003. Between 2021 and 2022 there was a fall of 165 looked after children, representing a decrease of 2.3%.

Figure 1.1: Children looked after at 31 March

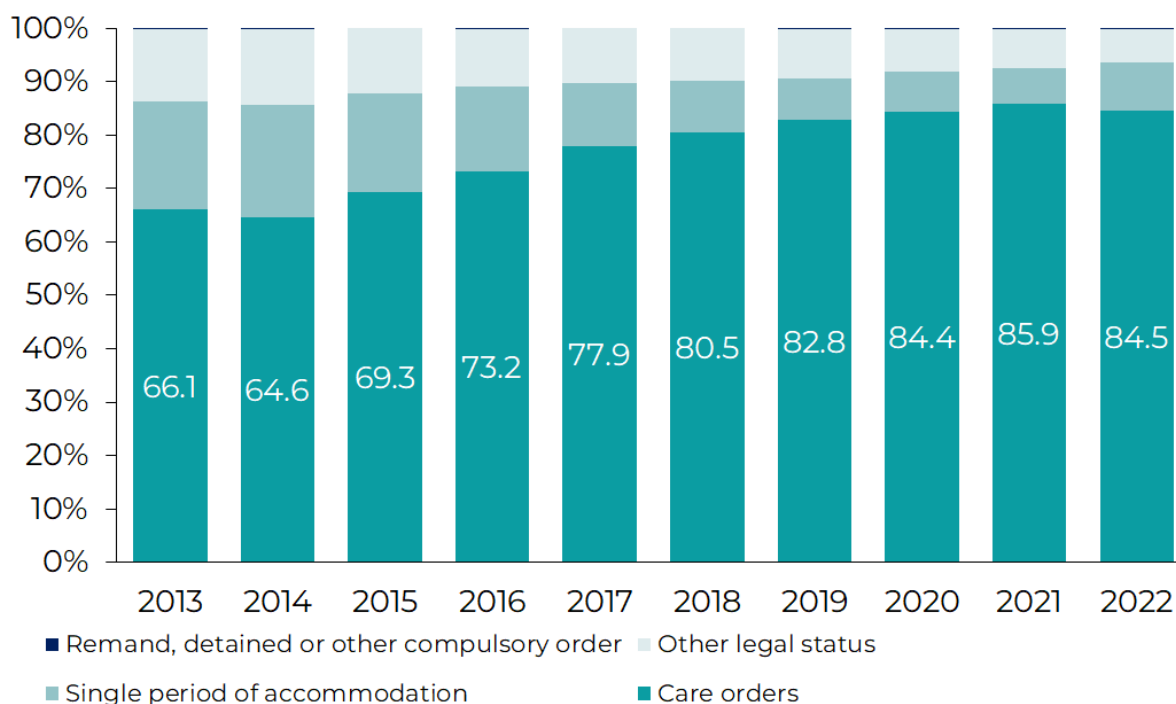


Source: StatsWales, [Children looked after at 31 March by local authority, gender and age](#)

Legal status

Children looked after include those on care orders and other children provided with accommodation by local authorities. Some children are also looked after because local authorities provide accommodation for respite purposes – these children are not included in the figures below. Data for the last 10 years shows that the percentage of looked after children on care orders has increased from 66.1% (3,805) in 2013 to 84.5% (5,985) in 2022.

Figure 1.2: Percentage of children looked after at 31 March by legal status



Source: StatsWales, [Children looked after at 31 March by local authority and legal status](#)

Looked after children per 10,000 of the population aged under 18

On 31 March 2013 there were 91 looked after children per 10,000 population in Wales, increasing to 115 in 2021 and decreasing to **112 per 10,000** in 2022.

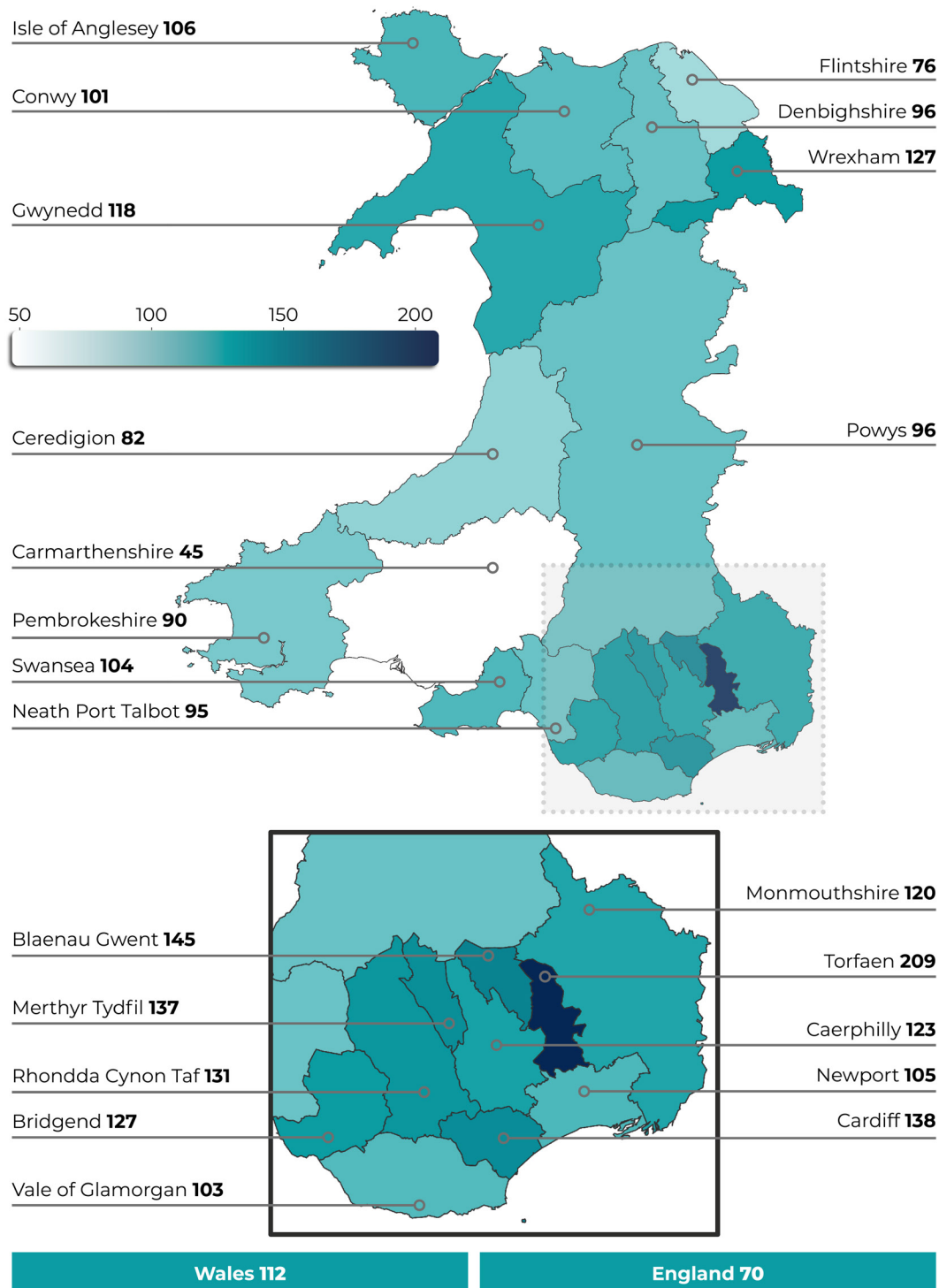
Local Authority variation: Looking at the number of looked after children aged under 18 per 10,000 population by local authority as at 31 March 2022, **Torfaen** has the highest rate of 209 and **Carmarthenshire** has the lowest rate of 45 looked after children per 10,000 population aged under 18.

Rates in England: In England the number of looked after children per 10,000 population aged under 18 increased from 64 per 10,000 in 2018 to **67 per 10,000 in 2021**. The statistical release states that the 2022 rate for England is not comparable to previous years due to the mid-year population estimates not being revised to reflect the 2021 Census. The 2022 rate in England (70 per 10,000) is below the rate for Wales (112 per 10,000) although the [Department for Education’s statistical release](#) states:

Data is collected and published independently by each of the four countries in the UK. Although there are similarities between the data collected by the four nations, there are also differences which may be

down to different policies and legislation, and differing historical data collections.

Map 1: Looked after children per 10,000 of the population aged under 18 in 2022; by area



Sources:

Wales - StatsWales, [Children looked after at 31 March per 10,000 population aged under 18 by local authority and year](#)

England - Department for Education, [Children looked after in England including adoptions 2022](#) - table cla_number_and_rate_per10k_children

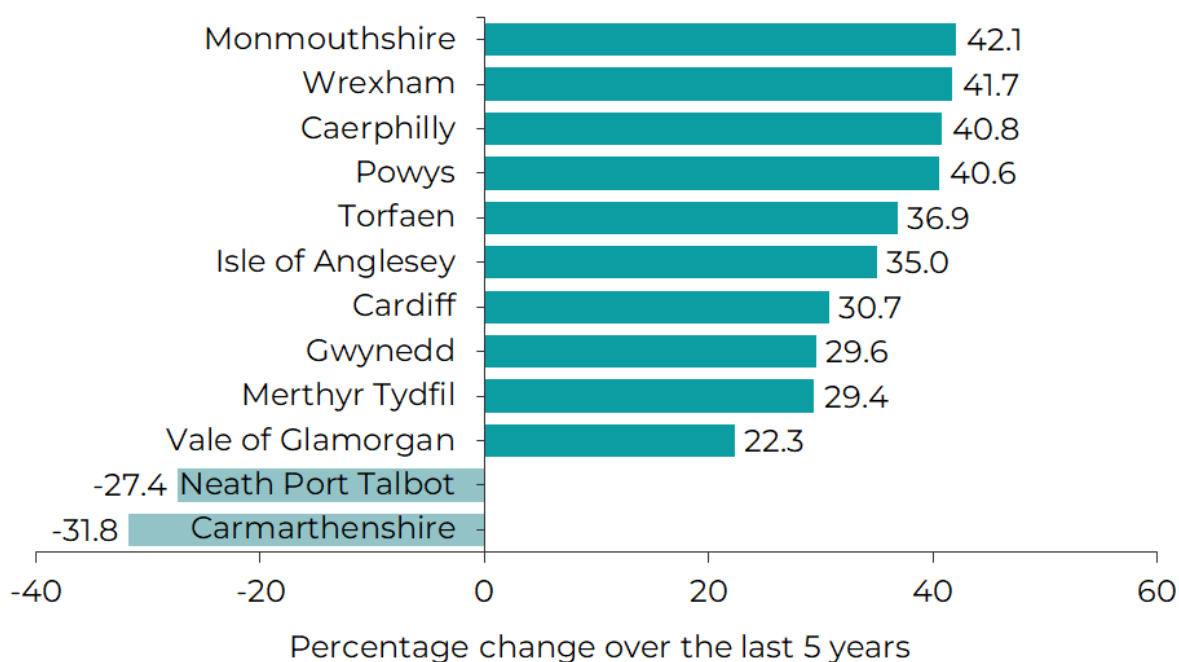
Notes: Numbers rounded to the nearest 10 and calculated rates per 10,000 children in this release are based upon ONS population estimates. Estimates by age and LA for mid-2021 were released by ONS in November 2022 and have been used for calculating rates for 2022. Rates for earlier years in this release are based upon population estimates published in 2021 and have not yet been revised following the 2021 census. As such, rates for 2022 are not comparable to rates for earlier years.

Care rates

The Wales Centre for Public Policy (WCPP) published **Children’s social services and care rates in Wales: A survey of the sector** in September 2021. In the report local authorities were identified as having decreasing care rates if they had reduced the rate of children in care by 10% or more over the last five years. Local authorities were identified as having increasing care rates if the rate of care had increased by more than the Welsh average (21%) over the last five years.

The report explains in the analysis they have excluded local authorities which despite having a large increase or decrease, had a lower or higher care rate than would be expected when deprivation is taken into account. Pembrokeshire falls into this category with a high rise but still comparatively low care rate.

Figure 1.3: Local authorities with increasing and decreasing rates of care selected for comparison (WCPP Report 2021)

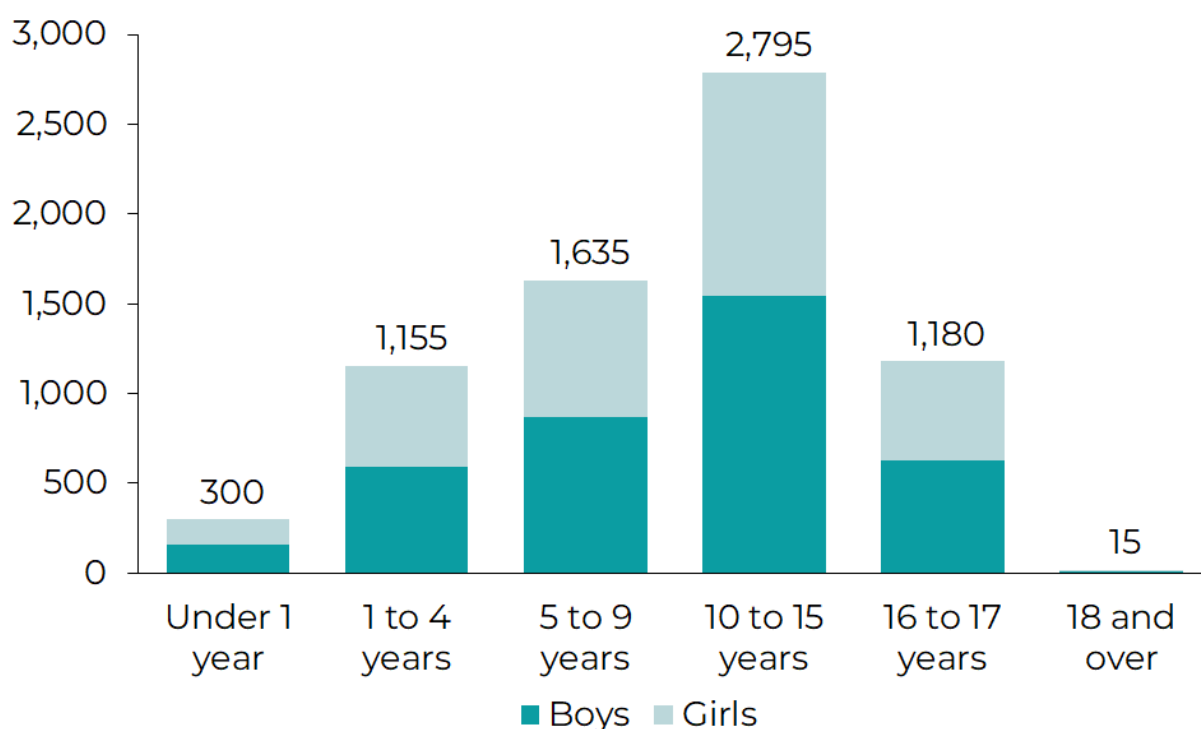


Source: Wales Centre for Public Policy, **Children’s social services and care rates in Wales: A survey of the sector, 2021**

Gender and Age

Statistics on the number of looked after children by gender and age are available on StatsWales rounded to the nearest 5. This means that some of the totals may not match those in other figures. Boys make up 53.7% of the total number of looked after children. Over half (56.4%) of all looked after children are aged 10 or over.

Figure 1.4: Percentage of children looked after at 31 March by gender and age



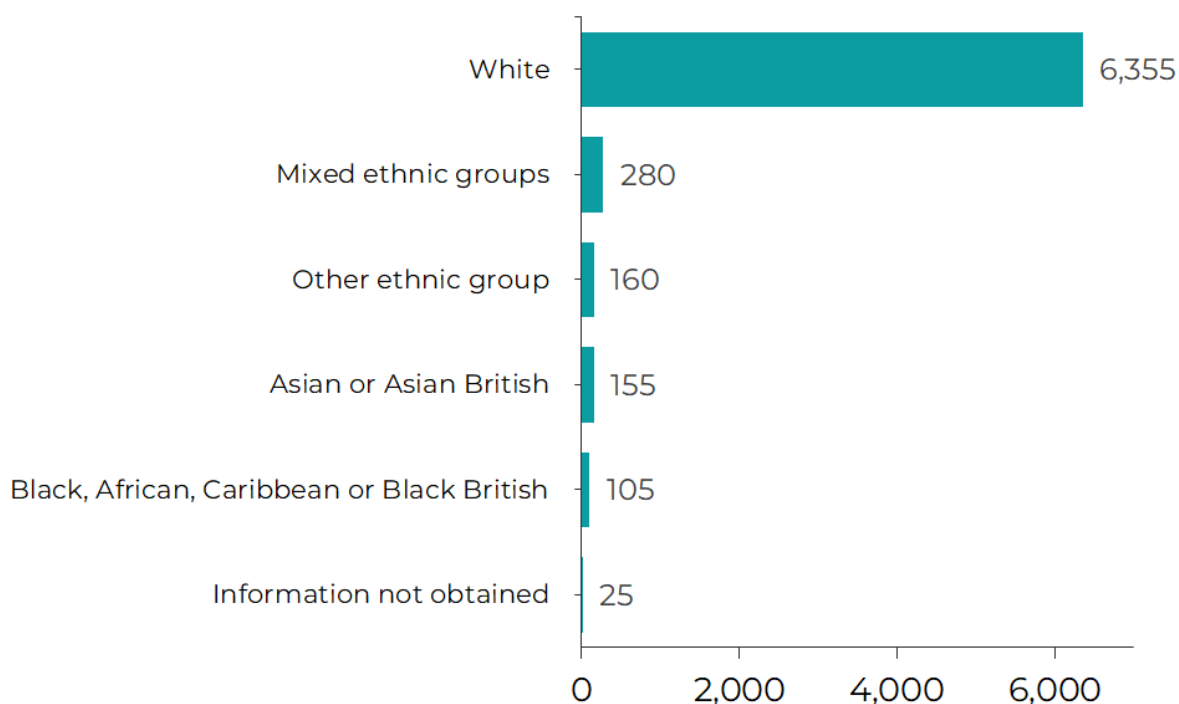
Source: StatsWales, [Children looked after at 31 March by local authority, gender and age](#)

Ethnicity

Where ethnicity was known, 90.1% of children looked after in 2021-22 identified their ethnic group as white, 4.0% as mixed ethnic group, 2.3% as other ethnic groups, 2.2% as Asian or Asian British and 1.5% as Black, African, Caribbean or Black British.

