

Agenda – Y Pwyllgor Cydraddoldeb a Chyfiawnder Cymdeithasol

Lleoliad:	I gael rhagor o wybodaeth cysylltwch a:
Fideogynhadledd drwy Zoom	Claire Fiddes
Dyddiad: Dydd Llun, 29 Tachwedd 2021	Clerc y Pwyllgor 0300 200 6565
Amser: 12.30	SeneddCydraddoldeb@senedd.cymru

Rhag-gyfarfod preifat

(12.30 – 12.45)

1 Cyflwyniad, ymddiheuriadau, dirprwyon a datgan buddiannau (12.45)

2 Gofal plant a chyflogaeth rhieni – sesiwn dystiolaeth

(12.45 – 13.45)

(Tudalennau 1 – 87)

Rachel Thomas, Pennaeth Polisi a Materion Cyhoeddus, Comisiynydd Plant
Cymru

Ruth Coombs, Pennaeth y Comisiwn Cydraddoldeb a Hawliau Dynol yng
Nghymru

Martyn Jones, Cadeirydd Dros Dro Pwyllgor y Comisiwn Cydraddoldeb a
Hawliau Dynol yng Nghymru

Gellir gweld ymatebion unigol i'r ymgynghoriad ar wefan y Pwyllgor
([cyhoeddus](#) / [cyfyngedig](#)).

3 Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog 17.42(ix) i eithrio'r cyhoedd o eitemau 4, 7 ac 8 o'r cyfarfod heddiw (13.45)

4 Gofal plant a chyflogaeth rhieni – trafod y dystiolaeth (13.45 – 14.00)



5 Gofal plant a chyflogaeth rhieni – sesiwn dystiolaeth

(14.00 – 15.00)

(Tudalennau 88 – 100)

Julie Morgan AS, Dirprwy Weinidog Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol

Nicola Edwards, Dirprwy Gyfarwyddwr, Is-adran Gofal Plant, Chwarae a'r

Blynyddoedd Cynnar

Claire Bennett, Cyfarwyddwr, Cymunedau a Threchu Tlodi

6 Papurau i'w nodi

(15.00)

- 6.1 Gohebiaeth gan Jill Youds, Cadeirydd y Bwrdd Pensiynau at y Llywydd ynghylch Bil Pensiynau'r Gwasanaeth Cyhoeddus a Swyddi Barnwrol – 9 Tachwedd 2021**

(Tudalennau 101 – 109)

- 6.2 Gwybodaeth ychwanegol o'r astudiaeth Covid a Gofal Plant – 12 Tachwedd 2021**

(Tudalennau 110 – 119)

- 6.3 Gohebiaeth gan Gadeirydd Pwyllgor yr Economi, Masnach a Materion Gwledig ynghylch yr ymchwiliad gofal plant a chyflogaeth rhieni – 22 Tachwedd 2021**

(Tudalennau 120 – 123)

7 Gofal plant a chyflogaeth rhieni – trafod y dystiolaeth

(15.00 – 15.15)

8 Blaenraglen Waith

(15.15 – 15.30)

Mae cyfyngiadau ar y ddogfen hon

Senedd Cymru
Y Pwyllgor Cydraddoldeb a
Chyfiawnder Cymdeithasol
Gofal plant a chyflogaeth rhieni: y
pandemig a thu hwnt
CPE(09)
Ymateb gan Comisiynydd Plant Cymru

Welsh Parliament
Equality and Social Justice Committee

Childcare and parental employment:
the pandemic and beyond
CPE(09)
Evidence from Children's
Commissioner for Wales

Gwybodaeth gefndir am Gomisiynydd Plant Cymru

Prif nod Comisiynydd Plant Cymru yw diogelu a hybu hawliau a lles plant. Wrth ymarfer eu swyddogaethau, rhaid i'r Comisiynydd roi sylw i Gonfensiwn y Cenhedloedd Unedig ar Hawliau'r Plentyn (CCUHP). Mae cylch gorchwyl y Comisiynydd yn cwmpasu holl feysydd pwerau datganoledig y Senedd sy'n effeithio ar hawliau a lles plant.

Cytuniad hawliau dynol rhyngwladol yw CCUHP, ac mae'n berthnasol i bob plentyn a pherson ifanc hyd at 18 oed. Mae Llywodraeth Cymru wedi mabwysiadu CCUHP yn sylfaen ar gyfer pob polisi a greir i blant a phobl ifanc, ac mae Mesur Hawliau Plant a Phobl Ifanc (Cymru) 2011 yn gosod dyletswydd ar Weinidogion Cymru, wrth ymarfer eu swyddogaethau, i roi 'sylw dyledus' i CCUHP.

Nid ymateb cyfrinachol yw hwn.

Er fy mod yn nodi bod yr ymchwiliad hwn yn ymwneud yn bennaf â chyflogaeth rhieni, oherwydd fy rôl statudol fel pencampwr annibynnol i hawliau plant, rwyf wedi rhoi sylw yn fy ymateb i'r ystyriaethau datblygiad plant a dadleuon hawliau plant mewn perthynas â'r Cynnig Gofal Plant. Bydd eraill mewn sefyllfa well i wneud sylwadau'n uniongyrchol ar fynediad i gyflogaeth a'i chadw, neu gynhyrchedd yn y gweithle.

Rwyf wedi defnyddio'r cylch gorchwyl a gyhoeddwyd ar gyfer yr ymchwiliad i strwythuro fy ymateb.

Mae fy ymateb yn cwmpasu'r canlynol:

- Yr angen am bolisi gofal plant plentyn-ganolog;
- Yr angen am adolygu telerau'r Cynnig Gofal Plant presennol; ac
- Argymhelliad i gynnal Asesiad Effaith llawn ar Hawliau Plant (CRIA) wrth adolygu'r polisi.

I ba raddau mae'r ddarpariaeth gofal plant bresennol yng Nghymru yn cefnogi rhieni, yn enwedig mamau, yn ddigonol i gael mynediad i gyflogaeth, aros yno a gwneud cynnydd, a pha newidiadau allai fod yn angenrheidiol i wella effeithiolrwydd y ddarpariaeth gofal plant wrth wneud hyn.

Ar hyn o bryd mae'r meini prawf ar gyfer y cynnig Gofal Plant yng Nghymru¹ yn benodol iawn; roedd hyn yn rhywbeth y bûm i'n mynegi pryder yn ei gylch wrth i'r Bil (Cyllido) Gofal Plant a ddaeth â'r Cynnig i rym fynd trwy'r Senedd. Yn fy nhystiolaeth ysgrifenedig² a'm hadroddiad blynyddol ar gyfer 2016-17³ fe wnes i fynegi pryder bod plant o aelwydydd diwaith yn cael eu heithrio o'r Cynnig, gan fod hynny'n debygol o ehangu'r bwlch rhwng y grŵp hwn a'r rhai sydd â rhieni sy'n gweithio o ran parodrwydd i fynd i'r ysgol. Er bod y ddarpariaeth gofal plant a gynigir mewn ardaloedd Dechrau'n Deg yn diwallu peth o'r angen hwn, nid yw'r holl blant y mae eu rhieni'n ddi-waith yn byw mewn ardaloedd Dechrau'n Deg. Mae ymchwil a gomisiynwyd gan Achub y Plant yn awgrymu nad yw 44% o'r plant sy'n byw mewn amddifadedd o ran incwm yng Nghymru, ar gyfartaledd, yn gymwys ar gyfer Dechrau'n Deg⁴.

Yn fy sesiwn o dystiolaeth lafar ar y Bil gyda'r Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg⁵, fe ges i fy herio ynghylch hyn, ar y sail ei bod yn alwad benodol ym maniffesto'r blaidd Lafur ac yn cael ei gweithredu yn ôl y telerau a addawyd. Fodd bynnag, mae dyletswydd gyfreithiol ar y Llywodraeth i roi sylw dyledus i hawliau plant wrth ymarfer unrhyw rai o'u swyddogaethau, ac nid oeddwn yn credu eu bod wedi gwneud hynny'n ddigonol, trwy gyflwyno polisi mor oedolyn-ganolog.

Mae'r gofyniad i weithio isafswm o 16 awr yr wythnos, a bod y ddau riant mewn cwpl yn gweithio, yn golygu y gallai aelwydydd incwm isel gael eu heithrio rhag cael mynediad i'r Cynnig.

Mae yna rai cynlluniau sy'n darparu gofal plant i'r rhai sy'n chwilio am gyflogaeth, ond nid yw'r rhain yn berthnasol os ydych chi mewn gwaith rhan amser (llai nag 16 awr) neu os ydych chi mewn addysg neu hyfforddiant. Efallai bod addysg neu hyfforddiant yn ffyrdd allweddol i rieni godi lefel eu sgiliau neu ychwanegu at eu cymwysterau er mwyn dychwelyd i'r farchnad lafur, ond mae diffyg argaeledd gofal plant yn rhwystr gwirioneddol i lawer sy'n mynd ar ôl yr opsiwn hwn. Bu aelodau'r Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg yn pwysu'n galed am hyn yn ystod cyfnod 1 y craffu ar y Bil, ond ni chafodd ei newid yn y fersiwn derfynol a ddaeth i rym.

¹ <https://gov.wales/childcare-3-and-4-year-olds>

² https://business.senedd.wales/documents/s75785/CCF%20202%20Childrens%20Commissioner%20for%20Wale_s.pdf

³ <https://www.childcomwales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/A-Year-of-Change-CCFW-AnnualReport.pdf>

⁴ Little pieces, big picture, Save the Children, 2018, tudalen ix. ⁵

<https://record.assembly.wales/Committee/4798>

Nododd adroddiad gwerthuso'r Llywodraeth o gyfnod peilot y Cynnig Gofal Plant yn 2019⁵ fod 92% o'r rhieni a ymatebodd i'r arolwg yn dal i ddefnyddio'r un darparwr gofal plant ag yr oeddent cyn i'r Cynnig gael ei weithredu. Roedd mwyafrif y teuluoedd oedd yn manteisio arno wedi clywed am y Cynnig trwy eu darparwr presennol. Ar ben hynny, un o'r prif fanteision a nodwyd oedd cynnydd mewn incwm i'w wario (cyfeiriodd 84% o'r cyfranogwyr at hynny) yn hytrach na chynnydd yn y nifer oedd yn manteisio ar ofal plant neu'n gallu cynnal neu dderbyn cyflogaeth newydd. Wrth gwrs, mae incwm ychwanegol i'w wario yn gyfraniad cadarnhaol pwysig i deuluoedd, o ran potensial i daclo tlodi plant, ond byddai trothwyon incwm uchel y cynnig gofal plant yn awgrymu nad dyma'r ffordd fwyaf effeithlon o gyflawni'r nod hwn.

Dylai unrhyw ddarpariaeth gofal plant sy'n cael ei hariannu gan y wladwriaeth fod o safon uchel a helpu plant i wireddu ystod o hawliau, gan gynnwys cymorth ychwanegol os oes ganddynt anabledd (Erthygl 23) a chael eu hamddiffyn rhag niwed (Erthygl 39).

Mae Erthygl 2 o CCUHP yn nodi'n benodol bod dyletswydd ar bartïon gwladol i sicrhau hawliau pob plentyn, heb wahaniaethu mewn unrhyw ffordd, gan gynnwys statws eu rhieni. Mae'r polisi presennol wedi'i seilio'n bennaf ar statws rhieni, ac felly gellid dadlau nad yw'n cydymffurfio â hawliau plant.

Pa effaith mae'r Cynnig Gofal Plant yn arbennig wedi'i chael o ran cyflawni amcan Llywodraeth Cymru o "helpu rhieni, yn arbennig mamau, i ddychwelyd i'r gwaith neu gynyddu oriau"

Nid yw fy Swyddfa'n monitro nac yn casglu data ar effaith polisiâu ar rieni, ond rwy'n nodi, yn adroddiad gwerthuso 2019, mai 14% yn unig o'r rhieni a ymatebodd i'r arolwg oedd wedi gallu cynyddu eu horiau gwaith. O'r rhain, roedd mwy o fenywod na dynion wedi gallu cynyddu eu horiau, ond at ei gilydd mae'r cynnydd a nodwyd yn gymharol isel.

Effaith argaeledd gofal plant cyfyngedig ar lefel cynhyrchiant Cymru

Ni fyddai gennyf ddata na gwybodaeth perthnasol ar gael i ateb y cwestiwn hwn.

Sut mae trefniadau gofal plant wedi effeithio ar gyflogaeth rhieni yn ystod pandemig y coronafeirws, yn arbennig mewn perthynas â mamau. Pa wersi allai gael eu cymhwyso i ddarparu cefnogaeth well yn ystod unrhyw gyfnodau clo neu gyfyngiadau llymach yn y dyfodol

Yn ystod y pandemig cysylltodd rhieni â'm Swyddfa yn pryderu eu bod yn gorfod parhau i dalu am leoedd gofal plant yr oedden nhw'n cael eu hatal rhag eu defnyddio yn ystod y cyfnodau clo.

⁵ https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2020-02/evaluation-of-the-earlyimplementation-of-the-childcare-offer-for-wales-year-two_0.pdf

Yn y cyfnod clo cyntaf yn arbennig, roedd rhaid i'r ddau riant fod wedi'u cyflogi mewn sectorau penodol i fod yn gymwys ar gyfer hybiau ysgol neu ddarpariaeth gofal plant i 'weithwyr allweddol'. Cafodd hynny effaith ar allu rhieni i ofalu am eu plant a pharhau i gyflawni eu horiau cyflogaeth llawn yn gyson ac yn ddibynadwy. Yn anecdotaid, clywsom am rieni'n gorfod newid neu leihau eu patrymau gwaith i reoli hyn, yn arbennig oherwydd anallu i gael mynediad i opsiynau gofal plant anffurfiol o fewn y teulu chwaith ar yr adeg hon.

Problem benodol yn ystod y cyfnod hwn oedd mynediad i ddarpariaeth ar gyfer plant ag anghenion dysgu ychwanegol. Roedd lleoliadau yn pryderu am eu gallu i ddiwallu anghenion plant, ond y plant hyn yw'r rhai sy'n elwa'n arbennig o gefnogaeth a darpariaeth reolaidd ac arbenigol.

Croesawn y ffaith bod meini prawf gweithwyr allweddol wedi cael eu gwneud yn fwy 'hyblyg' yn ystod cyfnodau clo dilynol, er nad dyna brofiad pob teulu o reidrwydd. Trwy ein gwasanaeth gwaith achosion annibynnol, fe ddyswyd bod angen yn aml i'n swyddfa ymyrryd a siarad â lleoliadau neu awdurdodau lleol er mwyn i deuluoedd gael mynediad i ddarpariaeth yr oedd ganddynt hawl i'w derbyn. Roedd pwysau ar hybiau gofal plant, a galw mawr am leoedd, ac arweiniodd hynny at rai o'r anawsterau mynediad a gyflwynwyd i'n swyddfa gan deuluoedd yn ystod y cyfnod hwn.

Ar ben hynny, achosodd atal ceisiadau newydd am y Cynnig ansicrwydd i rieni, gan fod angen o leiaf 6 wythnos i brosesu ceisiadau fel arfer. Roedd rhieni wedi cynllunio'u trefniadau gwaith gan ddisgwyl manteisio ar y Cynnig, ac felly roedden nhw'n pryderu ynghylch sut gallen nhw wneud trefniadau amgen a thalu amdanynt os na fyddai'r cynnig ar gael iddyn nhw. Fodd bynnag, pan wnaethon ni godi hyn gyda Llywodraeth Cymru, roedden ni'n falch o weld bod y Dirprwy Weinidog wedi cyhoeddi datganiad⁶ yn egluro rhai o'r trefniadau, mewn ymateb i bryderon rhieni.

A yw'r ddarpariaeth gofal plant sy'n cael ei hariannu gan Lywodraeth Cymru yn ddigon hyblyg i gefnogi cyflogaeth rhieni, yn arbennig mamau, mewn grwpiau demograffig gwahanol, a rhai sy'n profi amgylchiadau gwahanol

Rwy'n ymwybodol o anawsterau i rai rhieni wrth wneud trefniadau pontio rhwng y Cynnig Gofal Plant a darpariaethau eraill megis darpariaeth feithrin 10 awr y cyfnod sylfaen. Bydd sicrhau bod y Cynnig Gofal Plant a ariannir yn cyd-fynd ag opsiynau gofal plant eraill yn elfen bwysig i annog manteisio ar y ddarpariaeth bwysig hon i blant, a sicrhau bod darpariaeth ddi-fwlch ar gael ar gyfer pob plentyn sydd angen hynny.

Mae dilyniant darpariaeth gofal plant yn bwysig o safbwynt profiad y plentyn, ac mae'n ddymunol sicrhau bod y lleoliad yn newid cyn lleied â phosibl ar unrhyw ddiwrnod unigol, heb newid o gwbl yn ddelfrydol. Ar hyn o bryd mae'n rhaid i

⁶ <https://gov.wales/written-statement-childcare-offer-and-coronavirus-childcare-assistance-scheme>

lawer o rieni drefnu mwy nag un lleoliad i'w plentyn eu mynychu yn ystod un diwrnod.

