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Ymchwiliad i'r Adolygiad Blaenoriaethau ar gyfer y Pwyllgor Iechyd, Gofal
Cymdeithasol a Chwaraeon

Inquiry into the Priorities for the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee

Ymateb gan: Cŵn Tywys Cymru

Response from: Guide Dogs Cymru

[Via email]

Priorities for Health, Social Care & Sport Committee Consultation

Reablement and habilitation services for blind and partially sighted people in Wales

We have serious concerns about the decline in reablement and habilitation services for blind and partially sighted people in Wales.

The Welsh Government recognises more needs to be done and we are encouraged by references included in their recently published Codes of Practice in relation to the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act and other matters. It was particularly helpful to see the references to habilitation in paragraphs 185-186 in the Part 2 Code and the reference to free reablement services for longer for people with visual impairment in paragraph 5.12 of the Part 4&5 Code.

We strongly recommend that the Committee should look at the state of reablement and habilitation services for blind and partially sighted people in Wales and assess whether Welsh Local Authorities are meeting the requirements of the new Codes of Practice.

With regard to children's services Guide Dogs Cymru recently published the attached Research Study of Habilitation Services for Children and Young People with a Vision Impairment in Wales. As a result of the report Guide Dogs Cymru is calling for:

1. Local authorities to raise the importance of habilitation services for children and young people with a visual impairment, and be reminded of their responsibilities in relation to Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act.
2. For joined up working between health, education and social services to ensure a prompt and effective referral pathway to habilitation services (which is a requirement of the All-Wales Integrated Pathway for Children and young People (0-25 years) with Vision Impairment, and their Families).
3. For all local authorities to have access to a habilitation specialist. Welsh Local Authorities should be working towards 1 qualified habilitation specialist per 100 children and young people with a visual impairment.
4. For all local authorities (education and social services) to use the NatSIP Eligibility Framework for Scoring Support Levels when

delivering services to children and young people with a visual impairment and their families.

5. In addition to this, we would suggest that Local Authorities are required to evaluate the numbers of qualified staff needed to ensure that the identified provision is available to the CYP who require it – this includes both qualified teachers of the visually impaired (QTVIs) and habilitation staff.

If the Committee wants to improve health and well-being of a particularly vulnerable cohort of the Welsh population they will examine this issue and include it in the Forward Work Programme.

Guide Dogs Cymru