

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 36

Ymateb gan : ProMo-Cymru

Response from : ProMo-Cymru

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?

Background and Information about ProMo-Cymru

Rights based, and with over 30 years experience in the facilitation of coproduction and user engagement through digital technology and multiple remote channels, ProMo - Cymru, <http://www.promo.cymru/> has been successful in working with a number of partners and clients to deliver a range of digital information, advice and advocacy services.

Partnerships with Welsh Government include:

- FamilyPoint Cymru - <https://familypoint.cymru/> bilingual, information, advice and advocacy service for families most in need of financial and practical support
- Meic - <https://www.meiccymru.org/> bilingual, free and confidential information, advice and advocacy to children and young people up to the age of 25 in Wales

Both are:

- High volume, low cost information and assistance services to users and professionals delivered by a team of experienced and qualified staff
- Low threshold, multi-channel with no physical constraints to access - through: webchat, landline, mobile phone, text, email, available up to 16 hours per day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year
- Coproduced with service user and professional engagement through user-generated content / news, problem shared, invitation to and sharing of comment
- Embedded in Welsh Government policy and plans eg: - Social Services and Well-Being (Part 10 Advocacy, and Part 2: General: early intervention / prevention - Information Advice Assistance

(IAA)), Tackling Poverty and Financial Inclusion, Future Generations

- (Brief) Interventions including: i) information and assistance ii) signposting, iii) transfer options if busy / unavailable, iv) direct representation, v) self help, vi) referral to relevant agency

Response to Q.1:

ProMo-Cymru suggests that the Committee should be guided by the UNCRC and the human rights values and requirements embedded in the legal framework of devolved law-making and governance.

We think this will support the Committee in assisting decision-making with regard to what work it undertakes as well as the approach to any work undertaken.

ProMo-Cymru welcomes and supports the stated commitment that Committees' respective remits are not prescriptive or exclusive, that more than one Committee may properly involve itself in an issue, and that communication and coordination between Committee chairs is to be encouraged. This is very important because the human rights of children and the requirements of the UNCRC encompass many matters falling within the remit of each and all of the other policy and legislation committees.

We suggest the Committee should take every opportunity to consider how effectively Welsh Government and the public bodies in relation to which it exercises functions are absorbing children's rights in their work. The Welsh Government in exercise of all its functions and all persons exercising functions under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 in relation to children are under a duty to have due regard to the requirements of the UNCRC whenever they exercise those functions.

From recent and various sources and reports, ProMo-Cymru notes the following as key themes and issues for the Committee to consider the need to:

1. Promote children and young people's mental health and well-being.
2. Reduce and alleviate child poverty.
3. Identify and address the social determinants of inequalities in health.
4. Demonstrate how public bodies are embedding children's rights in practice.

5. Adopt clear, evidenced, child rights sensitive budgeting processes.
6. Reform the office of the Children’s Commissioner for Wales.
7. Promotion of child rights compliance by private organisations and the business sector.
8. Combat ageism against children and challenge the negative portrayal of children and young people.
9. Ensure active and meaningful participation by children and young people in decisions affecting them, and through communication platforms that are accessible to them
10. In the context of the Donaldson review, consider the need for:
 - a. mandatory age and developmentally sensitive rights and citizenship education in schools curricula from an early age
 - b. mandatory training for teachers and other school staff on the UNCRC and human rights of children and young people
 - c. approaches which nurture conflict-resolution skills, resilience, tolerance and respect for human rights and diversity
 - d. child-rights sensitive curriculum on sexual and reproductive health, and relationships
11. Abolish the defence of reasonable chastisement.
12. Understand and act on the experiences of and service responses to children and young people.

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.

On the basis of the evidence from FamilyPoint Cymru and Meic, outlined below, the key priorities suggested by ProMo-Cymru for the Committee are as follows:

1. Ensure active and meaningful participation by children and young people in decisions affecting them, and through information and communication platforms that are accessible to them. In this context develop a coherent and joined up

information strategy for Children and Young people with leadership and links between the National and Local levels which is currently non-existent. A position paper will be soon available from the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (which Wales is a member). Once available will be forwarded to this committee.

2. In the context of the Donaldson review, consider the need for:
 - mandatory age and developmentally sensitive rights and citizenship education in schools curricula from an early age
 - mandatory training for teachers and other school staff on the UNCRC and human rights of children and young people
 - approaches which nurture conflict-resolution skills, resilience, tolerance and respect for human rights and diversity
 - child-rights sensitive curriculum on sexual and reproductive health, and relationships
3. Promote children and young people’s mental health and well-being.