Data from the Annual Population Survey for 2018 to 2020, shows 90.5% of 0-15 year olds were from a white ethnic background, 3.6% from an Asian ethnic background, 2.8% from a mixed/ multiple ethnic backgrounds, 1.5% from a Black / African / Caribbean / Black British ethnic background and 1.3% from other ethnic backgrounds.

Figure 1.5: Children looked after at 31 March by ethnicity; 2021-22



Source: StatsWales, [Children looked after at 31 March by local authority and ethnicity](#)

Reasons for children needing to be looked after

Data on children starting to be looked after by need for care shows that **abuse or neglect was the reason 61.5%** of children (1,040) started to be looked after followed by family in acute stress (13.0%, 220) and family dysfunction (13.0%, 220).

Figure 1.6: Percentage of children starting to be looked after by need of care in Wales; 2021-22



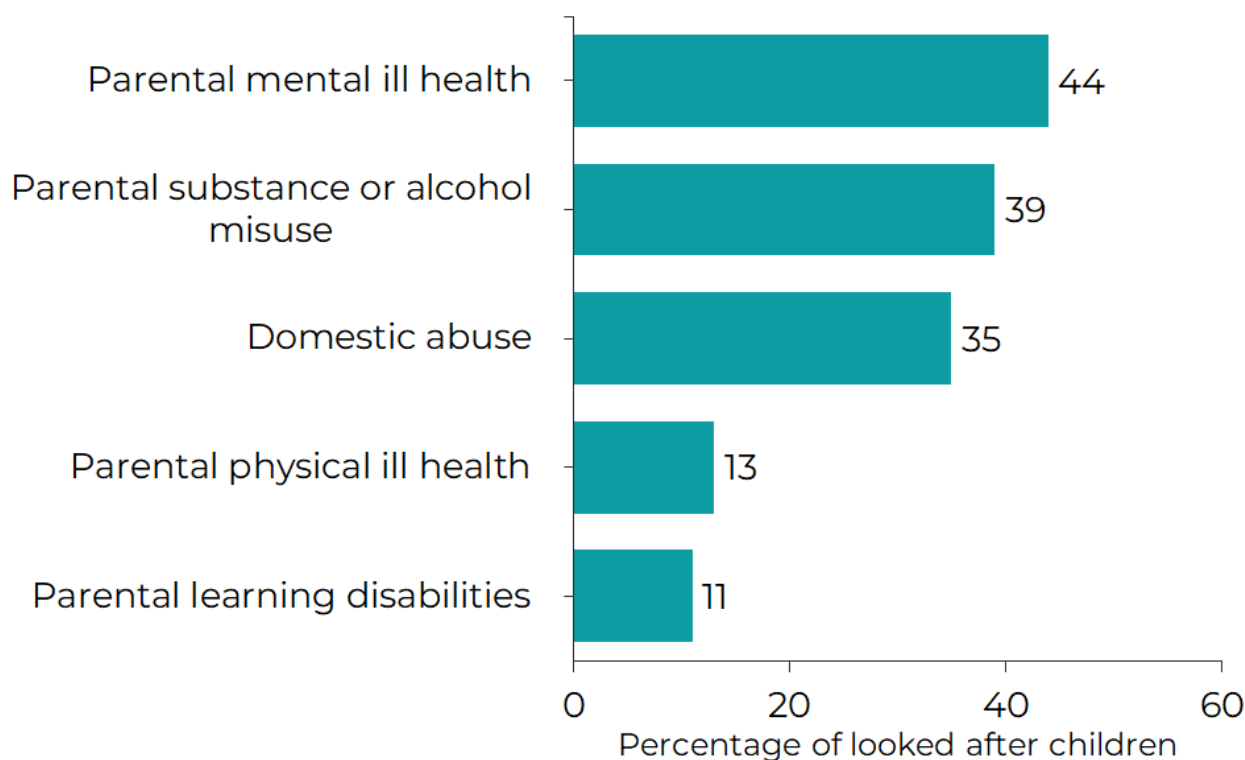
Excludes adoption disruption which was less than 5 children (0.3%).

Source: StatsWales, [Children starting to be looked after during year to 31 March by local authority and need for care](#)

Parental factors

The Welsh Government collects some data that measures the ‘characteristics and attributes’ of children looked after by local authorities. Data for children looked after as at 31 March 2021 shows that parental mental ill health (44%) was the most common factor, followed by parental substance or alcohol misuse (39%).

Figure 1.7: Parental factors of children looked after as at 31 March 2021



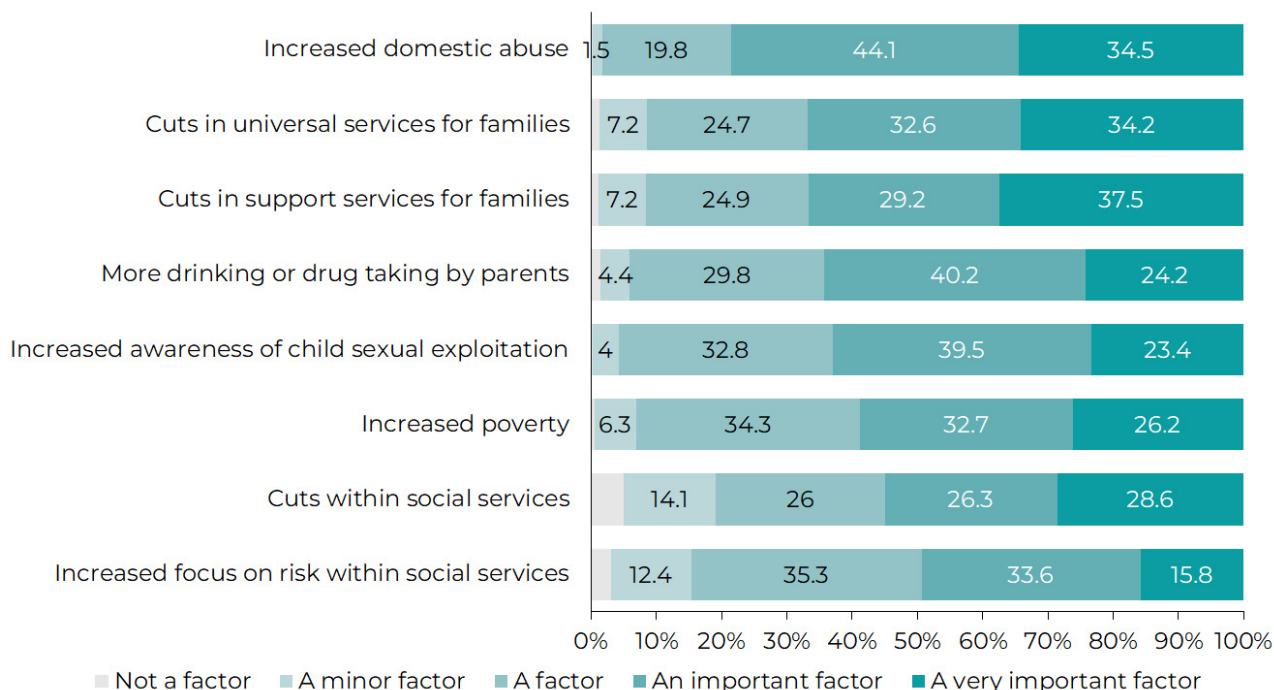
Source: StatsWales, [Parental factors of children receiving care and support by measure and year](#)

Factors influencing care rates

The care rate in Wales increased by 83% between 2003 and 2022, with more than 1% of children currently in care.

The Wales Centre for Public Policy [Children’s social services and care rates in Wales: A survey of the sector](#) report analyses the results of a survey of 792 social workers and leaders in children’s social care across Wales. The survey sought to understand what those working in the sector believe may be driving care rates and asked about which factors most influence the increase in care rates in Wales. Figure 1.8 shows respondents felt the biggest drivers for increased care rates were **increased domestic abuse with 78.6%** of respondents saying this was an important or very important factor. This was followed by cuts in universal services for families (66.8%) and cuts in support services for families (66.7%).

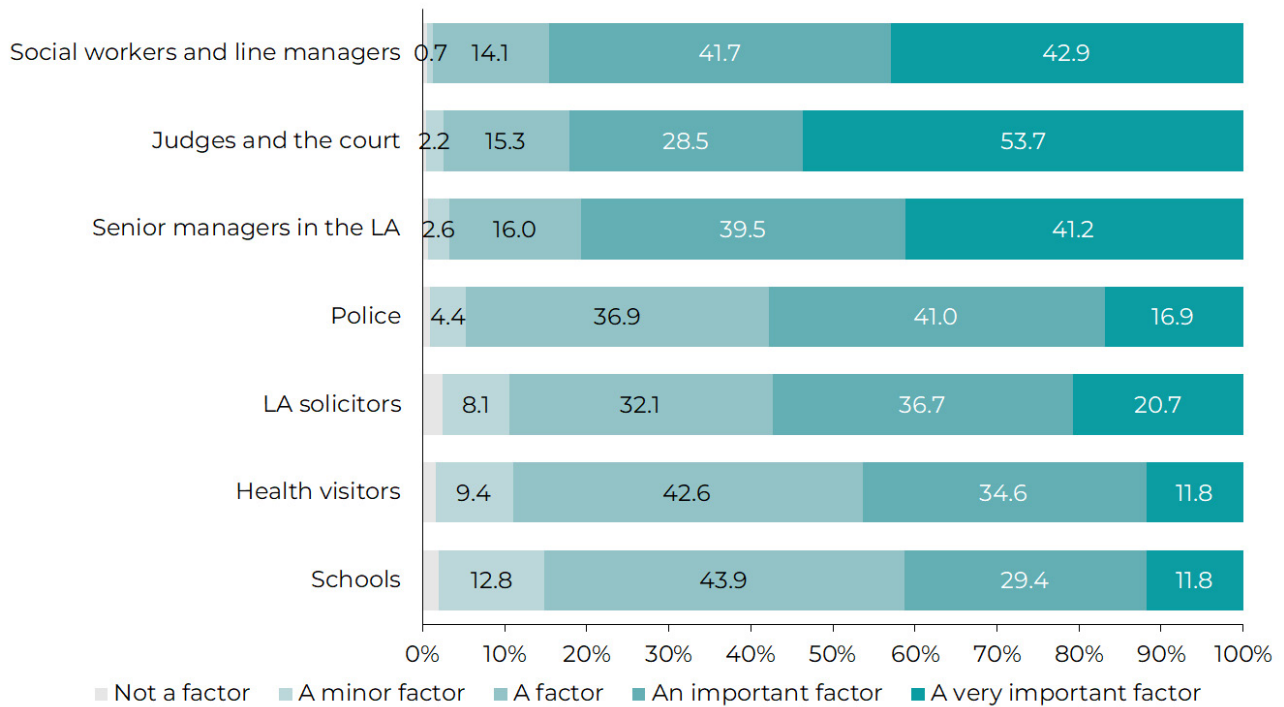
Figure 1.8: The proportion of responses to factors influencing care rates



Source: Wales Centre for Public Policy, [Appendices: Children’s social services and care rates in Wales - A survey of the sector](#) - Table D1

Respondents were then asked which agencies or groups most influenced the likelihood of children being in care in their area. Respondents were most likely to state social workers and line managers with 84.6% stating this was an important or very important factor. Followed by, judges and the court (82.2%) and senior managers in the LA (80.7%) as set out in Figure 1.9.

Figure 1.9: Respondents’ views about the influence of agencies or groups on care rate in their local authority

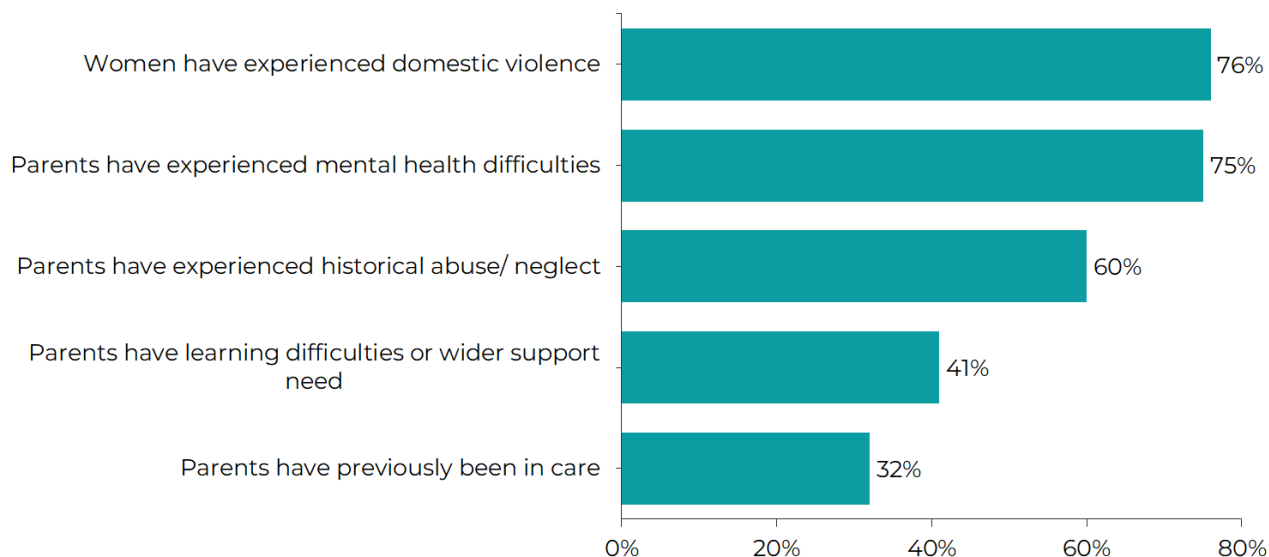


Source: Wales Centre for Public Policy, **Appendices: Children’s social services and care rates in Wales - A survey of the sector** - Table D2

Parental advocacy provider statistics

In a Children, Young People and Education Committee visit in December 2022, Barnardo’s Cymru gave a presentation on its Reflect Cymru project that discussed the presenting and historical needs of parents of looked after children. Figure 1.11 shows **76% of women had experienced domestic violence**, 75% of parents had experienced mental health difficulties and 60% had experienced historical abuse/neglect. These reflect similar factors to the statistics in figures 1.6 and 1.7 above.

Figure 1.10: Presenting and historical needs of parents of looked after children



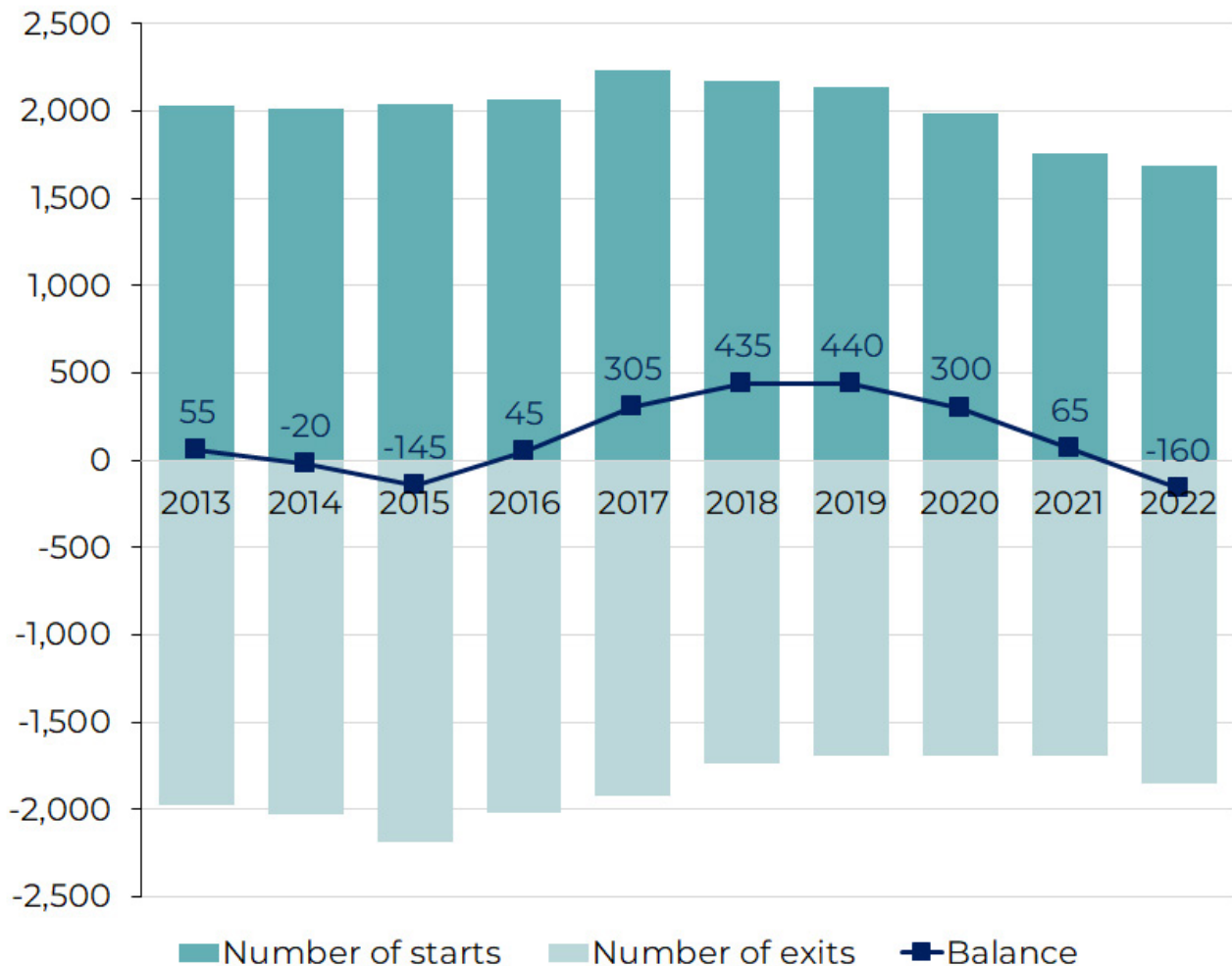
Source: Barnardo’s, Reflect Cymru presentation to the Children, Young People and Education Committee, December 2022

The balance of flows into and out of the care system over time

Figure 1.11 shows the number of starts and exits from the care system and the balance of children remaining in the care system from 2013 to 2022.

