



Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL Cymru's) Response to the Proposed Children and Families (Wales) Measure

The Association of Teachers and Lecturers represents over 160,000 education professionals across the four constituent parts of the United Kingdom. It draws its membership from teachers and lecturers, leaders and support staff in maintained and independent schools, and Further Education Colleges. As well as campaigning vigorously to protect and enhance members' pay and conditions ATL also believes that the education profession has a key role in developing education strategy and policy. ATL Cymru represents over 6,500 education professionals in colleges and schools across the whole of Wales.

Consultation Questions

1. Is there a need for a proposed Measure to deliver the stated objectives of:

- **contributing to the eradication of child poverty;**
- **making provision in relation to child minding and day care for children;**
- **establishing integrated family support teams to provide services to families where there are children who need to be, or who are, looked after, and this is related to needs on the part of their adult carers (such as dependence on drugs and alcohol); and**
- **making provision for play opportunities for children?**

ATL Cymru believes that there is a clear need for the Children and Families (Wales) Measure to provide greater support to families where children are most vulnerable and at risk. ATL has vigorously campaigned for policy changes to be enacted to negate the negative impact that poverty and deprivation has on children's future prospects and opportunities. Child poverty has a significant impact on educational attainment. 70% of ATL members working in the state sector stated that poverty and deprivation affects the educational performance of the children they teach. The quality of school activity only accounts for a 14% variation on pupil's performance and the brightest children in Britain's poorest homes are outperformed by the least gifted children from wealthy homes by the age of seven. The low attainment of pupil's from disadvantaged backgrounds is

driven more by a combination of factors related to poverty and deprivation than ability. This needs to be addressed.

ATL Cymru would like to stress the need for the WAG to adopt a joined-up approach to child poverty. Child poverty is systematically linked with women's poverty, which in turn is closely correlated with women's family status and the disproportionate share of caring responsibilities that they have. Lone mothers or female carers make up 90% of lone parent households and more than two thirds of these are poor. The WAG needs to ensure it adopts a more joined-up approach to ending child poverty and address the causes of poverty and inequality within our society through a focus on social justice rather than social exclusion.

Early intervention as proposed in the measure is vital to counteract the negative affects poverty and social disadvantage have on a child's life opportunities. We welcome the proposed measure.

3. Are the sections of the proposed Measure appropriate in terms of achieving the stated objectives?

(A)

ATL Cymru believes that the sections contained in part 1- eradicating child poverty, of the measure are appropriate in terms of achieving the stated objectives.

We welcome the proposed duty on LAs to produce and publish strategies on how they will contribute to the eradication of child poverty in Wales. We also welcome the duty on Ministers to prepare and publish a strategy on child poverty and to produce an assessment report on the strategy every three years. Such proposals will help ensure LAs and the WAG can be held accountable for their actions taken in relation to child poverty. It will help ensure that policy decisions are transparent and accountable.

(C)

ATL Cymru believes that sections 49-58 relating to the establishment of integrated family support teams is appropriate in terms of achieving the objectives of the measure. The integrated family support teams will facilitate joint-working in relation to vulnerable children who could potentially face disadvantage due to their personal circumstances. Partnership working is essential to ensure the integrated delivery of services and additional capacity to develop and deliver services. Any integrated family support team established will need to ensure it has effective leadership and common procedures to meet the needs of children and young people who need support through difficulties.

5. What are the potential barriers to implementing the provisions of the proposed Measure (if any) and does the proposed Measure take account of them?

The biggest potential barrier to the implementation of provisions contained in the proposed measure is securing sufficient funding. It needs to be ensured that all proposals in the measure are adequately costed and planned for to enable the effective implementation of the measure which will result in the improvement in the life chances of some of the most vulnerable children in our society.

ATL Cymru is not prepared to give oral evidence to the committee.

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