

Senedd Cymru
Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg

Welsh Parliament
Children, Young People and Education Committee

Ymchwiliad i effaith argyfwng Covid-19
ar blant a phobl ifanc yng Nghymru

Inquiry into the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak on
children and young people in Wales

COV 175
Ymateb gan: Unigolyn

COV 175
Response from: Individual

I am writing to share our experiences of the impact Covid 19 has had on the children within my family. My partner and I have 4 children and we have struggled to work and give them the intense support that they need both from an education and wellbeing perspective.

1) Education

Our children attend 2 different primary schools, one in Torfaen and the other in Newport. I can categorically say that I am hugely disappointed with the lack of education they have received. They have become increasingly despondent with home learning and require one to one supervision to complete their tasks. This leads to frustrations on their part largely because we parents are not familiar with the methods used to teach nowadays, particularly maths. We are also not welsh speakers so it has been impossible for us to provide any help with welsh language tasks. Up until very recently, both of us were working full time so the children had to be largely left to fend for themselves. We could not help them with home schooling and they became very upset with the lack of attention we were able to show them.

2) Fitness levels

Whilst we aimed to take the children out on a daily walk, working full time and playing teacher left us with very little available time. Their many in and out of school activities had ceased and this has massively impacted on their fitness. My daughter struggles with weight gain and was very upset last week when she discovered her clothes were not fitting her. In spite of our best efforts, the children are becoming increasingly lethargic and disinterested in any type of exercise. It is a battle.

3) Wellbeing

We noticed that before schools partly reopened in June, our children were becoming very low. They all got very clingy and the reopening of schools has helped. They all are counting down the days until they can go back to school properly and to some sort of normality. This is the greatest hope that they have right now.

4) Financial impact

I have been furloughed from my role and I believe my employer took this decision because they knew I was unable to fully focus on my role whilst having 4 children at home with me whilst I was working. I am now only taking home 80% of my salary and I am very worried about my longer term prospects should the children not return to school fully in September. With employees in England, NI and Scotland (I am the only one in Wales), my employer is highly unlikely to be considerate to my difficulties should schools not reopen fully. My children will be hugely impacted on if I lose my job.

I cannot underestimate the important role that school plays on the life of a child. Of course, their primary function is education but the social interaction and wellbeing that attending school full time makes to children is invaluable. Us parents are not professional educators, we are struggling to do our best but I know my own attempts are far below par and that my children need to return fully to education before irreparable damage is done.