Between 2013 and 2020 there were around 2,000 entries of children and young people into the care system, peaking at 2,230 in 2017 and reducing to 1,690 by 2022. The number of children and young people leaving the care system decreased from 2015 to 2020 and then has started to rise in the last two years. The ‘balance’ between ‘starts’ and ‘exits’ is shown by the trend line in Figure 1.11. In 2015 and 2022 there were more ‘exits’ than ‘starts’ resulting in what the Wales Centre for Public Policy’s (WCPP) methodology referred to as a ‘negative balance’. In the other years there was a positive balance with more starts than exits. In their analysis the WCPP caution that the two measures are not directly comparable as one covers the whole year and the other is a snapshot.

Figure 1.11 The balance between flows into and out of the care system over time across Wales



Sources:

Starts - StatsWales, **Children starting to be looked after during year to 31 March by local authority and need for care**

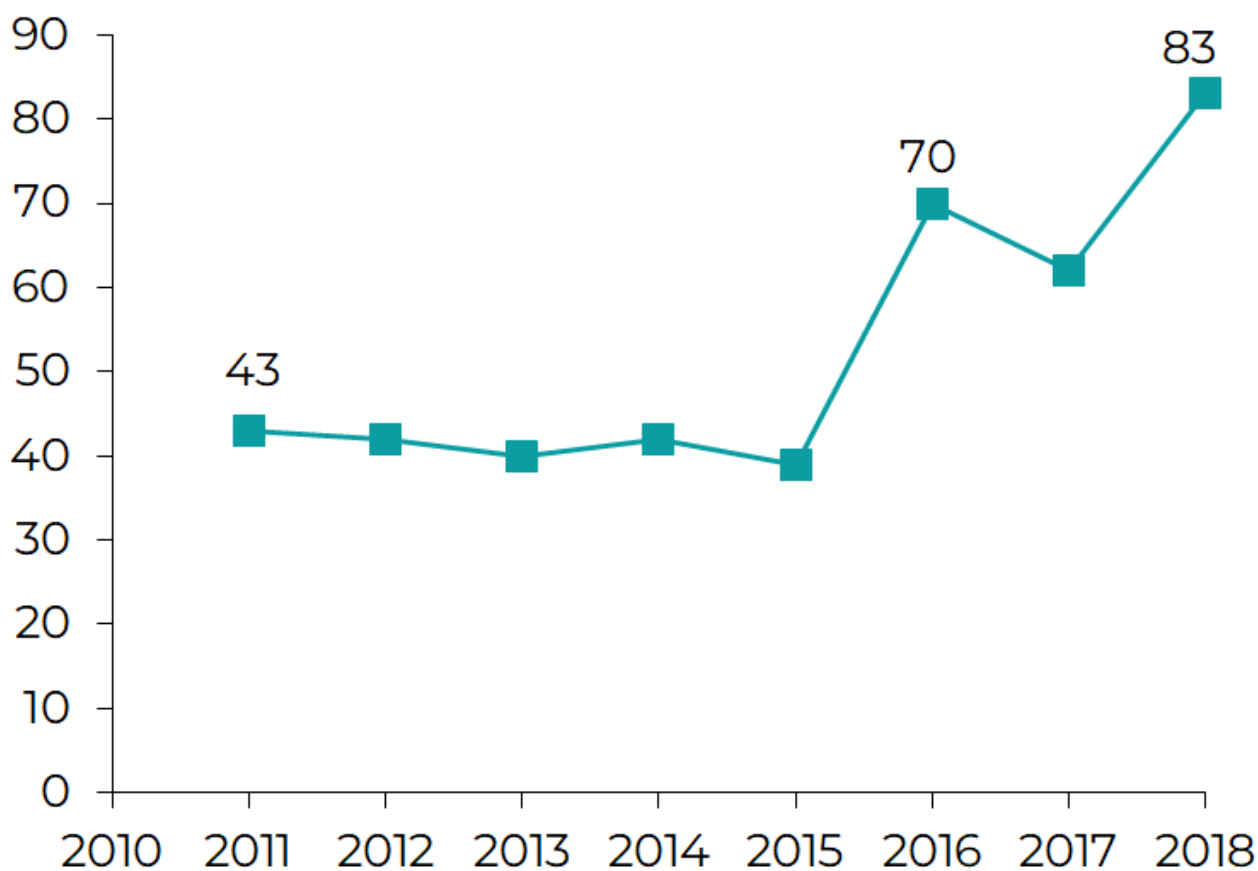
Exits - StatsWales, **Episodes finishing for children looked after during year to 31 March by local authority and reason for finishing** (not including Episode ceases and new episode begins on same or next day)

Balance = starts minus exits using the methodology from Wales Centre for Public Policy, **Children looked after in Wales: Flows into and out of the care system**

Newborn infants subject to care proceedings within two weeks of birth per 10,000 live births in Wales

Using research conducted by the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory, figure 1.12 below shows the number of newborn infants subject to care proceedings within two weeks of birth per 10,000 live births, by year. There were around 40 per year from 2011 to 2015. From 2015, there was an overall increase to 83 in 2018.

Figure 1.12 Newborn infants subject to care proceedings within two weeks of birth per 10,000 live births in Wales



Source: The Nuffield Family Justice Observatory [Born into Care: newborns and infants in care proceedings in Wales](#) October 2019

Children of care experienced children

There are currently no routinely collated or published statistics relating to the number of care experienced parents who have their own children temporarily or permanently removed.

The Senedd Petition's Committee has taken evidence on a petition calling for [Routine collection and publication of data of how many babies/children](#)

return to their care experienced parents care at the end of a Parent and Child Placement.

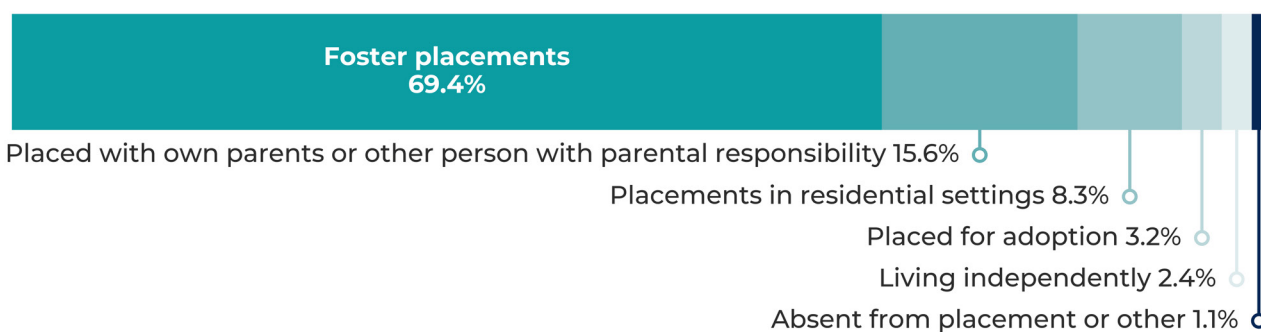
As part of this, ADSS Cymru provided **snap shot data from the City and County of Swansea** setting out information about 380 care experienced young people in touch with the local authority in Swansea as of March 2022. It suggests that of these, 21 were parents and 14 had their children remaining living with them. From the cohort of care experienced parents, 5 were under 18 years of age at the point of birth (the youngest being 15) and 16 were aged 18-22 years. This appears to suggest **that a third of care experienced parents had their children removed**. As part of its Inquiry into Care Experienced Children, the **Chair of the Children Young People and Education Committee** wrote to ADSS Cymru in December 2022 to request the equivalent data from all Welsh local authorities.

2. In care

Type of placement

Of the 7,080 looked after children in 2022, the majority (69.4%) were in foster placements, followed by placed with own parents or other person with parental responsibilities (15.6%) and 8.3% were in placements in residential settings.

Figure 2.1: Children looked after at 31 March by placement type; 2022

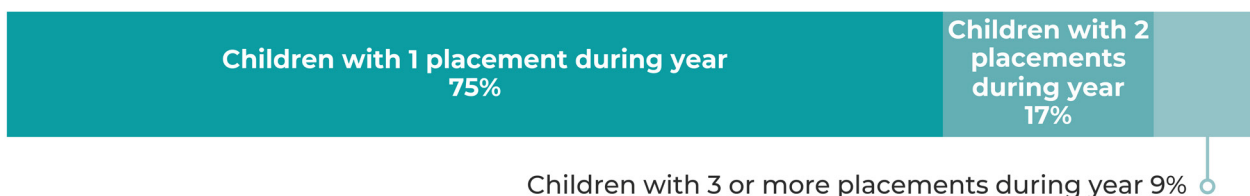


Source: StatsWales, [Children looked after at 31 March by local authority and placement type](#)

Number of placements during year

Three quarters (75%, 5,285) of children looked after had one placement during the year to 31 March 2022. This means that **26% of children looked after had two or more placements in the previous 12 months**. This is made up of 1,190 or 17% of children looked after had two placements and 605 or 9% of children had three or more placements.

Figure 2.2: Children looked after at 31 March by number of placements during year; 2022

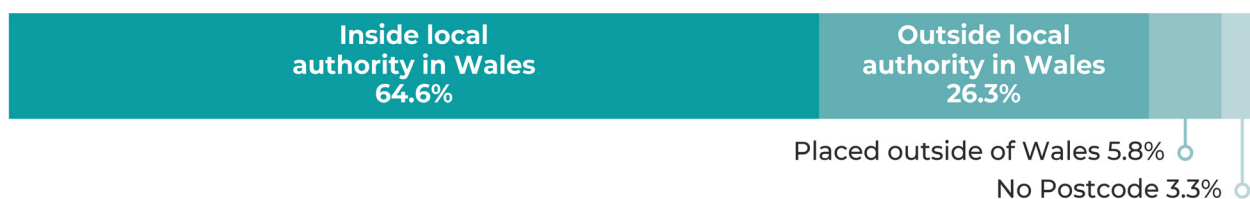


Source: StatsWales, [Children looked after at 31 March by local authority, number of placements during year and measure](#)

Location of placement

Over half (64.6%, 4,575) of children looked after had their placements inside their local authority, **26.3% (1,860) had placements outside of their local authority** in Wales and 5.8% (410) were placed outside of Wales.

Figure 2.3: Children looked after at 31 March by location of placement 2022



Source: StatsWales, [Children looked after at 31 March by local authority and location of placement](#)

Adoptions of looked after children by the length of time until adoption and age

In the year to the end of 31 March 2022, [data](#) shows that 285 looked after children were adopted. Over two fifths (43.9%, 125) were adopted in 2 to 3 years, 36.8% were adopted in 1 to 2 years, 12.3% in 3 to 4 years and 5.3% in 4 to 5 years. The majority (71.9%, 205) of looked after children adopted in the year to the end of 31 March were aged under 1 year.

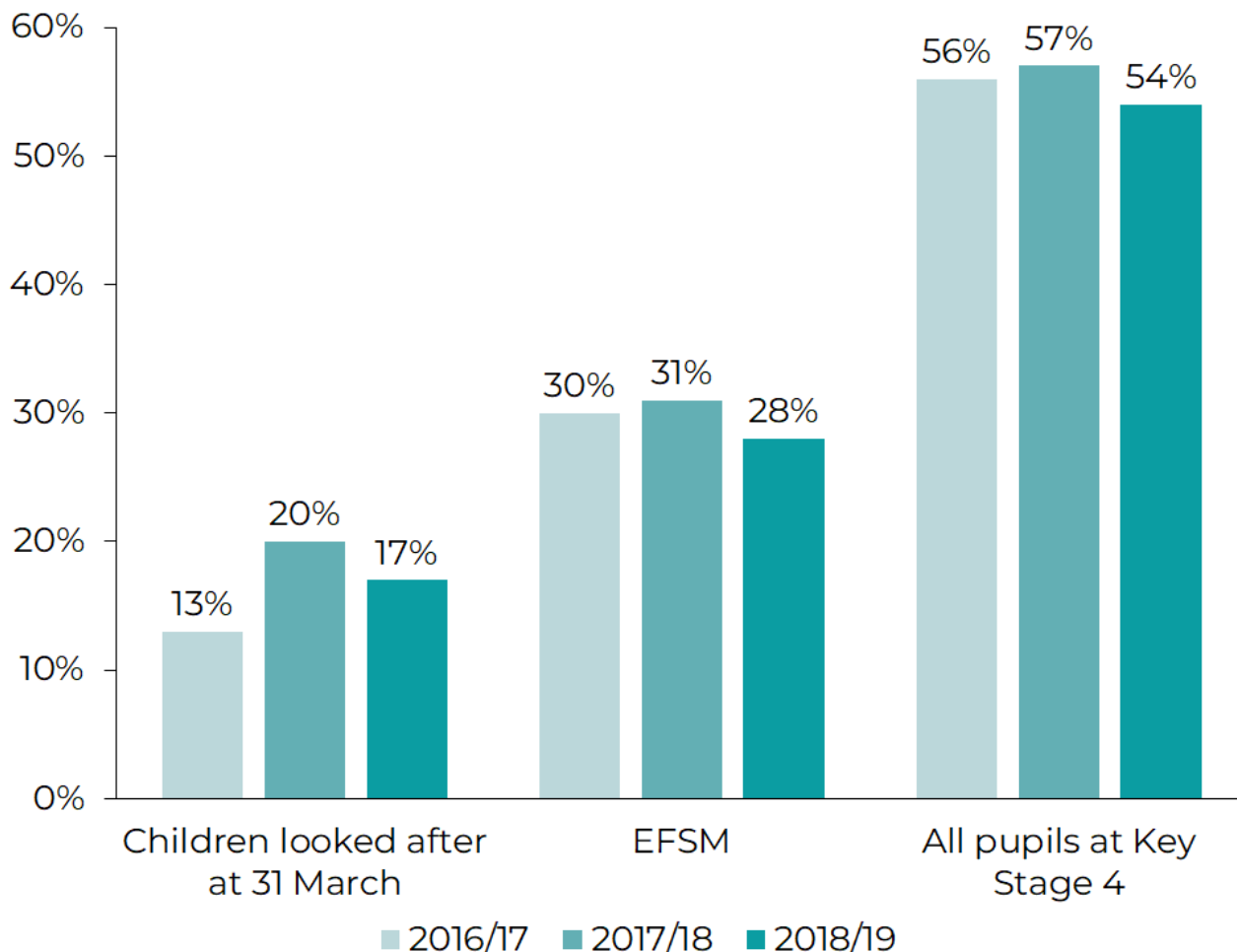
Educational outcomes

There is very limited data published on the educational experience of looked after children, for example the number of school moves they experience or the educational outcomes they achieve during their school careers.

There is some data available on educational outcomes at key stage 4 which we have compared to educational outcomes for all pupils and for those pupils eligible for free school meals, which will continue to be used as the proxy measure for deprivation until the roll out of universal provision.

Figure 2.4 below shows the percentage of children achieving 5 GCSEs at grade A*-C including maths and English or Welsh first language. Looked after children have lower educational attainment when compared to pupils eligible for free school meals and all pupils in 2017, 2018 and 2019.

Figure 2.4: Percentage of children achieving the level 2 threshold including English/Welsh and Mathematics at key stage 4, looked after children, pupils eligible for free school meals (EFSM) and all pupils in Wales at Key Stage 4, 2016/17 to 2018/19



Sources: StatsWales, **Educational attainment of children receiving care and support by measure and year, Key Stage 4 Interim Measures by Year, from 2018/19** and **Key Stage 4 Interim Measures by Year, from 2018/19**

Notes:

- Includes all pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year.
- Figures for children looked after are for the year at 31 March rather than the academic year
- Level 2 inclusive threshold is a volume of qualifications equivalent to the volume of 5 GCSEs at grade A*-C including maths and English or Welsh first language
- Pupils who are looked after may also be eligible for free school meals (EFSM). In 2017, 30% of looked after children were EFSM and 32% were EFSM in both 2018 and 2019.

3. Aftercare

There is very limited data published on the outcomes for looked after children when they have left care. Whilst there are concerns about the number of care leavers who experience **homelessness** or have contact with the youth justice system, it appears there is no routine data published.

