

# Early years and childcare conference - 28 November



The conference is part of our festival of lifelong learning, which takes place between 21 and 28 November.

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The early years and childcare conference marks the end of our festival of lifelong learning. Here's what's happening during the conference, which will be held in the Angel Hotel, Cardiff.

The programme

**9am: Registration, breakfast and exhibition**

**10am: Welcome and housekeeping**

Gemma Halliday, Social Care Wales

**10.10am: Opening speech**

Lisa Trigg, Social Care Wales

**10.30am: Message from Dawn Bowden, Minister for Children and Social Care**

**10.50am: Supporting children with Additional Learning Needs**

Hannah Jones and Ceri Ward, Rachel's Playhouse

**11.35am: Reflection/table discussion**

**11.45am: Break**

**12.05pm: Supporting anti racism practice across the early years**

Jacqueline Hooban, Joint leader, Cylch Meithrin Tywyn

**12.50pm: Reflection/table discussion**

**1pm: Lunch**

**1.45pm: Supporting bilingualism and embedding Welsh language and culture**

Hannah Jones and Ceri Ward, Rachel's Playhouse

### **2.30pm: Reflection/table discussion**

### **2.40pm: Caring in Welsh Award 2024 finalist**

Myfanwy Harman, Manager at Cylch Meithrin y Gyrnos

### **2.55pm: Well-being update**

Kate Newman, Social Care Wales

### **3.10pm: Closing remarks**

Gemma Halliday, Social Care Wales

**Please note: there will be a quiet room available at the conference.**

## **Speaker biographies**

Show

### **Dawn Bowden, Minister for Children and Social Care**

In 1989, Dawn moved to South Wales to become the youngest and first female District Officer in the area. She rose through the ranks of her union to become the UNISON Cymru/Wales Head of Health, a position she held up to her election as Assembly Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney in May 2016.

Dawn was elected as a Member of the Senedd for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney in May 2016. In the last Senedd term, Dawn served on the Health, Social Care and Sport; Culture Welsh Language and Communications; External Affairs and Additional Legislation; Climate Change and Rural Affairs; Children, Young People and Education and Equalities, Local Government and Communities Committees. She also Chaired the Committee on Senedd Reform and represented the Welsh Parliament at the European Congress of Regions and was a Member of the Valleys Taskforce.

On 11 September 2024, Dawn was appointed Minister for Children and Social Care.

### **Jaqueline Hooban, Joint leader, Cylch Meithrin Tywyn**

Jacqueline is a joint leader at Cylch Meithrin Tywyn. She has been involved in many projects including a podcast called 'Baby steps into the new curriculum', discussions at the National Eisteddfod about anti-racism in the early years, and she has worked as a community mentor on the Welsh Government's Anti-racism action plan. Cylch Meithrin Tywyn was the face of the launch of anti-racism across the early years sector through DARPL (Diversity and anti-racism professional learning).

Jacqueline will talk about the impact of moving from a city to a rural area and the barriers she found of being the only Black family in the village. She'll tell us why it's important to support anti-racist practice in the early years sector, to promote diversity and making sure children and families are being treated equally regardless of their background or culture.

### **Ceri Ward and Hannah Jones from Rachel's Playhouse, Aberdare**

Ceri and Hannah have previously presented at leadership and management events, sharing with the sector how they have put their leadership theories into practice in their setting. They are valued members of the early years network and have successfully fostered a passionate workforce.

Rachael's Playhouse, Aberdare is a full day care service offering care and education to children aged between 18 months and five years, set up in June 2018. The setting has fostered a nurturing environment where all children are valued and celebrated for their uniqueness. Staff work hard to make sure inclusivity is everyday practice, every child's voice is heard and that they are pro-actively removing barriers to inclusion and access.

Ceri and Hannah will share their staff approach in relation to the emerging needs of children, they'll share their strategies, considerations and communication methods used within their nurturing environment.

The setting is bilingual, and staff have worked hard to immerse the Welsh language and culture, creating a fully bilingual, authentic and purposeful learning environment. Hannah and Ceri will share their journey in fostering bilingualism and embedding the Welsh language and culture throughout the children's environment.

### **Myfanwy Harman, Manager, Cylch Meithrin y Gurnos in Merthyr Tydfil**

Since opening Cylch Meithrin y Gurnos in January 2023, Myfanwy has worked tirelessly to "build strong connections and trust within the community" and expand the Welsh-medium setting from one to 21 children.

Myfanwy has empowered parents to use more Welsh by offering family sessions. She takes the pressure off using perfect Welsh, helping parents realise they don't need to be fluent to send their children to Welsh-medium schools. Seven of the eight children leaving Cylch Meithrin y Gurnos this year will be entering Welsh-medium education.

Myfanwy encourages staff to improve their Welsh. Some are using Welsh daily having not spoken the language since leaving school. Myfanwy is a finalist of the Caring in Welsh Award 2024.

### **Lisa Trigg, Director of Improvement and Development, Social Care Wales**

Lisa joined Social Care Wales in 2018 as Assistant Director of Research, Data and Innovation. In the role, she worked across Wales to set up research, innovation and data services for the social care sector, led the development of the Insight Collective support and services, and co-developed the 'Ymlaen'

strategy.

In September 2024, Lisa became our Director of Improvement and Development. She feels enormously privileged to have the opportunity to lead our broader improvement and development work, and to support people leading and working in social care across Wales.

### **Gemma Halliday, Assistant Director, Social Care Wales**

Gemma started working with Social Care Wales in 2016 as a Workforce Development Manager, focusing on early years, careers and Welsh language. In 2019 Gemma became the Assistant Director for early years, Welsh language and equality, diversity and inclusion at Social Care Wales. She makes sure Social Care Wales' operational plans within her area of responsibility, reflect relevant strategies and then aligns them to Social Care Wales' strategic plan.

Gemma's background is in early years and education and she also holds a BA in Public and Social policy. Prior to Social Care Wales, Gemma worked for Conwy County Borough Council for 12 years, leading on early years and childcare, including Welsh language development in the early years as part of the Conwy Welsh Language Strategic group.

### **Kate Newman, Health and Well-being Development officer, Social Care Wales**

Kate is the Health and Well-being Development Officer and has been with Social Care Wales since April 2022. Kate's role involves sharing information on what well-being at work means, why it's important and how we can make a difference to supporting well-being at work. Before working for Social Care Wales, Kate worked across the public, private and third sector in roles covering community health development, public health commissioning, partnership and relationships work.

## List of exhibitors

Show

[Social Care Wales early years and childcare](#)

[Early Years Wales](#)

[Play Wales](#)

[Children's Commissioner for Wales](#)

[WeCare Wales](#)

[PACEY](#)

[Children in Wales](#)

[WJEC and City & Guilds](#)

[Neurodivergence Wales](#)

[Ace Hub Wales](#)

[Welsh Government](#)

[Mudiad Meithrin](#)

[ACT Training](#)

[University of Wales Trinity Saint David](#)

[Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs](#)