Effaith darpariaeth gofal plant ffurfiol o safon uchel ar gau'r bwlch cyrhaeddiad, a manteision posibl estyn y ddarpariaeth gofal plant i daclo anghydraddoldeb

Mae Astudiaeth Carfan y Mileniwm eisoes wedi dangos i ni bod plant o'r teuluoedd tlotaf eisoes ryw 10 mis y tu ôl i'r rhai o gefndir mwy cefnog o ran eu datblygiad erbyn cyrraedd 3 oed.

Canfu adroddiad Thematig gan Estyn yn 2021 ar addysgu sgiliau iaith a llythrennedd Saesneg mewn ysgolion cyfrwng Saesneg⁷⁸ fod "todi ac anfantais yn dal yn rhwystrau sy'n atal dysgwyr rhag datblygu sgiliau iaith a llythrennedd cadarn." Er na fydd y garfan sydd yn yr ysgolion ar hyn o bryd i gyd wedi bod trwy'r Cynnig Gofal Plant peilot cyn cychwyn yn yr ysgol, fy mhryder i fyddai bod parhau â chynnig sy'n targedu rhieni sy'n gweithio, yn hytrach nag anghenion datblygiadol plant, yn gwaethygu'r sefyllfa hon ymhellach.

Yn fy Adroddiad Blynyddol ar gyfer 2016/17 fe ysgrifennais "Rwy'n ymwybodol o bryderon ymhlith y gweithlu gofal plant presennol yng Nghymru ynghylch capasiti a chynaliadwyedd, gan gynnwys darpariaeth Gymraeg". Rhaid i ddata a chynlluniau'r Llywodraeth ar gyfer dyfodol y Cynnig ystyried darpariaeth Gymraeg a darpariaeth i blant ag anghenion ychwanegol, a gweithio gyda darparwyr yn y sector i sicrhau bod capasiti digonol i gyflwyno'r ddarpariaeth ofynnol ym mhob ardal.

Beth gall Cymru ddysgu o fodelau darpariaeth gofal plant eraill sydd ar waith yng ngweddill y Deyrnas Unedig ac yn rhyngwladol, ac arfer sy'n dod i'r amlwg o ran cefnogi cyflogaeth rhieni, ac i ba raddau y gellid trosglwyddo'r modelau hyn i gyd-destun Cymru

Yn yr Alban mae'r cynnig yn cael ei estyn yn raddol, i blant dwy flwydd oed cymwys, yn ogystal â'r holl blant 3 a 4 oed⁹. Mae'r ffocws ar y plant a fyddai'n elwa fwyaf o'r cynnig, gan gynnwys yr holl blant sy'n derbyn gofal a'r plant y mae eu teulu'n derbyn budd-dal cymhwys, gan gynnwys y rhai sy'n gymwys i dderbyn prydau ysgol am ddim. Mae ffocws da i'r polisi plentyn-ganolog hwn, ac mae'n sicrhau mai prif fudd y cyllid yw dysgu a datblygiad plant. O ystyried pryderon ynghylch lefelau tlodi plant yng Nghymru, gan gynnwys tlodi 'mewn gwaith', ac effaith capio a thorri nôl ar fudd-daliadau, mae defnyddio telerau tebyg i'r rhain ar gyfer cynnig gofal plant yn llawer mwy cydnaws â hawliau plant a'm galwadau cysylltiedig innau yn y maes.

⁷ <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/system/files/2021->

⁸ [/Estyn%20English%20language%20and%20literacy%20E%289%29.pdf](https://www.estyn.gov.wales/system/files/2021-01/Estyn%20English%20language%20and%20literacy%20E%289%29.pdf)

⁹ <https://www.gov.scot/policies/early-education-and-care/early-learning-and-childcare/>

Dylid nodi bod Asesiad Effaith Hawliau Plant (CIA) Bill Cyllido Gofal Plant 2019 yn amlygu'r elfennau cadarnhaol i'r plant hynny oedd yn rhan o'r cynnig yn unig, ac nad oedd yn ystyried hawliau pob plentyn. O ganlyniad, roedd yn asesiad diffygiol, a dylid dychwelyd ato, nawr bod y polisi ar waith. Roedd y polisi hwn hefyd wedi'i fwriadu fel peilot, felly mae'n amserol ystyried y gwersi a ddysgwyd o hynny, er mwyn targedu'r gefnogaeth a manteision y cyllid mewn modd sy'n cefnogi hawliau plant yn well.

Ar ben hynny, mae'n werth nodi bod Senedd yr Alban wedi pasio Bil yn unfrydol i ymgorffori CCUHP yn llawn i gyfraith yr Alban. Byddai hynny'n golygu bod modd gorfodi hawliau plant, a gofyn bod cyrff cyhoeddus, gan gynnwys y Llywodraeth, yn gweithredu'n gydnaws â hawliau plant. Byddai symudiad o'r fath yng Nghymru hefyd yn ychwanegu ymhellach at y gallu i alw llunwyr penderfyniadau i gyfrif ynghylch hawliau plant. Bûm i'n hallt fy meirniadaeth o'r CIA cyfyngedig a gynhaliwyd gan y Llywodraeth ar gyfer y Bil (Cyllido) Gofal Plant, oherwydd bod y dadansoddiad yn ystyried yr effaith gadarnhaol ar y plant oedd yn rhan o'r Cynnig yn unig, yn hytrach na sut roedd y polisi yn eithrio plant eraill a allai elwa'n fwy o dderbyn darpariaeth o'r fath.

Oherwydd bod y Llywodraeth wedi cyhoeddi dogfen CIA, roedden nhw wedi cydymffurfio â'u dyletswyddau cyfreithiol, ac o ganlyniad, ni allwn eu herio'n uniongyrchol ynghylch rhoi sylw dyledus i hawliau plant. Byddai ymgorffori CCUHP yn llawn yng Nghymru yn golygu bod modd herio polisiau a roddwyd ar waith gan y Llywodraeth yn uniongyrchol ar sail hawliau plant. Byddai'n rhaid i'r Llywodraeth ddangos bod eu camau gweithredu yn cydnaws â holl hawliau dynol plant, ac nid eu bod wedi meddwl am rai o'r effeithiau posibl o dan y model sylw dyledus yn unig. Mae'n bosibl hefyd y byddai teuluoedd wedi gallu herio'r Bil yn gyfreithiol ar y sail ei fod wedi cael ei gyflwyno heb roi sylw dyledus i'w hawliau plant, ac yna gallai'r Llywodraeth fod wedi cael eu gorchymyn i wneud addasiadau i'w polisi a'u canllawiau, er mwyn cydymffurfio â CCUHP.

Rwy'n parhau i alw ar y Llywodraeth i gymryd y camau angenrheidiol i ymgorffori CCUHP yn llawn yng nghyfraith Cymru, gan fod Mesur cyfredol Hawliau Plant a Phobl Ifanc (Cymru) 2011 yn gyfystyr ag ymgorffori rhannol yn unig.

Sut byddai angen i oblygiadau ariannol ac ymarferol megis argaeledd gofal plant gael eu hystyried gan Lywodraeth Cymru mewn unrhyw ddatblygiadau polisi i estyn y ddarpariaeth gofal plant yn y dyfodol

Gallai fod o fudd i'r Pwyllgor ofyn i Lywodraeth Cymru am y data diweddaraf ynghylch y nifer sy'n manteisio ar y cynnig ar draws gwahanol gymunedau, gyda ffocws arbennig ar ystyriaethau cydraddoleb megis aelwydydd sydd mewn tlodi a mynediad at ddarpariaeth Gymraeg neu gefnogaeth i blant ag anghenion ychwanegol. Gallai hyn edrych ar y teuluoedd sy'n gymwys a hefyd ar yr oriau maen nhw'n dewis manteisio arnynt, a dylid ei ddefnyddio i lywio cyfeiriad y polisi yn y dyfodol, ynghyd ag Asesiad Effaith diwygiedig ar Hawliau Plant, sy'n cymryd y data yma i ystyriaeth ac yn nodi'r dull gweithredu arfaethedig a fyddai'n lliniaru unrhyw effeithiau negyddol a nodwyd neu grwpiau sydd ar eu colled ar hyn o bryd.

Ar hyn o bryd byddai'r cynnig gofal plant ar gael i deuluoedd lle gallai incwm y ddau riant ar y cyd fod hyd at £199,000. Roedd yn debygol bod plant rhieni oedd yn ennill cyflogau uwch eisoes yn cael mynediad i ofal plant o safon uchel. Os nad yw'r cynnig gofal plant i fod ar gael i bawb, rwy'n credu y dylai gael ei gynnig i blant teuluoedd incwm is (p'un a ydyn nhw'n gweithio neu'n ddi-waith). Eto, roedd hyn yn rhywbeth y rhoddais bwys mawr arno wrth i'r Bil fynd trwy'r llywodraeth.

Ni ddylai buddsoddiad mor fawr gan y wladwriaeth mewn darpariaeth blynnyddoedd cynnar

eithrio plant rhieni di-waith yn llwyr o'r manteision. Mae hyn yn debygol o ategu anghydraddoldebau yn y canlyniadau i wahanol grwpiau cymdeithasol, ac o ganlyniad mae angen dadansoddi'n drylwyr er mwyn lliniaru unrhyw ganlyniadau niweidiol.

Byddwn i'n argymhell y dylid adlunio'r Cynnig, gan gyfeirio at unrhyw ddata gan y

Llywodraeth ynghylch lefelau manteisio presennol. Os bernir nad yw estyniad syml i gynnig mwy cyffredinol yn fforddiadwy, gallai'r opsiynau ar gyfer adlunio'r Cynnig gynnwys y canlynol:

- Darpariaeth i blant iau;
- Targedu'r plentyn, yn hytrach na'r rhieni, gyda'r gefnogaeth. Bydd hyn yn dal i helpu rhieni i gael gwaith, ond yn sicrhau bod pob plentyn a allai wneud hynny yn elwa o addysg a gofal plentyndod cynnar;
- Gostwng y trothwy enillion, o ran yr isafswm oriau gwaith i gael mynediad i'r cynnig, yn ogystal â'r trothwy enillion uchaf, er mwyn dod â'r Cynnig i lawr i dargedu teuluoedd incwm is a chanolig;
- Ystwytho nifer yr oriau sy'n cael eu darparu, naill ai o ran cyfanswm yr oriau wythnosol neu nifer yr wythnosau sydd ar gael bob blwyddyn, fel bod modd creu cynnig ehangach;
- Darpariaeth ychwanegol â phrawf modd ar gyfer rhieni sy'n gweithio ar incwm is, y tu hwnt i gynnig mwy cyffredinol.



Evidence to Committee

Equality and Social Justice Committee: Childcare and Parental Employment

Evidence details

Nature of Enquiry: Inquiry on childcare and parental employment, focussing on the barriers that childcare provision can present for parents, particularly women, entering and progressing in the labour market.

Source of Evidence: Senedd Cymru

Date: 15 November 2021

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About the Commission

1. The Equality and Human Rights Commission ('the Commission') is Great Britain's national equality body and has been awarded an 'A' status as a National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) by the United Nations.
2. Our job is to help make Wales and Britain fairer. We do this by safeguarding and enforcing the laws that protect people's rights to fairness, dignity and respect. We use our unique powers to challenge discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and protect human rights. We work with other organisations and individuals to achieve our aims, but are ready to take tough action against those who abuse the rights of others.
3. The Commission has been given powers to advise Governments and Parliaments across England, Scotland and Wales on the equality and human rights implications of legislation and policy. We can also publish information or provide advice, on any matter related to equality, diversity and human rights. We are here to offer our expert advice to support the work of the Equality and Social Justice Committee to ensure equality and human rights considerations are at the heart of the Sixth Senedd.

How we have approached this inquiry

4. Our response is informed by emerging Wales evidence, and data and information from elsewhere where we consider that to be relevant.
5. We have submitted our response on 15 November - 2021. We acknowledge that some of the detail and many of the statistics cited will be out of date almost immediately, although the issues raised are likely to remain relevant.

6. Although the response is wide-ranging, we anticipate that – given the fluidity and rapidly-changing nature of the current context – we may need to raise additional issues, as well as provide updates on the issues raised here, to the Committee in due course.
7. Not all evidence headings were applicable to the work of the Commission, and therefore we have included evidence under alternative headings for clarity and to support the work of the Committee.
8. We thank the Committee for the opportunity to provide evidence and look forward to exploring this further on 29 November.

Evidence

Pregnancy and Maternity Discrimination Research Findings

9. Our findings in relation to pregnancy and maternity discrimination (May 2018). The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Equality and Human Rights Commission commissioned a programme of research to investigate the prevalence and nature of pregnancy discrimination and disadvantage in the workplace. The Equality Act 2010 legislation prohibits pregnancy and maternity discrimination. The results in this report are based on interviews with 3,034 employers and 3,254 mothers.

10. The two surveys cover the views and experiences of employers and mothers on a range of issues related to managing pregnancy, maternity leave and mothers returning to work. The report explored:
 - The type and incidence of potential pregnancy and maternity-related discrimination.
 - The characteristics of women who experience possible discrimination.
 - Availability and effectiveness of advice and support.
 - Experiences of women who raise complaints or attempt to enforce their legal rights.
 - Employer awareness of and attitudes to their legal rights and responsibilities.

- Employer attitudes towards recruiting and managing women of childbearing age, pregnant women, those on maternity leave and women with children.
- Availability of advice and support for employers (particularly small and medium-sized enterprises).
- Why some employers may possibly discriminate and others are successful in promoting good practice.
- The demand among mothers to breastfeed or express milk in the workplace and employer attitudes, policies and practices in relation to breastfeeding in the workplace.

11. The majority of employers reported that it was in their interests to support pregnant women and those on maternity leave and they agreed that statutory rights relating to pregnancy and maternity are reasonable and easy to implement.

12. However, around one in nine mothers (11%) reported that they were either dismissed; made compulsorily redundant, where others in their workplace were not; or treated so poorly they felt they had to leave their job; if scaled up to the general population this could mean as many as 54,000 mothers a year.

13. One in five mothers said they had experienced harassment or negative comments related to pregnancy or flexible working from their employer and /or colleagues; if scaled up to the general population this could mean as many as 100,000 mothers a year.

14. 10% of mothers said their employer discouraged them from attending antenatal appointments; if scaled up to the general population this could mean up to 53,000 mothers a year.

15. Our research and findings reports

[Read the employers full research report \(PDF\)](#)

[Read the mothers full research report \(PDF\)](#)

[Read the summary of the key findings \(PDF\)](#)

[Read the interim report: summer 2015 \(PDF\)](#)

16. This report follows the 2005 Equal Opportunities Commission's (EOC) report [Greater Expectations](#) examining the extent of pregnancy discrimination in Britain. The EOC reported that almost half of the 440,000 pregnant women in Britain at that time, experience some form of disadvantage at work, simply for being pregnancy or taking maternity leave. It was also reported that 30,000 women are forced out of their jobs. This figure included women who opted for voluntary redundancy.

New research looking at employer views towards pregnant women and new mothers

17. The Equality and Human Rights Commission asked YouGov to conduct a survey to understand managers' attitudes around pregnancy and maternity discrimination. We found that:

- A third (36%) of private sector employers agree that it is reasonable to ask women about their plans to have children in the future during recruitment.
- Six in 10 employers (59%) agree that a woman should have to disclose whether she is pregnant during the recruitment process.
- Almost half (46%) of employers agree it is reasonable to ask women if they have young children during the recruitment process.
- 44% of employers agree that women should work for an organisation for at least a year before deciding to have children.
- 40% of employers claim to have seen at least one pregnant woman in their workplace 'take advantage' of their pregnancy.

- A third believe that women who become pregnant and new mothers in work are 'generally less interested in career progression' when compared to other employees in their company.
- Four in 10 (41%) employers agreed that pregnancy in the workplace puts 'an unnecessary cost burden' on the workplace.
- Half (51%) of employers agree that there is sometimes resentment amongst employees towards women who are pregnant or on maternity leave.
- Around a third (36%) of employers disagree that it is easy to protect expectant or new mothers from discrimination in the workplace.

Protected Characteristics and Socioeconomic Duty

18. The characteristics that are protected by the Equality Act 2010¹, which are most relevant for this evidence, include:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex

¹ <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/your-rights-under-equality-act-2010>

- sexual orientation

19. Pregnancy and maternity, in addition to sex, is a protected characteristic and is central to our evidence.

20. In addition, the Equality Act 2010 provides a framework for reducing the inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage through the socioeconomic duty.

21. Pregnant women and new mothers already face disadvantage in the workplace, which will likely worsen as a result of the pandemic and any subsequent recession. Our analysis² of the previous recession showed that women with childcare responsibilities were at a greater disadvantage than either men or other women in continuous employment, due to restricted internal labour markets and employer perceptions of unreliability and inflexibility.

22. Our 2015 pregnancy and maternity research³ found that around one in 20 mothers were made redundant at some point during pregnancy, maternity leave, or on return from maternity leave.

² T. Hogarth et al, EHRC (2009), [The Equality Impacts of the Current Recession](#)

³ EHRC (2015), [Pregnancy and maternity-related discrimination and disadvantage: Experiences of Employers](#)

23. More recently, the TUC surveyed over 3,400 workers, with one in four pregnant women and new mums reporting unfair treatment or discrimination at work including being singled out for redundancy or furlough⁴. As employers face increased financial difficulty and uncertainty throughout the coronavirus response, pregnant women and those on maternity leave are at an even greater risk of discrimination, and of being forced into redundancy.

