

Minister visits Finland on early years' fact-finding mission

As part of its five year programme for government, the Welsh Government is committed to transforming the early years' system in Wales to ensure it delivers the right support for all children.

During a two-day visit, the Minister visited a number of different projects that promote alternative approaches to families, the early years and social care.

The visits included:

- The Family Centre in the city of Vantaa. The centre co-ordinates the public health, social and educational services intended for children and families into a network that also includes the services offered by NGOs, parishes and voluntary stakeholders as well as specialised services;
- Kasvuntuki, a service aimed at Early Intervention and brokering knowledge to support children. The service promotes Early Intervention as a resource for professionals to use evidence-based interventions to support children and families;
- Tuomarila Family Support Centre in the city of Espoo. The centre offers family support and rehabilitation services, development work of child welfare and child protection, and services for families with children are aimed at detecting potential problems at an early stage and providing high quality treatment. The centre focuses on prevention and supporting families to find themselves their own resources to cope with the daily issues.

The Minister also met officials from the country's Ministry for Education & Culture and Ministry for Social Affairs & Health, the Itla Children's Foundation and the Central Union for Child Welfare.

Huw Irranca-Davies said:

"As the Minister in the Welsh Government responsible for children, the early years and social care, I want to ensure we provide the very best services that meet the needs of people across Wales. I was very pleased to visit Finland this week to learn more about Finland's approach to early years and social care.

"As a government, we are committed to ensuring all children from all backgrounds in all parts of Wales have the best start in life. This is why I'm leading work to transform our early years' system to ensure it delivers the right support for all children, particularly those from deprived backgrounds. Ensuring our children are given that best start in life is the best means of breaking the poverty cycle, and raising the aspiration and attainment for

everyone.

“We will now consider whether we can transfer some of the best-practice approaches I saw being used in Finland, to Wales.”