

UNCRC Reporting in Wales

State Party Report - Welsh Assembly Government

Preparation of the Wales UNCRC report will be led by the Minister for Children (Jane Hutt), supported by the Cabinet Sub-Committee on Children and Young People and the officials' groups that work to it. Huw Gwyn Jones, Children's Strategy Division, DELLS, Welsh Assembly Government and observer on the UNCRC Monitoring Group is the lead on the Welsh Assembly Government UNCRC report.

In June of this year, the UNCRC Monitoring Group were invited to conduct seminars with government officials on the UNCRC and UNCRC reporting process to develop their understanding of the Convention before submitting their contributions to the Welsh Assembly Government UNCRC report. Relevant chapters of *Righting the wrongs* were forwarded to the lead officials in order that they respond to this report when writing their commissioned responses to the Wales UNCRC report. The first draft is to be cleared by the end of August 31st

A draft report will go out for consultation in September/October and a final draft 30-40 page report presented to the Children and Young People Cabinet Sub-Committee on 4th December 2006.

The final report will then be translated into Welsh and a young people friendly version produced with submission to the DfES by the end of December. A published copy of the Wales report will be available in March 2007.

Welsh Assembly Government has the opportunity to comment on what UK Government are doing regarding non-devolved issues by end of February.

DfES are putting the UK State party report out for consultation for 4 week consultation March- April 2007.

UK State Party report submitted to UN Committee July 2007.

Welsh Assembly Government Time Line for UNCRC reporting

- June 2006 Commission contributions/ seminars for officials
- 17 July Paper to note to Cabinet CYP Committee
- 31 August First draft cleared by Minister for Children and other Ministers
- Sept-Oct Consultation – seek views from Welsh Local Government, Association, NGOs, Funky Dragon, Children's Commissioner
- Nov 06 Final draft prepare
- 4 Dec 06 Cabinet CYP Committee clears final draft - translation and version for young people
- End-Dec Wales report submitted to DfES
- March 07 Launch Wales report and YP version

NGO Alternative Report - UNCRC Monitoring Group

In January 2006, Save the Children, & UNCRC Monitoring Group published and launched *Righting the wrongs: the reality of children's rights in Wales*. This conference and report effectively launched the 3rd/4th round of reporting to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in Wales.

The Conference was addressed by the Chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Welsh Assembly Government Minister for Children, the Children's Commissioner for Wales and two children's rights academics. Policy makers, practitioners and academics were invited to attend not only to hear the findings of the report and to learn more about the UNCRC and its application to Wales but also as experts in their own right to contribute their own views on the challenges of implementation. It was intended in this way to strengthen the policy advocacy community for children's rights in Wales and to encourage more people to become involved in the monitoring and reporting process. The conference was oversubscribed and the conference feedback is indicative that the movement for children's rights in Wales is rapidly increasing.

The conference gave the unique opportunity to key duty bearers to gain important advice from the Chair of the UN Committee as well as create the occasion for the UNCRC Monitoring group to gain further commitments from Welsh Assembly government. A significant achievement of the Conference was to secure from the Welsh Assembly Government's Minister for Children a public commitment that she would be personally responsible for Wales' submission to the State party report.

The Conference report together with the *Righting the wrongs* report, are informing the developing advocacy strategy of the UNCRC Monitoring Group. The UNCRC Monitoring Group are currently using both reports to highlight the need for further changes as they affect children in Wales. The conference report will be disseminated August 2006.

Along with the Children's Commissioner Office, Funky Dragon and the Wales Local Government Association the UNCRC Monitoring Group will respond to Welsh Assembly government consultation on their report in Sept/October 2006. Rhian Croke, UNCRC Monitoring Officer, will facilitate the collation of responses from agencies represented on the UNCRC Monitoring Group. A sub-group has been working to consider the best way to include children's views in the NGO report.

