

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 - 141

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Ymateb gan: Unigolyn

Response from: Individual

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My children have been greatly impacted by the lockdown. We live in Flintshire, near to the English border.. They are 8 (son) and 11 (daughter). Both are miserable and their behaviour has worsened, with my 8 year old especially impacted. He has temper tantrums and is struggling to sleep. Before lockdown he adored school, being with his friends and was playing football at academy level up to 6 days a week. With nowhere to burn off his energy he is lethargic and has put on a lot of weight/lost his fitness.

My 11 year old is desperately unhappy at missing her transition to high school. She has engaged somewhat with her school work, but not fully. However my 8 year old loathes remote learning and it is a massive struggle every day to get him to engage with his school work. He is too young to work independently and I am working full time at home so do not have the time to help him in the way he needs. He frequently ends up being 'babysat' by the tech, gaming, tv etc. I hate this but have no option as I also have my work to do to pay the bills. I am so sad as he used to love learning and never had a poor report from school. Now I worry for his future.

I have no parents available to help either, so the summer holidays stretch before me with little or no help. My husband works a 50 hour week and is not able to help and he also has no parental help. It is just us.

My daughter is off to high school in England in September yet her brother is destined to get a part-time substandard education at home just because he is in Wales. We are looking at trying to get him into an English primary school or even move to England if 'blended learning' is the new normal.

Come September I have no idea what we will do if schools do not return to full time, including after school and before school childcare. I will be expected to start going back into my office. If my son is not in full time school what on earth am I supposed to do? I have literally no one else to care for him. I cannot afford a childminder's rates; breakfast and after-school club was a godsend as it was reasonable. I am left with 2 options – give up my job or leave my 8 year old home alone. Neither option is acceptable or practical. Every day he is 'remotely schooled' is a day he is not educated. As I said, he refuses to engage. He needs teachers, skilled in their role, to educate him face to face; he cannot learn away from school.

Please ensure all children return to school in Wales full time in September by removing social distancing and letting them develop as children should. Let them play, let them be with friends, let them live. There MUST also be plans in place to keep any Winter spikes contained with local lockdowns; never again should all schools be closed. If there are local closure, these should be as short a time as possible and have education replaced with live online teaching from teachers in real time. There is so much research that shows that not only do children not get ill from the virus but that they are not spreaders of the virus either. The risk to them in Wales is virtually zero. The risk to their mental health is immense.

England, Northern Ireland and Scotland have all committed to getting children back to school full time from August/September; let's not make Welsh children be the poor relations in the UK. Let's prioritise their education and well-being.