24. Many pregnant women reported that they had been forced to take unpaid leave, start maternity leave early or were placed on sick leave, rather than being furloughed, or were refused furlough because they had childcare responsibilities and were deemed not to be working. Many also raised, and continue to raise⁵, concerns about being forced to work without proper health and safety risk assessments, in breach of health and safety law.

25. The Commission is clear that pregnant women and new mothers should not be disadvantaged financially, or in their careers, by following advice to protect the health of themselves and their families.

26. The Welsh Government should include in all its guidance for employers links to the Equality and Human Rights Commission's Coronavirus employer guidance:

- [Coronavirus guidance for employers;](#)
- [Reasonable Adjustments for Employees;](#)
- [Your Duties on Pregnancy and Maternity.](#)

⁴ TUC (2020), [Pregnant and precarious](#): new and expectant mums' experiences of work during Covid-19. Note the TUC's sample is self-selected, so may not be fully representative of the population.

⁵ Pregnant Then Screwed (June 2020) [The impact of Covid-19](#)

Coronavirus, Childcare and Parental Employment

27. While all workplaces and employees have been affected by coronavirus, the crisis is affecting different groups in different ways. While noting that men comprise the majority of critical care cases, the Women's Budget Group has highlighted how women are disproportionately affected in work.

28. For example, women comprise the majority of health and care workers and of low paid workers,⁶ where a lack of basic employment rights such as sick pay mean that many have been forced to continue working while having to bear the brunt of their own childcare needs.⁷

29. This places significant challenges in terms of individual health and well-being, but also in terms of women's ability to participate in the labour market after restrictions are ended, or if childcare provision is eroded further.

⁶ Women's Budget Group (April 2020), [Crises Collide: Women and Covid-19](#)

⁷ Almost 3 in 10 mothers report reducing their working hours for childcare reasons, compared with 1 in 20 fathers ONS (2019), [Families and the labour market](#) The Resolution Foundation notes that 39% of working mothers were key workers before the crisis began, compared to just 27% of the working population as a whole. Resolution Foundation (April 2020), [Economic impacts of the coronavirus crisis on different groups of workers](#)

30. Recent estimates at a European level is that the economic benefits of gender equality could lead to a 10 percent increase in GDP yearly.⁸ There are clear business benefits to increasing workforce diversity too: diverse workplaces are more competitive, profitable and secure, financially out-performing their peers.⁹
31. As such, the Commission strongly believes economic recovery plans and employer responses need to consider and address the specific economic constraints facing women. If the Government is genuinely committed to achieving the best possible recovery it can, it needs to address labour market inequality, remove the barriers facing women in employment and create conditions for better economic participation for women.
32. This includes making a commitment to ensuring the provision of affordable, flexible childcare, stepping away from insecure employment and encouraging the creation of good work at real living wage levels, so that women are able to contribute their skills and experience to securing Wales's economic recovery.
33. The introduction of social distancing measures, shutdown of certain sectors and subsequent closure of schools and childcare settings has had a particular impact on women. Pre-existing labour market gender inequalities such as concentration in part-time, low paid employment, and

⁸ European Institute for Gender Equality (2017) [Economic benefits of gender equality in the European Union](#). Calculations state that gender equality could increase growth by 10 percent across the EU. Because of the UK's relative position as one of the EU's best performers in terms of gender equality means the benefits would likely not be as high as this but could still be as high as 4% or the equivalent of £88bn based on 2019 UK GDP.

⁹ CIPD (June 2018) [Diversity and inclusion at work: facing up to the business case](#)

over-representation in health and social care,¹⁰ childcare and education sectors, as well as shut-down sectors such as hospitality and retail, and the ongoing unequal burden of caring for children and family members,¹¹ places huge challenges on women's labour market participation and financial stability.

34. The sectoral impact of the social distancing restrictions, and the disproportionate impact it has had on low-paid women. The Resolution Foundation reported in June 2020 that women in employment were more likely to be in shutdown sectors than men in employment¹², and that women were more likely to be in low pay, with 19 per cent of women paid below two-thirds of the median compared to 12 per cent of men.¹³ IFS analysis also shows that workers in shutdown sectors such as hospitality were already almost twice as likely to be in poverty before the pandemic.¹⁴
35. Our analysis of the previous recession showed that women with childcare responsibilities were at a greater disadvantage than either men or other

¹⁰ According to the Women's Budget Group, 77% of healthcare staff are women. 83% of those working in social care are women, and around 21% are ethnic minorities. See Women's Budget Group (April 2020), [Crises Collide: Women and Covid-19](#)

¹¹ Almost 3 in 10 mothers report reducing their working hours for childcare reasons, compared with 1 in 20 fathers ONS (2019), [Families and the labour market](#) The Resolution Foundation notes that 39% of working mothers were key workers before the crisis began, compared to just 27% of the working population as a whole. Resolution Foundation (April 2020), [Economic impacts of the coronavirus crisis on different groups of workers](#)

¹² Resolution Foundation (2020), [The Full Monty](#). Facing up to the challenge of the coronavirus labour market crisis.

¹³ Resolution Foundation (2020), [A new settlement for the low paid: Beyond the minimum wage to dignity and respect](#)

¹⁴ IFS (2020), [Living standards, poverty and inequality in the UK: 2020](#)

women in continuous employment.¹⁵ The Commission's research into pregnancy and maternity discrimination also found that 1 in 20 pregnant workers or those on, or recently returning from, maternity leave experienced redundancy.¹⁶

36. In addition, low-skill, low paid work is particularly vulnerable to any economic downturn¹⁷ and there is evidence already that certain sectors, including hospitality and retail where many women are employed, are beginning to implement major redundancies,¹⁸ and permanent closures as a result of the pandemic.¹⁹ This will have a profound impact on the financial security of many women and the gender pay gap in the longer term.

Equality and Human Rights Implications

37. The equality and human rights implications of the coronavirus pandemic stretch far and wide. It has precipitated a global public health and economic crisis that is significantly impacting all areas of life for everyone throughout Wales.

¹⁵ T. Hogarth et al, EHRC (2009) [The Equality Impacts of the Current Recession](#)

¹⁶ EHRC and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2016) [Pregnancy and maternity related discrimination: experiences of mothers](#)

¹⁷ T. Hogarth et al, EHRC (2009) [The Equality Impacts of the Current Recession](#)

¹⁸ UK Hospitality (June 2020) [One million hospitality staff members expected to return to work in July](#) this survey indicates that the hospitality industry is expecting to see around 320,000 redundancies as a result of the pandemic.

¹⁹ Centre for Retail Research (June 2020) [The crisis in retailing](#). The CRR estimates there will be over 235,000 job losses in the retail sector in 2020.

38. The Commission's "How coronavirus has affected equality and human rights" report shows how the pandemic has laid bare, intensified and deepened existing inequalities.
39. Dr Sara MacBride-Stewart & Dr Alison Parken in "[Inequality in a future Wales: Areas for action in work, climate and demographic change](#)" highlights that low-skilled jobs decrease, creating unemployment for those over-represented in low-paid and precarious work, including women.
40. In addition, with the shift towards digital and green jobs, there is a concern that women are underrepresented in these sectors and will be further underemployed²⁰
41. The differential economic impact we are seeing on women is a direct result of existing labour market inequalities caused by the combination of women's concentration in low paid or part time work, lack of flexible working opportunities at all levels, and the fact that women do the majority of unpaid care work. These are all contributing factors to the gender pay gap, which we believe may be widened as a result of the coronavirus.
42. The differential economic impact we are seeing on women is a direct result of existing labour market inequalities caused by the combination of women's concentration in low paid or part time work, lack of flexible working opportunities at all levels, and the fact that women do the majority of unpaid care work. These are all contributing factors to the gender pay gap, which we believe may be widened as a result of the coronavirus.
43. As a result of the closure of schools and nurseries, many parents faced difficulty balancing the needs of working and childcare, either because they were expected to work from home, or because they were required to

²⁰ <https://phw.nhs.wales/publications/publications1/inequality-in-a-future-wales-areas-for-action-in-work-climate-and-demographic-change/>

attend work. Unequal division of unpaid labour, including childcare and caring responsibilities for older or disabled relatives, means that this is having a particular impact on women.

44. An IFS online survey reported that mothers are 23 per cent more likely than fathers to have lost their jobs either temporarily or permanently during the pandemic. Of those mothers who were in paid work prior to social distancing measures being introduced, they were 47 percent more likely to have permanently lost their job or to have quit employment, and 14 percent more likely to have been furloughed. Many mothers too have had to reduce their paid working hours in order to manage the additional requirement of childcare and schooling.²¹

45. A survey by Pregnant Then Screwed indicates that 77.6 per cent of mothers reported difficulties balancing paid employment and childcare, with 25 percent of respondents saying that their employer had been inflexible. 56.5 per cent also report concerns that this has, or will, damage their career prospects.²²

46. A lack of affordable, sustainable and flexible childcare is also a real concern. Childcare providers have expressed concern about their long term viability in light of the social distancing restrictions²³ because of narrow profit margins and reliance on parents paying fees²⁴. A survey in April revealed that 25 per cent of providers thought that it would be

²¹ Institute for Fiscal Studies (May 2020) [Parents, especially mothers, paying heavy price for lockdown](#)

²² Pregnant Then Screwed (June 2020) [The impact of Covid-19](#) surveyed 3868 pregnant women and mothers.

²³ Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (May 2020), [PACEY survey reveals devastating impact of Covid-19 on childcare provision.](#)

²⁴ Coram Family and Childcare (April 2020), [Statement from Coram Family and Childcare: nursery closures.](#)

unlikely they would be operating in 12 months' time²⁵; another reported that around 15 per cent of providers, offering up to 250,000 places, stated that they won't reopen once social distancing measures are ended²⁶.

47. Previously, the TUC also found that 71 per cent of mums planning to return to work in the three months following June 2020 are currently unable to find childcare²⁷, with 35% of mothers prior to the crisis relying on informal childcare such as friends and relatives. If early years' childcare settings are forced to close, this will severely undermine women's future participation in the labour market.

48. A survey of 6147 parents in early March 2020 found that eight per cent of women had not returned to work following a birth of a child due to childcare costs, and for those who had, 47.2 per cent reduced their hours²⁸. Recent research by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development estimates that the UK has the second most expensive childcare system in the world,²⁹ meaning many women decide to work part-time to care for their children themselves, a contributing factor to the gender pay gap.

²⁵ Early Years Alliance (May 2020), [CORONAVIRUS: A quarter of childcare providers fear permanent closure within the year, new Alliance survey reveals.](#)

²⁶ Childcare.co.uk (April 2020) [Nearly a sixth of childcare providers set to close permanently due to Covid-19](#)

²⁷ TUC (2020), [Pregnant and precarious: new and expectant mums' experiences of work during Covid-19](#)

²⁸ Pregnant Then Screwed (February 2020), [Cost of childcare.](#)

²⁹ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2019), [Net childcare cost for parents using childcare.](#)

49. Evidence shows a disproportionate impact on some people³⁰. In the context of the economic reconstruction strategy for Wales we specifically highlight the unequal impact on ethnic minorities, disabled people, young people, women and people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage. The coronavirus pandemic has laid bare, intensified and deepened existing inequalities.

50. In our *Is Wales Fairer? 2018*³¹ report we documented how disabled people are being left even further behind, socio-economic disadvantage is leading to a stark gap in life experiences, violence against women and girls is a reality for many, and race inequality persists in Wales. We are concerned that the pandemic and responses to it are exacerbating these existing inequalities across all areas of life.

51. Concerns have been raised in Wales that pregnant women have been sent home on sick pay or unpaid leave during the Coronavirus crisis³². Caring responsibilities are increasing for many which will have a disproportionate impact on the one in four women aged 50-64 who have caring responsibilities, compared to one in six men³³. We need to mitigate the negative impact this could have on women's careers as they continue to shoulder the majority of childcare and caring responsibilities³⁴. Ethnic

³⁰ https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/equality_and_human_rights_commission_how_coronavirus_has_affected_equality_and_human_rights_2020.pdf

³¹ [Equality and Human Right Commission \(2018\), 'Is Wales Fairer? 2018', EHRC website \[accessed June 2020\]](#)

³² [BBC news, 'Coronavirus: Claim pregnant women put on sick pay', 10 May 2020 \[accessed May 2020\]](#)

³³ [Carers UK, Facts About Carers policy briefing, August 2019 \[accessed May 2020\]](#)

³⁴ [Summers, H. \(2020\) UK society regressing back to 1950s for many women, warn experts', The Guardian, 18th June \[accessed 18 June 2020\]](#)

minority women are more likely to be in precarious employment and could therefore feel the brunt of any economic recession.

52. In addition, recent analysis by the Women's Budget Group shows that many disabled women had very real concerns about the financial implications of coronavirus, with 34.2 per cent reporting that they had run out of money compared to 24.4 per cent of non-disabled women. Disabled women were also more likely to report that they were spending more time working from home, were struggling to focus and experienced increased stress.³⁵

53. We recognise that Welsh Government resources and public services are under exceptional strain and that responding to the pandemic means responding to a rapidly evolving situation and making tough decisions. However, now and as we emerge from this crisis, it is crucial that equality and human rights are at the centre of decision-making so that responses to it are effective and no-one is left behind.

What measures should the Government put in place to ensure gender equality in the longer-term economic recovery from Coronavirus, with specific reference to any upcoming financial announcements?

³⁵ Women's Budget Group (June 2020) [Disabled women and Covid-19](#)

54. There is an urgent need for the Welsh Government to take steps to ensure that workers with particular protected characteristics do not face further detriment.
55. The cumulative impact of the financial disadvantage experienced by women risks resulting in many falling into poverty in the short term, and widening the gender pay gap in the longer term. The Welsh Government must consider the specific economic impacts of the pandemic on women, including younger, disabled and ethnic minority women, particularly those who are low-paid, and where necessary, target support to sectors that have been disproportionately impacted.
56. We also urge the Welsh Government to undertake analysis on the number of employees made redundant disaggregated by protected characteristic, full-time and part-time status, occupation, and industry as part of its wider assessment of the impact of coronavirus and work with the Commission, trade unions and business representative groups to find ways to mitigate any disproportionate impact on different protected groups.
57. It is important for the Welsh Government to take action to protect women from discrimination, particularly given its binding obligations under CEDAW to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of in the field of employment, including on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity.
58. Our 2015 pregnancy and maternity discrimination research also revealed that a quarter of employers believe it is acceptable to ask questions about a woman's plans to have children at interview.³⁶ This potentially places women at further disadvantage in a competitive job market.

³⁶ BEIS and EHRC (2015) [Pregnancy and maternity related discrimination: summary of findings](#)

59. As noted above, the Commission is very concerned about the longer term availability of childcare for working parents, and the impact this has on women's participation in the job market. The unequal division of unpaid caring responsibilities was also identified as major concern

60. Fathers increasingly want to play a greater and more active role in bringing up their children, but current parental leave offers are failing to meet this demand because of the complexity of the Shared Parental Leave scheme, ineligibility, low financial incentive, and concerns about employer attitudes.

61. These barriers to parental leave for fathers reinforce gendered assumptions about caring responsibilities, and result in a disproportionate burden of childcare and other unpaid work on mothers. At the last UK census³⁷, women were also notably more likely to be unpaid carers than men, which can also have a lasting impact through women's careers and contribute to the gender pay gap³⁸.

62. Social distancing measures have required many employers to implement flexible working practices in order to survive. [ONS data](#) shows that in the period 14-17 May a third worked from home only, with another eight per cent working from home and travelling to work. This has demonstrated that it is possible, and beneficial to both employers and employees.

63. We hope to see this practice continue in the long term as flexible working enables many people to participate in the labour market, particularly those

³⁷ Office for National Statistics (2011), [Census 2011](#)

³⁸ EHRC (2018), [Fair opportunities for all: a strategy to reduce pay gaps](#)

with caring responsibilities³⁹ and disabled people⁴⁰, leading to greater efficiency, reducing stress and increasing employees' motivation and commitment. Flexible working options for fathers would also help to increase their participation in early years' childcare, and, as with improvements to parental leave, support more balanced gender roles.

64. Recent reports indicate that many employees are worried their employer will revert to previous inflexible working practices⁴¹. We believe that this would be regressive and that both government and employers need to recognise that flexible working during the pandemic has shown that it is possible to retain productivity and contribute to the economy, while reducing strain on public services and improving people's family life.

The impact of high-quality formal childcare provision on reducing the attainment gap, and the potential benefits of extending childcare provision to tackle inequalities.

³⁹ Working Families (2019), [2019 Modern Families Index](#) Nearly three in five parents (58%) reported having a flexible and family-friendly employer would make them more likely to stay. Over half (55%) said it would make them more motivated and productive.

⁴⁰ Leonard Cheshire (2019), [Disabled workers are being failed by employers](#)

⁴¹ TUC (2019), [One in three flexible working requests turned down, TUC poll reveals](#)

65. Our human rights tracker⁴² highlighted that the Welsh Government funded childcare for an average of over 13,500 children per month before the pandemic. Access to childcare remains a barrier to employment in Wales – support should be tailored to parents’ needs, including by expanding the offer to children under three.

