

A Vision for Looked after Children's Care in Wales 2016-2020

In preparation for the National Assembly Election Campaigns, a working group of charities has been established to promote the need for a new 'Vision' for looked after children and care leavers in Wales.

Working closely with Assembly Members, The Children's Commissioner for Wales, ADSS Cymru and WLGA, we will establish a national debate on the opportunities and challenges for children and young people who are looked after in Wales.

We will:

- Engage with politicians and professionals to set the context, the challenges and the opportunities for change
- Give care experienced children and young people a stronger voice, by bringing together a range of perspectives from children and young people who have been in or left care to ensure their experiences inform positive change
- Campaign for improvements which enable more children and young people to enjoy stable and secure placements
- Promote ambitious outcomes for Care Leavers in Wales that ensure they are able to reach their potential

What we are calling for:

- **A rights-based approach:** all policy and legislation relating to looked after children and care leavers should **enable them to fully realise their rights** under the UNCRC.
- **Focus on outcomes:** a vision for looked after children should promote the **positive role of the care system and focus on outcomes all partners from across the service spectrum must work towards and be accountable for**. It is vital we embed an outcomes-focused approach to care planning for looked after children so that we are focused on the difference we are trying to make and not simply processes and legal provision. To achieve this every part of the state and its services should take an active **responsibility to behave as a good corporate parent at strategic, operational and individual levels**.
- **Embedding emotional well-being into the care system:** We should start with emotional well-being if we are to create a care system which delivers positive outcomes for looked after children and care leavers. This means clearly **identifying emotional well-being as a strategic priority within the care system** and ensuring that delivery is **consistently monitored and tracked**. It means equipping foster carers, and other carers with the training, skills and tools to support the often complex needs of the children and young people in their care.

- **Improving permanence and stability:** Too many children in Wales experience placement breakdown and multiple moves, which can impact on their emotional wellbeing and their educational outcomes. Work needs to be undertaken to **better understand the placement needs of the Welsh looked after population**, with training and support provided to encourage **the identification of new carers** able to accommodate the needs of children in the care system
- **Hearing the voice of looked after children and care leavers:** Every child and young person in care has their own individual idea of what contributes to their well-being and what kind of support will best help them achieve it. Social workers, and carers and other professionals should support children to **describe what is important to their well-being and how carers and professionals can help**. Doing so can empower children and young people to feel more “in charge” of their own well-being and resilience. Looked after children and care leavers should be viewed as experts on the care system and there should be effective mechanisms for **consulting them about the services they receive and the changes they wish to see**.
- **Appropriate and stable accommodation for care leavers:** Some of our most vulnerable care leavers, including those who have not enjoyed a stable long term foster placement and who often have more complex needs will not benefit from the When I Am Ready provisions. We need to develop **appropriate accommodation offers** including supported accommodation to ensure that these care leavers are **safe, and can also benefit from the stability that will give them the best chance to realise their potential and enjoy good well-being outcomes**.

Activity

The working group will meet on a monthly basis to consider our priorities and programme of work. Key to success of our work will be continued engagement with ADSS Cymru, WLGA and the wider Children’s sector in Wales.

The Children’s Commissioner will be kept informed of our work and will act as an observer in her capacity as an independent champion for children.

Our programme of work commenced in Foster Care Fortnight with a Breakfast Seminar on June 10th, in the National Assembly, supported by a cross party group of Assembly Members. The seminar set the context around children’s social care and challenged the audience to begin to consider what an appropriate vision will be for children’s social care from 2016-10.

A follow up seminar will be delivered in Care Leavers Fortnight in October.

Gweledigaeth ar gyfer Gofal Plant sy'n Derbyngofal yng Nghymru 2016-2020

Wrth baratoi ar gyfer ymgyrchoedd Etholiad y Cynulliad Cenedlaethol, sefydlwyd gweithgor o elusennau i hyrwyddo'r angen am 'Weledigaeth' newydd ar gyfer plant sy'n derbyn gofal a'r rhai sy'n gadael gofal yng Nghymru.

Dylai'r weledigaeth hyrwyddo rôl gadarnhaol y system ofal a'r canlyniadau y mae'n rhaid i bob partner weithio tuag atynt. Trwy gydweithio'n agos ag Aelodau'r Cynulliad, Comisiynydd Plant Cymru, ADSS Cymru a Chymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru (CLILC), byddwn yn sefydlu trafodaeth genedlaethol am y cyfleoedd a'r heriau i blant a phobl ifanc sy'n derbyn gofal yng Nghymru.

Byddwn yn:

- Ymgysylltu â gwleidyddion a gweithwyr proffesiynol i osod y cyd-destun, yr heriau a'r cyfleoedd ar gyfer newid.
- Rhoi llais cryfach i blant a phobl ifanc sydd wedi cael profiad o ofal, trwy ddod ag ystod o safbwyntiau ynghyd gan blant a phobl ifanc sydd wedi derbyn gofal neu wedi gadael gofal, er mwyn sicrhau bod eu profiadau'n llywio newid cadarnhaol.
- Ymgyrchu ar gyfer gwelliannau sy'n galluogi mwy o blant a phobl ifanc i fwynhau lleoliadau sefydlog a sicr.
- Hyrwyddo canlyniadau uchelgeisiol i'r rhai sy'n gadael gofal yng Nghymru, sy'n sicrhau y gallant wireddu eu potensial.