Data from the **looked after children census** suggests of the 700 children (aged 16 and over) who ceased to be looked after at the 31 March 2022, 670 (95.7%) were in suitable accommodation.

Reasons for finishing being looked after, aged 16 and over

Of the 700 episodes finishing for children looked after (aged 16 and over) during the year to 31 March 2022, 190 finished due to turning 18 years old and continuing to live with former foster parent(s) in a When I Am Ready Arrangement. A further 175 gave other reasons and 130 returned home to live with parents, relatives or other person with parental responsibility.

Figure 3.1: Episodes finishing for children looked after (aged 16 and over) during the year to 31 March by reason for finishing

	Number
Turned 18 years old and continuing to live with former foster parent(s) in a When I Am Ready arrangement	190
Period of being looked after ceased for any other reason	175
Returned home to live with parents, relatives or other person with parental responsibility	130
Moved into independent living arrangement and no longer looked after: supportive accommodation providing formalised advice/support arrangements (e.g. most hostels, YMCAs, foyers, and care leavers projects)	110
Transferred to care of adult social services	50
Moved into independent living arrangement and no longer looked after: accommodation providing no formalised advice/support arrangements (e.g. B&B, bedsit, own flat, living with friends)	35
Sentenced to custody	5

Source: StatsWales, **Episodes finishing for children looked after (aged 16 and over) during the year to 31 March by local authority, gender and reason for finishing**

Care leavers on their 19th birthday

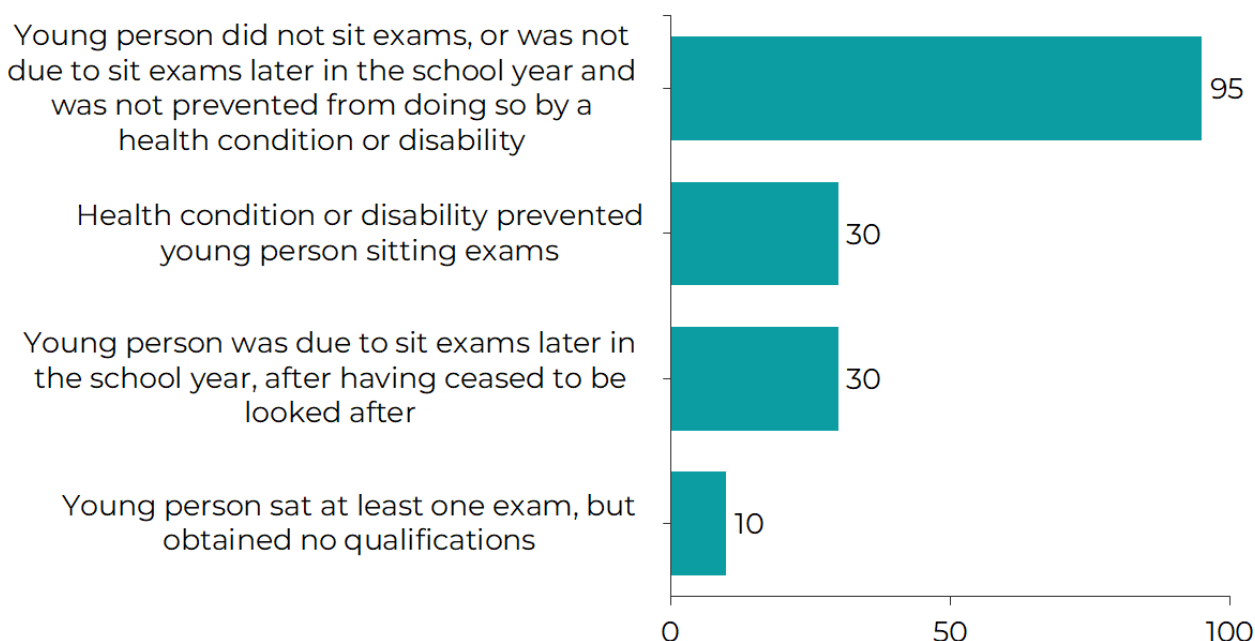
- The majority of care leavers (93% of 495) were in touch with the local authority (in line with statutory responsibilities) on their 19th birthday during the year ending 31 March 2016. These **figures** are no longer updated.
- Over a third of care leavers (39% of 465) were not in education, employment or training on their 19th birthday during the year ending 31 March 2016. These **figures** are no longer updated.

Children aged 16 and over ceasing to be looked after and reason for no qualifications

This data is no longer updated but the **latest published data** from 2016 shows that 23% of children aged 16 and over ceasing to be looked after during year ending 31 March had no qualifications.

The most common reason was that the ‘young person did not sit exams, or was not due to sit exams later in the school year and was not prevented from doing so by a health condition or disability’ (95 out of 160).

Figure 3.2: Children aged 16 and over ceasing to be looked after during year ending 31 March 2016 by reason for no qualifications



Source: StatsWales, **Children aged 16 and over ceasing to be looked after during year ending 31 March by local authority and reason for no qualifications**

Care experienced students in higher education (HE)

UCAS published the findings of their UK wide survey of 8,930 care-experienced individuals who applied to HE in 2022, and a survey of 500 applicants who shared a care background ahead of starting their studies in Autumn 2022.

Next Steps: What is the experience of students from a care background in education? details 69% of care experienced applicants had concerns about finances when starting university or college. 60% did not receive guidance around applying to HE specific to their status as a care-experienced student when at school or college.

Figure 3.3: Percentage of care experienced UCAS applicants in the UK; 2022

	Percentage
Had concerns about finances when starting university or college	69%
Did not receive guidance around applying to higher education specific to their status as a care-experienced student when at school or college	60%
Did not know there was support available for care-experienced students in higher education before they started their application/research	59%
Had concerns about looking after their mental health and wellbeing when starting university or college	54%
Did not do any research about support offered to care experienced students by universities and colleges when considering their options	54%

Source: UCAS, **Next Steps: What is the experience of students from a care background in education?**

Health and well-being survey

Despite concerns about the prevalence of mental health and well-being issues among the care experienced population, there appears to be no routinely published official data.

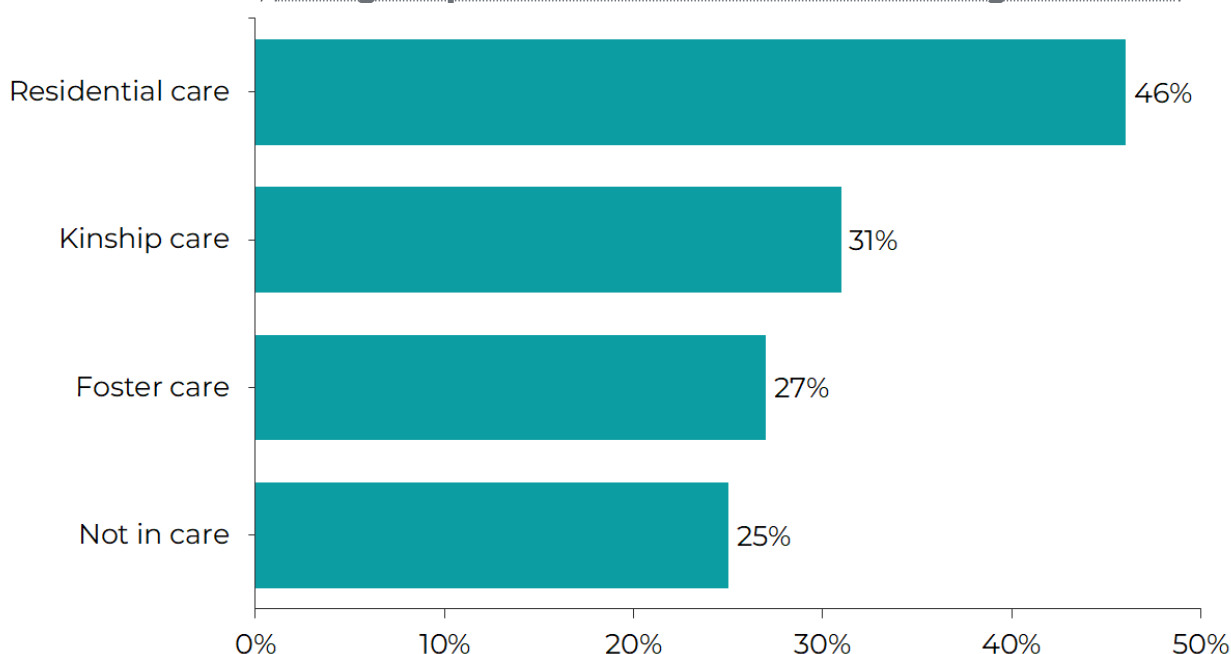
In January 2020 DECIPHer at Cardiff University published **Young People ‘Looked After’ in Wales: findings from the 2017/18 Health Behaviour in School-aged Children Survey and School Health Research Network Student Health and**

Wellbeing Survey. It sets out the findings for young people 'looked after' in Wales relating to wellbeing, risk behaviours and school belonging. The survey is an online self-completion survey and measures self-reported health behaviours and wellbeing outcomes among adolescents aged 11-16 years.

The two figures below show young people 'looked after' were more likely to have drunk alcohol in the past 30 days or have been exposed to bullying in the past couple of months. Those placed in residential care showed the highest rates in both cases.

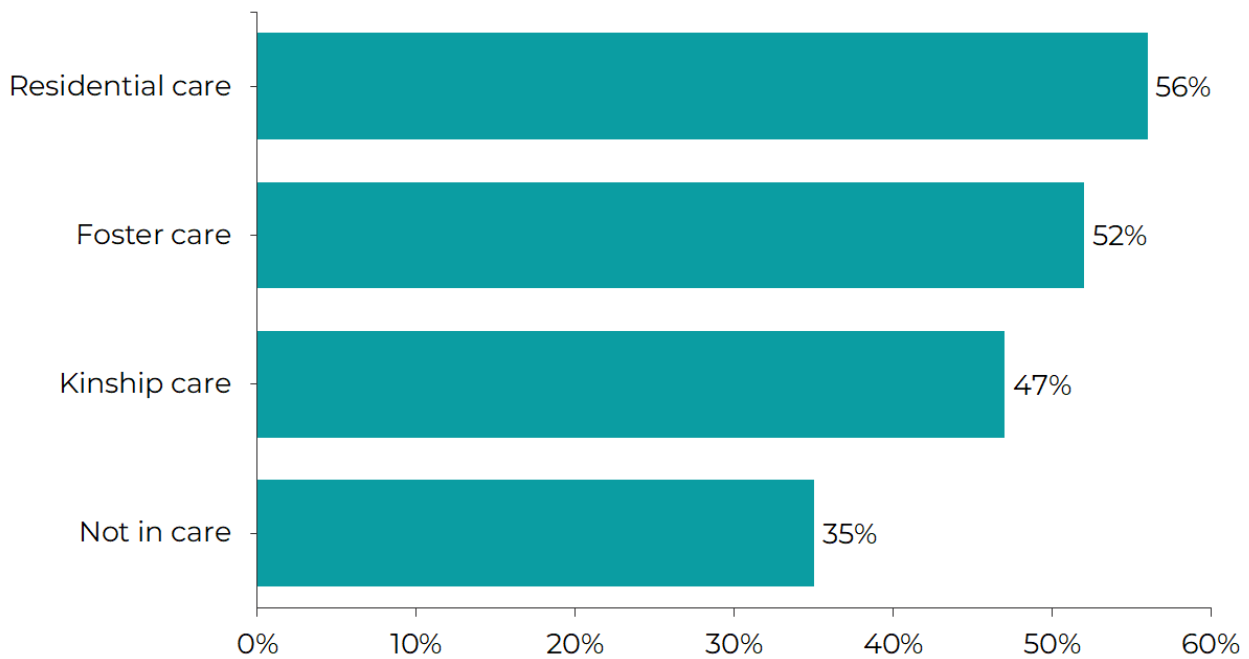
Figure 3.4: Percentage of care experienced young people aged 11-16 who have drunk alcohol in the past 30 days by care status

Source: DECIPHer, [Young People 'Looked After' in Wales: findings from the](#)



2017/18 Health Behaviour in School-aged Children Survey and School Health Research Network Student Health and Wellbeing Survey

Figure 3.5: Percentage of care experienced young people aged 11-16 exposed to bullying in the past couple of months by care status



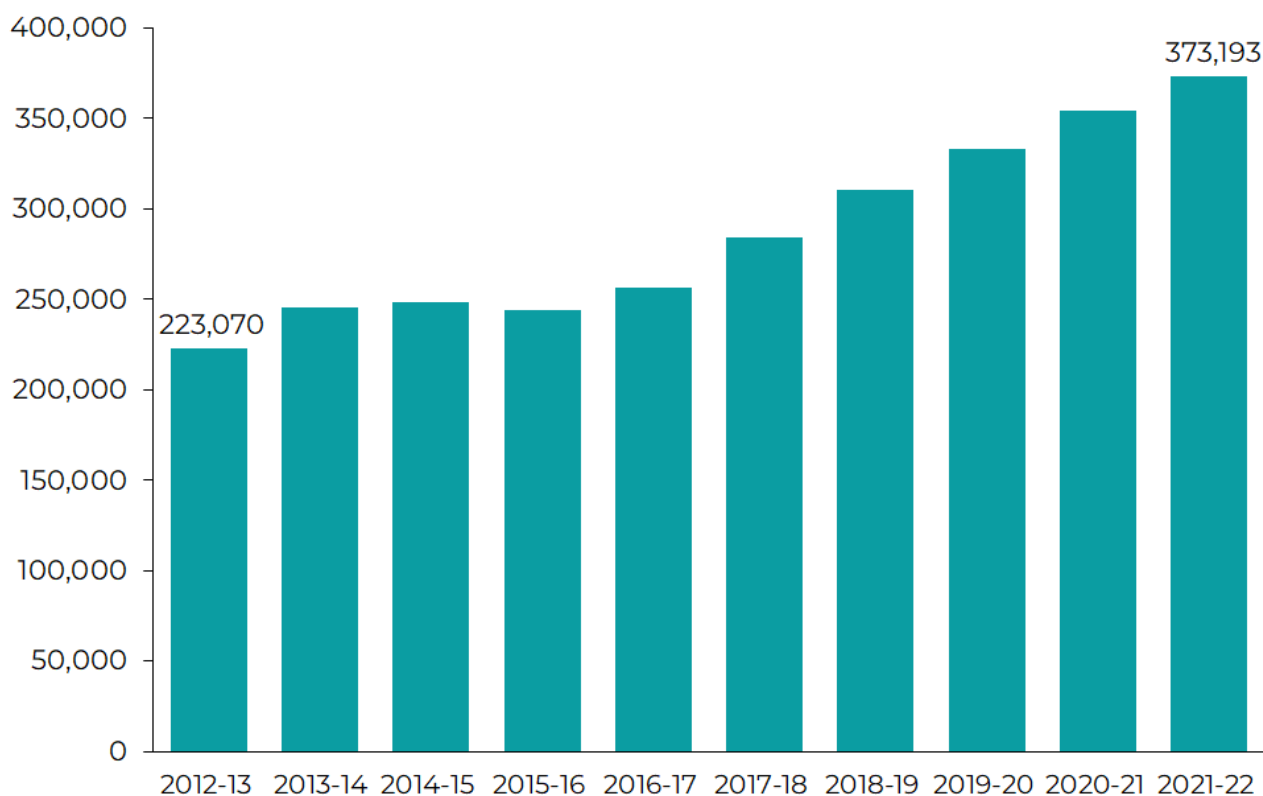
Source: DECIPHer, [Young People ‘Looked After’ in Wales: findings from the 2017/18 Health Behaviour in School-aged Children Survey and School Health Research Network Student Health and Wellbeing Survey](#)

4. Cross cutting

Social services revenue expenditure on looked after children services

Social services revenue expenditure on looked after children services is available from StatsWales. Data from 2012-13 to 2021-22 shows that **expenditure has increased by 67.3% in cash terms to £373 million in 2021-22**. In real terms (taking inflation into account) expenditure increased by 40.7% between 2012-13 and 2021-22.

Figure 4.1: Total social services revenue expenditure on looked after children services; 2012-13 to 2021-22 (£ thousand)



Source: StatsWales, [Social services revenue expenditure by client group \(£ thousand\)](#)

Workforce

Whole time equivalent staff numbers

Figures are available showing the whole time equivalent numbers of staff working in local authority social services departments. The number of whole time equivalent

staff in residential services for children and young people decreased from 422 in 2012-13 to 407 in 2018-19, a fall of 4%.