The UNCRC Monitoring Group will also respond to the final published report available in Wales during March 2006 as well as writing a Wales section to the alternative report to be sent to the UN Committee during the reporting session beginning July 2007.

UNCRC Monitoring Group's Time Line

- January 2006 - *Righting the wrongs* launched and published at conference. 3rd/4th reporting round to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child launched in Wales.
- January –June 2006 – Dissemination of RW & Presentations & advocacy regarding RW's recommendations.
- June 2006 – Training on UNCRC & UNCRC Monitoring and Reporting Process for WAG Senior Civil Servants
- August 2006 – *Righting the wrongs* Conference Report disseminated.
- September 2006 – UNCRC Monitoring Group's Strategy Day
- October 2006 – Respond to Welsh Assembly Government UNCRC Report.
- March 2007 – Respond to WAG published report
- March- April 2007 – Feed into UK Government consultation
- July 2007 - 2008– Wales section to Alternative Report.

Children's Report - Funky Dragon

In January 2006, the UNCRC Monitoring Group, facilitated a UNCRC training and planning day developing Funky Dragon's understanding of the UNCRC and discussing the best way to ensure that children's views get heard and acted on when reporting to the UN Committee in this reporting session. The Concluding Observations of the UN Committee in the past have been extremely adult centric most clearly seen by there being no mention of play in the recommendations.

Since January, a steering group of 12 young people has been elected from the Funky Dragon Council. Young people from the steering group are directing the process but are being supported by Funky Dragon staff members. Funky Dragon core staff will spend at least 50% of their time on UNCRC Monitoring over the next year and an additional 6 ESF workers will be working on this full time.

In April the young people steering group visited the UNICEF project (*What do you think project?*) in Belgium where there were a steering group of 40 young people who delivered on Belgian's first children's report. Following this visit, the first meeting with academics from Swansea University took place to frame the research. Dr Kevin Haynes and Antonella Invernizzi from the Institute of Applied Social Studies at Swansea University are supporting the project with regards to the design of the research methodology. Qualitative and quantitative research will be carried out with young people (11-18) across Wales to determine their views on their rights.

Funky Dragon does not receive any funding for 0-10's and have approached Minister Jane Davidson (Department for Education & Life Long Learning Skill) for additional funding for two extra staff to address this gap.

Supporting materials are being produced including a DVD on the history of children's rights and the UNCRC, a UNCRC educational pack and potentially a web page dedicated to the UNCRC. These are being designed to assist the research process and to raise awareness of the UNCRC and children's rights.

The next meeting of the Steering Group on 8/9/10 September will aim to finalise the scope of the research. Both the rights themes and cross-cutting issues have been selected by the young people. The research will be conducted between September 2006 and December 2007. It is anticipated the children's report will be available end 2007 - beginning 2008.

Funky Dragon are currently making plans for two of their staff to accompany two young people to visit the young people's working group in India in October 2006, who have also submitted a young people's report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Funky Dragon's Time Line:

- Oct 2005 – First discussions took place with Funky Dragon around the SC report
- Jan 2006 – FD staff look at the reality of the idea.
- Feb 2006 – establish steering group and young people approval of plan
- March 2006 – discuss with other agencies
- April 2006 – trip to Belgium; begin work on the DVD
- May/June 2006 – on completion of DVD begin looking at resources; translation and publication; recruit staff
- June 2006 – launch
- July and August 2006 – staff induction/training; begin contacting groups
- Sept 2006 to December 2007 – conduct research
- January to March 2008 – compile findings
- April to May 2008 – write/translate/print report
- June 2008 – present report/product

Independent Human Rights Institutions - Children's Commissioner's Office for Wales

Children's Commissioner Office for Wales have recently informed us that there has been no agreement as yet as to whether the UK Children's Commissioner's will write a joint report or will write separate country reports. We await further information on their plans for reporting.

Rhian Croke
UNCRC Monitoring Officer
Save the Children (UK)
& UNCRC Monitoring Group