

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i'r [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar gyfer yr ymchwiliad: [A oes gan blant a phobl ifanc anabl fynediad cyfartal at addysg a gofal plant?](#)

This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) for the inquiry: [Do disabled children and young people have equal access to education and childcare?](#)

AEC 24

Ymateb gan:

Response from: Swansea Bay University Health Board - Occupational Therapy

Are disabled and neurodivergent children and young people excluded from any part of their education because of their disability or because they are neurodivergent?

Yes. Those that have an obvious physical and/ or learning disability often have great support within a special school environment. Schools do differentiate to meet their needs. This is however school dependent. CYP that attend mainstream school often have less support. Teaching staff have varying knowledge and experience and this affects their ability and confidence to support inclusivity with all activities.

CYP that are neurodiverse often do not have obvious disabilities. These may include CYP with Sensory processing difficulties, ADHD, ASD. These CYP are VERY often not understood and not supported. I.E- A YP with Tactile defensiveness is really negatively affected by having to wear school uniforms but this is not differentiated. A CYP that has vestibular differences and seeks movement is often given a label of 'bad behaviour' because they can't stop fidgeting. Often CYP with low arousal tend to not engage in class and these CYP are over looked.

Have disabled and neurodivergent children and young people been discriminated against because of their disability or because they are neurodivergent?

Yes- These CYP are often excluded from school trips and extra curricular activities because of 'bad behaviour' when they are just fidgety, or have more difficulty with transitions. This really affects their social interactions with their peers and makes them feel outcast and different. This affects their self-esteem and causes them to disengage with education. These are other very intelligent CYP, if teaching staff could understand and change their management of these CYP in the classroom slightly.

What impact do these issues have on disabled and neurodivergent children and young people's mental health and wellbeing and how well they do at school or nursery?

Lack of knowledge and experience of staff impact on the way CYP are understood and managed. This affects their participation within education and they dis engage because they do not have the right support. CYP often mask their differences as it is so important to fit in when they transition to comprehensive schools. This then really affects their self-esteem. Causing anxiety and depression and often results in exclusion because of behavioural difficulties. Often a mainstream school have 'special needs support' but YP do not want to go for support as they are highlighted by their peers as 'special/ different'.

The learning can be different- it can be made accessible. A CYP with Dyspraxia, Dyslexia etc- could access learning much better if it was digital- but unfortunately many schools do not offer this- It is one way for all and CYP do not all learn the same way. The new National Curriculum for Wales is supposed to be more person centred but schools are not designing their curriculum to suit all

What are the barriers for schools and childcare providers in providing inclusive and accessible education?

Time, knowledge, experience, working collaboratively with Health, No extra resource for health for ALN reform.

Organisation for some, navigating school settings, complex time tables, mixed ability classes, large super school sizes, homework demands, lunch time social demands, sensory overload within school (canteen with number of pupils, smells, noise etc), Teachers often have too many demands- lack of LSA . Environments are too busy and demanding. Limited quiet spaces and areas to have space. YP often need to travel large spaces during the day and they are often fatigued. Many area are not ramped so CYP have to access through different entrances. School toilet do not have adequate facilities, often smell bad and YP vape in toilets. Do all CYP need to take part in school concerts if it is too difficult for them to engage?

How well do schools or childcare providers talk to disabled and neurodivergent children and young people, and their families and keep them informed or include them in decisions and choices?

Not well at all. Often teachers have very limited knowledge and do not understand how CYP need to be supported. Parents are very frustrated that they CYP is not supported but school often do not listen.

Do disabled and neurodivergent children and young people and their families feel they get the same choices as other children, young people and their families?

No

Is there good provision for different types of disability?

No. Not for neurodiverse CYP. They are often seen as being 'badly behaved' but it is the environment, change in routines, change in teaching staff, attitudes and expectations of teaching staff that cause the CYP to react in ways that are not usual for them.