Table 1: Whole time equivalent staff of local authority social services departments; 2012-13 to 2018-19

	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Total residential services for children and young people (RSCYP)	422	409	379	396	364	386	407

Source: StatsWales, [Whole time equivalent staff of local authority social services departments \(all years\)](#)

Workforce consistency

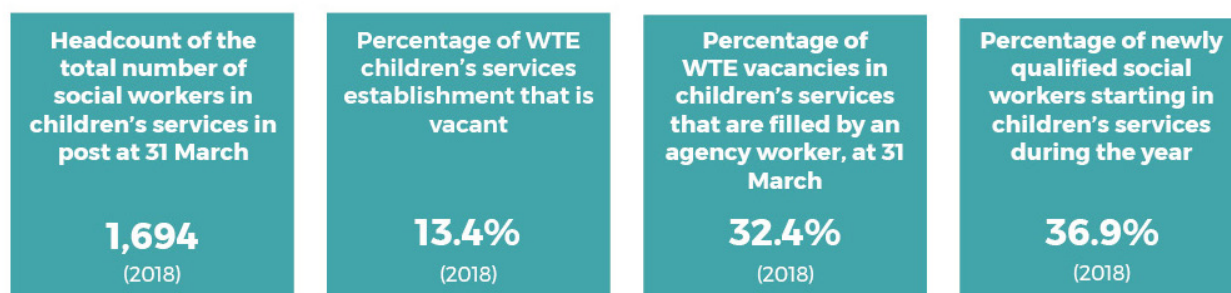
Care Inspectorate Wales' report [National Overview Report in relation to care experienced children and young people](#) analysed local authority self-evaluation data from 1 January 2018. This report found:

- 97% of looked after children were allocated to a social worker
- 61% of looked after children have had the same social worker for the last six months and
- 13% of looked after children had experienced more than two changes of social worker in the last 6 months

Headline data reported by Social Care Wales shows in 2018:

- There were 1,694 social workers (headcount) in children's services in post at 31 March:
- 13.4% of whole time equivalent posts in children's services were vacant
- 32.4% of whole time equivalent vacancies in children's services were filled by an agency worker as at 31 March
- 36.9% of newly qualified social workers started in children's services during the year

Figure 4.2: Headline data reported by Social Care Wales



Source: Social Care Wales, [National social care data portal for Wales, Children services](#)

Social Care Wales also published a [Social care workforce report](#) in 2021 which discusses social work teams and their vacancies and turnover;

Frontline teams are carrying 726 vacancies (462 in children's social work teams, 261 in adult social work teams and three in teams that work with both adults and children). (...)There were 141 vacancies reported in children's residential care with 61 posts held vacant. This represented 2.5 per cent of all social care vacancies in Wales. In total, we estimate there were 142 vacancies in children's residential care in Wales on 31 March 2021.

The report also looked at turnover by service area in the social care sector in 2020 to 2021 although highlights that data was only provided by 81% of identified services. The table below shows service areas working with children had experienced a positive net change in 2020 to 2021.

Table 2: Staff turnover by service area; 2020 to 2021

	Joiners	Leavers	Net change
Residential care - children	285	119	+166
Social work teams - children	417	304	+113

Source: Social Care Wales, [Social care workforce report](#) 2021

Social workers supporting foster carers

The Fostering Network published a report [State of the Nation's Foster Care 2021: Spotlight on Wales](#) which analysed the responses to their survey from 256 foster carers from Wales. Respondents noted that continuity and capacity of social work staff was the one thing they would most like to change to make foster care better. Over the previous two years, 53% of foster carers had the same supervising social worker, 29% had two, 12% had three and 6% had four or more.

5. Further sources of data

Welsh Government, [Wales Children Receiving Care and Support Census: as at 31 March 2021](#)

Welsh Government, [Wales Children Receiving Care and Support Census, 2019 statistical release](#)

[The Public Law Applications to Orders \(PLATOS\) tool](#)

[National Youth Advocacy Service, Project Unity Mid Term Review Jan 2022](#)

CYPE(6)-04-23 – Paper 1

Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg | Children, Young People and Education Committee

Gwasanaethau i blant sydd wedi bod mewn gofal: archwilio diwygio radical | Services for care experienced children: exploring radical reform

Ymateb gan Gweithredu dros Blant | Evidence from Action for Children

1. Before care: Safely reducing the number of children in the care system

Please outline a **maximum of three** top priorities for radical reform of services for safely reducing the number of children in the care system:

Priority 1:

Identify most vulnerable families and provide long term community-based support to help them to manage needs- housing. Finance , health and relationships .

Priority 2:

Remove children earlier from the most dangerous parents – recognise that Complex PTSD and Attachment Disorders are akin to a learning disability and persist , current interventions assume that it is a matter of choice and education which is mistake. Protection for children earlier will prevent the pattern from re-occurring.

Priority 3:

Invest in family centre hubs to provide consistent community support to vulnerable families

2. In care: Quality services and support for children in care

Please outline a **maximum of three** top priorities for radical reform of services for children in care:

Priority 1:

Design services based upon relative stage of emotional development and assess impact of trauma and neglect with individualised plan for treatment – abandon chronologically based assumptions and approach to service design as they don't fit children who have suffered neglect and abuse.

Priority 2:

Raise the age of leaving care to 25 yrs – this will give children a chance to mature prevent the cycle repeating itself. Establish fostering as a permanency arrangement akin to a normal family with less intrusion from system once permanency agreed.

Priority 3:

Protect children from the impact of meeting the parents that abused them, contact or family time is widely perceived as a right and is supported. However, the experiences of abuse that required removal are devastating to the child's development and emotional wellbeing. Ongoing contact for the most seriously abused children has a debilitating impact upon the child victim of the adult abuser and creates ongoing mental health vulnerability as well as de-stabilizing caring environments. This should be assessed on an individual basis.

3. After care: On-going support when young people leave care

Please outline a **maximum of three** top priorities for radical reform of the on-going support provided when young people leave care:

Priority 1:

'Shared lives' should be extended to cover all looked after children. 'When I'm ready' has not been adequately implemented and often undermines the relationships between foster carer and child.

Priority 2:

Many children leaving care have lifelong impairments re, their development and mental health, this requires much more sustained support than is currently available, adult services should be extended to offer services to all care leavers if needed.

Priority 3:

Develop community resources to provide ongoing pastoral support, employment, housing, relationship management etc

4. Anything else

Do you have anything else you would like to tell us?

CYPE(6)-04-23 – Paper 2

Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg | Children, Young People and Education Committee

Gwasanaethau i blant sydd wedi bod mewn gofal: archwilio diwygio radical | Services for care experienced children: exploring radical reform

Ymateb gan TACT Cymru | Evidence from TACT Cymru

1. Before care: Safely reducing the number of children in the care system

Please outline a **maximum of three** top priorities for radical reform of services for safely reducing the number of children in the care system:

Priority 1:

Reinvest in communities, youth clubs, family centres, hubs etc. This provides extended family support to isolated families/children, additional role models: as parental figures or eg positive male role models, as well as safeguarding measures in monitoring and picking up on potential risky behaviours.

Priority 2:

Join up the various services which young people use (see all SCR outcomes about communication)

Priority 3:

Develop all schools to be trauma informed and avoid re-triggering the trauma experienced by looked after children.

2. In care: Quality services and support for children in care

Please outline a **maximum of three** top priorities for radical reform of services for children in care:

Priority 1:

More joint working initiatives and alliances between third sector providers eg the North Wales Partnership between TACT, Action For Children and Barnardo's. This enables them to concentrate on their competitive and

comparative advantages, their ethical values and to prevent waste, duplication and inefficiency.

Priority 2:

Specialist placements committed to family reunification eg Parallel Parenting with carers using their experience to act as coaches and mentors to parents. (there could be scope to use trained foster carers with birth families pre-care too)

Priority 3:

Provide direct payment for older young people in care managed by their foster carers/ residential staff etc. so that therapy and mental health support can be bought rather than rely on waiting lists. Similar to direct payments in adult services. (It also replicates what many middle class families do for their own children.)

3. After care: On-going support when young people leave care

Please outline a **maximum of three** top priorities for radical reform of the on-going support provided when young people leave care:

Priority 1:

Extend fostering arrangements based on an assessment of the child's emotional age and ability rather than their chronological age. When I'm Ready would only apply to young people who are genuinely ready and we would also suggest that the WIR service be brought within the Provider's domain in order to continue to provide the support to the carers and young people.

Priority 2:

Extend the role of providers beyond early adulthood to provide advice, emotional social practical support extending beyond corporate parenting eg we have 'TACT Connect', a commitment and connection for life, or a genuine corporate parenting commitment (parenting doesn't end at 25 etc).

Priority 3:

Make all university education free for care leavers, student loans would be grants that do not have to be paid back.

4. Anything else

Do you have anything else you would like to tell us?

As a fostering service we wouldn't necessarily feel our strengths lie in the pre care service but as we are advised we must include priorities within this category we have included some thoughts on this.

CYPE(6)-04-23 - Paper 3

Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg | Children, Young People and Education Committee

Gwasanaethau i blant sydd wedi bod mewn gofal: archwilio diwygio radical | Services for care experienced children: exploring radical reform

Ymateb gan Voices From Care Cymru | Evidence from Voices From Care Cymru

Introduction

Voices From Care Cymru is Wales' leading charity upholding the rights of care experienced children and young people. A key component of our role is enabling care experienced children and young people to get their voices heard where decisions are made that affect them. We are a children's rights organisation, dedicated to ensuring that children and young people affected by the care system have their rights, as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and incorporated into Welsh law and policy, fully realised.

We strongly welcome the Committee's Inquiry and all pleased to be able to present evidence.

When the Programme for Government was published following the last Senedd election we were pleased to see that the Labour Party manifesto commitment to exploring radical reform of services for the care experienced community was included.

We have long received support from Welsh Government to enable us to support care experienced young people to have input into specific areas of Welsh Government policy development. We were pleased to be invited to enable young people's participation in the development of, for example, the Basic Income Pilot and the Government's policy to remove private profit from the provision of care to children and young people. We were keen to ensure that the voices of care experienced children and young people were at the centre of any process established by Welsh Government to explore radical reform. We examined, with advice from our partner agencies in the appropriate jurisdictions, the review processes that had taken place recently in Scotland and in England. We concluded that neither model provided an appropriate blueprint for the exploration of radical reform here in Wales. The Scottish process, while initially exhaustive and inclusive, was very time consuming and expensive and in the view of our colleagues has failed to deliver real change. There is also a perception that young people have

completely lost control of the process. While there is much to commend in the report of the English Review there is little evidence of political will to deliver on its findings, and there is widespread concern that it will remain essentially a theoretical exercise.

We held discussions with Welsh Government officials and with the Deputy Minister for Social Services. We facilitated a meeting between the Deputy Minister and a group of care experienced young people in Llandudno. As a result of these discussions the Deputy Minister commissioned us to facilitate a process that would enable care experienced children and young people to work with Welsh Ministers to identify what radically reformed services would look and feel like to care experienced children and young people and their families. She asked us to prepare for and organise a Summit meeting between care experienced children and young people and Welsh Ministers.

The Process

Over the summer of 2022 we consulted with care experienced children and young people across Wales. We contacted them through our own existing network and members, our partners in the third sector and local authority children services. We attended summer events, organised 8 workshops, supported by some additional online discussions. We recruited a core group of 40 young people to act as Young Ambassadors and represent their community at the summit meeting.

Through this consultation process we discussed with young people the true meaning of the words **radical** and **reform**. Using their own experiences of the care system itself and of wider services available to children and young people they identified failings in the current systems, positives in the current systems and began to develop a vision of what radically reformed services would look and feel like to care experienced children and young people.

We agreed with Welsh Government that it was essential that the Summit resulted in a usable 'product' - a document upon which progress towards radical reform could be built. We agreed to call this document a Declaration, in line with the Declarations that are agreed at international Summit meetings.

Working with the Young Ambassadors, drawing on the findings of this consultation, and of a previous consultation we undertook to develop the Voices From Care Cymru Manifesto for the 2021 Senate election we drafted the Declaration.

The Summit was scheduled to take place in Cardiff on September the 10th 2022. Unfortunately, due to the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, it had to be postponed. It was rescheduled for Saturday the 3rd of December 2022. We used the delay to deepen our understanding of the issues facing

some care experienced young people - for example care experienced young asylum seekers - and to further prepare Young Ambassadors to take part.

33 Young Ambassadors debated the Draft Declaration with the Deputy Minister for Social Services, the Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Well-being, the Minister for Social Justice and the Minister for Education. Ministers and Young Ambassadors then presented their findings to the First Minister who responded. Young Ambassadors and Ministers agreed the draft Declaration, with minor amendments. The Declaration is currently being re-drafted, and will be formally signed and published soon.

We are not yet able to share the full Declaration with the Committee, as it is subject to further ratification by Young Ambassadors and Ministers. However, we set out below the main findings of the consultation.

Findings

Voice

Care experienced young people told us that they often do not feel listened to. They told us the adults did not always understand that it could be difficult for them to express their views and to tell the whole truth. They felt it was important that even very little children should be supported to speak out. They felt it was important that when a child or young person's wishes and feelings could not be agreed to because it wasn't safe that people should explain to them why, and what would happen.

They told us that when they raised concerns about how they were being cared for those concerns were not always properly investigated, and the outcomes we're not always explained.

Some care experienced young people had had positive experiences of advocacy. Other young people could not remember being offered advocacy at all. Those who had had positive experiences expressed a wish to be able to stay in touch with their advocate so that they did not have to keep explaining issues again and again to new people. Some young people had found it hard to trust advocates because they did not believe that they were truly independent of social services.

Coming into Care

Some care experienced young people felt that if their families had received more help and support they might have been able to stay with them. They suggested that families should have access to independent advocacy to help and support them, but also stressed that children and young people should have their independent advocates too, to make sure that their voices were heard.

They explained that they believed it was important that if a child is taken into care services continue to work with the family, and with the child to try to make it possible for the family to be reunited. They stressed that children and young people should be listened to if they said they did not want to go home. They believed that professionals should stay in touch with children and families that had been subject to care proceedings to make sure that the children continued to be safe and well and happy.

They believe that once a child or young person is taken into care, professionals should continue to work with the family. They explained that they believe this because those families might go on to have more children who they might be able to look after well if they were helped, and also because when care experienced young people are old enough they often want to be in touch with, and sometimes live with their birth families.

In Care.

Care experienced children and young people had a range of experiences with regard to staying in touch with birth families after being taken into care. Most wanted to be able to stay in touch if it was safe, and they wanted people to explain to them why they couldn't, if it wasn't safe or if family members were not prepared to stay in touch. However, some young people reported feeling pressurised to stay in contact when they didn't want to. Contact with brothers and sisters was a big issue for many young people. For example, some reported letterbox contact that had worked well until they were 18 falling apart after that.

Many young people reported that they had never had it properly explained to them why they had been taken into care. They knew it could be hard, but they felt professionals should explain, even to quite young children and young people.

They told us that many people working with them, from foster carers to teachers, did not understand that even if the care experience for a child or young person was positive, the very process of being taken into care is always traumatic. They believed that it was very important that people should be trained to understand the impacts of trauma, and to know that these impacts might be felt by a young person long after they had been taken into care.

Many care experienced young people reported being placed in care a long way away from their school, their community and their friends. They described how disruptive this was, particularly if it was followed by many other moves. They believe that the system should be designed so that children and young people can stay as close as possible to home when they are taken into care, and that they should only be moved far away if there is a serious risk to their safety.

Many young people reported very positive experiences of fostering. They described loving and supportive foster carers who had made huge differences to their lives. Many continued to be in contact with their foster carers long after leaving care. However, there were some issues.

Young people told us that sometimes foster carers did not display the right values and behaviours to enable young people to grow and thrive. Some young people had experienced prejudice and discrimination from foster carers. They believe that care needed to be taken when recruiting foster carers to ensure that they do have the right values and behaviours. They believe that foster carers' training should be regularly updated, and that they need training to support the different needs of children and young people with protected characteristics. Young people understood that there was a shortage of foster carers in many areas, and they believe that it should be a high priority for more foster carers to be recruited. They reported having to move a number of times before they found the right foster carers, and most believed that that was because there were not enough foster carers for young people to be properly matched to begin with. They believe that it is very important for foster carers to be paid fairly and to receive enough support. Some were angry that kinship carers are paid less than other foster carers. Others were upset because they had found out the carers will be paid more if a child or young person that they're looking after is labelled as 'difficult'. Young people really disliked being labelled like that. Some reported being very unhappy about their care being, as one young person put it 'auctioned off to the lowest bidder'. They believed that any money spent on their care should be actually used for that purpose, and not for private profit.

Young people told us that fostering doesn't work for everyone. Some reported positive experiences of residential homes, others felt that young people in residential settings were sometimes treated less favourably than those in foster care. They wanted a range of options to be available, and for their placements to be stable. Some of the issues about the need for staff training, and for staff with the right values to be recruited that are outlined below were of particular importance to young people in residential settings.

Care experienced children and young people had a wide range of experiences and views about the staff that had worked with them. Many reported very positive experiences. One young man described his social worker as having been 'the person who first showed me what a good man could be.' Older care experienced young people often reported positive experiences with their PAs, with staff doing their best to be available whenever the young people needed them, being flexible, I'm just one young person said 'she never gives up on me'.

However there were issues. Young people reported frequent changes of social worker, often with no hand over. They described how distressing it was to have to keep telling their story again and again to new people. Some young people had similar experiences with PA's, saying that they sometimes didn't know from one week to the next who their PA was or how to contact them. Young people knew that there were shortages of staff, and they understood that the roles could be challenging. They were clear that values and skills were more important than formal training. They said what they needed most from staff was empathy, understanding, and patience.

Care experienced young people told us that they wanted to feel 'normal', and that there were things in the way that the current system operates that stopped them feeling like other children and young people. For example, many reported parents of their friends having to be police checked before they could stay with their friends; this despite national guidance having been changed to allow foster carers to make those decisions under many circumstances. Some young people were very uncomfortable with the way in which foster carers were expected to keep records even if the child or young person had been living with them for many years. They felt this reminded them that they were not, as one young person said, 'really part of the family'. Practical things, like the timings of meetings, also got in the way of everyday life. Young people really disliked having their formal LAC reviews take place in school during school hours. They reported being taken out of lessons to attend these meetings in front of all their friends, and, as one young person said:

'Everyone sees people in suits turning up. They know it is to discuss you. It makes you feel weird. And you miss lessons. Why can't we have meetings when we are not supposed to be in school - holiday times or after 4:00 o'clock?'

Some young people reported not being invited to meetings, or not being helped to prepare for them. Many young people believed that services needed to be more flexible, so that they were there when children and young people needed them.

