

Senedd Cymru
Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg

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

COV 96
Ymateb gan: Ysbyty Arch Noa i Blant Cymru

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 96
Response from: Noah's Ark Children's Hospital for
Wales

We recently participated in your Committee's inquiry into children's rights and are disappointed to see that the findings of the inquiry have still not been concluded upon and shared with the public due to the Covid 19 pandemic. We believe that the findings of the children's rights inquiry have a significant bearing on public sector decision making during the Covid 19 pandemic. We deem it regrettable that the report and recommendations that were due to be disseminated on March 23rd as part of the children's rights inquiry have not yet been shared publically and Welsh Government has not yet been scrutinised rigorously in relation to them.

We are however pleased to see that as Chair of the Committee you have been active in your role scrutinising Welsh Government and in requesting that they issue children's rights impact assessments in relation to the impact of all measures on children that have and will be introduced to manage Covid 19. As part of the evidence we submitted to the children's rights inquiry we reported that Welsh Government had failed to have due regard to the rights of the child in relation to a number of decision making processes that impact upon children with complex health conditions. We also suggested that this may not be an isolated case and in fact there could be a number of other Welsh Government decision making processes that have not been subjected to the robust scrutiny that having due regard to children's human rights requires.

We are deeply concerned that this apparent disregard to having due regard to assessing the impact on children's human rights is continuing with children's human rights impact assessments not yet being shared in relation to decision making concerning Covid 19. Given the mistakes made in relation to older people in care homes and recent allegations of human rights breaches, we urge Welsh Government to take their obligations under the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011 seriously

and to share publically the decision making regarding regulations and policies through a children's human rights lens.

Additionally the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child recently advised that "while acknowledging that the COVID19 pandemic may have a significant and adverse impact on the availability of financial resources, these difficulties should not be regarded as an impediment to the implementation of the Convention".¹ We would like to see this guidance being adhered to in relation to our continuing concerns regarding children with complex health conditions (please see earlier evidence submitted as part of the children's rights inquiry) but also this to be taken seriously in relation to all children's issues.

Finally we would welcome your Committee sharing the learning from the children's rights inquiry; making strong recommendations for a thorough review of all Welsh Government and public sector decision making in relation to children's human rights (including in relation to the Covid 19 pandemic); issuing recommendations that ensure that all officials and Ministers are subject to rigorous and mandatory training regarding understanding fully their children's human rights obligations and recommending that appropriate systems of accountability are in place and enforced.

The pandemic and its resulting complexities and consequences for children make this more, not less urgent.

¹ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CRC/Shared%20Documents/1_Global/INT_CRC_STA_9095_E.pdf