

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales
Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg | Children, Young People and
Education Committee
Bil Anghenion Dysgu Ychwanegol a'r Tribiwnlys Addysg (Cymru)|
Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill

ALN 03

Ymateb gan: Grŵp Gwleidyddiaeth Caerdydd Trelái
Response from: The Politics Group Cardiff Ely

We are a group of young people who all attend the same school. We have met eight times to discuss politics, our experiences of school and our hopes for the future.

There has usually been five of us but seven different people have been involved, four males and three females aged between 15 and 18. The sessions have been led by Marleen from the Netherlands. She is a student on placement with Barnardo's Cymru. Marleen has been supported by Heather and Tim from Barnardo's Cymru.

Marleen has explained that the law that controls our education is changing and we should share our experiences about school and choices with the people, Assembly Members, making the new law.

During the eight sessions we have had the chance to think about what has happened to us in the past, what we experience now and what we hope for the future. In the first session we thought about politics and how it was not just the big things like Donald Trump and Brexit but the things in our own lives like family, school, work and money.

School

All of us attend the same high school. It is a special school. When Tim asked if we had statements none of us could remember.

Some of us talked about the problems we had when we went to mainstream schools. Most of the problems were bullying but sometimes it was that we did not get enough support. These things were better when we moved to special schools although some of us still feel bullied sometimes.

Some of us have to travel a long way to get to school and would rather go to school closer to home with friends who live near us. Most of us also feel it is very difficult to meet friends after school because of the distances between us and not being able to travel independently.

Some of us would like to go to a mainstream school for some lessons, a school which is closer and they could stay with their friends. Most of us would prefer to stay in special school; it would be a big change to move because the special school has more help, there is less bullying and it is less confusing. We all thought that we should be involved in deciding which school to go to.

One of the activities we did asked us what we would want to keep about our school and what would we like to change.

To keep we said:

- Friends
- Teaching assistant
- Lessons
- The Café
- Green time
- More opportunities
- Lunch time
- Nice people
- Help
- Time
- Playtime
- Science
- IT, and
- Drama

To change we said:

- Maths
- Arguing
- Lessons
- Bossy teachers
- That 16+ pupils should be able to leave the school grounds

- Travel is too long
- Bullying
- Lessons are too short
- Too strict
- School does not listen

When we talked about our future we talked about the skills we need to be independent and not qualifications.

Decisions and Choices

During the sessions we have had to make lots of decisions which were really difficult until Marleen helped us understand information and what our choices could lead to. We made some decisions by voting. We had discussions about our choices and then the vote decided what our decision was. Marleen, Heather and Tim did not vote. Marleen has also given us lots of time to work out what to do.

We thought about the new Individual Development Plan and thought that the 'I' could also stand for Independent. We all thought that it was good to plan and that each of us had our own plan that should be linked to what we wanted in our futures.

It was hard to think about the 'D' Development. We tried to think what skills we needed to make a whole person. This was difficult. In the end we decided that we did not have to have all the skills now but that we could keep learning them. We also decided that we would need to keep learning skills because our lives would change.

We all thought that the skills that helped us become independent were the most important. One skill that was important to all of us was to be confident. Other skills included skills with Money, food, reading and writing, shopping, teamwork, communication, looking after little ones and being able to walk by yourself.

All of us are aware of our safety so do not use the internet much or social media at all. When we thought about living independently we always thought about living with someone.

We think that we should be involved in making decisions with our parents and carers. When we were asked who are the most important people in making decisions about us we said:

1st Us

2nd Parents or our carers

3rd Teachers

Independence

What most of us want in the future is independence. We want to go to college and find work. We want to have relationships and our own homes. We want to learn how to use public transport and manage our own money.

We know that this will take time and that we will need lots of support for a long time.

We have learnt that we can make some of our own decisions or help other people make decisions about our lives. Marleen, Tim and Heather learned that we need extra time and support to understand information and make decisions. When we are fully included in making decisions about us, they will be better decisions for us.