

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales  
Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg | Children, Young People and  
Education Committee

Blaenoriaethau ar gyfer y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg |  
Priorities for the Children, Young People and Education Committee

CYPE 31

Ymateb gan : Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs

Response from : Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs

**Question 1** – Within the remit set out above: what do you consider to be the priorities or issues that the Children, Young People and Education Committee should consider during the Fifth Assembly?

- 1. Funding to sustain current and create, where needed, new childcare provision. In particular, continuation of the Out of School Childcare Grant post April 2017. This would also allow continued support to help childcare clubs become registered to support quality, affordability and sustainability.**
- 2. Improved access to childcare for families:**
  - i) in deprived communities and areas of high unemployment to enable people to take up training/returning to work.** Out of school Childcare Clubs are particularly important for lone parent/low income families as they provide convenient, affordable, childcare, enabling parents to work and train, driving economic growth, tackling poverty and reducing inequalities in communities. In addition, attending a high quality childcare setting has a significant influence on a child's development, especially those children who come from disadvantaged backgrounds.
  - ii) for children with additional needs to access childcare and play opportunities.**
- 3. Continued availability of Playwork training for staff in childcare settings (both registered and unregistered).**
- 4. Support for the transitional stage between primary and secondary school by offering childcare for older children.**

Across Wales, there is unmet demand for childcare for secondary school children and this remains a major challenge for parents. Resources to develop childcare for children attending secondary schools are needed.

5. **Continued drive on healthy eating and lifestyles.** This includes investment into healthy lifestyle schemes and raising corporate responsibility to subsidise healthy food, enabling less well off families to eat more healthily, even if this means increasing the cost of the less healthy options.

**Question 2** – From the list of priorities or issues you have identified, what do you consider to be the key areas that should be considered during the next 12 months (please identify up to three areas or issues)? Please outline why these should be considered as key priorities.

**Funding to sustain current and create, where needed, new childcare provision. In particular, continuation of the Out of School Childcare Grant post April 2017. This would also allow continued support to help childcare clubs become registered to support quality, affordability and sustainability.**

The provision of funding through the Out of School Childcare Grant has seen the sector develop and grow over the last seven years, enabling parents and carers to return to work, extend working hours or return to training knowing their children are cared for in quality Out of School Childcare Clubs. The provision of the grant has also enabled the support of the childcare sector in what has been both a difficult financial period and a period of change. Ideally continued support via this grant should be on a **three year cycle** to enable a structured plan to be developed to maximise the use of this grant fund and enable it to maintain the sustainability of the current childcare settings and enable development where gaps have been identified in the Childcare Sufficiency Audits. Providing parents and carers with choice and flexibility in quality Out of School childcare settings and quality and safe play and learning opportunities for children.

This would also allow continued support to ensure all childcare clubs become registered. Currently there are 243 unregistered and 38 non-registerable out of school settings across Wales (18% of all clubs). Such clubs are currently unable to access Playwork Apprenticeships and parents using them will not be able to access Tax Free Childcare or Working Tax/Universal Credits, which means affordability (and sustainability) and quality, is compromised. Ongoing support is required to encourage and provide practical help to register with CSSIW. A mechanism to set standards within non-registered settings would also drive quality in the transition period.

Additionally continuation of the Children and Families Delivery Grant for a further **3 year** term, to allow the **CWLWM** consortium to build on the excellent strategic work done so far. **Cwlwm**, brings together the five leading childcare organisations in Wales, to deliver a bilingual

integrated service that ensures the best possible outcomes for children and families across Wales, within the Welsh Government's 'whole-system' approach.

**Improved access to childcare for families in deprived communities and areas of high unemployment to enable people to take up training/returning to work**

Out of School Childcare Clubs are particularly important for lone parent/low income families as they provide convenient, affordable, childcare, enabling parents to work and train, driving economic growth, tackling poverty and reducing inequalities in communities. In addition, attending a high quality childcare setting has a significant influence on a child's development, especially those children who come from disadvantaged backgrounds. However, it is a struggle to open and maintain clubs in disadvantaged areas as they need to be affordable to families in the community and therefore need more resources and support from umbrella organisations to build and maintain management capacity.

