

**Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymchwiliad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg i weithredu diwygiadau addysg](#)**

**This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee inquiry into Implementation of education reforms](#)**

**IER 26**

**Ymateb gan: Mind Cymru**

**Response from: Mind Cymru**

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**Nodwch eich barn mewn perthynas â chylch gorchwyl yr ymchwiliad. | Record your views against the inquiry's terms of reference.**

Introduction:

We welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation and the Committee's commitment to undertake a second 'check in' under this Inquiry.

We are grateful that the Committee is actively seeking the lived experience of these reforms and their commitment to ensuring that what they hear will help shape their work.

Children and young people's mental health and wellbeing continues to be one of the biggest challenges facing Wales today. These words were said in our response to the Education White Paper in 2019 and then the pandemic hit. It cannot be underestimated, how much of an impact this has had on the mental health of our young people. For some, this impact continues. We have a collective responsibility to keep listening to them and to keep fighting for the support they need, when they need it.

Whilst meeting this challenge is multi-faceted and requires collaboration with children and young people and cuts across all public sectors, the implementation of our recent curriculum reforms undeniably offered and continues to offer, a once in a generation opportunity to embed the importance of wellbeing into our children's lives.

Implementing the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021:

"The school curriculum of any country is a reflection of both its cultural development and its value base".<sup>1</sup>

In many respects, it could be argued that Wales has come a very long way over recent years in our commitment, at a strategic level, to documenting the importance of good mental health amongst our learners.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.euro.who.int/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/74761/Hpsc\\_Forum\\_2007\\_Finland.pdf](http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/74761/Hpsc_Forum_2007_Finland.pdf)



Looking specifically at the Curriculum Act, this not only places a duty to “have regard to mental health and emotional well-being of children and young persons” (Section 63), but also includes a “Health and Wellbeing” area of learning and experience to be delivered locally by all head teachers. Welsh Government itself amending the legislation to include Section 63 is a clear demonstration of the desire to ensure the key role schools play for young people is recognised.

This has felt, at times, like a fast-moving, progressive approach and whilst we are absolutely headed in the right direction, the Committee’s Inquiry allows us the opportunity to reflect on how far we’ve come in Wales and assess the route we now need to take.

In our work to ensure that mental health was afforded the priority it deserved in the development of the Curriculum Act, we outlined how vital placing it as a statutory part and listing it within primary legislation would be to reflecting the fact that good mental health and wellbeing is central to effective learning and the preparation for successful independent living. It could be argued that Wales has achieved this, but only in part.

**Mind Cymru would urge the Committee to explore how far duty bearers under the Curriculum Act are aware of Section 63 and their specific responsibility “in exercising any function conferred by or under this Act, have regard to the mental health and emotional well-being of children and young persons likely to be affected by the exercise of the function.**

**To allow for the exploration of this, Mind Cymru would urge the Committee to question how far these bodies and organisations have contributed to any reflective learning on implementation of the Curriculum Act to date, and what their thoughts are in relation to their role in ensuring a consistency and equity of learning opportunities for learners.**

The professional learning and other support settings are receiving to ensure effective implementation of the Curriculum for Wales and the ALN system.

Again, we believe that through the development of specific guidance relating to Section 63 of the Act, an identification of the true level of professional learning, and other support, could be identified in a timely manner. At present, there is a complete lack of clarity around expectations here and we are therefore unable to assess the appropriate training and support needs of school staff (in its widest form) to allow for these expectations to be effectively met.

**Mind Cymru believes that the Committee could play a vital role in examining how far Welsh Government have assessed or plan to assess, the training and support needs present amongst the education workforce to effectively implement the Curriculum Act for our learners.**



