

Senedd Cymru  
Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg

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

COV 74  
Ymateb gan: Unigoln

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Welsh Parliament  
Children, Young People and Education Committee

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

COV 74  
Response from: Individual

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My name is XXXXXX XXXXXXXX and I am 16 yrs old. I'm writing to you today to ask for a clear plan on what will happen for EOTAS children like myself after lockdown. I'm also asking you to relay these plans to all EOTAS parents and carers throughout Wales as soon as possible.

Yet again we feel we've been forgotten about by the education system and everything has to be fought for. During this pandemic there has been no discussion about us EOTAS children whatsoever. What's even more concerning about this is the fact that many EOTAS children are extremely vulnerable and at risk to many dangers. As well as this their families may be vulnerable and at risk as a result of the limited support they are now getting from the people they need it from.

After already enduring many failures by the education system I feel like I am only being failed again. I have worked hard to get back in to some sort of education and I feel as though all of that has been taken away and yet again I'm left with nothing. I think its important for you to understand that i did not ask for these circumstances prior to the lockdown to fall upon me, which will also apply to every other EOTAS child. However we are often treated like we chose this way of education or how to behave, where the system failed to identify our needs. can you assure me that when mainstream schools do go back that you will make it mandatory for every teacher to go through trauma informed training, ACE's training and are aware of the impact that mental illness, ALN and disabilities have on the coping mechanisms in school.

It was very well publicised that the current yr 11 pupils were/are missing out on some important events that all yr 11's are entitled to - the end of year prom, t-shirt signing, parties, saying goodbye, walking the corridors for the last time, and the GCSE's and result day. I want you to understand that this is the reality for many EOTAS children and has been fro years. I never got to attend a prom, get my t-shirt signed, go to leaving parties, walk the corridors one last time or do my GCSE's. I never knew that my last day was my last day, and I was made to feel like I chose this and deserved not to have these things. EOTAS are never made out to be brave because of what they have

been through, never given credit for the perseverance to continue learning despite the failings they've been through and they are never recognised publicly by yourself.

EOTAS children are just as worthy and entitled as any other child to an education and to know what is happening to it. In your much publicised return to school plans, you highlight the important fact that pupils emotional well-being and mental health needs are the top priority. However, as we are already all aware this should have been highlighted a long time ago and the current school system has failed and is continuing to fail many pupils like myself. I would love to see the education system redesigned after this crisis so that no other pupil has to endure the failings that many EOTAS children have.

Here are a few questions I have for you:

1. How are you ensuring that EOTAS children are safe in this lockdown? A phone call once or twice week is all well and good, but there is no face to face value or understanding on whether a child is actually safe during these calls.

2. Will EOTAS return to education at the same time as other children and have priority to accessing tutors and other services required for their education? I assume there will be a rise in children not returning to school, however I feel it is important that the current EOTAS children should be prioritised to accessing these services.

3. What is our equivalent to a school hub? I like many other EOTAS children are classed as a vulnerable child and I am often in need of a safe space out of the house. However I cannot face going back into a school environment and have not be informed of a hub / safe space I can access if needed. I find this extremely concerning considering that we have already endured so much trauma and there are potentially many lives at risk.

4. Will you be able to provide LA tutors to young people who are currently in yr 11 for an extra year. I'm currently in yr 11, and as it stands I will not be provided with a tutor by the LA post 16. My parents can not afford a private tutor and many other families can't. I've been given the option to return to college but this is not a suitable option for myself considering my difficulties. What other options are there for me to continue learning and completing some qualifications in a way that works for me and doesn't compromise my mental and physical health. It has been well publicised that current yr 11 pupils in mainstream education will be given exam results and then able to move on to 6th form or college. What options are there now for EOTAS pupils?

6. Why have you not discussed us yet, are we not important or valuable to society?