Care experienced young people understood that, for example, certain records needed to be kept, but they wanted the system to change to make their lives as 'normal' as possible.

Care experienced young asylum seekers told us but their access to education was very limited. They wanted to be able to learn English as quickly as possible and they wanted to be able to choose whether face to face learning or online learning was best for them they wanted to be able to learn life skills to help them understand the community that they are living in. They wanted to have the same support as that provided to other care

experienced children and young people, and they wanted to receive the same financial support as other care experienced young people. They wanted to be treated in the same way and to receive the same support wherever they live in Wales.

Education

Some care experienced young people had had really positive experiences in education. For them school was a safe place, and being moved to a different school if they had to move placements was really distressing and negative. Some individual teachers had made a huge difference.

However, many young people reported feeling that their schools did not understand the challenges that they were facing. They felt that staff had not received the right training to enable them to understand the trauma that young people had experienced and the effect of that trauma on them. Some reported staff having low expectations of them because of their care experienced background. . Some had experienced stigma and bullying, not only from fellow pupils but from staff. They believed that staff needed proper training, and that care experienced young people should be involved in delivering that training. Many believed that schools and colleges should make more effort to ensure that care experienced students understand the opportunities that may be available to them, and that they get access to those opportunities. This includes access to good quality work experience and to information about apprenticeships and training, and about university. Young people believed that care experienced students needed this extra support because they may not have family members and others in their lives who can provide access to this knowledge and these opportunities in the way that other pupils may have.

Many of those young people who had been able to get to university reported good support. Some universities make impressive efforts to ensure that they provide opportunities to enable care experienced young people to attend, and to stay at university. However, some young people had struggled, for example with access to accommodation in holiday times. Young people believed that the good practise at some universities ought to be shared and that Welsh Government should require universities to support care experienced and young people.

Leaving Care.

Some young people had had positive experiences of leaving care and had felt supported. They had begun to learn life skills, like budgeting and cooking, long before they had to leave their foster placement. They had strong supportive relationships with their PAs, which had helped them find suitable places to live and to develop positive relationships in their communities. Some had been able to stay with their foster carers beyond

their 18th birthdays, using the When I'm Ready Scheme. Some had been able to get places at university and had been supported to keep them. Some had been able to access apprenticeships in public sector organisations, designated for care leavers, and had been supported in those roles.

However, too many young people told us that they had not had enough support to help them learn to live independently. They reported being housed in inadequate hostel accommodation without support. Many young people had never heard of the When I'm Ready Scheme. Of those who had, and who had wanted to stay with their foster carers barriers, including financial barriers had made this impossible even when the foster carers really wanted the young people to be able to stay with them. They believed that foster carers should all be made aware of the When I'm Ready scheme, that the financial arrangements should be made simpler, and that the Scheme should work the same way everywhere in Wales. Young people in residential care felt that it was unfair that there was no similar scheme available to them to enable them to stay in the community that they were familiar with, and continue to get some support from care home staff. Some young people told us that they had turned to alcohol or other drugs to self medicate. They also told us of friends who had become involved in unlawful activities, partly because involvement and things like county lines provided them with some kind of community. They believed that there was a need for more PAs, for PAs to be better trained and supported, and for support not only to be available between 9 and 5 on weekdays. Many young people told us that support from third sector organisations had made a huge difference to them. Some believed that those organisations should be better resourced and supported.

Access to mental health support was a big issue for care experienced young people. Many reported difficulties with moving to adult services when they turned 18. They also reported very long waiting times to access child and adolescent services when they were younger. Young people believed that care experienced young people should have priority in mental health services because of the trauma that they have experienced.

Many care experienced young people felt that support should continue to be available, certainly until they are 25 and beyond. As one young person said:

'Would you stop looking after your kids, just because they were past their 25th birthday?'

One suggestion was that there should be a phone number that care experienced people could phone when they were over 25 if they needed support and advice.

General

Care experienced children and young people reported experiencing stigma at many stages in their lives, in education, in their communities, in accessing services like housing, and in employment. They believe that any programme of radical reform must have action to tackle stigma at its heart will stop

Care experience children and young people told us but there is too much variation between how care experienced children and young people are supported across Wales. They believe but how well they are cared for and supported should never depend on where they live, and that they should be provided with the best care and support wherever they are.

They also reported often feeling that decisions were made that affected their lives by people who did not know them or understand them. They would like everyone who decides things that affect their lives to spend time getting to know them and understand them. They want to be listened to, and they want people to act on what they have to say, or explain properly why they can't do so.

Conclusion and Next Steps.

Much of what care experienced children and young people told us through this consultation is not new. This presents a major challenge. It is clear from what we have been told that there is much good practise, but that it is not routinely shared and too often depends on the determination and goodwill of individual local decision makers or frontline pack practitioners. Despite the good intentions of national guidance, local delivery for care experienced children and young people varies, and it is clear that some aspects of national policy, for example the When I'm Ready Scheme, are not effectively monitored and not consistently delivered. This must change.

The Summit draft Declaration does not attempt to set out a blueprint of how services should be transformed. Rather it sets out a vision of how services will look and feel to care experienced children and young people and their families once radical reform has taken place. Once the Declaration is signed there will be a programme of work engaging professionals with the delivery of the Declaration. Young Ambassadors and Ministers will work together to engage professionals in this process, and to monitor progress. The intention is to hold a further Summit in 12 months' time to assess progress.

Following the Summit young people have told us that they believe is that Welsh Ministers have really heard and understood them, and are truly committed to undertaking the radical reform needed to transform the lives of care experienced children and young people.

In addition to any specific recommendations the Committee may wish to make about specific services we would invite the Committee to consider

asking the Welsh Government to commit to some core principles. We believe that it is essential that care experienced children and young people continue to have a central voice in the process of radical reform. We believe radical reform should deliver consistent, high quality services across the whole of Wales, and that, while there is a need for flexibility to meet local needs and circumstances, the care and support a child or young person receives should never depend on where in Wales they live. We believe that it will be essential for Welsh Government to closely monitor the delivery of the programme of radical reform, and to ensure but sufficient robust information is collected to enable that monitoring to be effective. We believe that at the heart of radical reform must be action to tackle the stigma that care experienced children and young people face and to end it.

We hope that the Committee will be able, in addition to undertaking this very important Inquiry, to continue to monitor the Welsh Government delivery on its commitment to radical reform of services, and to continue to engage with care experienced young people as part of that monitoring process.

We look forward to delivering evidence in person.

CYPE(6)-04-23 - Paper 4

Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg | Children, Young People and Education Committee

Gwasanaethau i blant sydd wedi bod mewn gofal: archwilio diwygio radical |
Services for care experienced children: exploring radical reform

Ymateb gan NYAS Cymru (National Youth Advocacy Service) | NYAS Cymru (National Youth Advocacy Service)

1. Before care: Safely reducing the number of children in the care system

Please outline a **maximum of three** top priorities for radical reform of services for safely reducing the number of children in the care system:

Priority 1: Welsh Government should create a national action plan to reduce the disproportionate number of children entering care with care-experienced parents.

We know early intervention is key to improving outcomes for children and young people at risk of entering care. We also know that early help targeted at supporting families can improve the lives and chances of children and young people staying with families.

Care-experienced young women are more likely than their peers to become young parents.¹ They are also more likely to have their children taken into care. NYAS Cymru's Project Unity service provides wraparound support to care-experienced young mothers in Wales to keep families together, whenever possible. This form of parent advocacy aims to break the cycle of care by helping to build up confidence in young mothers empowering them to have their voices heard, and access training/education/employment opportunities.

Yet young care-experienced mothers can face structural discrimination because of their age and care status. NYAS Cymru's recent report brought together care-experienced young women's voices. Young women consulted all talked about the discrimination they feel they face as care-experienced young mothers. This discrimination is what leads to some young women being referred to child protection before their baby is even born, without any explanation as to why they have been referred in the first place:

"It's really bad how social services treat us – my children were only referred to social services because I had been in care. I had a house, a partner, a job – I was doing well. They became involved because of my ex-partner – and started care proceedings."²

In more than 7 out of 10 cases, young women requested help from NYAS' Project Unity service to help to navigate child protection or care proceedings.³ On the help received before meetings, one young woman said:

"When I have meetings coming up they help me to have a voice. The project worker used to speak for me at my request but now I do it myself with their support. I'm more confident."⁴

¹ Roberts, L., Maxwell, N., Elliot, M. (2019) When young people in and leaving state care become parents. What happens and why? In Children and Youth Services Review Volume 104.

² Project Unity (2022) 'Mid-term Review', Available at: [NYAS-Project-Unity-MidTerm-Review-Jan-2022 \(amazonaws.com\)](https://www.amazonaws.com). p. 25.

³ *Ibid.* p. 17.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 31.

NYAS Cymru recommends that Welsh Government should create a national action plan, co-produced with care-experienced parents, to reduce the disproportionate number of children entering care. Within this action plan should be a commitment from local authorities to gather and publish statistics on how many girls and young women under the age of 25 years old in local authorities were subjected to child protection processes for their child or children, including pre-birth, and provide a clear action plan that sets out a framework for how they will support care-experienced women and girls who become pregnant.

Priority 2: Welsh Government should commit to eradicate child poverty by 2030.

62% of care-experienced children initially received care and support during 2021-22 because of abuse or neglect.⁵ To radically reform services and stop poverty rates impacting the number of children in Wales entering care, Welsh Government must begin to provide families with the financial means to survive.

NYAS Cymru welcomes that Welsh Government has committed to producing a revised Child Poverty Strategy for Wales, due to be published 2023.⁶ We understand that Welsh Government spend is determined by what Wales receives in budget allocation from the UK Government, with part of the budget funded from money raised from devolved taxes. Nonetheless, Welsh Ministers need to exercise their powers in line with the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011 to prevent and eradicate poverty which, in many circumstances, is the cause of neglect.

NYAS Cymru believes Welsh Government's objective to reduce the number of children entering care in Wales must be coupled with radical reform of the welfare system for Wales and a date by which to eradicate child poverty. We suggest that date should be 2030.

Priority 3: A statutory entitlement to parent advocacy should be offered across Wales at the earliest opportunity to parents at risk of entering child protection proceedings, which must be sustained into the future beyond current funding to 2025.

Welsh Government has invested in parent advocacy, which aims to keep families together by advocating, supporting, empowering, and enabling parent(s) to have a voice and be partners in decision-making processes with social care services.

⁵ Welsh Government (2022) 'Children looked after by local authorities: April 2021 to March 2022', Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/children-looked-after-local-authorities-april-2021-march-2022-html#:~:text=At%2031%20March%202022,-7%2C080%20children%20were&text=This%20is%20a%20rate%20of,status%20was%20under%20care%20orders>.

⁶ Welsh Government (2022) 'Child poverty strategy: 2022 progress report', Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/child-poverty-strategy-2022-progress-report-html#section-111855>.

At present, NYAS Cymru is funded by Welsh Government to deliver parent advocacy across Pan Gwent. With Welsh Government funding, we were able to support 275 families in this region between April 2021 and March 2022. Out of the 275 parents who NYAS Cymru supported, no safeguarding issues were presented in a total of 70 cases concerning issues experienced in education and health. Therefore, all children remained within their parental home. This is why we urge Welsh Government to roll out this provision without delay.

For parents who would have substantial difficulty fully participating within child protection statutory processes for reasons such as health issues, additional learning needs, addiction, poverty, housing, debt or/and domestic violence, the parent advocacy early intervention service offers a lifeline of support that is non-judgemental while empowering them and building their confidence and capability as parents.

Parent advocates:

1. Empower parents to take control in their lives and engage constructively with social services.
2. Help them to navigate the system and support on offer, as well as understand what is happening.
3. Hold services accountable for their delivery and waiting times, helping to break down barriers of access and challenge silos between agencies such as mental health, addiction, housing or welfare support.
4. Safely reduce the number of children entering care, by supporting parents early. This is in line with the presumption that it is in the best interests of children to stay with their families unless they cannot be kept safe.

A parent involved in our parent advocacy early intervention service, said: "Parents feel very lost. If it wasn't for parent advocacy I would still be lost in the system and my child would not be at home."

Parent advocacy is more successful if there are good resources within the community to provide holistic support. This includes good drug and alcohol support services that do not require a waiting list, or access to domestic violence provision. The Welsh model of social prescribing could be linked to supporting this work as this would make parent advocacy services easily accessible, reducing the likelihood that children will need to enter care.

2. In care: Quality services and support for children in care

Please outline a **maximum of three** top priorities for radical reform of services for children in care:

Priority 1: Welsh Government should completely ban all forms of unregulated accommodation, guaranteeing that children in care are cared for where they live.

The rise in children living in unregulated accommodation in Wales – which has risen approximately 18% since 2018-19 – is making it increasingly challenging to keep children safe where they live.⁷ Failing to ensure an adequate standard of living is in breach of children’s Article 27 right in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

In England, the UK Government made it illegal from September 2021 to house care-experienced children up to the age of 15 in unregulated accommodation. The UK Government is working towards a form of regulation for all currently unregulated homes by 2024. There are some significant flaws in the form of regulation proposed in England, but we note that the Welsh Government has made no similar moves to ban unregulated accommodation in any form.

122 children lived in semi-independent accommodation in Wales when they ceased to be looked after, according to the most recent figures.⁸ From the definition of semi-independent accommodation provided, we cannot be sure how much of this accommodation is unregulated or otherwise. NYAS Cymru believes that the Welsh Government refusal to acknowledge the children living in this type of accommodation in Wales is a direct result of the acute housing shortage in Wales.

Life for these 16- and 17-year-olds can be terrifying. We submit as evidence what care-experienced young woman Charlotte said about her experiences as a 16-year-old in unregulated accommodation, which has also been covered by BBC Newsnight.

“The police would be called in at least twice a week, or some kind of big incident would happen where some fight would kick off, or someone’s doors would get kicked in, or someone would OD [overdose] on some drug and they’d have to be shipped off to a hospital... It’s mad behaviour that shouldn’t be happening! Like anywhere, let alone a place that’s supposed to house children and young adults... It’s crazy that it’s actually a place where people are put.”

NYAS Cymru understands that there is resistance to such a ban due to a lack of appropriate placements. Welsh Government must therefore prioritise a plan of action across policy areas including social care and housing to address this shortage, which should be achieved by working with young people. Social

⁷ Welsh Government (2022) ‘Children looked after by local authorities: April 2021 to March 2022’, Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/children-looked-after-local-authorities-april-2021-march-2022-html#:~:text=At%2031%20March%202022,-7%2C080%20children%20were&text=This%20is%20a%20rate%20of,status%20was%20under%20care%20orders>.

⁸ *Ibid.*

Care Wales and Care Inspectorate Wales should also work with unregulated accommodation providers to support them to meet standards of care.

A practical way to mitigate the risks of further limiting housing availability would be to introduce a staggered ban to unregulated accommodation.

- **After one year:** A clear ban for under 16s could take place.
- **After three years:** The ban could extend to include 16-year-olds.
- **After six years:** The ban could extend to include 17-year-olds.

To make sure that children in these homes are listened to and taken seriously while changes take place, Welsh Government should enshrine independent residential visiting advocacy as a statutory requirement for all children's homes, including unregulated accommodation.

Priority 2: Welsh Government should repurpose housing for children in care and care leavers to live in.

NYAS Cymru welcomes the Welsh Government commitment to transition to not-for-profit models of care for children in care in Wales, for which taking the profit out of residential care for children's homes has been designated as the initial focus. Nonetheless, a key issue for the Programme Board to consider is the significant investment needed to build the capacity of the public/not for profit children's care homes sector.⁹

We asked young people from NYAS Cymru's Young Person's Advisory Group what they thought about children's homes making significant profits from their experiences of being in care. All young people felt very uncomfortable with profits being made in this way. One young person expressed that "It's wrong and shouldn't be allowed, they should always disclose where and what the money has been spent on."

Yet children in care should not have to choose between private children's homes "profiting on our trauma" and being moved far away from their families. To that end, Welsh Government must not only focus their attention on supporting private providers wishing to move away from new models; they must focus on rapidly expanding non-profit provision in Wales so more children are not placed in unregulated accommodation or moved out of area. A housing strategy for care-experienced children and young people is long overdue, which should look at the wider support package available alongside accommodation.

One idea is to repurpose spaces in commercial areas and turn them into homes for children in care or care leavers to live in. Repurposing housing for residential use would alleviate the housing crisis, decrease the number of empty spaces, and most importantly mean children in care could continue living in Wales.

⁹ Welsh Government (2022) "Removing profit from the care of looked after children: Draft Terms of Reference", Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2022-03/removing-profit-from-the-care-of-looked-after-children-terms-of-reference.pdf>. p. 5.

Priority 3: Welsh Government must provide missing children and young people with a statutory entitlement to an independent return interview.

Welsh Government must provide children in care with a statutory entitlement to return interviews. Return interviews provide an opportunity for a young person to explain why they went missing and to discuss what needs to be put in place to prevent them from going missing again.¹⁰ While good practice is happening across Wales, there is too much variation in the way stakeholders safeguard and respond to children and young people in Wales who go missing. This has resulted in an inequality of access to support for missing children depending on where they live in the country. With children in care far more likely to be reported missing than those not in care, clearer and stronger guidance on return interviews should be a Welsh Government priority.¹¹

As part of the 'Missing the Point' campaign steering group, chaired by NYAS Cymru and bringing together partners across the sector including the four Police and Crime Commissioners, the 4Cs led a participation workshop with children in March 2022 to discuss return interviews. A total of 30 children aged 7 to 17 who live with a foster carer or in a children's home in Wales attended. They shared that a return interview discussion is important because:

- It should "find out the problem that caused them to run away."
- "Talks should take place so they can understand what happened and learn from it."
- "They might have something inside that they avoid" talking about.
- "If the reason is they want to see their friends, this could be discussed in a positive way."
- It should "find out how things could have been dealt with differently."
- They may be "scared of where they are living currently" and need to talk

UK Government recognised the importance of independent return interviews in connecting children in care with an adult in 2014 when they made return interviews a statutory requirement in England. This means that within 72 hours of a young person returning from a missing episode, it is a legal requirement for them to be offered a return interview. Welsh Government should do the same, entitling every child after a missing episode to an independent return interview, conducted by someone independent of the police or a local authority.

