

Senedd Cymru
Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg

Welsh Parliament
Children, Young People and Education Committee

Ymchwiliad i effaith argyfwng Covid-19
ar blant a phobl ifanc yng Nghymru

Inquiry into the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak on
children and young people in Wales

COV - 16
Ymateb gan: Unigloyn

COV - 16
Response from: Individual

The impact this situation is having on children and family life is appalling.

We have two small children (6 and 3) and both work full time in professional jobs with a substantial amount of technical work and frequent meetings. I also have management responsibilities. Both of us have to be able to work between 9 and 5 in order to be involved in scheduled meetings, respond to queries from colleagues (who may be depending on our answers to complete time-sensitive tasks) and in my case to be available for my team. We have to squeeze homeschooling tasks for our older child in anywhere we can, and have almost no time to play with either of them. We have to give them far more TV time than we would like, because there is no way to get work done otherwise. I see a lot of twee posts about “nobody cares if your child is on your Zoom call” – but actually, if the call is dealing with commercially sensitive information about a household name, my manager does care, and rightly so. Similarly it’s just not possible to focus on a complicated spreadsheet and be present for a 3 year old simultaneously.

I don’t think the government understands what’s being asked of working parents. I think there is an assumption that every child has a mother at home, or at least working only part time – and in 2020 I think that’s incredibly disappointing. I also don’t think there is any understanding of the psychological impact of the total refusal to discuss how long this might go on for. We need to know if this is it for the school year – because if my daughter isn’t going to school until September, I am going to have to take some sort of leave of absence to try to make sure she receives some kind of education. If that’s not possible – and it probably won’t be – I will have to resign; another mother driven out of the workforce by poor government. It is enormously frustrating that the government is demanding so much of families while refusing to give us even information, never mind support. We understand that plans might have to change, but surely it’s possible to tell us if the planning is based on weeks or months? Other countries such as Denmark and Germany have managed to be open with their citizens and treat them like adults.

I'm really disappointed with the Welsh Government, which appears to be being every bit as secretive and paternalistic as its Westminster counterpart. When this is over we will be giving serious thought to moving our family to a country that actually cares about children.