



PLANT YNG NGHYMURU
CHILDREN IN WALES

State of Parenting and Family Support Sector 2025



Information gathered March 2025 during a National Parenting
and Family Support Strategic Leads Network meeting.

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The overall picture in Wales has not changed much from 2024, with many issues increasing, becoming more complex and others emerging. However, the sector is resilient and passionate and is responding positively.

The sector is aiming to support families at the earliest possible stage, sharing key messages and resources before babies are even born.

Reason for referrals

The general nature of referrals continues to be complex with multiple issues; these include but are not limited to:

- Behaviour - tantrums, violent outbursts
- Emotional Based School Avoidance
- Toileting in schools (young children)
- Supporting a child's journey to school
- Self-harm and teen mental health crisis
- Additional Learning Needs (ALN and Neurodiversity (ND) for whole family
- Anxiety (child and / or parent)
- Relationships, conflict in relationships, separating parents
- Mental health issues (parents and children)
- Confirmed ALN / ND and no support on waiting lists / when confirmed
- Antenatal issues (specifically around the complexity of Mental health, Domestic abuse and drugs and alcohol)
- Teenagers and the complexity of cases
- Child to parent abuse and violence - younger children
- Trauma and ACEs
- General parenting – routines, boundaries, play, sleep etc
- Emotional regulation (parents and children)

Areas of concern

There continues to be a concern that the sector is **unable to deliver early intervention and prevention support**.

It is a **whole new world of parenting**, with more and more issues arising for parents and more intense support needed. The service is having to be **reactive to meet the needs** of the modern world, by providing specialist support and tackling wider needs outside of the remit of parenting.

Support is being tailored for each family, leading to more intense **one-to-one support, role modelling, adapted programmes** and **longer-term involvement**.

Parents themselves are presenting as **neurodivergent** and need to be supported to help themselves before they can help their child/ren.

Funding is still a problem; it is often short term and uncertain, leading to a **lack of job security** and **higher training costs** with skilled and experience staff moving on.

When groups and programmes are held for parents, they face challenges attending due to a **lack of childcare or travel**, meaning parents are missing out on support that is available. There is a need to ensure funding covers local childcare, mobile creches and travel costs, to enable equity of opportunities for parents.

Staff well-being is still a high area of concern. Many **staff feel underqualified** for the complexity of cases they face, and in turn they feel that they are not giving families the service they need and deserve as they are **spread too thinly**.

There can be a **lack of ownership and collaboration between services**, leaving parenting and family support services left filling the gaps in an already over stretched service, where they don't wish to turn any family away.



Response to issues

The sector is **working harder** than ever to meet the **increase and diversity of needs** of the families they work with.

This includes:

Investing in a **responsive training plan**, introducing **new parenting programmes**, **working creatively** and **collaboratively** with other agencies to enable services to work together more effectively.

Offering **online self-referral, shorter programmes, specialist workshops, softer skills, drop-ins, evening and weekend groups, incentives, peer support and volunteer parent led facilitators**, all of which are offering flexible ways for families to access help and support.

Using a **strengths-based approach**, helping families recognise the positive changes and the distance travelled.

A focus on **antenatal provision** and including Dads, enabling key messages and resources to be shared from the beginning, and encouraging a journey of support.

Working with schools to delivering specific short term (4/5 weeks) programmes to parents when children are ready for transition to secondary or have just started. **Working with Youth engagement participation service, Education Welfare Officer/inclusion teams** to understand and respond to specific family issues

Focusing more strongly on the **importance of healthy relationships** and **conflict resolution** in improving outcomes for children and **embedding relationship support** into local parenting and family support policy and strategy.

Training practitioners in specific programmes to ensure children have **consistency at home and in childcare/school settings**.

Taking a **proactive approach** and **working with Health**, encouraging Health Visitors to promote what support is available and encourage parents to engage and access support before any specific needs may present and arise.

Although the sector is still being inundated with referrals, we are seeing a **positive and proactive response to supporting families**. The array of **creative ways** that support is being offered is testimony to a **skilled and passionate workforce**.

This needs to be supported by both **appropriate and secure funding** and a **wide recognition** of the work that the parenting and family support sector is delivering; to ensure that **all families** who **need support can access it**.