66. It is still commonplace for women to bear the majority of domestic work and caring responsibilities, a contribution that is often unseen, undervalued and, in some cases, increasing. ONS estimates the value of unpaid childcare at £132.4bn, 69% of which is accounted for by women. The estimated value of unpaid adult care is £7.97bn, with 59% accounted for by women. This can have major implications for the living standards and mental and physical health of carers.

67. A study by the University of Manchester showed that around 85 carers a year died by suicide in the UK between 2011 and 2015, around half of whom were female. The high cost of childcare can be prohibitive. New analysis by the Trades Union Congress (TUC) revealed that while real wages fell in England between 2008 and 2016, childcare costs rose by 48% over the same period⁴³. The UK and Welsh governments have extended their free childcare, though the availability and implementation of this is different in each country. We have previously highlighted that childcare provision in Wales is patchy⁴⁴.

⁴² <https://humanrightstracker.com/en/progress-assessment/access-to-employment-welsh-government-assessment/>

⁴³ <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/pressing-for-progress-womens-rights-and-gender-equality-in-2018-pdf.pdf>

⁴⁴ See: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/file/18736/download?token=VJ6vr2ia> [accessed: 20 May 2018].

68. The Welsh Government introduced the Childcare Offer for Wales in 2017 to provide up to 30 hours of formal childcare for children aged three or four⁴⁵, but this does not go far enough to meet the needs of parents.

69. The UK and Welsh governments, where applicable, should⁴⁶ ensure the availability and affordability of properly regulated childcare, including by ensuring adequately funded, flexible and high-quality childcare for all children, tackling problems with funding and availability of the provision for 30 hours of free childcare for children aged three to four years, and addressing the funding gap for children between the ages of nine months and three years.

- a. introduce dedicated, non-transferable and flexible ‘use it or lose it’ shared parental leave for parents, with a pay rate that acts as a real incentive to take-up.
- b. make paternity and shared parental leave a ‘day one’ right for employees, and include equivalent provisions for agency and self-employed workers to ensure they can access paid shared parental leave at the same rate as employees.

70. Encouraging parents to share childcare responsibilities more equally would reduce the impact on women’s careers and pay, and ensure fathers have the opportunity to involve themselves more in day-to-day child rearing. In principle, paternity pay and the introduction of shared parental leave means this is possible.

⁴⁵ Welsh Government, ‘The Childcare Offer for Wales: Help with childcare costs for working parents of 3 to 4 year olds’ [accessed: 10 September 2020].

⁴⁶

https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/childrens_rights_in_great_britain_executive_summary_0.pdf

71. A survey of parents and businesses suggested, however, that just 1% of men had taken up shared parental leave, and that parents considered their relative earning potential and the financial impact when deciding who should care for their children. Statutory maternity and paternity pay is much lower than the National Minimum Wage (NMW) or National Living Wage (NLW), and pay for fathers is lower than that for mothers. In addition, flexible working rights are restricted to employees with over 26 weeks' service.

72. Two factors seem to encourage men's involvement in childcare and reduce the impact on women's careers of being the sole carer: more generous paternity leave, and more affordable childcare. Evidence has shown that countries with effective paternity leave policies are often those that offer well-paid, flexible but non-transferable policies.

73. We have called on the Welsh Government to review the Gender Equality Roadmap to respond to women's experiences of work during the Coronavirus pandemic and in recovery. We also called for the Welsh Government to address the problems with the availability and affordability of properly regulated childcare, including by ensuring adequately funded, flexible and high-quality childcare for all children, and monitor the impact different models of provision have on women's labour market participation, and encourage men and women to share caring responsibilities on an equal basis⁴⁷.

⁴⁷ <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/pressing-for-progress-womens-rights-and-gender-equality-in-2018-pdf.pdf>

Other sources of evidence the Committee may wish to consider

Human Rights Tracker

74. Our [human rights tracker](#) is one of the world's first online tools for monitoring human rights compliance. It is a searchable online tool to track how well the Welsh and UK Governments are putting its human rights duties into practice and contains all of the most recent recommendations made to the UK by the UN treaty bodies and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). We want the human rights tracker to raise awareness of the UK's human rights duties, to help you monitor how well they are being put into practice, and to support you in holding government to account.

75. You can use the tracker to:

- Review the progress the Welsh & UK governments have made towards fulfilling their international human rights obligations.
- Search by [UK](#) and [Wales](#) so you can see which government is responsible for implementing the recommendations.
- Find out what the UN has said about a particular human rights issue (such as education, living standards or work) or population group (such as disabled people or children) in the UK.
- Find dedicated pages on each of the UN human rights treaties the UK has agreed to follow, and on the UPR process.

Is Wales Fairer?

76. [Is Wales Fairer?](#) is the most comprehensive review of how Wales is performing on equality and human rights across all areas of life, including; education, work, living standards, health, justice and security and participation in society.
77. This is the Welsh supplement to our report on equality and human rights progress in England, Scotland and Wales, [Is Britain Fairer?](#)
78. We have also recently produced a follow-up “[How Coronavirus has affected equality and human rights](#)” report which summarises evidence to help us understand the effects of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on different groups in society.

Yn rhinwedd paragraff(au) vi o Reol Sefydlog 17.42

Mae cyfyngiadau ar y ddogfen hon

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Eitem 5

Y Pwyllgor Cydraddoldeb a Chyfiawnder Cymdeithasol – ymateb ysgrifenedig i ymchwiliad y Pwyllgor gan y Dirprwy Weinidog Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol

Gofal plant a chyflogaeth rhieni: y pandemig a thu hwnt

Y cefndir

1. Mae rhieni yn cyfeirio'n aml at broblem cael gafael ar ofal plant fforddiadwy a hyblyg, yn enwedig mamau, fel un o'r prif rwystrau sy'n eu hatal rhag gweithio, neu symud ymlaen ymhellach yn eu gyrfa. Mae'r sector gofal plant a reoleiddir yng Nghymru yn cwmpasu ystod eang o ddarpariaeth, sy'n cynnwys gwarchod plant a gofal dydd¹, a cheir darparwyr o bob rhan o'r sectorau cyhoeddus a phreifat a'r trydydd sector.
2. Bwriad y model cymysg hwn yw sicrhau bod dewis a hyblygrwydd i rieni yn y math o ofal y maent yn ei ddefnyddio ar gyfer eu plant. Fodd bynnag, mae model sy'n ymateb i'r farchnad yn golygu bod darpariaeth gofal plant gofrestredig yn tueddu i gael ei chanfod mewn ardaloedd lle mae'r galw yn uwch, am fod y boblogaeth yn uwch a bod yna fwy o gyfoeth.² Yn hanesyddol, mae safleoedd gofal plant (yn enwedig safleoedd gofal dydd llawn) hefyd yn tueddu i gael eu clystyru ar hyd llwybrau cymudo. Yn aml, gall hyn olygu bod llai o ddewis i rieni mewn ardaloedd gwledig ac mewn rhannau llai cyfoethog o Gymru, a gall y teuluoedd yn yr ardaloedd hyn orfod teithio ymhellach i gael gofal plant. Mae'r ffordd rydym yn mynd i'r afael â'r materion hyn o ran dosbarthiad a thegwch darpariaeth yn allweddol wrth inni geisio sicrhau gofal plant hwylus a fforddiadwy i bob riant.

Lefelau presennol y ddarpariaeth ac effaith y pandemig

3. Mae 3,336 o safleoedd gofal plant a chwarae wedi'u cofrestru gydag Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru, gan ddarparu dros 76,000 o leoedd i blant 0-12 oed. Mae hyn yn ostyngiad o 8 y cant yn nifer y safleoedd, a 3 y cant o'r capasiti, o'i gymharu â lefelau cyn Mawrth 2020, ac er bod hyn yn awgrymu bod y sector yn gyffredinol wedi ymdopi â'r pandemig yn weddol dda, mae heriau yn parhau o hyd mewn rhannau o'r sector.

	Safleoedd	Lleoedd
Gofal Dydd Llawn	995	38,715
Gofal Dydd Sesiynol	455	10,302
Gofal y Tu Allan i'r Ysgol	350	13,715
Darpariaeth Chwarae Mynediad Agored	14	1,051

¹ Diffinnir gwarchod plant fel gofal a ddarperir gan un neu fwy o bobl ar gyfer plant rhwng 0 a 12 oed mewn safleoedd domestig nad ydynt yn gartref i'r plentyn ei hun, am fwy na 2 awr y dydd am dâl neu wobwr. Diffinnir gofal dydd fel gofal ar gyfer plant rhwng 0 a 12 oed a ddarperir ar safle annomestig ac mae'n cynnwys meithrinfeydd dydd, gofal plant y tu allan i'r ysgol, grwpiau chwarae, crèches a chwarae mynediad agored.

² Llywodraeth Cymru (2017) [Capasiti Gofal Plant yng Nghymru: mapio'r ddarpariaeth gofal plant yn erbyn y galw posibl amdano](#)

Crèches	13	309
Gwarchodwyr plant	1,509	12,191
Cyfanswm safleoedd gofal dydd	1,827	64,092
Cyfanswm yr holl safleoedd	3,336	76,283

Ffynhonnell: Cofrestr Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru ar 8/11/2021³

4. Mae rhai safleoedd yn nodi bod llai o blant yn mynychu a newidiadau i batrymau defnydd pobl o gymharu â'r cyfnod cyn Covid-19, gan arwain at ostyngiad cyffredinol yn y galw. Mae llawer o ddarparwyr gofal y tu allan i'r ysgol, er enghraifft, wedi methu â gweithredu o ganlyniad i faterion yn ymwneud â chael mynediad i safleoedd, pryderon ynghylch cymysgu ar draws swigod ysgol a lefelau isel o alw ymhlith rhieni sy'n gweithio gartref.
5. Creodd y pandemig hefyd alw newydd am ofal plant ffurfiol. Mae'r cyfyngiadau ar gyswllt ag aelwydydd eraill dros y flwyddyn ddiwethaf wedi arwain rhai teuluoedd i ddefnyddio gofal plant ffurfiol (yn hytrach na theulu neu ffrindiau) am y tro cyntaf, fel y gwelwyd yn glir yn y nifer a fanteisiodd ar y Cynllun Cymorth Gofal Plant drwy gyfnod y Coronafeirws a gynigiwyd rhwng Ebrill ac Awst 2020⁴. Dywedodd un o bob pump o'r rhieni a holwyd nad oeddent yn defnyddio gofal plant ffurfiol cyn y Cynllun Cymorth. Nid ydym eto wedi gweld beth y bydd hyn yn ei olygu o ran y galw a'r defnydd o ddarpariaeth gofal plant gofrestredig wrth inni symud ymlaen. Dywedodd 96 y cant o'r rhieni a holwyd fel rhan o'r gwerthusiad o'r Cynllun Cymorth ei fod wedi ei gwneud yn haws iddynt weithio, nododd 73 y cant ei fod wedi eu galluogi i weithio mwy o oriau a dywedodd 71 y cant eu bod wedi gallu gweithio oriau mwy hyblyg o ganlyniad i'r cynllun.
6. Darparwyd amrywiaeth o gefnogaeth i'r sector ar ddechrau'r pandemig, ac rydym wedi parhau i wneud hynny wrth i'r sefyllfa sefydlogi ac i safleoedd allu cynyddu eu gweithgarwch. Ceir manylion y cyllid a ddarparwyd yn yr Atodiad, ynghyd â doler i'r canllawiau diweddaraf.

Cefnogi teuluoedd sy'n gweithio

7. Er gwaethaf y cynnydd a wnaed yn ystod y blynyddoedd diwethaf o ran sicrhau mwy o gydraddoldeb rhwng rhieni, mae gofal plant yn parhau i gael ei ystyried a'i gyflwyno fel mater i famau. Mae hyn yn rhywbeth a welwyd i raddau mwy dros y ddwy flynedd ddiwethaf, a nifer o adroddiadau yn nodi'r effaith anghymesur a gafodd y pandemig ar fenywod ac ar famau sy'n gweithio⁵. Mae llawer o'r

³ Nid yw'r ffigurau hyn yn cynnwys gwasanaethau a ataliwyd gan y gallent fod ar gau am gyfnod amhenodol. Maent yn cynnwys tua 150 o safleoedd sydd wedi hysbysu Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru eu bod ar gau dros dro oherwydd COVID-19, gan gynnwys oherwydd achosion o'r feirws, prinder staff, neu ddiffyg galw.

⁴ Llywodraeth Cymru (2021) [Gwerthusiad o Gynllun Cymorth Gofal Plant y Coronafeirws](#)

⁵ Andrew, A., Cattan, S., Costa Dias, M., Farquharson, C., Kraftman, L., Krutikova, S., Phimister, A. a Sevilla, A. (2020). The Gendered Division of Paid and Domestic Work under Lockdown. Bonn, (2365-9793). Ar gael drwy: <https://covid19.iza.org/publications/dp13500/>.

adroddiadau hyn⁶ yn cyfeirio at effeithiau penodol y cyfyngiadau ar weithgarwch ysgolion a mynediad at ofal plant, yn ffurfiol ac yn anffurfiol, a'r pwysau dilynol yn sgil addysgu gartref a gofal plant yn syrthio ar fenywod i raddau helaeth. Hyd yn oed mewn aelwydydd dau riant, lle roedd y ddau riant yn gweithio, ysgwyddodd menywod fwy o'r cyfrifoldebau gofal plant. Mae yna dystiolaeth y gallai anghydbwysedd rhwng y rhywiau fod wedi cynyddu ymhlith rhieni, ac mae gwaith ymchwil yn awgrymu bod hyn yn creu risg fwy o anawsterau iechyd meddwl i fenywod ac o golli enillion⁷.

8. Mae hyn er gwaethaf cynnydd yn yr absenoldeb tadolaeth â thâl a gynigir, hawliau rhieni i rannu cyfnod absenoldeb o'r gwaith, a hawl pob rhiant, gan gynnwys dynion, i ofyn am batrymau gweithio hyblyg. Beth bynnag, mae'r pandemig, mewn sawl ffordd, wedi atgyfnerthu stereoteipiau rhyw traddodiadol ac wedi cynyddu'r rhwystrau y mae menywod yn eu hwynebu, naill ai wrth weithio neu ddychwelyd i'r gweithle. Wrth i bobl ddychwelyd i weithleoedd ffurfiol yn y dyfodol, mae pryderon hefyd y bydd colli'r hyblygrwydd a gynigir drwy weithio gartref yn effeithio ymhellach ar opsiynau gyrfa i rai menywod. Mewn gwledydd eraill, dangoswyd bod darpariaeth gofal plant ffurfiol yn adnodd effeithiol i ysgogi cyplau sy'n ennill dau gyflog i gael plant⁸. Mae darpariaeth gofal plant hefyd yn cyfrannu'n fawr iawn at foddhad bywyd mamau a'u lles⁹.
9. Er y gofynnwyd i safleoedd gofal plant gyfyngu eu gwasanaethau i blant gweithwyr hanfodol a phlant agored i niwed ar ddechrau'r pandemig, gyda help y Cynllun Cymorth Gofal Plant drwy gyfnod y Coronafeirws, symudwyd yn gyflym i ehangu'r mynediad pan oedd yn ddiogel gwneud hynny. Mae safleoedd gofal plant wedi gallu cynnig eu gwasanaethau i bob teulu ers Mehefin 2020, ac er bod nifer o fesurau cysylltiedig â Covid ar waith i ddechrau, a oedd yn golygu parhau â rhai cyfyngiadau ar eu gweithgarwch, rydym wedi gallu lleihau'r rhain wrth i'r amgylchiadau wella o ran iechyd cyhoeddus ehangach.
10. Yn wahanol i ysgolion, nid oedd unrhyw gyfyngiadau ar weithredu safleoedd gofal plant tra roeddem ar Lefel Rhybudd 4, gan adlewyrchu'r risgiau llai i blant a chan blant yn eu blynyddoedd cynnar yn benodol, a'r angen i gefnogi rôl hanfodol y safleoedd hyn o ran datblygiad plant. Yn gyffredinol, mae cyfraddau heintio yn parhau'n isel mewn plant ifanc iawn, ac mae'r achosion mewn safleoedd gofal plant hefyd yn is nag mewn sectorau eraill. Roedd y dystiolaeth hon, ynghyd â'r manteision i blant a'r effeithiau anghymesur ar rieni sy'n gweithio, yn enwedig mamau, yn llywio ein ffordd o feddwl ac ymateb. Yn dilyn cyfnod byr o aros, roeddem hefyd yn gallu [ailgychwyn y Cynnig Gofal Plant](#) ym mis Medi 2020, gan lacio'r meini prawf cymhwysedd ar gyfer rhieni yr effeithiwyd ar eu hincwm dros dro gan Covid-19.

⁶ EPPI, Sefydliad Ymchwil Gymdeithasol Coleg Prifysgol Llundain (2021) [Mitigating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on parents and carers during school closures: A Rapid Evidence Review](#)

⁷ Xue, B. a McMunn, A. (2021). Gender differences in unpaid care work and psychological distress in the UK Covid-19 lockdown. *PLoS One*, 16(3), e0247959.