¹⁰ National Youth Advocacy Service (2022) 'Return Interviews', Available at: <https://www.nyas.net/get-support/supporting-professionals/return-interviews/>.

¹¹ NYAS Cymru and The Children's Society (2020) 'Missing the Point', Available at: <https://nyas.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/NewsCampaigns/Campaigns/Missing-the-Point-Report-EL-Nov.2020-1.pdf>. (p. 3)

a3. After care: On-going support when young people leave care

Please outline a **maximum of three** top priorities for radical reform of the on-going support provided when young people leave care:

Priority 1: Welsh Government should extend the basic income pilot to all care leavers up to 25 years old after evaluating the project early.

To tackle poverty experienced by care leavers, the Welsh Government launched a £20 million basic income pilot in July 2022. The pilot provides more than 500 care leavers who turn 18 years old over the following year with £1600 each month (before tax) for three years to support them as they enter adulthood and transition to independent living.¹²

NYAS Cymru is delighted that Welsh Government have prioritised ongoing financial support for young people who leave care with this scheme. As the pilot appears to have already positively impacted young lives, NYAS Cymru calls on the Welsh Government to evaluate their basic income pilot scheme early. As the reserved powers of the UK Government could challenge a permanent rollout of the pilot, it would be useful for an early evaluation to be released ahead of the next general election to encourage its inclusion in UK-wide party manifestos. If the evaluation shows success, we will welcome Welsh Government's commitment to extend the pilot to all care leavers up to 25 years old.

Such forward planning would make it more difficult for UK Government to resist collaboration with Welsh Government over the scheme and where it falls with respect to social security (welfare benefits) as a reserved power held by the UK Government.

Priority 2: Welsh Government should create a strategy to offer support to care-experienced people throughout their lives.

NYAS Cymru work with many care leavers who are negatively impacted by 'cliff edges' of care and support. This is when financial or emotional support suddenly ceases for them at key ages such as at 21, where a young person is no longer considered a care leaver in Wales unless they are in higher education.

25 can represent a further 'cliff edge' for young people in Wales, when Personal Advisor support is also removed for young people who are following or want to follow a programme of education or training. NYAS Cymru welcomes that Welsh Government intends to legislate in this area, but it is not clear when changes will be implemented. We believe these changes need to be implemented without delay.

¹² Senedd Cymru (2022) 'Plenary 28/06/22', Available at: <https://record.senedd.wales/Plenary/12880#A73116>.

24 is the average age at which young people move out from their family home in the UK.¹³ Emotional and financial support from their parent(s) does not stop for many young people after they move out, and often continues long into their adulthood.

Corporate parents should do the same to enable young people to have positive outcomes in their lives by providing support and contact. Welsh Government's corporate parenting charter is a step forward, in that all public bodies who signed up have developed an action plan and offer of commitment and support to care leavers, which includes free transport, leisure, and access to services.

Welsh Government's 2016-2021 strategy on 'improving outcomes for children' committed to expanding the offer of Personal Advisors for care leavers up to age 25.¹⁴ NYAS Cymru calls for a new 'improving outcomes' strategy to improve outcomes for care leavers at all ages. This strategy would work to urgently expand support through and beyond the current 'cliff edges'.

To define what this support could look like, Welsh Government should for the first time conduct a far-reaching and meaningful consultation of care-experienced people of all ages, so that they can define what they feel is needed or wanted from their corporate parent. This should then lead to the development of clear new corporate parenting duties.

Priority 3: Make independent visitors part of the leaving care offer to young people.

An Independent Visitor is an adult who volunteers their time to get to know a child or young person in care. Sometimes an Independent Visitor is the only person in a care-experienced child or young person's life who is not paid to spend time with them. It is completely up to children and young people whether they want to have an Independent Visitor, yet many do not even know they are entitled to an Independent Visitor if it is in their best interests.

Only 1% of care-experienced children in Wales are currently matched with an Independent Visitor.¹⁵

If the Welsh Government were to extend children and young people's statutory entitlement to Independent Visitors up to the age of 25, the important role Independent Visitors play in children and young people's lives would no longer be part of the 'cliff edge' in support that many experience around their 18th birthday. It would also provide young people leaving care with someone to talk to at a point in their lives when feelings of isolation and loneliness are common.

¹³ NYAS (2022) 'Support for care leavers in England and Wales', Available at: <https://nyas.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/WhoWeAre/AtB-Support-for-care-leavers-in-England-and-Wales-5.pdf>.

¹⁴ Welsh Government (2021) 'Improving Outcomes for Children Programme', Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-06/improving-outcomes-for-children-programme-legacy-report.pdf>.

¹⁵ NYAS (2022) 'The Right Friend: Independent Visitors', Available at: <https://nyas.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/WhoWeAre/AtB%20Independent%20Visitors%20Summer%202022.pdf>.

Further to this, an active offer for children and young people to be given access to an Independent Visitor, if in their best interests, should take place at the beginning and end of their care journey. This would mean children and young people's access to Independent Visitors is made 'opt-out' rather than 'opt-in', so as to make sure they are aware of their entitlement. This is already included in as best practice in Welsh Government's Practice Standards and Good Practice Guide on Independent Visitors, which was produced by NYAS Cymru in partnership with stakeholders.¹⁶ This would mean that more than 1 in 100 care-experienced children and young people are able to benefit from their right to an Independent Visitor.

¹⁶ NYAS Cymru and Welsh Government (2020) 'Practice Standards and Good Practice Guide', Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-01/independent-visitors-guidance-for-local-authorities.pdf>.

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CYPE(6)-04-23 - Paper to note 1

Y Pwyllgor Iechyd a
Gofal Cymdeithasol

—
**Health and Social Care
Committee**

Lynne Neagle MS
Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing
Welsh Government

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16 January 2023

Dear Lynne

Food Supplement and Food for Specific Groups (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2022

Thank you for your letter of 20 December 2022 regarding the above Regulations. We considered your response, and your recent exchange of correspondence with the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee, at our meeting on 11 January 2023. Following our discussion, we would welcome clarification of the following issues (including, where appropriate) where the relevant information can be found in the Explanatory Memorandum to be laid alongside the Regulations.

Timing of the Regulations

Your letter of 21 November indicated that the Regulations would be laid before the UK Parliament on 14 December 2022, and that they would come into effect on 18 January 2023. Your subsequent letter of 20 December 2022 states that the Regulations will be laid "in December". We noted at our meeting on 11 January 2023 that the Regulations do not yet appear to have been laid.

1. Could you confirm when the Regulations are expected to be laid and enter into force?
2. Could you outline why the Regulations have been delayed, and whether the delay will give rise to any consequences?

Divergence with Northern Ireland

You indicate in your letter of 20 December 2022 that no formal assessment has been undertaken of divergence between GB and Northern Ireland regarding barriers to trade or public health.

3. Could you clarify whether standards will be different in GB and Northern Ireland as a result of the amendments to be made by the Regulations?

Bilingual legislation

In your answer in your letter of 20 December to question 3 from our letter of 1 December 2022, you explain that you considered different options for taking forward the proposed amending regulations, including the option for Welsh Government to bring forward its own Statutory Instrument. However, you did not indicate whether the availability of legislation in Welsh and in English, and the implications for the accessibility of law in Wales, was a factor in your consideration.

4. What consideration was given to the impact of the UK Government making regulations on the accessibility of the law and the availability of bilingual legislation?

Consultation with stakeholders

In your response to the LJC Committee's letter, you explain that the UK Government undertook a three week consultation with specific stakeholders on the proposed changes.

5. Could you provide details of which stakeholders were consulted, and how any responses are reflected in the Regulations?

Amendments to be made by the Regulations

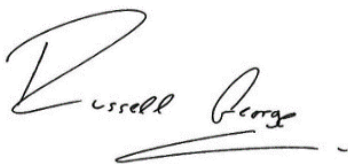
Thank you for the information you have provided on the rationale for the amendments to be made by the Regulations. We welcome the indication that the Welsh Government will be bringing forward its own Regulations regarding baby food.

We note that one amendment will update the definition of pesticide residue from the terminology used in Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 to a narrower definition taken from an earlier regulation (Regulation (EC) No 396/2005).

6. Could you provide further information about the rationale for reverting to a narrower definition, and what the implications of such a change might be?

We would be grateful for a response by 24 January 2023.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Russell George". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke underneath.

Russell George MS

Chair, Health and Social Care Committee

cc Jayne Bryant MS, Chair, Children, Young People and Education Committee

Huw Irranca-Davies MS, Chair, Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg. We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

Agenda Item 8.2

CYPE(6)-04-23 – Paper to note 2

Lynne Neagle AS/MS
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Iechyd Meddwl a Llesiant
Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing

Russell George MS,
Chair, Health and Social Care Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

24 January 2023

Dear Russell,

Food Supplement and Food for Specific Groups (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2023

Thank you for your follow up letter dated 16 January 2023 regarding the above amending regulations. I take each of your points in order.

1. Could you confirm when the Regulations are expected to be laid and enter into force?

The legislation was laid on Friday 13 January. The link is attached [The Food Supplements and Food for Specific Groups \(Miscellaneous Amendments\) Regulations 2023 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#).

2. Could you outline why the Regulations have been delayed, and whether the delay will give rise to any consequences?

DHSC officials advised on 12 December that the Regulations would not be laid 14th December 2022 due to them not being able to get the necessary Ministerial clearance in time.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

3. Could you clarify whether standards will be different in GB and Northern Ireland as a result of the amendments to be made by the Regulations

The standards will be the same across GB and Northern Ireland. The GBSI makes minor amendments and forms part of a single GB legislative framework. This is consistent with the approach taken in respect of previous legislative amendments in this area. The EU has made legislation to make the same amendments which are already applicable in corresponding nutrition regulations across the EU.

4. What consideration was given to the impact of the UK Government making regulations on the accessibility of the law and the availability of bilingual legislation

They met the following criteria specified by the Counsel General for when such legislation may be made in the UK Parliament on behalf of Welsh Ministers.

- a. where the interconnected nature of the relevant Welsh and English administrative systems mean that it is most effective and appropriate for provision for both to be taken forward at the same time in the same legislative instrument; and
- b. where the devolved provisions in question are minor or technical and non-contentious.

The regulations are considered to be technical in nature for this purpose and as such I considered there to be limited impact.

5. Could you provide details of which stakeholders were consulted, and how any responses are reflected in the Regulations?

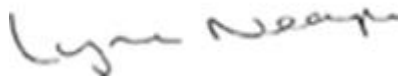
The consultation invited comments from the food and nutrition industry, representative groups, the public and other interested parties across the UK on the proposed approach. The consultation document was also placed on the Knowledge Hub, a closed forum for Local Authorities, to discuss views on enforcement issues.

There was overall support for the technical amendments to food supplements and the respondents welcomed the changes which were proposed. There was a request for a longer transition period for the change in unit of measurement used for labelling copper in food supplements and this was agreed and reflected in the SI.

6. Could you provide further information about the rationale for reverting to a narrower definition, and what the implications of such a change might be?

This change will provide a more precise definition of residues taken from Regulation (EC) No 396/2005 (on maximum residue levels of pesticides in or on food and feed of plant and animal origin) and give more clarity and consistency with the definition which is used in the legislation for general food .

Yours sincerely,



Lynne Neagle AS/MS

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Iechyd Meddwl a Llesiant
Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing

CYPE(6)-04-23 – Paper to note 3

Lynne Neagle AS/MS
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Iechyd Meddwl a Llesiant
Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Huw Irranca-Davies MS,
Chair, Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee

Jayne Bryant MS,
Chair, Children, Young People and Education Committee

Russell George MS,
Chair, Health and Social Care Committee

18 January 2023

Dear Huw, Jayne, Russell

I am writing to inform you that my consent has been granted for The Food Supplement and Food for Specific Groups (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2022 and that this Statutory Instrument has now been laid in the UK Parliament.

The SI has amended the following legislation to effect changes in Scotland, Wales and England.

- The Nutrition (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (SI 2019/651) as amended,
- Regulation (EU) No 609/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 June 2013 on food intended for infants and young children, food for special medical purposes, and total diet replacement for weight control and repealing Council Directive 92/52/EEC, Commission Directives 96/8/EC, 1999/21/EC, 2006/125/EC and 2006/141/EC, Directive 2009/39/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Commission Regulations (EC) No 41/2009 and (EC) No 953/2009¹,
- Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2016/127 of 25 September 2015 supplementing Regulation (EU) No 609/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the specific compositional and information requirements for infant formula and follow-on formula and as regards requirements on information relating to infant and young child feeding **Error! Reference source not found.**

¹ Retained EU regulation as amended by The Nutrition (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 and 2020

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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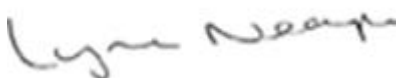
source not found.Error! Reference source not found.Error! Reference source not found.Error! Reference source not found.Error! Reference source not found.Error! Reference source not found. and,

- Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2016/128 of 25 September 2015 supplementing Regulation (EU) No 609/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the specific compositional and information requirements for food for special medical purposes^{Error! Bookmark not defined.}

These amendments have:

- updated the unit of measurement used for copper in food supplements;
- updated the unit of measurement used for zinc in food supplements;
- updated the forms of niacin which are permitted for use in the manufacture of food supplements to include nicotinamide riboside chloride;
- updated the forms of magnesium which are permitted for use in the manufacture of food supplements to include magnesium citrate malate;
- updated the forms of folate that are permitted for use in the manufacture of infant formula and follow-on formula (IFFOF) to include calcium L-methylfolate;
- updated the forms of folate that are permitted for use in the manufacture of processed cereal-based foods and baby foods to include calcium L-methylfolate;
- standardised the definition of pesticide residues used in the regulations on IFFOF; and
- standardised the definition of pesticide residues used in the regulations on food for special medical purposes developed to satisfy the nutritional requirements of infants and young children (iFSMPs).

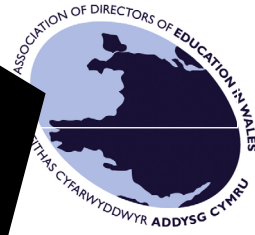
Yours sincerely,



Lynne Neagle AS/MS

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Iechyd Meddwl a Llesiant
Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing

[Written Statement: The Food Supplements and Food for Specific Groups \(Miscellaneous Amendments\) Regulations 2023 \(17 January 2023\) | GOV.WALES](#)



Dr Chris Llewelyn

Prif Weithredwr / Chief Executive

**Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru
Welsh Local Government Association**

Un Rhodfa'r Gamlas

Heol Dumballs

Caerdydd

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One Canal Parade

Dumballs Road

Cardiff

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Tel: 029 2046 8600

Ein Cyf / Our Ref:

Dyddiad / Date: 06 January 2023

Gofynnwch am / Please ask for: Sharon Davies

Llinell uniongyrchol / Direct line: 07917275203

Ebost / Email: sharon.davies@wlga.gov.uk

WLGA / ADEW Response to Jane Bryant MS

Thank you for your letter, Minister Jane Bryant,

the scale and nature of violence, abuse, sexual harassment or sexual abuse towards school staff across maintained settings in Wales, whether by colleagues, managers, parents or pupils

Schools record reported incidents and local authorities monitor these, and LAs are therefore able to identify patterns / clusters / links between cases which can highlight concerns around culture or volume of cases which could lead to interventions and training / re-training prioritisation.

Local authorities have generally seen a rise in exclusions and permanent exclusions over the last academic year. A large proportion of these have been related to incidents of verbal and physical aggression to staff from pupils.

In addition, anecdotal feedback from schools highlights that tensions from parents towards schools in relation to their children's education appear more prominent in comparison to pre-pandemic issues.

Local authorities do not publish data relating to incidents due to the sensitivity of the content, but to assist with this query and to provide a sense of scale, a number of local authorities have agreed for the purposes of this communication to provide information and examples of practice under agreement of anonymity:

Example 1:

Since January 2020 (to November 2022) there have been 196 recorded incidents in maintained settings. These are mostly incidents of violence by pupils against staff. There are number of recurring types of incidents, and these tend to be in the main in areas of higher deprivation. Incidents involving physical violence by parents and

other staff is rare with less than 5 incidents reported since January 2020.

This example shows the level of data available, and the role local authorities take in monitoring and intervention.

Example 2:

Scale and Nature of violence (both physical and non-physical, e.g., verbal abuse across maintained settings in Wales is recorded via the use of accident report forms and Violence at Work Report forms.

Violence at Work Statistics for the period July to September 2022:

In total there were 62 Violence at Work reports in the Directorate between July to September 2022. In 61 of the incidents, the assailant was a pupil of which 55 were primary schools, 1 was a secondary school and 5 were special schools.

