

HWLG(3)-WS-020a - Barnardo's Cymru
Health, Wellbeing and Local Government Committee
Inquiry into Wheelchair Services - Written evidence from Barnardo's Cymru

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**Barnardo's
Cymru**

**Response from Barnardo's Cymru to
'Health Wellbeing and Local Government
Committee inquiry into Wheelchair
Services in Wales'**

Submitted by:

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A. INTRODUCTION

- Barnardo's Cymru has been working with children, young people and families in Wales for over 100 years and is one of the largest children's charities working in the country. We currently run 42 diverse services across Wales, working in partnership with 20 of the 22 local authorities, supporting over 8,000 children, young people and families in the last year.
- Barnardo's Cymru services in Wales include: care leavers and youth homelessness projects, young carers schemes, specialist fostering and adoption schemes, family centres and family support, parenting support, community development projects, short breaks and inclusive services for disabled children and young people, assessment and treatment for young people who exhibit sexually harmful or concerning behaviour and specialist services for children and young people at risk of, or abused through, child sexual exploitation.
- Every Barnardo's Cymru service is different but each believes that every child and young person deserves the best start in life, no matter who they are, what they have done or what they have been through. We use the knowledge gained from our direct work with children to campaign for better childcare policy and to champion the rights of every child. We believe that with the right help, committed support and a little belief, even the most vulnerable children can turn their lives around.

B. BARNARDO'S CYMRU DISABILITY SERVICES

- Barnardo's Cymru has 7 services across Wales that work directly with disabled children and young people. These include adoption and fostering services, community link services, and play and leisure provision.
- Disability is a cross cutting issue and therefore children, young people and families using any of our services can be affected by mobility impairments and other impairments.

C. BARNARDO'S CYMRU'S SERVICE USERS EXPERIENCES OF WHEELCHAIR SERVICES

- We have very few current service users who are wheelchair users, and therefore feel our comments do not necessitate giving oral evidence.
- We know that there have been some causes for concern for Barnardo's Cymru service users who are wheelchair users, detailed in our report 'Don't push me around' June 2006. This report details data from UK wide research, including Wales, exploring the difficulties that children and young people face when using wheelchair provision services. Links to Welsh and English language copies are below, and a copy has been attached with the email containing this written evidence.

http://www.barnardos.org.uk/dont_push_me_around_report.pdf

http://www.barnardos.org.uk/7867_dont_push_me_around_welsh_mobility_report.pdf

- Since this report was written we are not aware of any change in the issues it raises and discusses.
- We feel that correct wheelchair provision is of particular importance to children and young people because they have quickly changing needs which necessitates an efficient and quick service for provision and repairs.
- Long waiting times or problems with not having the right mobility support have a deep impact on children, young people and their families. It affects a child's ability to access school impacting on learning, and preventing a parent being able to go to work. It can also lead to social isolation for parents, children and young people. A slow or inappropriate response from wheelchair services can have a large detrimental affect upon children and young people's development, severely restricting their social life and extra curricula activities.

Vikki Butler
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