⁸ WOOD, J.; NEELS, K. Local Childcare Availability and Dual-Earner Fertility: Variation in Childcare Coverage and Birth Hazards Over Place and Time. *European Journal of Population*, cyfrol 35, rhif 5, t. 913–937, 2019

⁹ SCHMITZ, S. The Impact of Publicly Funded Childcare on Parental Well-Being: Evidence from Cut-Off Rules. *European Journal of Population*, cyfrol 36, rhif 2, t. 171–196, 2020

Y Cynnig Gofal Plant

11. Mae'r Cynnig Gofal Plant yn adeiladu ar y ddarpariaeth ar gyfer addysg y Cyfnod Sylfaen i blant 3 a 4 oed mewn safleoedd gofal plant. Mae gofyn i awdurdodau lleol ddarparu o leiaf 10 awr yr wythnos, er bod llawer yn cynnig mwy. Rydym wedi cyhoeddi [cyngor](#) i awdurdodau lleol i'w helpu i ddeall y rhwystrau i ddarparwyr o ran bod yn hyblyg, a dod o hyd i ffyrdd o sicrhau bod y ddarpariaeth sydd ar gael yn ymateb i ddymuniadau rhieni.
12. Cyflwynwyd y Cynnig yn wreiddiol fel mesur i gefnogi rhieni sy'n gweithio gyda chostau gofal plant. Cynhwyswyd elfennau ohono yn benodol i ddarparu'r cymorth ehangaf posibl. Mae'r oriau gofal plant a ariennir yn hyblyg, a gall rhieni eu defnyddio ar unrhyw adeg o'r dydd, neu ar unrhyw ddiwrnod o'r wythnos. Nid oes terfyn uchaf chwaith ar y nifer y gellir ei ddefnyddio mewn diwrnod, gan fod angen sesiynau hirach ar gyfer rhieni sy'n gweithio shifftiau weithiau.
13. Cynhaliwyd gwerthusiadau blynyddol o'r Cynnig ers i'r cynlluniau peilot cychwynnol ddechrau yn 2016, ac yn gyffredinol adroddwyd bod y Cynnig yn helpu rhieni gyda'u cydbwysedd rhwng bywyd a gwaith ac â chyllid teuluol. Mae gwerthuswyr annibynnol wedi dangos bod y Cynnig wedi bod yn fwy tebygol o effeithio ar allu menywod i weithio mwy o oriau¹⁰¹¹. Roedd y gwerthusiad diweddaraf, a gyhoeddwyd ym mis Mawrth 2021¹², yn gyfyngedig o ran cwmpas o ganlyniad i'r pandemig, ond nodwyd y canlynol:
 - dywedodd dros 40 y cant o rieni fod y Cynnig wedi gwella eu cyfleoedd ar gyfer hyfforddiant a dysgu a datblygu ym myd gwaith, a'u bod yn defnyddio mwy o ofal plant ffurfiol yn sgil y Cynnig;
 - dywedodd mwy na hanner fod y Cynnig wedi cynyddu eu hyblygrwydd yn y ffordd yr oeddent yn gweithio, ac roedd 13 y cant wedi cynyddu'r oriau yr oeddent yn gweithio;
 - dywedodd 50 y cant arall fod y Cynnig wedi rhoi'r potensial iddynt gynyddu eu henillion.
14. Canfu'r gwerthusiad hefyd mai rhieni sy'n dod o fewn y grwpiau incwm canolig i isel a fanteisiodd yn bennaf ar y Cynnig:
 - roedd o leiaf 58 y cant o'r rhieni a oedd yn defnyddio'r Cynnig yn ennill llai na'r lefel cyflog blynyddol gyfartalog genedlaethol ar gyfer gweithwyr llawn amser;
 - roedd ychydig dros chwarter (29 y cant) o rieni yn ennill llai na £15,600, a dim ond lleiafrif (5 y cant) oedd yn ennill £52,000 neu'n fwy.
15. Mae canfyddiadau gwerthusiad blwyddyn pedwar ar fin cael eu cyhoeddi, ac rydym yn hyderus y bydd y rhain unwaith eto yn dangos yr effaith gadarnhaol y mae'r Cynnig yn ei chael ar gyflogadwyedd rhieni.

¹⁰ [Gwerthuso'r Cynnig Gofal Plant i Gymru: blwyddyn 2](#)

¹¹ [Gwerthuso Gweithredu Cynnar y Cynnig Gofal Plant i Gymru](#)

¹² [Gwerthuso'r Cynnig Gofal Plant i Gymru: blwyddyn 3](#)

16. Fodd bynnag, mae'n bwysig ein bod yn cofio'r plentyn a'i anghenion bob amser. Dyna pam y cyfyngir y ddarpariaeth i safleoedd cofrestredig sy'n cael eu harolygu, lle mae gennym hyder yn ansawdd y gofal a bod mesurau diogelu priodol ar waith. Rydym yn sicrhau bod cyllid ar gael i gefnogi plant ag Anghenion Dysgu Ychwanegol fel eu bod yn gallu manteisio ar ofal plant ar sail gyfartal a chael cymorth sydd wedi'i deilwra i'w gofynion. Gall y Gwasanaethau Gwybodaeth i Deuluoedd hefyd gynnig cyngor ac arweiniad i rieni ar sut i fanteisio ar y Cynnig, y ddarpariaeth gofal plant orau yn yr ardal ar gyfer eu hanghenion, a gwasanaethau cymorth eraill y gallai fod eu hangen ar y teulu neu y maent am eu cael.

17. Roedd tua 16,800 o blant yn manteisio ar y Cynnig Gofal Plant ym mis Gorffennaf eleni. Dyma'r nifer uchaf o bobl ers i'r Cynnig ddechrau ac amcangyfrifir bod hyn yn 48 y cant o'r boblogaeth gymwys. Fodd bynnag, mae'r niferoedd yn amrywio'n sylweddol ledled Cymru. Rydym yn gweld lefelau cyson uwch o bobl yn manteisio ar draws y Gogledd ac yn y dinasoedd mwy nag ar draws Cymoedd y De. Daeth y gwaith ymchwil a wnaed i'r patrymau amrywiol hyn i'r casgliad bod llawer o faterion yn cyfrannu at hyn, gan gynnwys:

- Diffyg ymwybyddiaeth o'r Cynnig ymhlith rhai, neu sut i wneud cais amdano;
- Anallu i ddangos tystiolaeth sy'n bodloni'r gofynion o ran cyflogaeth (oherwydd oriau gwaith anghyson, neu am nad oedd gan rieni slipiau cyflog am eu bod yn hunangyflogedig);
- Pryderon ynghylch yr effaith ar hawliau i gael budd-daliadau eraill;
- Diffyg gofal plant mewn ardaloedd gwledig, neu ddiffyg gofal plant sy'n gallu gweithio o amgylch patrymau gwaith rhieni;
- Diffyg gofal plant digonol ar gael yn eu dewis iaith;
- Bod yn well gan rieni ddefnyddio gofal plant anffurfiol o fewn y teulu.¹³

18. Bydd y materion hyn i gyd yn bwydo i mewn i asesiadau awdurdodau lleol o ddigonolrwydd gofal plant, y mae'n ofynnol iddynt edrych yn benodol ar ddigonolrwydd gofal i rieni sy'n gweithio a rhieni sy'n chwilio am gyfleoedd gwaith neu hyfforddiant. Maent hefyd yn faterion sydd wedi llywio ein gweledigaeth ar gyfer system Addysg a Gofal Plentynod Cynnar gynhwysfawr, a [lansiwyd](#) yn 2019.

Addysg a Gofal Plentynod Cynnar (ECEC) – Ehangu'r Ddarpariaeth

19. Mae ein gweledigaeth ar gyfer Addysg a Gofal Plentynod Cynnar (ECEC) yn canolbwyntio ar yr egwyddor y dylai pob plentyn gael profiad dysgu a gofal o ansawdd uchel sy'n eu hysgogi mewn unrhyw safle addysg a gofal y maent yn ei fynychu. Rydym am sicrhau system yng Nghymru a fydd yn adlewyrchu ein huchelgais am gymdeithas fwy cyfartal, fel a ganlyn:

- dylai datblygiad plant fod wrth wraidd ein dull gweithredu, a'n hegwyddorion ar gyfer ECEC;

¹³ [Hughes, Buddug a Jones, Kathryn \(2021\) Credoau rhieni, eu hymddygiadau a'r rhwystrau y maen nhw'n eu hwynebu: gofal plant ac addysg gynnar](#)

- effaith tlodi ar gyfleoedd bywyd plant ddylai fod yn egwyddor arweiniol inni wrth ystyried blaenoriaethau, ac yn arbennig sut i dorri'r cylch tlodi; a
- dylem adeiladu system gofal plant i Gymru yn seiliedig ar egwyddor cydraddoldeb cyfleoedd cynyddol i bawb, gan ehangu'r ddarpariaeth â chymhorthdal yn raddol.

20. Mae anfantais o ran datblygiad yn amlygu ei hun cyn bod plentyn yn dair oed, ac erbyn iddynt ddechrau yn yr ysgol mae plant o'r teuluoedd incwm isaf, ar gyfartaledd, 16 mis y tu ôl i'r rhai o deuluoedd incwm uwch. Mae'r bwlch cyrhaeddiad hwn yn cynyddu dros amser, a'r effeithiau cymdeithasol, emosiynol ac economaidd yn para oes. Mae angen buddsoddi mewn ystod eang o gymorth ar draws y blynyddoedd cynnar i fynd i'r afael â'r bylchau hyn a chefnogi'r broses o drosglwyddo i addysg ffurfiol. Rydym wedi deall hyn ers tro, a dyna pam yr ydym wedi canolbwyntio'n helaeth ar gefnogi plant a'u teuluoedd yn rhai o'r ardaloedd mwyaf difreintiedig yng Nghymru drwy ein rhaglen Dechrau'n Deg. Mae'r rhaglen wedi cefnogi teuluoedd yn gyson drwy amrywiaeth o wasanaethau gan gynnwys ymweliadau iechyd gwell, gofal i blant 2 flwydd oed, rhianta a chymorth lleferydd, iaith a chyfathrebu. Mae dadansoddiad cynnar o un ardal awdurdod lleol yn awgrymu bod y plant hynny sy'n mynychu gofal plant Dechrau'n Deg yn fwy aml yn tueddu i gyflawni eu canlyniadau disgwylidig ym mhob maes dysgu yn amlach na'r rhai a oedd yn mynychu'n llai aml¹⁴. Mae ein rhaglen Adnewyddu a Diwygio hefyd yn canolbwyntio ar fynd i'r afael â'r bwlch cyrhaeddiad. Mae'n cynnwys elfen benodol ar y blynyddoedd cynnar, gydag £13m o gyllid ychwanegol i gefnogi'r ddarpariaeth mewn ysgolion a safleoedd gofal plant yn ystod y flwyddyn ariannol hon.
21. Roedd y cyfyngiadau a gyflwynwyd yn sgil pandemig y coronafeirws yn golygu na wnaeth rhai asesiadau wyneb yn wyneb o ddatblygiad hwyrach heb eu nodi. Er mwyn helpu i fynd i'r afael â hyn, sefydlwyd Cronfa Datblygu Plant dros dro, a hyd yma mae wedi darparu £11.5m i awdurdodau lleol rhwng Hydref 2020 a Mawrth 2022. Mae'r gronfa yn targedu gwasanaethau a chymorth i blant dan bum mlwydd oed, er mwyn sicrhau bod anghenion datblygiadol yn cael eu nodi cyn gynted â phosibl cyn iddynt waethgu i lefel ddifrifol. Yn ogystal â'r Gronfa Datblygu Plant, mae £7 miliwn o gyllid ychwanegol hefyd wedi'i ddarparu i awdurdodau lleol (drwy'r Grant Plant a Chymunedau) i helpu i leddfu'r pwysau ar wasanaethau cymorth cynnar hanfodol i gefnogi plant, pobl ifanc a rhieni mewn ymateb i'r pandemig, a lleihau amseroedd aros amdanynt.
22. Rydym wedi edrych ar dystiolaeth o bob cwr o'r byd i helpu i ddatblygu ein gweledigaeth ar gyfer ECEC, gan ddefnyddio modelau Sgandinafia sy'n un o'r ardaloedd â'r ddarpariaeth fwyaf hael yn y byd lle mae pob plentyn yn cael addysg a gofal cynnar â chymhorthdal. Yn llawer o wledydd Sgandinafia, mae hyn yn seiliedig ar hawl gyfreithiol plentyn i gael darpariaeth addysg a gofal cynnar. Rydym hefyd yn edrych ar arferion o fewn y DU, er enghraifft yr Alban sydd wedi cynyddu eu darpariaeth gofal plant a ariennir i bron i chwarter o blant 2 flwydd oed, yn ogystal â phob plentyn 3 a 4 oed. Fodd bynnag, er mwyn symud

¹⁴ [Dadansoddiad o ganlyniadau Dechrau'n Deg gan ddefnyddio data sydd wedi'u cysylltu: gofal plant ac asesiadau sylfaenol y Cyfnod Sylfaen | GOV. CYMRU](#)

o'r lle rydym arni nawr tuag at system ECEC gyffredinol, bydd angen cymryd nifer o gamau, yn ogystal â mwy o gyllid tuag at gostau penodol gofal plant y mae teuluoedd yn eu hwynebu. Yn benodol, mae angen inni wneud y canlynol:

- Datblygu a meithrin y sector i sicrhau digon o leoedd ECEC;
- Buddsoddi yng ngweithlu ECEC fel bod niferoedd staff yn ddigonol a bod staff yn ymarferwyr hyderus a gwybodus;
- Gwella ansawdd y ddarpariaeth drwy sicrhau bod yr addysgeg sy'n sail i'r Cyfnod Sylfaen yn cael ei lledaenu i bob rhan o'r ddarpariaeth blynyddoedd cynnar.

23. Rhaid inni fuddsoddi mewn lleoedd ECEC ychwanegol. Hyd yn oed os nad yw pob plentyn am fanteisio ar ei hawl i hyn, byddai'n dal i fod angen mwy o leoedd arnom pe baem yn cynyddu lefelau cyffredinol y ddarpariaeth. Byddai angen inni hefyd edrych ar leoliadau'r ddarpariaeth honno, gan sicrhau ei bod wedi'i lledaenu'n decach ledled Cymru. Rydym wedi buddsoddi £81m o gyllid cyfalaf mewn safleoedd gofal plant yn ystod y cyfnod 2019-2023, a thros £39m yn cefnogi darpariaeth cyfrwng Cymraeg ar hyn o bryd; mae angen inni adeiladu ar hyn. Mae ein rhaglen Ysgolion a Cholegau'r 21ain Ganrif hefyd yn ymdrechu i gefnogi'r gwaith o gydleoli gwasanaethau fel ffordd o sicrhau mwy o werth am arian o fuddsoddiadau, a gwell cyfleoedd a phrofiadau i ddefnyddwyr gwasanaethau. Ochr yn ochr â buddsoddi mewn lleoedd, mae angen inni hefyd gynyddu a chefnogi'r gweithlu.

24. Mae'r gweithlu gofal plant, gwaith chwarae a blynyddoedd cynnar yn cyflogi tua 17-18,000 o bobl. Mae ffigurau o 2015-16 yn awgrymu bod y sector yn cyfrannu hyd at £1.2bn i economi Cymru. Byddai ariannu mwy o leoedd yn golygu bod angen mwy o staff. Rydym wedi buddsoddi £9.2m mewn hyfforddiant a gwella sgiliau yn ystod 2016-2023 o dan y rhaglen Cynnydd ar gyfer Llwyddiant a ariennir gan Gronfa Gymdeithasol Ewrop. Wrth symud ymlaen mae angen inni barhau i gefnogi'r gweithlu presennol gan gynnal a gwella eu sgiliau, gweithio ar draws ein holl raglenni hyfforddiant ac addysg, a denu mwy o bobl i'r gweithlu. Bydd Gofal Cymdeithasol Cymru yn dechrau ymgyrch recriwtio cyn bo hir, a byddwn yn parhau i fwrw ymlaen â'r gwaith a nodir yn ein cynllun ar gyfer gweithlu'r gofal plant, gwaith chwarae a'r blynyddoedd cynnar, a gyhoeddwyd yn 2017.

Rhieni, Gofal Plant a Chyflogaeth (PaCE)

25. Rhieni, Gofal Plant a Chyflogaeth (PaCE) yw un o'r rhaglenni sy'n cyfrannu at helpu mwy o rieni i gael gwaith, ac yn darparu cymorth pwrpasol, gan gynnwys cymorth ariannol tuag at gostau gofal plant, i rieni (gan gynnwys rhieni sengl) sy'n dymuno manteisio ar gyfleoedd addysg, cyflogaeth neu hyfforddiant, ond y mae gofal plant yn rhwystr iddynt rhag gwneud hynny.

26. Ers argymhellion adroddiad y Pwyllgor Cydraddoldeb, Llywodraeth Leol a Chymunedau, "Wrth eich gwaith: rhianta a chyflogaeth yng Nghymru", ymdrechwyd i godi proffil PaCE yn genedlaethol. Bellach mae gan PaCE dudalen ddynodedig ar wefan Llywodraeth Cymru, ac rydym wedi gwella ein llenyddiaeth hyrwyddo i'w gwneud yn haws i rieni ddeall yr hyn y mae PaCE yn

ei gynnig. Mae PACE hefyd yn cael ei hyrwyddo ar sianeli cyfryngau cymdeithasol trydydd partion perthnasol fel Dewis Cymru a'r Cynnig Gofal Plant. Mae gan Gynghorwyr PACE hefyd well perthynas â staff y Cynnig Gofal Plant ym mhob ardal, a gwneir ymdrechion parhaus i alinio PaCE â'r strwythur cymorth ehangach i deuluoedd ledled Cymru er mwyn darparu gwasanaeth integredig a di-dor i rieni.