In 2010/11, Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs distributed £52,987 in 'Assisted Places' grants in Anglesey, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouth, Newport and Wrexham (Community Focussed Schools, Cymorth, RSG and Childcare Core grants). The 'Assisted Places' grant scheme aims to enable children from families in need of financial support to attend an out of school childcare club so that their parents/carers can continue or return to work or training, for respite care, social inclusion or other reasons. The grant is paid directly to the childcare club to subsidise fees. Financial need from parents and to ensure it does not replace childcare assistance of WTC is evidenced.

The Assisted Places grant scheme also works to sustain childcare clubs - particularly in disadvantaged areas - as attendance figures and income are increased for the club and fees are subsidised for the low income families who would otherwise be unable to attend (or would have to reduce the number of sessions).

In 2016/17, we only have Assisted Places grant schemes in Newport and Gwynedd and any support provided by local authorities for low income families is not consistent across Wales.

**More funding for children with additional needs to access childcare and play opportunities.**

If children with additional needs need additional support to access a childcare setting, through a one to one worker, the cost often has to be met by childcare providers, who often struggle to remain sustainable anyway, or the child is unable to attend.

In 2010/11, Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs distributed £60,351.51 in Conwy, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Newport, Pembrokeshire, Torfaen and Wrexham in 'Extra Hands' grants (Community Focussed Schools, Cymorth, Carers' grants). These support children with additional needs and their families who would otherwise be unable to attend club. It also supports the sustainability of clubs, which struggle financially to employ additional one to one staff. The 'Extra Hands' grant is paid directly to the club to pay for a one to one support worker for the specific child.

The grants allowed children with additional needs to attend clubs of their choice and within their communities and are particularly important for clubs set up specifically to support children with additional needs.

However in 2016/17, we now only have funding from Newport, Conwy and Gwynedd. There are some local authority schemes, but there is not a consistent level of support across Wales and information can sometimes be difficult to access. There should be sufficient resources in place to ensure that families can access quality childcare across Wales, regardless of any additional needs.

### **Continued availability of Playwork training for staff in childcare settings (both registered and unregistered)**

The provision of work-based learning in the sector is fundamental to ensuring that quality and standards are not purely maintained but also improve. Changes in childcare legislation and registration of childcare settings mean that childcare settings will need to access Playwork training in order to obtain and keep their registration with Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW). Currently there is limited Playwork training available for unregistered settings, so unless childcare settings can fund training themselves, Out Of School Childcare settings have limited or no access to training. Childcare settings are able to access Welsh government training through programmes such as WBL Apprenticeships and Progress for Success. These programmes of learning have eligibility requirements which mean a lot of Out of School Childcare settings can not access these programmes. Apprentices must be 16-24 year olds and some restrictions apply as to how long they have been in post. Progress for Success is for 25+ but learners have to be working 16 hours and be in a registered setting. This means that the nature of Out of School Childcare Clubs puts Playworkers at a disadvantage and unable to access these programmes, leaving them with no access to the qualifications they need in order to register their setting. The new government Tax Free Childcare scheme is only accessible to settings registered with CSSIW therefore putting the sustainability of

unregistered settings at risk if they are unable to access these schemes. Post exiting Europe, we are uncertain of the impact on the work based learning.

**Support the transitional stage between primary and secondary school by offering childcare for older children.**

Across Wales, there is unmet demand for childcare for secondary school children (particularly years 7 and 8) and this remains a major challenge for parents. Resources to develop childcare for children attending secondary schools are needed. Families have been dependant on using childcare services within their local primary schools and then have no continuity of the care service when their 11 year old child enters secondary school. The new regulations for CSSIW now mean that staff need to be appropriately qualified in Playwork when caring for children up to 12 years and so a lack of qualified staff will be a barrier to setting up and registering services for this age group.