

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru	National Assembly for Wales
Pwyllgor yr Economi, Seilwaith a Sgiliau	Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee
Blaenoriaethau ar gyfer Pwyllgor yr Economi, Seilwaith a Sgiliau	Priorities for the Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee
EIS 09 PACEY Cymru	EIS 09 PACEY Cymru

The National Assembly for Wales' new Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee was established in June 2016.

Our remit is to examine legislation and hold the Welsh Government to account by scrutinising expenditure, administration and policy matters, encompassing (but not restricted to): economic development; transport; infrastructure; employment; skills; and research and development, including technology and science.

I am writing to individuals and organisations with an interest in our areas of work to ask you what issues you think we should look at during the Fifth Assembly (2016-2021). On no more than two sides of A4, please set out what you think should be priority areas for the committee, including whether there is any work done by previous committees of the Assembly that you think we should review or follow up. We will be planning our work programme in Autumn 2016 so we are asking for all suggestions to reach us by **1 September 2016**.

Please contact us by emailing SeneddEIS@assembly.wales

PACEY Cymru are grateful for the opportunity to submit information to support work around key priorities for this committee.

1. Tax Free Childcare

PACEY Cymru believe that the committee has a role to play in ensuring how tax free childcare is supported, promoted and implemented in Wales. Although this is a responsibility of the non-devolved UK government the implications, promotion and guidance for this need to be considered by Welsh Government with support from the childcare sector and this is a key time for this to be considered.

2. Business Sustainability

PACEY Cymru strongly believes there needs to be a joined up approach between this committee and the Children, Young People and Education committee on issues related to business sustainability in childcare settings. PACEY Cymru have also provided a response to this committee on their priorities for the fifth term 2016-2021.

Childcare and play should be seen as being an employment sector in its own right, but also has an important role to play in ensuring the provision of affordable, accessible and quality childcare to meet demand enabling parents to attend training and work. There are also challenges in ensuring business sustainability in rural and deprived areas. PACEY Cymru are part of the Cwlwm consortium, funded by Welsh Government, that support in this area and further information can be shared on request.

PACEY Cymru also believe that there is still considerable work to be done on promoting types of childcare and the importance of choosing quality childcare to parents.

Issues around business sustainability including access to funding for Welsh Government programmes, consistency of funding formula and consideration of a childcare on domestic premises category of registration which is likely to impact on

local planning. Further information on these issues is available on request form PACEY Cymru.

3. Planning

Following work on the changes to childcare regulation in Wales in early 2016 PACEY Cymru are aware of inconsistencies still arising on a local level in relation to local planning issues. This is specifically in relation to processes related to planning advice, applications, charges and fees for childminding provision. Further clarity and national guidance on this would be welcomed by the sector.

4. Skills

As 'Skills' fall within the remit of this committee PACEY Cymru would like to highlight the importance of continued support of qualifications including work-based training within the childcare and play sector. The launch of Progress for Success is a huge step forward and will be well received, giving over 25's in Wales access to funded qualifications. Research has shown links between higher levels of qualified staff and quality of provision. As this programme is supported by EU funding PACEY Cymru calls on this committee to support the provision of guarantees for continued funding of this key priority given the uncertainty around Brexit.

Following the move by CSSIW to online submission of Self Assessment of Service information a clearer picture is emerging around the low level of IT skills and confidence in using these by approximately 25% of the sector. This skills gap is a particular issue in an increasingly growing, digital world and could impact on business sustainability if not addressed. PACEY Cymru would like to see increased access and funded support around the development of IT skills for registered childcare services, including self-employed childminders.

The priority of development of digital literacy for children in Wales can only be achieved by ensuring that those caring for and educating, young children have appropriate skills, understanding and confidence themselves to take this forward.

5. Deprivation

It is PACEY Cymru's understanding that this committee would scrutinise or have an interest in Welsh Government anti-poverty initiatives including Communities first and PaCE (Parents, Childcare and Employment) programme that link to economic development. It is important to again ensure joint working to consider elements of these programmes that may cross with priorities of other departments/committees including childcare and education.

As an example, from a childcare perspective, the Flying Start programme in Wales has embedded the need for quality and development of childcare within its guidance and annexes. Some other initiatives, where childcare is a smaller element and not their main area of activity (like PaCE), may not have the same knowledge or expertise on what quality looks like when commissioning ad hoc childcare. Further work needs to be carried out in this area to ensure a joined up approach that also supports business sustainability.

6. About PACEY Cymru

PACEY is the Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years. Formed in 1977, we are a charity dedicated to supporting childcare professionals to deliver high quality care and early learning for children. We provide expert support, training and resources to childcare professionals across England and Wales and offer advice and peer support through our nationwide network of PACEY local groups. We represent the views and experiences of practitioners to government, regulators and decision makers and champion their vital role in helping children get the best start in life.

PACEY Cymru is a valuable component of PACEY providing a dedicated service in Wales for childcare and early years professionals and key partners. PACEY Cymru receives funding from the Welsh Government to support our work in Wales.

For further information please contact;

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