Am beth rydym ni'n galw:

- **Dull gweithredu seiliedig ar hawliau:** dylai pob polisi a deddfwriaeth sy'n ymwneud â phlant sy'n derbyn gofal a rhai sy'n gadael gofal **eu galluogi i wireddu eu hawliau'n llawn** o dan CCUHP.
- **Ffocws ar ganlyniadau:** dylai gweledigaeth ar gyfer plant sy'n derbyn gofal hybu **rôl gadarnhaol y system ofal a chanolbwyntio ar ganlyniadau y mae rhaid i bob partner ar draws y sbectrwm o wasanaethau weithio tuag atynt a bod yn atebol yn eu cylch**. Mae'n hanfodol ein bod yn gwreiddio dull seiliedig ar ganlyniadau wrth gynllunio gofal ar gyfer plant sy'n derbyn gofal, fel ein bod yn canolbwyntio ar y gwahaniaeth rydym ni'n ceisio'i wneud yn hytrach na phrosesau a darpariaeth gyfreithiol yn unig. Er mwyn cyflawni hyn, dylai pob rhan o'r wladwriaeth a'i gwasanaethau dderbyn **cyfrifoldeb gweithredol i ymddwyn fel rhiant corfforaethol da ar lefel strategol, weithredol ac unigol**.
- **Gwreiddio llesiant emosiynol yn y system ofal:** Dylem ni gychwyn gyda llesiant emosiynol os ydym am greu system ofal sy'n cyflawni canlyniadau cadarnhaol i blant sy'n derbyn gofal a rhai sy'n gadael gofal. Mae hyn yn golygu **nodi llesiant emosiynol yn glir fel blaenoriaeth strategol yn y system ofal** a sicrhau bod y cyflawni'n cael **ei fonitro a'i olrhain yn gyson**. Mae'n golygu sicrhau bod gan ofalwyr maeth, a gofalwyr eraill, yr hyfforddiant, y sgiliau a'r offer i gefnogi anghenion y plant a'r bobl ifanc sydd yn eu gofal, anghenion sy'n aml yn gymhleth.

- **Gwella parhad a sefydlogrwydd:** Mae gormod o blant yng Nghymru yn profi lleoliad yn methu a symud sawl tro, a gall hynny effeithio ar eu llesiant emosiynol a'u canlyniadau addysgol. Mae angen gwneud gwaith i **ddeall yn well anghenion lleoli poblogaeth Cymru sy'n derbyn gofal**, a darparu hyfforddiant a chefnogaeth i annog **canfod gofalwyr newydd** sy'n gallu darparu ar gyfer anghenion plant sydd yn y system ofal.
- **Clywed llais plant sy'n derbyn gofal a'r rhai sy'n gadael gofal:** Mae gan bob plentyn a pherson ifanc sydd mewn gofal eu syniad unigol eu hunain o ran beth sy'n cyfrannu at eu llesiant a pha fath o gefnogaeth fydd yn eu helpu orau i gyflawni hynny. Dylai gweithwyr cymdeithasol, gofalwyr a gweithwyr proffesiynol eraill gefnogi plant i **ddisgrifio beth sy'n bwysig i'w llesiant a sut gall gofalwyr a gweithwyr proffesiynol helpu**. Gall gwneud hynny rymuso plant a phobl ifanc i deimlo bod ganddynt "fwy o reolaeth" ar eu llesiant a'u gwydnwch eu hunain. Dylid ystyried plant sy'n derbyn gofal a'r rhai sy'n gadael gofal fel arbenigwyr ar y system ofal, a dylai fod systemau effeithiol ar gyfer **ymgyngori â nhw ynghylch y gwasanaethau maen nhw'n eu derbyn a'r newidiadau maen nhw'n dymuno eu gweld**.
- **Llety priodol, sefydlog ar gyfer y rhai sy'n gadael gofal:** Ni fydd rhai o'r bobl ifanc mwyaf agored i niwed sy'n gadael gofal, gan gynnwys rhai sydd heb fwynhau lleoliad maeth sefydlog hir dymor, ac sy'n aml ag anghenion mwy cymhleth, yn elwa o ddarpariaethau Pan fydda i'n Barod. Mae angen i ni ddatblygu **cynigion llety priodol** gan gynnwys llety â chymorth i sicrhau bod y bobl hyn sy'n gadael gofal yn **ddiogel, a hefyd yn gallu manteisio ar y sefydlogrwydd a fydd yn rhoi'r cyfle gorau iddynt wireddu eu potensial a mwynhau canlyniadau da o ran llesiant**.

Gweithgaredd

Bydd y gweithgor yn cwrdd yn fisol i ystyried ein blaenoriaethau a'n rhaglen waith. Elfen allweddol o lwyddiant ein gwaith fydd ymgysylltiad parhaus ag ADSS Cymru, WLGA a'r sector Plant ehangach yng Nghymru.

Bydd y Comisiynydd Plant yn cael gwybodaeth reolaidd am ein gwaith a bydd yn gweithredu fel sylwedydd yn rhinwedd ei swydd fel pencampwr annibynnol i blant.

Cychwynnodd ein rhaglen waith yn ystod Pythefnos Gofal Maeth, gyda Seminar Brecwast ar 10fed Mehefin, yn y Cynulliad Cenedlaethol, a gefnogwyd gan grŵp trawsbleidiol o Aelodau Cynulliad. Roedd y seminar yn gosod y cyd-destun o ran gofal cymdeithasol i blant ac yn herio'r gynulleidfa i ddechrau ystyried pa weledigaeth fydd yn briodol ar gyfer gofal cymdeithasol i blant o 2016-10.

Bydd seminar dilynol yn cael ei gynnal yn ystod Pythefnos y Rhai sy'n Gadael Gofal ym mis Hydref.