27. Ers ei sefydlu yn 2015, mae PaCE wedi cefnogi 6,541 o unigolion (6,189 o fenywod a 352 o ddynion), a dechreuodd 2,881 (44 y cant) (2,722 o fenywod a 163 o ddynion) o'r rheini ar gyflogaeth o fwy nag 16 awr yr wythnos. Mae hyn yn llawer mwy na'r targed o 20 y cant. Parhaodd PaCE i weithredu yn ystod y pandemig, gan gydnabod bod llawer o rieni mewn rolau gweithwyr allweddol a bod angen cymorth arnynt i ddod o hyd i a/neu dalu am ofal plant. Ers dechrau'r pandemig mae PaCE wedi cefnogi 1318 o bobl.

28. Roedd y [gwerthusiad](#) diweddaraf o'r Rhaglen PaCE, a gyhoeddwyd ym mis Mawrth 2020, yn canolbwyntio ar brofiadau unigolion sydd wedi cael eu cefnogi ganddi. Roedd y gwerthusiad yn cydnabod, er enghraifft:

- mai menywod oedd y mwyafrif llethol o'r rheini a gysylltodd â PaCE;
- bod traean ohonynt (menywod yn bennaf) wedi symud ymlaen i gyflogaeth.

29. Mae gwerthusiad terfynol ar y gweill a fydd yn canolbwyntio ar werth am arian y rhaglen PaCE, a bydd hwn yn cael ei gyhoeddi yn y Flwyddyn Newydd. Ariennir PaCE gan Gronfa Gymdeithasol Ewrop, ac mae'r arian a ddarparwyd hyd yma i dalu am weithgarwch tan Fehefin 2022. Fodd bynnag, mae yna gytundeb "mewn egwyddor" gan WEFO i ymestyn y ddarpariaeth tan Fehefin 2023, a daw'r rhaglen i ben ym mis Hydref 2023. Mae sgysiau gyda chydweithwyr eraill yn Llywodraeth Cymru yn parhau ynghylch pa ddarpariaeth gofal plant a allai fod ar gael i gefnogi unrhyw gynnig gan Lywodraeth Cymru i feithrin cyflogadwyedd pan ddaw arian Ewropeaidd i ben.

Y Camau Nesaf

30. Er mwyn ein helpu i ddeall beth arall y gallai fod ei angen, mae sawl darn o waith ar y gweill sy'n rhoi sylw i'r galw, y nifer sy'n manteisio a chymorth i'r sector sydd wedi'i dargedu:

- Cwblhaodd 90 y cant o safleoedd cofrestredig Arolwg Hunanasesu Gwasanaeth Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru yn ddiweddar. Mae'r data hwn, sy'n rhoi cipolwg cynhwysfawr o'r sector, yn cael ei ddadansoddi ar hyn o bryd;
- Mae awdurdodau lleol yn cynnal eu Hasesiadau o Ddigonolrwydd Gofal Plant (a fydd yn cael eu cyhoeddi yn 2022) a buom yn gweithio gydag awdurdodau lleol ar arolwg cenedlaethol rhieni i'w hysbysu;
- Cyn bo hir, byddwn yn cynnal gwerthusiad o ddau gynllun cymorth sy'n cael eu rhedeg gan Busnes Cymru, sy'n darparu cymorthdaliadau cyflog i gefnogi safleoedd sy'n ceisio ehangu, a chostau cychwyn ar gyfer gwarchodwyr plant newydd.

31. Defnyddir yr wybodaeth hon, ynghyd â ffynonellau eraill gan gynnwys ymchwil Sgyrsiau Cenedlaethol Gofal Cymdeithasol Cymru¹⁵, ac arolygon a gynhelir gan Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru a phartneriaid Cwlwm i lunio polisiau a rhaglenni a fydd yn cefnogi'r sector gofal plant i ehangu a ffynnu. Caiff y rhain eu llunio yng nghyd-destun ein Rhaglen Lywodraethu bresennol sy'n cynnwys dau ymrwymiad penodol yn y maes hwn:

- a. Cyllido gofal plant ar gyfer mwy o deuluoedd lle mae rhieni mewn addysg a hyfforddiant;
- b. Parhau i gefnogi prif raglenni Dechrau'n Deg.

32. Bydd hefyd yn bwysig edrych ar ddsbarthiad gofal plant yng nghyd-destun ein huchelgeisiau ar gyfer Cymru gryfach, decach a gwyrddach. Mae rhieni sy'n gweithio o gartref neu'n agosach at adref yn debygol o fod eisiau mwy o ofal plant yn lleol. Gallai diwygiadau posibl i batrwm y diwrnod ysgol a'r flwyddyn ysgol hefyd sbarduno newidiadau o fewn y sector gofal plant a chwarae, ac mae bwrw ymlaen â'n polisi ar Ysgolion Cymunedol yn creu mwy o gyfleoedd ar gyfer cyfleusterau amlddefnydd sydd ar gael i bobl leol drwy gydol y flwyddyn.

Atodiad

Cymorth ariannol ar gyfer y sector gofal plant a chwarae Ebrill 2020 – Tachwedd 2021:

Cefnogaeth Llywodraeth Cymru i'r sector gofal plant yng ngoleuni'r pandemig

Y Cynnig Gofal Plant a'r Cynllun Cymorth Gofal Plant drwy gyfnod y Coronafeirws

Er gorfod atal y Cynnig Gofal Plant dros dro i newydd-ddyfodiaid rhwng 1 Ebrill a 30 Mehefin 2020, parhaodd Llywodraeth Cymru i ariannu lleoedd y Cynnig a oedd eisoes wedi'u harchebu am dri mis er mwyn helpu i gynnal darparwyr gofal plant ar gost o £11m.

Fel rhan o ymateb uniongyrchol Llywodraeth Cymru i'r pandemig, ailflaenoriaethwyd cyllid y Cynnig i ariannu gofal plant gweithwyr hanfodol a phlant agored i niwed o 1 Ebrill 2020 tan 31 Awst 2020. Darparwyd £16.7m drwy'r [Cynllun Cymorth Gofal Plant drwy gyfnod y Coronafeirws](#), gan gefnogi gweithwyr hanfodol a phlant agored i

¹⁵ Sgyrsiau Cenedlaethol gyda'r Sector Gofal Plant, Chwarae a'r Blynyddoedd Cynnar yng Nghymru. Gofal Cymdeithasol Cymru. 2021

niwed. Dros y cyfnod pan oedd ar gael, darparodd y Cynllun Cymorth ofal i dros 900 o blant agored i niwed a 9,600 o blant gweithwyr hanfodol (yn seiliedig ar amcangyfrifon diweddaraf awdurdodau lleol).

Sicrhawyd £20m ychwanegol gennym er mwyn [ailagor y Cynnig Gofal Plant](#) ar gyfer ceisiadau yn ystod haf 2020, gan sicrhau bod cyn lleied o rieni â phosibl yn colli cyfleoedd gofal plant a ariennir gan y Llywodraeth. Drwy gydol cyfnodau dilynol o gyfyngiadau a chyfraddau heintio Covid-19 uchel, galluogwyd darparwyr i barhau i hawlio cyllid y Cynnig i dalu am gyfnodau byr a hirach o darfu yn sgil absenoldebau staff a phlant o ganlyniad i Covid-19, gan gefnogi cynaliadwyedd y sector.

Grant Darparwyr Gofal Plant

Cyflwynwyd y [Grant Darparwyr Gofal Plant](#) fel pecyn cymorth penodol i gynnig achubiaeth ariannol i ddarparwyr gofal plant nad oeddent yn gallu manteisio ar becynnau cymorth eraill gan y Llywodraeth, ac i helpu i sicrhau bod lleoedd gofal plant ffurfiol yn parhau i fod ar gael i rieni. O'r 1,000 o safleoedd a oedd yn gymwys ar gyfer y Grant, derbyniwyd ceisiadau llwyddiannus gan 162, a gwariwyd £0.5m (£3,000 y safle ar gyfartaledd) o gyllideb o £4.5m. O'r cychwyn cyntaf buom yn gweithio gyda rhanddeiliaid i godi ymwybyddiaeth o'r Grant, a defnyddio ystod o sianeli cyfathrebu i hysbysebu a darparu gwybodaeth amdano. Roedd nifer o broblemau yn ymwneud â'r broses ymgeisio ac amodau'r grant y gwnaeth llawer o ddarparwyr gofal plant ei chael yn anodd eu goresgyn:

- Roedd cymhlethdod y broses ymgeisio yn anghymesur â'r swm arian posibl a gâi ei ddyrannu, ac felly ystyrid nad oedd yn werth y drafferth;
- Anhawster darparu prawf digonol o elw/colled yn ystod y cyfnod rhwng 1 Ebrill a 30 Mehefin 2020;
- Mae'r dystiolaeth yn awgrymu nad oedd y colledion yn fawr yn ystod y cyfnod hwnnw oherwydd bod cyllid y Cynnig yn dal i gael ei dalu, a bod y becynnau cymorth eraill yn ddefnyddiol i lawer;
- Y risg y byddai'n rhaid ad-dalu'r cyllid a ddyfarnwyd pe bai safleoedd yn gorfod cau oherwydd amgylchiadau y tu hwnt i'w rheolaeth;
- Atal y grant am fod darparwr wedi hawlio cymorth y Cynllun Cymorth Incwm i'r Hunangyflogedig, er mai taliad i ategu incwm personol oedd hwn, nid i gefnogi'r busnes gofal plant;
- Amharodrwydd i ffurfio corff cyfreithlon;
- Nid oedd rhai safleoedd yn gallu ailagor yn eu lleoliad AGC cofrestredig, a bu'n rhaid iddynt symud dros dro i leoliad anghofrestredig (neu cawsant gyngor i ddadgofrestru), gan eu gwneud yn anghymwys.

Cyllid cynaliadwyedd drwy awdurdodau lleol

Yn y flwyddyn ariannol 2020-21, dyrannwyd £5.3m ychwanegol i awdurdodau lleol (yn ogystal â'r cyllid blynyddol o £2.3m) drwy elfen Gofal Plant a Chwarae'r Grant Plant a Chymunedau i helpu gwasanaethau gofal plant yn eu hardaloedd, gan eu galluogi i gefnogi safleoedd a darparwyr a oedd yn wynebu costau ychwanegol neu golli incwm o ganlyniad i'r pandemig. Mae £3.5m arall wedi'i ddarparu yn y flwyddyn ariannol 2021-2022 i gefnogi grantiau cynaliadwyedd bach pellach ar gyfer y sector.

Cyllid Cyfalaf

Yn 2020-21, darparwyd £5m o gyllid cyfalaf (£3m ar gyfer Chwarae a £2m drwy gynllun grant cyfalaf bach y Cynnig) i helpu safleoedd gofal plant i wneud eu lleoliad yn fwy diogel yn ystod y pandemig. Ym mis Hydref 2021, cyhoeddwyd £11.6m arall mewn cyllid cyfalaf i gynyddu'r capasiti yn safleoedd gofal plant y Cynnig a Dechrau'n Deg yng Nghymru, a £5m o gyllid cyfalaf i helpu awdurdodau lleol i ymateb i'r blaenoriaethau yn eu cynlluniau gweithredu digonolrwydd chwarae.

Rhyddhad Ardrethi Busnesau

Ym mis Medi 2018, cafodd cynllun Rhyddhad Ardrethi Busnesau Bach parhaol Llywodraeth Cymru ei wella i ddarparu **rhyddhad ardrethi o 100 y cant** i bob eiddo gofal plant cofrestredig am gyfnod o dair blynedd o fis Ebrill 2019. Cytunwyd ar hyn i gydnabod rôl economaidd-allweddol y sector i alluogi rhieni a gofalmwr i weithio ac aros mewn gwaith.

Ym mis Gorffennaf 2021, cytunodd y Gweinidogion y dylid ymestyn y rhyddhad ardrethi o 100 y cant am 3 blynedd arall oherwydd effaith y pandemig. Bydd ymestyn y rhyddhad ardrethi tan 31 Mawrth 2025 yn darparu £9.7m o gymorth ychwanegol ar gyfer safleoedd gofal plant cofrestredig. Bydd hyn yn helpu'r rhai sy'n wynebu anawsterau ariannol o ganlyniad i'r pandemig ac yn sicrhau lefel y ddarpariaeth y mae ei hangen ar blant a rhieni ac y maen nhw'n dibynnu arni.

Grantiau Busnes Cymru

Ym mis Medi 2019, lanswyd dau grant cymorth busnes. Cyflwynwyd y rhain gan Busnes Cymru a'u nod oedd cefnogi busnesau newydd a darparwyr gofal plant a oedd eisoes yn bodoli i ehangu. Oherwydd y pandemig, estynnwyd y dyddiad cau ar gyfer hawlio'r cyllid i 30 Medi 2021 i roi amser i'r rhai a oedd yn derbyn y grant i gyflwyno'r dystiolaeth angenrheidiol.

Comisiynwyd gwerthusiad o'r ddau grant hyn. Dylai hyn ein helpu i ddeall effaith y grantiau a phenderfynu ai dyma'r ffordd orau o gefnogi'r sector.

Cefnogi adferiad drwy Haf o Hwyl a Gaeaf Llawn Lles

Lanswyd **Haf o Hwyl**, a oedd yn werth £5m, ym Mehefin 2021 i roi cyfle i blant a phobl ifanc rhwng 0 a 25 oed chwarae a chymryd rhan mewn gweithgareddau hamdden, chwaraeon a diwylliannol i helpu i ailadeiladu eu sgiliau cymdeithasol ac emosiynol yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg. Buom yn gweithio gydag Arweinydd Chwarae Awdurdodau Lleol i gefnogi ystod eang o weithgareddau a chyfleoedd o 1 Gorffennaf tan 30 Medi, wedi'u teilwra i anghenion y bobl a'r cymunedau yn eu hardal. Dywedodd llawer fod gormod wedi tanysgrifio i'r gweithgareddau, a bod galw am y ddarpariaeth ar draws pob oedran.

Ym mis Hydref 2021, cyhoeddwyd £20m arall ar gyfer **Gaeaf Llawn Lles** a fydd yn cefnogi plant a phobl ifanc drwy:

- ddarparu'r lle a'r amser i chwarae, gan eu cefnogi i gael hwyl a mynegi eu hunain drwy chwarae;
- mentrau rhyngweithiol, creadigol a chwarae yn y gymuned ar gyfer pob oedran;

- cyfleoedd i ddatblygu a meithrin eu sgiliau cymdeithasol drwy ymgysylltu â ffrindiau a chyfoedion;
- creu lle a chyfleoedd i chwarae'n rhydd ac ar gyfer gweithgarwch corfforol.

CWLWM (consortium o gyrff ambarél sy'n cynrychioli darparwyr gofal plant yng Nghymru)

Ers dechrau'r pandemig, mae consortium CWLWM wedi derbyn £2.2m yn ychwanegol i gefnogi darparwyr ar draws ystod eang o faterion sy'n codi yn sgil Covid-19 ac i helpu gwasanaethau i addasu mewn ymateb i'r effaith y mae'r pandemig wedi'i chael ar y sector.

Cyfleoedd Chwarae

Ers dechrau'r pandemig, mae Chwarae Cymru, yr elusen annibynnol a ariennir gan Lywodraeth Cymru, wedi derbyn £400,000 arall i ymgymryd â gwaith penodol i gefnogi darparwyr ar draws ystod eang o faterion sy'n codi yn sgil Covid-19, ac i hyrwyddo pwysigrwydd a gwerth chwarae ymhlith rhieni a rhanddeiliaid er mwyn cefnogi lles eu plant yn dilyn cyfyngiadau Covid-19.

Ym mis Gorffennaf 2020, dyfarnwyd £1.6m i Awdurdodau Lleol drwy'r Gronfa Galedi Frys i Awdurdodau Lleol i ddarparu gwell cyfleoedd chwarae i blant mewn cymunedau sy'n agored i niwed, ac i wireddu'r manteision a ddaw yn sgil hyn o ran datblygiad plant a lefelau gweithgarwch, ynghyd â £500,000 arall ym mis Hydref 2020 i gefnogi cyfleoedd chwarae i blant, gan helpu awdurdodau lleol i gyflawni eu Dyletswydd Digonolrwydd Chwarae.

Cyllid Gofal Cymdeithasol Cymru

Gofal Cymdeithasol Cymru yw'r Cyngor Sgiliau Sector ar gyfer sector y blynyddoedd cynnar a gofal plant yng Nghymru, a nhw sy'n gyfrifol am gynnal a goruchwylio gofynion hyfforddi, cymwysterau a datblygu'r sector. Fel partner strategol i Lywodraeth Cymru, maent wedi chwarae rhan allweddol yn y gwaith o gefnogi'r sector yn ystod y pandemig.