Headline figures from Meic and FamilyPoint Cymru:

	Meic	FamilyPoint Cymru
Web sessions per quarter	ca. 4000	current peak at ca. 12.5K
Facebook reach per quarter	ca. 124K	current peak at ca. 134K
Contacts to helpline (all platforms) per quarter	ca. 1200	ca. 300
Of which % calls (remainder = IM / text / email)	ca. 67%	ca. 75%
Top 4 issues	Relationships 23%	Childcare 27%
	Mental health 10%	Parenting 18%
	Rights 7%	Housing 13%
	Physical health 7%	Health 9%

Sample snapshot of FamilyPoint Cymru and Meic cases:

School issue - A parent contacted the helpline to ask for us to help her daughter who was aged 8. Her daughter had previously been doing well in school but had recently been moved onto a different table to a group of rowdy boys, and away from her friends for Maths. The Helpline Adviser Advocate (HAA) spoke to the child who confirmed that she was very unhappy in school and felt that the boys were disrupting her and she felt lonely being away from her friends. She said that her wish was to be returned back to her old table as

soon as possible. The parent had contacted the school to raise concerns but not action had been taken. The HAA agreed to contact the school and spoke to the head teacher. They explained how unhappy the young person was, how she felt it was affecting her learning and her wish to be moved. The head teacher was reluctant to agree but said they would consider the young girl's request. The HAA feedback to the child and parent. An email was received several days later from the parent stating that her daughter had been moved back to her old table and that she was delighted. She praised the HAA and the service and said her daughter was so much happier since the move.

Autism issue - Parent of YP wanted me to contact OneFamilyFoundation regarding the progress of a grant application that he had made on behalf of his stepson. His stepson is 13 and autistic. The organisation contacted the parents 8 weeks ago. They sent them information about applying for grants. Since then, the stepdad has had intermittent phone contact with the organisation but been told that there is a holdup in processing the grant application as the bank account that the government set up for his stepson is not able to be accessed as they don't have the policy number. The last contact they had was 2 weeks ago. He also wanted information about suitable activities/organisations which could support his son. His son is autistic. He had also e-mailed us 20 minutes previously regarding this. I explained to the service user that I could contact OneFamilyFoundation on his behalf. He was happy for me to do this and gave me all the pertinent details. I told him that once I had done this I would contact him with an update. I also told him that I would send him any information pertinent to his second issue by e-mail. He said he would prefer this as it would save him writing it down and he'd be able to read over it.

Social media issue - A young person contacted the helpline via instant message in a very distressed state. They said they had sent compromising images to a person over social media who was now asking them to send more, stating that if she didn't comply she would make their images public. The HAA spent a long time discussing possible options and outcomes although the young person was very nervous to take any action in case their pictures were made public. The HAA explored what might happen if they didn't tell anyone what was happening. Eventually the young person agreed to contact CEOP to report the situation. The HAA talked them through the process and remained on line with them while they did this. They also discussed the option of the young person telling their parents so that they could support them and take further action if needed. They agreed to do this and thanked the HAA for their help.

Mental health issue - Mother of 11 yr old girl from Neath wanting to access counselling for daughter. Explored what she had already tried.

She had been to GP, school and had referrals to CAMHS but service had been denied. Mother said daughter had not had an assessment and she disagreed with their findings. Discussed options of contacting another GP, challenging decision with GP practice manager, private counselling and also provided with contact details for Young Minds parent helpline - who offer free, confidential online and telephone support, including information and advice, to any adult worried about the emotional problems, behaviour or mental health of a child or young person up to the age of 25. Parent heard of FP via leaflet in GP surgery

Child in need - A young person contacted the helpline on behalf of a friend who was being the process of being assessed for Autism. They didn't know how to support their friend and what help or information might be available. The HAA asked if the friend would speak with the, which they agreed to. This young person confirmed the situation and said they felt they needed support from someone through the assessment process. The young person met the criteria for face to face advocacy so the HAA provided details for NYAS. The young person said they felt happy to contact the service themselves to ask for support.

Childcare issue - Parent began by saying they wanted to find out about childminding, but clearly needed to talk about her disappointment with childminder (no longer taking her daughter to playgroup sessions and delayed in telling her that she thinks her daughter is anxious), and concerns about her child being nervous in group settings. Explored options with parent, who is beginning to feel that she and her child would probably both benefit from her giving up her current job and retraining as a childminder. Sent links to Young Minds (section for parents worried about their child/ren's anxiety), and training/registering to become a child-minder. She thanked me for my help.

Unemployment / benefits issue - The caller mentioned they had recently lost their job, both themselves and husband had applied for income based support initially due to National Insurance Contributions, also child benefit and other entitlements. The caller was looking to see during the process of waiting for benefits, and also potentially what other support and help may be available in the meantime whilst awaiting these applications to progress. We looked at ideas such as crisis loans, also due to the family situation whether there may be a more speedy way of access support. Details of the DWP Benefits line, also Citizens Advice Bureau and The local family information service passed onto the caller for further specialist help and advice in relation to possible ideas and solutions.