



Cardiff, with Bethany, mum Lorraine, Dylan, Gareth, dad Richard and Cian



Cian before his diagnosis with the match trophy following a game with his club Llanharan RFC

£131m bill for supply teachers

COUNCILS in Wales have spent more than £130m on supply teaching in the last three years, new figures have shown.

Data obtained by the Welsh Conservatives shows local authorities spent as much as £41m on temporary teaching cover in the 2014-15 financial year.

Collectively 19 of the 22 Welsh councils that responded to the party's Freedom of Information request have paid out £131.7m on supply cover since 2012. The nation's highest spenders include Cardiff - at more than £24m - and Caerphilly, which spent £16m. Primary, secondary, special and middle schools are all included in the figures.

Shadow Education Minister Angela Burns said: "Taxpayers will rightly question this staggering amount of public money. Our figures reveal the true extent of supply staff use and parents will raise justifiable concerns. It's extremely important for pupils to have stability and it's clear that supply cover must be a priority for the next Welsh Government."

A recent survey commissioned by the Assembly's Children, Young People and Education Committee (CYPEC) to give a picture of how supply teaching works around Wales found almost a quarter of pupils are taught by a supply teacher at least once a week and that 30% are taught by a different supply teacher each time.

A spokeswoman for the Welsh Government said: "The employment of supply teachers does not fall within the powers devolved to the Welsh Government. It is the duty of individual head teachers, working with their governing body and wider school team, to determine the best way to manage absences and cover provision."

"The Education Minister has recently received the National Assembly's committee report on supply teachers and will consider and respond fully in due course."

YOUNGSTERS' RUGBY CLUB FUNDRAISING FOR CIAN

CIAN, along with his brother and sister Dylan and Bethany, play rugby for tots and mini teams at Llanharan RFC.

The club, where Cian's dad Richard is vice president, are now organising fundraising events called fun and games to help and support Cian in his battle.

Llanharan RFC are off on tour at the end of the season and have organised a fun fundraising event for the tourists on Saturday, January 2, at the club.

Hugh Smith, from the club, said: "The tour committee, a motley collection of current and



Cian with his sister Bethany and brother Dylan in hospital

former players, have very kindly offered to donate all funds raised during the evening to help support Cian and his family through this very difficult time.

"They are also keen to extend an open invitation

to all our Junior and Mini players, team mates, parents, committee and families together with all our club members and supporters.

"The evening takes place between 5pm and 7pm will

be a great opportunity for the youngsters to compete with, and against, their parents, our senior players, committee members and anyone who wants to join in a selection of 'suitable indoor games'.

"The games will be fun for all and will allow us to show that, as a rugby playing club, we are all together and right behind Cian."

The tour committee will also be holding a mega raffle for Cian and any further prizes will be gratefully received on the evening.

A Boxing Day raffle raised £228 for the appeal.



Cian and dad Richard

Day, but hopefully he will feel a bit better soon to enjoy the rest."

Cian's parents are writing a blog in his name to promote awareness of his condition. You can follow his story at www.ciansstory.uk.

Richard, who works for the UK Government within the Home Office in Science and Technology, said: "Myself and Lorraine would like to thank our employers for their support and understanding; our friends and family for their offers of help and assistance."

"The village of Llan-



Cian with some of his toys in hospital

haran for welcoming us into their community; the charities who are assisting Cian and the fam-

ily; the staff at Noah's Ark Children's Hospital for Wales with breathing difficulties, said: "It made our Christmas."

"We want to raise awareness of Cian's condition hoping it will encourage research into new treatments and potential cures."

Cian was just one of a number of children Bale spent time with during his visit at about 4.30pm on Thursday.

Lucy Griffiths, whose son Jayden was at the Children's Hospital for Wales with breathing difficulties, said: "It made our Christmas."



Cian, Santa and an elf with some Christmas presents