Cyflwynwyd ymgyrch *Gofalwn* Gofal Cymdeithasol Cymru yn 2020-21 i gefnogi'r gwaith o recriwtio a chadw staff yn y sector gofal plant yn ogystal â chefnogi morâl a chydabod y rôl hanfodol a chwaraeir gan y gweithlu. Un o swyddogaethau cyson allweddol Gofal Cymdeithasol Cymru yw darparu adnoddau a chanllawiau sy'n benodol i'r sector, llawer ohonynt mewn ymateb i'r materion sy'n cael eu codi gan y sector a'r heriau a wynebir oherwydd Covid-19.

Sicrhodd Gofal Cymdeithasol Cymru hefyd fod gwaith yn parhau i gefnogi'r rhai a oedd yn ymgymryd â chymwysterau yn ystod y pandemig, gan gynnwys drwy ddatblygu fframweithiau prentisiaeth i gefnogi cymwysterau newydd, a thrwy ddatblygu dulliau hyblyg o gyflawni cymwysterau ar adeg pan amharwyd ar y gallu i sicrhau lleoliadau gwaith.

Cynnydd ar gyfer Llwyddiant

Un o raglenni Cronfa Gymdeithasol Ewrop yw Cynnydd ar gyfer Llwyddiant, a lansiwyd ym mis Awst 2016. Mae'r rhaglen yn ariannu ymarferwyr y blynyddoedd cynnar, gofal plant a chwarae (gan gynnwys gwarchodwyr plant cofrestredig

hunangyflogedig) i ymgymryd â chymwysterau gofal plant a chwarae cydnabyddedig.

A chyfanswm buddsoddiad o £9.2 miliwn gan Gronfa Gymdeithasol Ewrop a Llywodraeth Cymru yn ystod 2016-2023, nod Cynnydd ar gyfer Llwyddiant yw gwella sgiliau a chefnogi tua 4,000 o ymarferwyr. Cefnogodd Llinyn 1, a ddaeth i ben yn 2018, 979 o ymarferwyr i uwchsgilio, ac mae Llinyn 2 sy'n rhedeg yn ystod 2018-2023 yn anelu at gefnogi 3,000 o ymarferwyr eraill i ehangu eu lefelau sgiliau, ac yn ei dro, at gryfhau darpariaeth gofal plant o ansawdd uchel yng Nghymru.

Yn ogystal â chymorth ariannol, mae Llywodraeth Cymru wedi llunio [canllawiau](#) i ddarparwyr gofal plant a chwarae ar sut i gadw staff a phlant yn ddiogel drwy gydol y pandemig.

At: Elin Jones AS
Y Llywydd a Chadeirydd Comisiwn y Senedd

19 Hydref 2021

Annwyl Lywydd,

Cafodd y Bil Pensiynau'r Gwasanaeth Cyhoeddus a Swyddi Barnwriaethol (y Bil) ei gyflwyno yn Senedd y DU ym mis Gorffennaf 2021, ac mae'n gwneud darpariaeth ynghylch cynlluniau pensiwn y gwasanaeth cyhoeddus. Ym mis Awst 2021, gosododd y Cwnsler Cyffredinol femorandwm cydsyniad deddfwriaethol gerbron y Senedd ar y sail bod nifer o ddarpariaethau'r Bil o fewn cymhwysedd deddfwriaethol y Senedd.

Er bod deddfwriaeth ar gynlluniau pensiwn galwedigaethol a phersonol yn fater a gedwir yn ôl gan Senedd y DU, ceir eithriad¹ penodol sy'n galluogi'r Senedd i ddeddfu ynghylch cynllun pensiwn Aelodau o'r Senedd. Fodd bynnag, Trysorlys Ei Mawrhydi sy'n parhau'n gyfrifol am swyddogaeth gymeradwyo newidiadau i'r cynllun pensiwn datganoledig hwn.² Er nad yw'r Bil yn cynnig newid swyddogaeth Trysorlys EM ar hyn o bryd, deallaf fod Llywodraeth Cymru a Llywodraeth y DU wedi trafod y mater hwn, a bod Llywodraeth y DU yn bwriadu cyflwyno gwelliannau i'r Bil i ddileu swyddogaeth gymeradwyo Trysorlys EM.

Yn dilyn gohebiaeth rhwng y Cwnsler Cyffredinol a Phrif Ysgrifennydd y Trysorlys ar y pryd (dyfyniad wedi'i atodi), mae swyddogion Trysorlys EM wedi bod mewn cysylltiad ag ysgrifenyddiaeth Bwrdd Taliadau Annibynnol y Senedd o ganlyniad i'r cynigion i ddiwygio rheolau cynllun pensiwn Aelodau o'r Senedd. O ystyried mai'r Bwrdd sy'n gyfrifol am bennu rheolau cynllun pensiwn yr Aelodau, cysylltwyd â'i ysgrifenyddiaeth i gadarnhau pwy y dylid ei wahodd i drafod y mater hwn â swyddogion Trysorlys EM.

¹ Paragraff 134 o Atodlen 7A i Ddeddf Llywodraeth Cymru 2006.

² Adran 30 o Ddeddf Pensiynau'r Gwasanaeth Cyhoeddus 2013.

Mae'r Bwrdd o'r farn bod y cwestiwn o sut y dylid arfer y swyddogaeth yn y dyfodol yn gysylltiedig â'r fframwaith cyfansoddiadol y mae'r Bwrdd yn gweithredu oddi mewn iddo. Felly, nid yw'r Bwrdd yn credu ei bod yn briodol iddo fynegi barn ar unrhyw benderfyniadau polisi deddfwriaethol o ran a ddylid trosglwyddo'r swyddogaeth hon neu ei dileu yn gyfan gwbl.

Fodd bynnag, mae'r Bwrdd yn fodlon mynegi ei farn i Drysorlys EM, drwy ei ysgrifenyddiaeth, ar ymarferoldeb technegol gwelliant arfaethedig ac unrhyw oblygiadau cyfreithiol y byddai'n rhaid eu hystyried wrth lunio cyngor polisi ar y mater. Mae'n fodlon i'r trafodaethau hyn rhwng swyddogion fynd yn eu blaenau heb ragfarnu barn Comisiwn y Senedd na barn y Senedd ar y mater.

Dim ond yr effaith ar gynllun pensiwn Aelodau o'r Senedd y byddai unrhyw drafodaethau o'r fath yn ei chynnwys.

Rhowch wybod i mi os ydych am drafod y mater hwn ymhellach.

Yn gywir,



Dr Elizabeth Haywood

Cadeirydd Bwrdd Taliadau Annibynnol y Senedd

copi at Mick Antoniw AS, y Cwnsler Cyffredinol a Gweinidog y Cyfansoddiad

Jenny Rathbone AS, Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor Cydraddoldeb a Chyfiawnder Cymdeithasol.

Huw Irranca-Davies AS, Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor Deddfwriaeth, Cyfiawnder a'r Cyfansoddiad

Peredur Owen Griffiths AS, Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor Cyllid

Y Gwir Anrhydeddus Simon Clarke AS, Prif Ysgrifennydd y Trysorlys, Llywodraeth y DU

Jill Youds, Cadeirydd Bwrdd Pensiwn Cynllun Pensiwn Aelodau o'r Senedd

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg neu'r Saesneg / We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

Atodiad

Dyfyniad o ohebiaeth gan Mick Antoniw AS, y Cwnsler Cyffredinol a Gweinidog y Cyfansoddiad, at y Gwir Anrhydeddus Steve Barclay AS, Prif Ysgrifennydd y Trysorlys ar y pryd, ynghylch y Bil Pensiynau'r Gwasanaeth Cyhoeddus a Swyddi Barnwriaethol, 11 Awst 2021

"I note that the Bill as introduced does not make provision in relation to the pension scheme for members of the Senedd. In the context of that scheme, I note the proposed amendments to the Bill to introduce measures removing the requirement for HM Treasury consent to matters within the Senedd's legislative competence. Legislation governing Senedd members' pensions is taken forward in Wales by the Senedd Commission, and so UK Government officials should liaise with officials from the Commission on the potential effect and drafting of any amendments. It would then also be for the Commission to advise Members on the impact of those amendments. However, it remains the responsibility of a member of the Welsh Government to lay any Legislative Consent Motions that are required, and so on that basis and subject to the relevant provisions being made available to my officials and those in the Commission, I will consider laying a supplementary Legislative Consent Memorandum before the Senedd. I therefore hope that all necessary officials can liaise as amendments are prepared and before they are taken forward."

Mae cyfyngiadau ar y ddogfen hon

Eitem 6.2



Covid and Childcare: Spending Review Briefing September 2021

This briefing sets out the emerging findings from a Nuffield-funded research project into the impact of Covid-19 on childcare in England, which draws on information from interviews and surveys with parents, childcare providers and local authority staff, as well as administrative data sources. It shows that the pandemic has hit the childcare sector hard and unevenly, with families already facing disadvantage the ones most likely to miss out. Not only is a well-functioning childcare system vital in enabling parents to work, it is a proven strategy to narrow the gap between disadvantaged children and their peers, reducing the pressure on schools. The emerging findings from our research find a number of areas of concerns that have already and are likely to continue to impact on children's outcomes, particularly for the most disadvantaged. While there is not yet evidence of mass closures or market failure, weaknesses in the system, including a lack of infrastructure support, have been exacerbated by the crisis which require urgent action. Childcare is not a simple market commodity, but instead a social good with the potential to change lives.

The spending review provides the opportunity to make the necessary investments to achieve this potential. Investment in childcare also provides the opportunity to hit a number of the Build Back Better priorities. Childcare is a key pillar of strong public services, supporting children's education in the crucial early years. It is essential that all families across the country are able to access high quality childcare to allow parents to work and children to achieve in order to achieve the Government's levelling up agenda. And finally childcare is a crucial part of the infrastructure needed to support growth and enable parents to move into work.

Key points:

- Children have missed out on substantial amounts of early education, with large reductions in take-up. There is some evidence that take-up of the free entitlement for two, three and four year olds has fallen more amongst disadvantaged children than amongst their better-off peers.
- Partly as a result of missing out on early education, children's development has been adversely affected by the pandemic. Parents, childcare providers and local authorities all raised concerns about children regressing or not progressing as expected as a result of lower attendance at early education. There are also concerns about the widening of socio-economic gaps in children's development over the course of the pandemic.
- Income from parent fees has been declining due to changes in working arrangements and declining family incomes. This reduction could threaten the delivery of free early education entitlement places which many providers have previously subsidised from parent fees.
- Covid-19 has significantly increased childcare providers' struggle to recruit and retain qualified staff, threatening their ability to provide childcare places in the medium term.
- Shortages of places could also threaten parents' ability to work, and we are already seeing a significant drop in the supply of school age childcare.

Covid-19 and Childcare: local impacts across England

[Covid-19 and Childcare: Local impacts across England](#) is a study exploring the impact of the pandemic on early education and care services, funded by the Nuffield Foundation and being undertaken by a team of researchers from the Centre for Evidence and Implementation, University of East London, UCL, Frontier Economics, Coram Family and Childcare, and the Institute for Fiscal Studies. It will highlight lessons for improvements at



both the national and local levels, to support a sustainable, high quality system. This briefing presents evidence from three early strands of the work:

- **Strand 1:** Telephone survey of 122 local authority Early Years Leads conducted in February and March 2021 and already published by [Coram Family and Childcare and Frontier Economics \(2021\)](#)
- **Strand 2:** Analysis of secondary data sources including Ofsted register data, DfE early years attendance data and aggregate Early Years Census data, forthcoming from UCL and IFS
- **Strand 3:** Qualitative case studies comprised of 99 interviews with parents, providers and early years staff in 10 different local authority areas conducted between May and August 2021, forthcoming from Centre for Evidence and Implementation.

Our early findings were discussed at three roundtable events with childcare providers, family organisations and civil servants. These discussions helped to refine this briefing.

Children are missing out on early education

There have been substantial decreases in uptake of early education for two, three and four year olds. [Early Years Census \(2021\)](#) data shows that around 19,000 fewer children were accessing the two year old offer in January 2021 compared to January 2020 – a 13% reduction (from around 143,000 in 2020). Most local authorities interviewed reported declines in demand for funded hours for two year olds, some substantially higher than this average reduction, with predictions that some of this decline will persist for some time (forthcoming results from Strands 1 and 3). Similarly, there were around 60,000 fewer 3 and 4 year olds accessing the universal offer in January 2021 than in January 2020 – a 4.7% reduction (from around 1.27 million in 2020) – and around 17,000 fewer 3 and 4 year olds accessing extended entitlement – a 4.9% reduction.

In case studies (forthcoming results from Strand 3), it was found that numerous parents discussed planning to put a child in nursery but then did not do so due to the pandemic, safety concerns (including wanting to protect grandparents), financial concerns and wanting one child home when another school-age child was home in a lockdown.

Consequences:

Reduced or non-attendance in early education has affected children's development, and many providers and local authorities reported a level of need that was not seen before (forthcoming results from Strand 3). Providers described children as having regressed, or not having progressed in line with age, and visible impacts of breaks in childcare attendance in children's language, behaviour, independence, ability to socialise, struggling with structure and group activity, and being quieter, more anxious and less confident than before the pandemic (forthcoming results from Strand 3). There is also an increase in children with social-emotional issues due to their families' circumstances (e.g. domestic violence, severe financial pressures) which were exacerbated as children were at home all or most of the time (forthcoming results from Strand 3).

Parents also have concerns about the development of their child due to the pandemic. They felt Covid measures decreased social interactions, and reduced informal and formal social networks such as parent-and-child and stay and play groups. Parents were concerned that their children were not meeting developmental milestones and that young children were not



getting as much attention as their older siblings were home from school and needed help in home schooling (forthcoming results from Strand 3).

Settings are working with many children who are starting at a lower point developmentally compared with previous cohorts with more behavioural issues from having missed formal early education and interaction with other services, such as stay and plays (forthcoming results from Strand 1 and 3). Providers also described local authority support services such as referrals for SEND assessments and speech and language support as having been constrained during Covid and now reporting much longer waiting lists, leading to concerns that support services are struggling to meet rising need (forthcoming results from Strand 3). The [Education Endowment Foundation \(2021\)](#) report in their interim briefing that 76% of schools reported that children who started school in Autumn 2020 needed more support than children in previous cohorts.

Areas for action:

- National promotion of the benefits of early education, and greater support for local activity to encourage higher take-up of the free entitlement. This activity should build on approaches that have been proven to work, such as multi-disciplinary partnerships to promote the free entitlements, personal contact with eligible families, targeted marketing, simplifying application processes and using a range of languages to promote (Hempsall's and Coram Family and Childcare, 2021).
- Greater 'catch up' support for early years settings, including reception classes, to ensure providers have the resources necessary to enable children to 'get back on track' and reach the expected level of development.
- More creative/flexible use of funded entitlement to strengthen relationships between providers and families and support home learning particularly if take-up remains low.

Disadvantaged children in particular are missing out

There is some indirect evidence that the reduction in take-up of early education could be greater for more deprived children. While the number of three and four year olds accessing free early education who are eligible for the early years premium increased by 6% between January 2020 and January 2021 ([Early Years Census, 2021](#)), the proportion of school children eligible for the pupil premium rose by 20% over the same period ([School Census, 2021](#)). This suggests that take-up of early education places has fallen more amongst children who would have been eligible for the early years premium, therefore a large number of deprived children missing out on early education (forthcoming results from Strand 2).

Data from a survey of parents/carers undertaken earlier in the pandemic also suggested that 16% of vulnerable children are spending less time in early education than pre-Covid compared to 11% who are not vulnerable, with 28% of parents with vulnerable children saying their childcare provider is offering less flexibility in the days and times their child can attend than pre-Covid, compared with an overall figure of 9% of parents reporting lack of flexibility ([DfE, 2020](#)).



In the same survey ([DfE, 2020](#)), 22% of families where income is £10,000-£19,999 are not using formal childcare anymore because it's too expensive, compared to 15% of all families. This is the second most popular reason after 'I never use formal childcare'. Additionally, 19% of low income parents in the survey said their previous provider cannot provide the childcare hours they need, compared to 10% of all parents.

Discussion at our roundtable with childcare providers highlighted that they often struggle to access funding for children with SEND. While funding streams are available, the application processes can make them hard to access and they do not cover the full costs, for example, only covering 15 hours even if the child is entitled to the extended 30 hours offer. While this is a longstanding issue, the increased pressure on funding and services as a result of Covid will put pressure on support that was already vulnerable.

Consequences:

One of the key aims of funded early education is to narrow the achievement gap between disadvantaged children and their peers, but this cannot be achieved if disadvantaged children are not attending. This low uptake could delay development amongst disadvantaged children and instead widen and entrench the achievement gap between them and their peers. For example, [Hendry et al \(2021\)](#) found that children from low income families who continued to attend early education showed enhanced language benefits, understanding more words than those that didn't attend formal childcare. This suggests that children from less affluent backgrounds who lost access were disproportionately disadvantaged.

Other inequalities will also be widened. For example, local authorities that saw larger reductions in take-up of the universal offer amongst three and four year olds had, on average, lower female economic activity rates prior to the pandemic and also had higher claimant counts (unemployment rates) around the time of the early years census in January 2021 (forthcoming results from Strand 2).

The developmental delays that have occurred could lead to an increase in SEND diagnoses if they are not addressed. High quality early intervention could help to address these issues and help children to catch up, preventing the additional costs that come from late intervention when issues are further developed and entrenched.