Violent Incident Category	July to Sept 2022	July to Sept 2021	July to Sept 2020
Anti-Social Behaviour	0	0	1
Damage to Property	2	0	0
Physical Assault No Injury	37	20	11
Physical Assault with Injury	21	9	6
Threat of Physical Assault	0	5	1
Verbal Abuse	2	0	1
Total	62	34	20

To note: Scale and nature of sexual harassment or sexual abuse towards staff may not be captured using this form – unless the member of staff made a comment on the form to notify the Local Authority that the incident was in relation to sexual harassment or abuse. In this instance the member of staff's line manager would record this (i.e., Head teacher) and act through the schools Conduct and Behaviour Policy - Behaviour Corrective Actions with the pupil (via parent/carer).

what steps schools should take to prevent violence, abuse and harassment (e.g., policies, guidance, training, risk assessments, etc.) and how effectively schools across Wales are taking those steps.

All schools should have well defined policies in place and governing bodies / leadership teams would be supported by local authorities to ensure full understanding and application of policy. Local authority support includes provision of effective policy support, support for risk assessments and guidance on managing the risk. Schools in general work well with local authorities on this but there is a concern that there remains underreporting in schools. Training can also be offered via online training systems but there is an acknowledgment that there is further work to do in ensuring all staff are well trained.

Schools should take a proactive approach and use the guidance and frameworks provided. LAs have policies in place (e.g., Schools Keeping School Staff Safe Guidance) and there are various Violence at Work / Security risk assessments and Lock Down procedures to be followed and practiced as well as training via Head teacher induction and specific training provisions.

Additional LA support / interventions include reviews of behaviour policies and a school graduated response to increases in behaviour incidents, introduction of additional behaviour support including wellbeing hubs and additional behaviour/wellbeing trained staff, and training for staff e.g. ELSA and Thrive.

Partnership working with Early Help, youth services, youth justice services, Police and Children's Social Care are all ways that schools can use to respond to some of these issues.

Head teacher induction is mandatory, and schools are supported to implement the guidance and protective measures. On occasions, the LA would support a school after an incident has occurred to either review their existing procedures or provide support to ensure measures are in place to protect staff.

Incident reporting is generally perceived to have increased and this is something that is encouraged very often to remove the stigma from reporting. However, more can be done by school management teams to ensure these messages are commonplace to improve reporting and ensure targeted support is offered, and local authorities encourage this.

what support schools should offer to staff who have suffered violence, abuse or harassment and how effectively schools across Wales are providing that support.

Staff who suffer any of the above would be offered occupational health support, wellbeing support or additionally can be referred to counselling services. However, take up of this offer is often reported as low.

Key indicators of a successful package of policy, practice and support include:

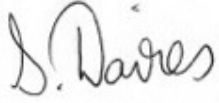
- Confidence in the reporting process by providing an open door, time to decompress and explain the incident without judgement.
- The offer of counselling and support
- Ensure the employee understands the incident can be reported to the police (where relevant)
- Risk assessment review to ensure safe systems of work, no lone working and signposting to further support
- Ensuring wider general awareness of, training in, and monitoring of delivery of VAWDASV mandatory training, and signposting to support routes.

Example 3:

Where there has been a need for additional therapeutic or counselling support, the local authority has worked with schools to provide that bespoke support.

The majority of schools have introduced wellbeing days and mentors to assist each other with the day-to-day pressures within the school environment. Schools have identified staff and pupil wellbeing as one of their strategic priorities to ensure this area is being addressed.

Yours sincerely,



Pennaeth Addysg
Head of Education

Croesawn ohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg a byddwn yn ymateb i ohebiaeth yn yr un iaith.
Ni fydd defnyddio'r naill iaith na'r llall yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh and English and will respond to correspondence in the
same language. Use of either language will not lead to a delay.

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CYPE(6)-04-23 – Paper to note 5



January 5th, 2023

Dear Jayne Byrant, MS, Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee,

RE: Trauma informed Schools in Wales and least restrictive practice to support CYP's mental health

We write to you to express concern about the use of restrictive practice within high schools in Wales, particularly Newport. It has come to our attention that a behaviour management programme called 'Ready to learn' is being used within a number of high schools in Wales. It has also come to our attention that a number of schools are not trauma aware or informed and have not received appropriate training on the impact of adverse childhood experiences, toxic stress, adversity and trauma and how to best support children and young people with these challenges.

Through our own research it appears that the 'Ready to Learn' programme originated in a Bristol high school and was created by a school leader called Matthew Stevenson. It is described as a binary system that assesses if children are 'ready to learn or not'. Its original target group was disadvantaged students for whom it was recognised were more likely to experience 'poor behaviour during lessons'. [Mr Stevenson said writing for SecEd:](#)

*"If students aren't focused in lessons, they receive a warning, with their name written on the board. Students automatically receive a warning for talking over the teacher or another student, or for being off task. Students who receive a second warning in a single lesson are sent to our **isolation room for a full school day** (that is, five full lessons including an hour's detention after-school). This is a massive deterrent, and despite high numbers initially, we have relatively few students in isolation now.*

*Underlying everything we did was a huge increase in student responsibility. Students are expected to **make their own way to the isolation room and are responsible for their behaviour once there** (three warnings in the isolation room results in a day's exclusion). This reflected our belief that the vast, vast majority of students **can behave well, if they choose to.**"*

The Centre for Mental Health Trauma, challenging behaviour and restrictive interventions in schools [policy briefing](#) states that challenging behaviour and trauma are associated. Young people who show challenging behaviour are more likely than average to have been exposed to trauma.

In some cases, challenging behaviour is a symptom of trauma. Thousands of young people are subject to some form of restrictive intervention in schools in the UK every year for challenging behaviour. There is reason to believe that these interventions have a negative impact on mental health, irrespective of previous trauma exposure.

Young people who have experienced trauma in the past are especially at risk of experiencing psychological harm from restrictive interventions. For example, exclusion and seclusion can echo relational trauma and systemic trauma; while physical restraint can echo physical and sexual abuse. As a result, these interventions may cause harm and potentially drive even more challenging behaviour.



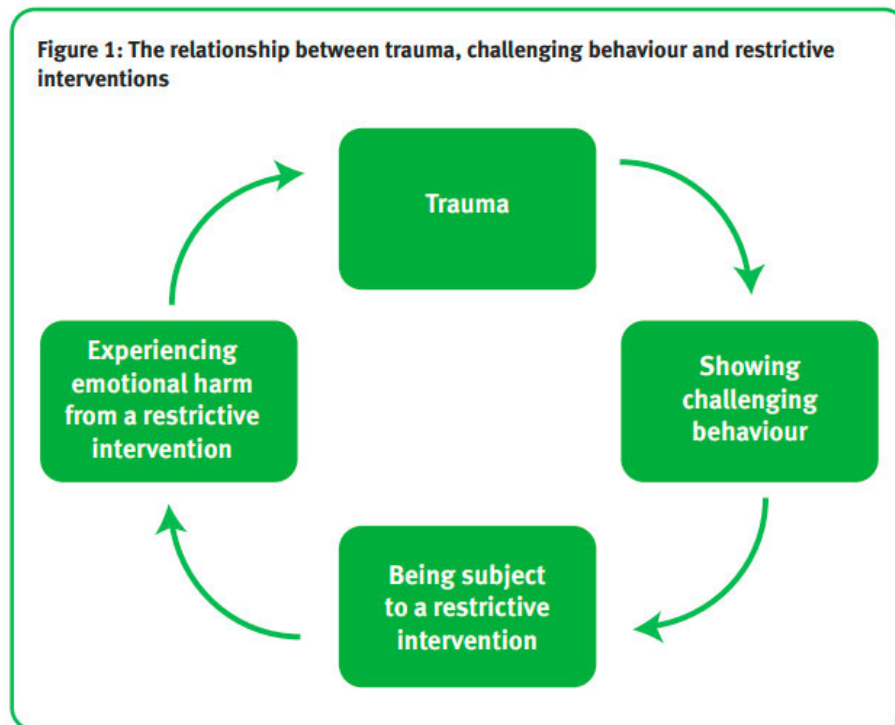


Figure one: Centre for Mental Health Trauma, challenging behaviour, and restrictive interventions in school cycle

We have the following principal concerns about the Ready to Learn programme’s ethos, approach, and use:

- It is not a trauma or relationally informed approach.
- It is not in line with the [Welsh Government Reducing Restrictive Practice Guidelines](#)
- It is not in keeping with the [Trauma informed Wales: A Societal Approach](#)
- To our knowledge the programme does not have any formal monitoring system and practice is not over seen by any governing or best standards body. There is no mechanism for ensuring children’s rights are not being breached.
- There is not publicly available routinely collected data, no evaluation methodology and no evidence base to support its effectiveness, efficacy, or safe use.
- There is evidence to suggest its use is contra-indicated to the promotion of good mental health and the reduction of incidents of behaviours that challenge/behaviours of distress.
- It is out of step with other psychosocial and trauma informed interventions, the evidence base and [policy position statements](#) on child development.

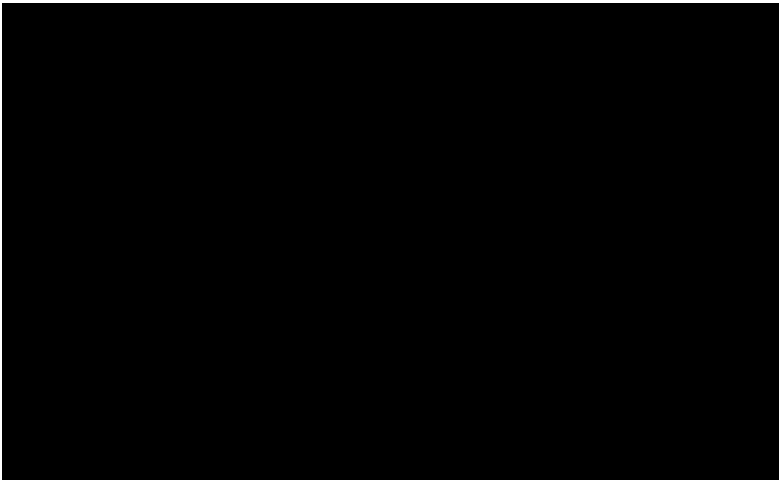
In contrast, the use of approaches such as positive behavioural support (PBS) which is recommended by the WG Reducing Restrictive Practice Guidelines reduces the use of restrictive interventions and incidences of ‘behaviours that challenge’/behaviours of distress. Trauma-informed schools seek to minimise the trauma-causing potential of the school environment, and to maximise the healing potential of the school environment. This alongside the implementation of a whole school approach



are practices that are supportive of creating psychosocially and relationally healthy school culture which in turn reduces children and young people's exposure to distress as well as is supportive of providing safe secure and nurturing relationships which are necessary to heal from trauma and adversity.

We would like to see all schools and education settings in Wales:

- To undertake trauma informed training that includes an understanding of children and young people's developmental, attachment and relational needs.
- To implement the WG Reducing Restrictive Practice Guidelines and to use least restrictive approaches to managing children and young people's distress (behaviours that challenge).



Agenda Item 8.6

CYPE(6)-04-23 – Paper to note 6

Y Pwyllgor Iechyd a Gofal Cymdeithasol

Health and Social Care Committee

Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg

Children, Young People and Education Committee

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Lynne Neagle MS

Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing

19 January 2023

Dear Lynne

Consideration of a national children's counselling service

As you will agree, building positive mental health and wellbeing should begin in early in a child's life, as positive and healthy relationships and connection are vital for their healthy development and their future mental health. For the same reason, where trauma does occur in a child's early years, it is crucial that the right services and mechanisms are in place, and that they work together in a joined up way to support children, young people and their families. This includes school counselling services, whole school and whole families approaches, and CAMHS, as well as the implementation and embedding of the NEST/NYTH framework.

As part of ensuring that the right preventative and intervention services are in place to support children across Wales, we would be grateful if you could indicate whether any consideration has been given to establishing a national children's counselling service to ensure that all children of all ages, including those who are not yet school age, have access to mental health and wellbeing practitioners.

Yours sincerely



Russell George MS
Chair, Health and Social Care Committee



Jayne Bryant MS
Chair, Children, Young People and Education
Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg. We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.



Agenda Item 8.7

CYPE(6)-04-23 – Paper to note 7

Julie Morgan AS/MS
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Deputy Minister for Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Our ref: JMSS/0421/22

Jayne Bryant MS
Chair
Children, Young People and Education Committee
Welsh Parliament
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jayne.bryant@senedd.wales

19 January 2022

Dear Jayne,

With thanks for your letter. I'm pleased to provide an update on planned review and refresh of the 10 year plan for childcare, playwork and early years workforce.

Welsh Government are taking steps to review the current Plan to assess progress made against the original commitments. In addition, work is being undertaken to assess the direction and vision of the Plan to ensure that the commitments of the refreshed Plan take into account the impact of the pandemic, cost of living crisis, and recruitment and retention issues. The refresh will also seek to ensure the Plan reflects our developing early childhood education and care (ECEC) ambitions and our vision for a diverse and inclusive sector.

It is anticipated that the full review and refresh will be published in Spring 2023. We will share the Plan once published with the Children, Young People and Education Committee and the Equality and Social Justice Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Julie Morgan AS/MS
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Deputy Minister for Social Services

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Agenda Item 8.8

CYPE(6)-04-23 - Paper to note 8

Julie Morgan AS/MS
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Deputy Minister for Social Services

Our ref JMSS/0160/23

Jayne Bryant
Chair
Children, Young People and Education Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay Cardiff
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seneddchildren@senedd.wales

20 January 2023

Dear Jayne,

Thank you for your letter of 16 December 2022 regarding Child Sexual Abuse.

I was pleased to have been able to attend the Cross Party Group on Preventing Child Sexual Abuse on 15 December in order to provide an update on the National Action Plan on Preventing and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse.

You will be aware that I issued a Written Statement on 29 November 2022 to accompany the publication of the Delivery Report of the National Action Plan which set out the work that has been achieved throughout the three year period of the National Action Plan which concluded in June 2022. The progress that had been achieved against the objectives of the National Action Plan, not least given that this took place during the unprecedented demands of the pandemic, was remarkable. I remain thankful to the Cross Party Group in providing constructive feedback and scrutiny throughout the life of the Action Plan.

In order to inform the next National Action Plan, Welsh Government is in the process of considering the Delivery Report as well as the important final report of the Independent Inquiry on Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) - which was published on 20 October. We will also be consulting with stakeholders, including young people and adults with lived experience, to ensure we consider their views on what the next National Action Plan should look like. In the meantime, the Regional Safeguarding Boards have committed to continue with their focussed work from actions within the original plan, and for this I am grateful.

The final report published by IICSA set out its' final recommendations. Of the 20 final recommendations, six are for Welsh Government to directly respond to. All Government Departments are provided up to six months to provide a response outlining whether these each recommendation is accepted in full, partially accepted or not accepted. Officials are

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engaging with counterparts in UK Government to discuss the recommendations and how these may be taken forward in both England and Wales. Work is ongoing to develop a timeline in order to respond accordingly.

It is important that the work to respond to the recommendations outlined within the final IICSA recommendations are aligned with the work to develop the next iteration of the National Action Plan on Preventing and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse. I want to see a joined-up approach to ensure that the important work of the IICSA report is reflected as fully as possible in the next National Action Plan. It is intended that the next National Action Plan will also be for a three-year period.

The organisation, Children in Wales have been commissioned to lead a programme of engagement with stakeholders and this has already commenced earlier this month. This will provide an opportunity for partners to provide feedback on areas already identified for action and to identify any further issues that should be considered for the next phase of work. It is anticipated that this will be a further opportunity to consider the IICSA recommendations.

A draft implementation/action plan will then be developed by the Welsh Government. We will engage and consult with those with lived experience and with multi-agency stakeholders on the draft action plan in June/July 2023. This will inform the publication of an implementation/action plan on preventing and responding to child sexual abuse in the Autumn of 2023.

This does not mean that the work on preventing and responding to child sexual abuse will cease until the Autumn of 2023. In line with the statutory obligations set out in our legislation and guidance, and explained in the Wales Safeguarding Procedures, duties to protect children at risk of abuse, neglect, or harm, including child sexual abuse remain in place.

I hope that this provides sufficient information to assist you in the development of your work programme.

Yours sincerely



Julie Morgan AS/MS
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Deputy Minister for Social Services

Agenda Item 8.9

CYPE(6)-04-23 – Paper to note 9

Lee Waters AS/MS
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Newid Hinsawdd
Deputy Minister for Climate Change



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Jayne Bryant MS
Chair,
Children, Young People and Education Committee

20 January 2023

Dear Jayne,

Thank you for your letter dated 16 December 2022 in relation to the learner travel review. Much has changed since the Learner Travel Measure came into force in 2008. Home to school transport now accounts for a quarter of all local authority direct spending on education – this is a growing cost.

During 2020, we undertook a review of the existing Learner Travel Measure which involved gathering initial evidence. It found significant weaknesses in current networks and infrastructure that make implementing an expansion of provision difficult. We found there is inconsistency in provision across all of Wales.

Officials met with the Association of Directors of Education in Wales in the autumn where they heard the feedback from local authorities on some of the challenges they are facing in securing transport for learners. This dialogue continues and builds on the evidence we considered as part of the first review.

An official has recently been appointed to lead on the wider learner travel review. They are currently planning the wider review and I will be happy to share details of the timetable for that review when it becomes available.

Rather than tweaks, a long-term sustainable plan must be found.

The government has published a White Paper, One Network, One Timetable, One Ticket, which sets out an ambitious vision for transforming bus services in Wales. The proposed bill will offer us a chance to look a fresh at bus service delivery across Wales, including the provision of school transport.

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As our aims are ambitious, these reforms will take time, but it is vital that we get this right to support learners and our wider reform programme. In the meantime, we will continue to work with Local Authorities to encourage a consistency in approach.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lee', is centered within a light gray rectangular box.

Lee Waters AS/MS
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Newid Hinsawdd
Deputy Minister for Climate Change