

Welsh Government Draft Budget 2025-26

Email received from an individual

I am writing to you in your capacity as Chair of the Children, Young People, and Education committee to ask for your support to advocate for the Welsh Government to prioritise families in its upcoming budget by introducing a comparable childcare offer to that in England.

You may have seen that it was announced recently that Birth Rates have fallen significantly in 2023, And that Wales received the largest declines in Total Fertility Rate compared with 2022.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/livebirths/bulletins/birthsummarytablesenglandandwales/2023>.

Although we both now earn wages that are just above average, due to increased interest rates on our mortgage, and not having family nearby, having a child in Wales would currently be completely out of reach financially due to the lack of childcare support. In England, parents are eligible for 15 hours of free childcare from when your child is 9 months old and this increases to 30 hours when they turn 3, whereas in Wales there is no support in our postcode until a child turns 3 years old. With childcare costs being so high we would be looking at nearly 16k per year on childcare, or around 1,300 per month, which is completely unattainable for us- whereas in England we would be paying just over half of this. Currently selling our home we worked so hard to save for as first time buyers and leaving our home nation of Wales to relocate to England would be the only way for us to afford a child. Alongside wider cost of living pressures and additional taxation on many young people through student loans, we really emphasise with the decreased birth rate in our nation, and remaining child free is the most likely option we will have to take.

We also note that, despite living in a property that is significantly under the average house price in XXXXXXX, we are not eligible for any additional childcare support via Flying Start, so this initiative does seem like a bit of postcode lottery.

While we were pleased to see the change of government in Westminster this year, we hoped that it would lead to a comparable childcare offer being introduced in Wales but so far the Welsh Government has not indicated this as a priority. Now that the UK government has announced an additional £1.7bn through the Autumn budget, I really hope this will now be reconsidered. Would you please raise this issue in Committee and advocate for the introduction of a childcare offer in Wales comparable to that in place across the border, through the December budget?

This issue has also been highlighted recently in media coverage
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cm27l7g8g39o>.

I would really appreciate your consideration of this issue of cross border fairness that is impacting families and hope that you would consider advocating for the many parents in Wales not currently receiving support, and by extension for those of us who would love to have children but simply can't afford to while living in our home of Wales.