Areas for action:

- More and/or more effective funding targeted towards disadvantaged children, to ensure providers have the resources necessary to support children from more disadvantaged backgrounds, who have experienced the greatest developmental delays. For example, a reformed early years pupil premium with funding levels reflecting additional costs could be an effective way to support childcare providers to be able to effectively meet the needs that disadvantaged children may present with.
- Increase and simplify SEND funding to help improve access.
- Take-up activity focusing on disadvantaged children, to ensure that those who have missed out on early education have an opportunity to catch-up before going to school, and to ensure these larger developmental inequalities do not persist amongst new cohorts of children eligible for the free entitlements. For example, Hemsalls and Coram Family and Childcare (2021) find that personal contact can be most helpful in overcoming individual barriers. Approaches such as the Golden Ticket where families who are identified as potentially eligible for the two year old offer using DWP data are able to take up a place without going through the income check that is usually part of



the application process were felt to be particularly effective in reaching families otherwise unlikely to take up early education. Early years staff found that outreach work targeted at families with the strongest reservations about their child starting early education at two was most effective in supporting take-up of the two year old offer (Covid and childcare strand 3)

The future supply of early education places could be compromised: finances

Providers have faced a reduction in income, both from parent paid fees throughout the pandemic, and from free early education funding, especially since the changes that were made in January 2021 to how this was paid that returned to funding actual attendance rather than places. Providers have also faced higher costs as a result of meeting pandemic-related requirements. Just 47% per cent of open group-based providers and 56% of open childminders were reasonably confident that they would be financially sustainable to continue to run their childcare provision for another year or longer ([DfE, 2021](#)).

For some settings, the reduction in income from parent fees has been dramatic. For example on average, in November to December 2020 open group based settings expected to receive £3,592 per week from parent-paid fees but received, on average, £2,416 at the time of the survey – two thirds of the parent fees they expected. Open childminders expected to receive £618 per week from parent-paid fees but received, on average, £388 at the time of the survey ([DfE, 2021](#)). Local authorities reported that these reductions in parent fees were driven by families reducing the amount of childcare they used or stopping use entirely (forthcoming results from Strand 3).

Some childcare providers were supported through the nationally funded Coronavirus Job Retention ('furlough') Scheme, the self-employment support grants (SEISS) and changes to free entitlement funding. However, these did not fully off-set income losses because providers had incurred salary costs for furloughed staff or workers not entitled to SEISS and they faced other non-staff costs. Some also received discretionary funding from their local authority including discretionary sustainability grants to support settings, using the underspends from overall early education funding, topping up the free entitlement funding from local funds and the use of Covid recovery or business scheme grants (forthcoming results from Strand 1 and 3).

The reduction in income from paid-for hours poses additional challenges as many providers find that funding levels for funded entitlement places do not cover their delivery costs and so cross-subsidise from parent fees (forthcoming results from Strand 3). Indeed this model of 'cross-subsidisation' underpins the rate at which the Department for Education funds providers for free entitlement hours ([Early Years Alliance, 2021](#)). This reduction in private income could therefore threaten the delivery of free early education places for some providers at current funding levels. Early in the pandemic, 20% of parents who used formal childcare before the pandemic said they have no intention of using formal childcare again ([DfE, 2020](#)), suggesting that at least some reduction will last into the medium term.

Given the harsh financial climate, there was concern among both providers and local authorities about the viability for some childcare providers to continue to provide childcare for children with SEND. For example, SEND funding is typically not available for 2 year olds because they are too young to have a diagnosis, and for 3-4 year olds it only covers the free universal 15 hours and is not available for the additional 15 hours most working parents are entitled to. Complex funding applications also mean that some providers miss out on SEND funding which adds to the financial pressures of providing places for SEND children (forthcoming results from Strand 3). Research has shown that more expensive SEND places



are cross subsidised with income from parent fees, when the latter decrease, providers may have to reduce the number of SEND places to remain financially viable ([Paull and La Valle 2018](#)).

Consequences:

Current public and private income for childcare providers is attached to individual children, rather than the infrastructure funding to support providing early education and childcare places. This has led to a fragile market where some providers have little ability to weather periods of decreased demand, let alone the prolonged reduction in demand seen as a result of Covid-19.

Reliance on cross subsidisation of funded places by parent fees means any permanent reduction in parent fees may undermine some providers' financial viability or reduce providers' ability to offer early education places in future, especially for children with SEND. This will lead to a potential shortage of early education places, especially in areas where it is hard to raise fees. Alternatively, providers may decide to increase parent fees in order to maintain financial sustainability or continue to offer early education places.

Government and local authority funding available, while helpful, did not fully cover providers' costs (forthcoming results from Strand 3). These losses led some to take actions that could end up threatening long term financial sustainability. For example the [Whittaker et al \(2021\)](#) report noted that 26% of settings in deficit took on debts to stay afloat, and 58% used reserves. Coupled with the phasing out of both national and local additional support, this is likely to place additional burdens on many providers that are already in a very financially weak position and mean that financial pressure continue or even increase through the autumn and winter.

Areas for action:

- Increase funding rate to ensure cross-subsidisation is not required to deliver early education
- Consider providing infrastructure funding in order to ensure the supply of early education places even while demand is fluctuating

The future supply of early education places could be compromised: workforce issues

Providers described their current staff as being drained, exhausted and worn out with morale very low. There were concerns that there had not been sufficient investment in training the next generation of early years educators, and that free or subsidised in-service training was now scarce. Local authorities also report that childcare staff morale was very low due to high level of stress and lack of recognition for all the work and risks they have taken over the past year – the differential treatment of childcare settings and schools was seen as particularly unfair given that most settings remained opened while schools closed (forthcoming results from Strand 3). Childcare providers had struggled to recruit high quality staff for some time pre-Covid, but current pressures mean that recruitment issues were considerably worse than pre-pandemic, with some providers already planning to reduce places due to staff shortages. The low pay within the sector combined with high vacancy rates and the perception of lower safety risks in other occupations were causing many to leave the sector, including older, more experienced professionals (forthcoming results from Strand 3).

Consequences:



The struggle to recruit and retain qualified professionals threatens the ability of childcare providers to continue to provide sufficient places. Some providers already reported reducing the number of childcare places they offered as they could not recruit enough staff (forthcoming results from Strand 3).

Not only does this threaten the supply of places, but it also has a negative impact on the quality of provision. Frequent staff turnover and the inability to recruit staff with the necessary qualifications or experience are likely to have a negative impact on quality. Staff and their relationships with individual children are the greatest determinant of childcare quality and so essential in enabling childcare to achieve its potential to support children's outcomes. In addition, forthcoming results from Strand 1 show that several local authorities reported that the educational focus of provision had been diminished due to extra work "keeping children safe" and reducing the risk of spread of Covid.

Areas for action:

- Higher funding rates are needed to enable pay to increase sufficiently for early education settings to attract and retain qualified staff.
- A national childcare workforce strategy supported by funding.

Parents may struggle to stay in work

The need to balance additional childcare responsibilities with work has been a challenge for parents, with mothers disproportionately affected. [ONS \(2020\)](#) found that over 20% of parents reporting that childcare had affected their ability to work. This is echoed by researchers at the IFS (published in [The IZA Institute of Labor Economics, 2020](#)) who found that mothers and fathers report doing substantially more childcare during the pandemic - fathers were engaged in childcare during 4.2 one-hour slots and mothers during 6.7 slots in 2014/15 which substantially increased to 8.0 and 10.3 one-hour slots respectively in April 2020 ([The IZA Institute of Labor Economics, 2020](#)).

The [Whittaker et al \(2021\)](#) study found that of parents that took parental leave, over half (54%) said that childcare influenced their decision whether or not to return to work. 14% had to take extended/extra periods of leave to manage childcare, 7% said the difficulty in accessing suitable childcare is affecting my career progression and 7% said they had to reduce their paid work hours because they could not access suitable childcare. In case studies (forthcoming results from Strand 3) some parents reported limited childcare provision affected their progress in employment, the type of employment they worked, the number of hours they worked, and limited them to a 'job' rather than a 'career.' Therefore, for some families, childcare has affected their decision to return to work or progress in the workplace. Evidence shows that mothers, in particular, are most likely to be affected - 64% reported that childcare influenced their decision whether or not to return to work, compared to just 31% of fathers ([Whittaker et al, 2021](#)). This highlights the vulnerability of women's employment in relation to childcare disruption, and that childcare is likely to have continued impacts on women's employment opportunities.

Out of school care is used by twice as many families as pre-school childcare to enable parents to work but shows the most significant drops in supply ([Coram Family and Childcare and Frontier Economics \(2021\)](#)). Some of this reduction in supply is caused by a reduction in demand due to home working and children not being in schools, but other explanations included a lack of school premises or schools wanting to reduce multiple contacts. Many local authorities predicted that post-pandemic, demand could permanently reduce for hours outside the core 9am to 3pm due to continued and permanent changes in work patterns. The



short hours required for this type of provision (normally 8am to 9am and 3pm to 6pm) mean that it can be difficult to make it financially viable. If demand is permanently lower or returns slowly, many providers may find that it is no longer financially viable to them to stay open leaving a gap for families who do still need this provision. There is also concern about home-based care (that is, childminders and nannies) as supply of this provision declined considerably in rural areas where many (working) parents rely on home-based care because of scarcity of group provision (Childcare and Covid, strand 3).

Consequences:

If parents cannot find the childcare they need, they may be unable to work, or may have to reduce their hours or take more flexible (potentially lower paid) jobs. It is more likely that mothers will leave employment or reduce earnings, meaning we may see an increase in the gender employment/wage gap. These lower employment rates could have adverse impacts both for individual families, through rising child poverty rates, as well as for the public purse, with reduction in tax payments, and an increase benefit payments.

Areas for action:

- Supporting the supply of school-age childcare and home-based care to meet demand.

Acknowledgements

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**Equality and Social Justice
Committee**

Paul Davies AS

Cadeirydd Pwyllgor yr Economi, Masnach a Materion Gwledig

4 Tachwedd 2021

Annwyl Paul,

Gofal plant a chyflogaeth rhieni: y pandemig a thu hwnt

Yn fy llythyr ar 10 Awst, rhoddais wybod i chi fod y Pwyllgor Cydraddoldeb a Chyfiawnder Cymdeithasol wedi cytuno i gynnal ymchwiliad i effaith pandemig COVID-19 ar fenywod yn y gweithle. Mae'r gwaith hwn bellach wedi dechrau; mae'r Pwyllgor yn cynnal ymchwiliad i ofal plant a chyflogaeth rhieni: y pandemig a thu hwnt. Bydd yr ymchwiliad yn canolbwyntio ar y rhwystrau y gall darpariaeth gofal plant ei olygu i rieni, yn enwedig menywod, o ran ymuno â'r farchnad lafur a symud ymlaen.

Ceir cylch gorchwyl yr ymchwiliad yn atodiad A, a manylion casglu tystiolaeth yn atodiad B.

Gall agweddau ar yr ymchwiliad sy'n ymwneud â chylch gwaith eich Pwyllgor chi fod o ddiddordeb i'ch Aelodau. Felly, hoffwn wahodd eich Aelodau i ystyried a oes unrhyw bwyntiau yr hoffent eu codi mewn perthynas â'n cylch gorchwyl, neu unrhyw ran yr hoffent ei gymryd yn ein gwaith ymgysylltu â rhanddeiliaid a dinasyddion.

Sesiynau tystiolaeth a chraffu cyfarfodydd ffurfiol

Cynigias fod Sarah Murphy, fel Aelod ar y ddau Bwyllgor, yn gweithredu fel rapporteur i rannu unrhyw gwestiynau a gynigir gan eich Aelodau yn ein sesiynau casglu tystiolaeth a chraffu ffurfiol.

Ymgysylltu â rhanddeiliaid a dinasyddion

Os hoffai unrhyw rai o'ch Aelodau gymryd rhan yn y sesiwn drafod neu unrhyw rai o'r grwpiau ffocws arfaethedig fel sylwedydd, gofynnwch i'ch tîm Clercio gysylltu â thîm Clercio fy mhwyllgor i wneud trefniadau. Rwyf hefyd yn hapus i rannu gyda'ch Aelodau y nodiadau o'r digwyddiadau hyn i lywio eich gwaith yn y dyfodol.

Diolch ichi ymlaen llaw am roi sylw i'r cais hwn. Byddaf yn rhoi'r wybodaeth ddiweddaraf i chi wrth i'r ymchwiliad fynd yn ei flaen.

Yn gywir



Jenny Rathbone

Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor Cydraddoldeb a Chyfiawnder Cymdeithasol

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



Atodiad A

Cylch gorchwyl

Y cylch gorchwyl ar gyfer yr ymchwiliad yw archwilio:

- I ba raddau y mae'r ddarpariaeth gofal plant bresennol yng Nghymru yn cefnogi rhieni'n ddigonol, yn enwedig mamau, i gael swydd, aros yn y swydd a symud ymlaen yn y swydd, a pha newidiadau y gallai fod eu hangen i wella effeithiolrwydd y ddarpariaeth gofal plant wrth wneud hyn.
- Pa effaith y mae'r Cynnig Gofal Plant yn benodol wedi'i chael o ran cyflawni nod Llywodraeth Cymru o "helpu rhieni, mamau yn arbennig, i ddychwelyd i'r gwaith neu i gynyddu'r oriau y maent yn eu gweithio".
- Effaith y lefelau cyfyngedig o ofal plant sydd ar gael ar lefelau cynhyrchiant yng Nghymru.
- Sut mae trefniadau gofal plant wedi effeithio ar gyflogaeth rhieni yn ystod y pandemig coronafeirws, yn enwedig mewn perthynas â mamau. Pa wersi y gellid eu defnyddio i ddarparu gwell cymorth yn ystod unrhyw gyfnodau clo neu gyfyngiadau uwch yn y dyfodol.
- A yw'r ddarpariaeth gofal plant a ariennir gan Lywodraeth Cymru yn ddigon hyblyg i helpu rhieni o ran cyflogaeth, yn enwedig mamau, mewn gwahanol grwpiau demograffig ac sy'n profi gwahanol amgylchiadau.
- Effaith ddarpariaeth gofal plant ffurfiol o ansawdd uchel ar leihau'r bwlch cyrhaeddiad, a'r buddion posibl yn sgil ymestyn y ddarpariaeth gofal plant i fynd i'r afael ag anghydraddoldebau.
- Yr hyn y gall Cymru ei ddysgu o fodolau eraill o ddarpariaeth gofal plant sy'n gweithredu yng ngweddill y DU ac yn rhyngwladol a'r ymarfer sy'n dod i'r amlwg o ran cefnogi cyflogaeth rhieni, ac i ba raddau y gallai'r modelau hyn fod yn drosglwyddadwy yng nghyd-destun Cymru.
- Sut y byddai angen i Lywodraeth Cymru ystyried goblygiadau ariannol ac ymarferol fel argaeledd gofal plant mewn unrhyw ddatblygiadau polisi yn y dyfodol i ymestyn y ddarpariaeth gofal plant.

Atodiad B

Casglu tystiolaeth

Dydd Llun 15 Tachwedd	Paneli tystiolaeth rhanddeiliaid: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Sefydliadau sy'n ymgyrchu dros ofal plant▪ Darparwyr gofal plant▪ Darpariaeth gofal plant y tu allan i Gymru
Dydd Llun 22 Tachwedd	Sesiwn drafod gyda sefydliadau fel darparwyr gofal plant, sefydliadau sy'n ymgyrchu dros faterion gofal plant, cyflogwyr, undebau llafur.
Dydd Llun 29 Tachwedd (i'w gadarnhau)	Panel tystiolaeth: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Comisiynydd Plant Cymru▪ Y Comisiynydd Cydraddoldeb a Hawliau Dynol Sesiwn graffu: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Y Dirprwy Weinidog Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Dyddiadau amrywiol trwy gydol mis Tachwedd	Cyfres o grwpiau ffocws ar-lein ac wyneb yn wyneb gyda rhieni a sefydliadau partner o bob cwr o Gymru



**Pwyllgor yr Economi,
Masnach a Materion Gwledig**

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Jenny Rathbone AS
Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor Cydraddoldeb a Chyfiawnder
Cymdeithasol

22 Tachwedd 2021

Annwyl Jenny,

Gofal plant a chyflogaeth rhieni: y pandemig a thu hwnt

Diolch am eich llythyr dyddiedig 4 Tachwedd ynghylch y dull arfaethedig o ymdrin â'r ymchwiliad uchod, sy'n berthnasol i gylch gwaith Pwyllgor yr Economi, Masnach a Materion Gwledig.

Trafododd yr Aelodau eich llythyr yn ein cyfarfod ar 11 Tachwedd. Roeddent yn fodlon i Sarah Murphy AS, sy'n aelod o'r ddau bwyllgor, weithredu fel rapporteur i ofyn cwestiynau a gynigir gan Aelodau'r Pwyllgor hwn yn ystod eich sesiynau craffu.

Byddai'r Aelodau hefyd yn croesawu cael gwybod am hynt yr ymchwiliad, ac rwy'n hapus i'r ddau dîm clericio rannu gwybodaeth i hwyluso hynny.

Cofion gorau,



Paul Davies AS

Cadeirydd: Pwyllgor yr Economi, Masnach a Materion Gwledig

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

