



# Children in Wales

## Plant yng Nghymru

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[www.childreninwales.org.uk](http://www.childreninwales.org.uk)

### Speaking with one voice

**Equal legal protection for children**

**Brexit and children's rights**

**County lines exploitation: Gangs, drugs and Wales**

**Working with fathers**



#### Also featuring:

- UK Youth Parliament
- Additional Learning Needs
- General Data Protection Regulation
- Health Youth Summit
- Children's Commissioner for Wales
- National Participation Standards
- Getting More Involved in Social Care
- MEIC Cymru

## Welcome

Since the vote on leaving the European Union last year, Children in Wales has worked alongside partner organisations to look at the potential impact that exiting the EU will have on the lives of children and young people. Since the beginning of 2017 we have made representations to both the Welsh Government and the UK Government about ensuring that the views of children and young people are listened to in relation to the negotiations about the future post Brexit. We have also had regular meetings with the Wales Office to make the views of Welsh organisations and the children and families they work with known so that these can be communicated directly through to UK Government. We believe it is vital to ensure that young people get a say in the Brexit process and they will be the people living with the consequences of the final outcome.

Children in Wales is worried about the potential impact that leaving the European Union will have on children and young people's rights. We are particularly concerned that the European Union (withdrawal) Bill will not include the European Charter of Fundamental Rights. Children in Wales originally campaigned at EU level for the word 'age' to be included in the anti-discrimination Clause of this Charter. Within the UK Wales has taken progressive steps to ensure the rights of children and young people are incorporated into some pieces of legislation in recent years, and we need to make sure that this progress is not adversely affected.

Furthermore, there is widespread concern about the loss of EU structural funds as these have supported much work in disadvantaged areas of Wales. Whilst the UK Government has indicated a Fund post Brexit to replace the EU funding, there is no detail about how much would be in this fund nor how it would be distributed and monitored across the UK. We would be very pleased to have as much information as possible from the organisations in Wales who feel that their services may be at risk post Brexit so we can include this information to make a strong case for Wales. Please

email me at [catriona.williams@childreninwales.org.uk](mailto:catriona.williams@childreninwales.org.uk)

At the Cross-Party Group on Children and Young People on 18 October 2017, Children in Wales and the Wales Observatory on the Human Rights of Children and Young People at Swansea University launched a briefing paper on Brexit and Children's Rights in Wales. The paper sets out concerns that have arisen for children in Wales, and opportunities to protect children's rights through law and policy in Wales.



The briefing concentrates on four main areas; the erosion of guarantees of fundamental rights, the undermining of social cohesion, the loss of EU funding to support disadvantaged communities, and the lack of meaningful opportunities for children to participate in the Brexit process. It provides concrete recommendations on strengthening or safeguarding children's rights as the Brexit process continues. You can read more about this event in this magazine.

Following this, we held a round table event for over 90 delegates. Attendees discussed what they thought were the biggest impacts of Brexit and what their priorities were, as well as how they and young people could be engaged further as Brexit progressed. A report of this event will be available in due course.

As the EU (Withdrawal) Bill makes its way through Parliament, we will be monitoring progress and ensuring children's voices are heard in the work going forward in Wales.

You can keep up with developments and our work on Brexit and children's rights on our website, and by following the hashtag #BrexitCYPWales on twitter.

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## UK Youth Parliament takes over Commons chamber for debate

Chris Richards, Children in Wales

On 10 November 2017, the UK Youth Parliament held its annual debate in the House of Commons, in Westminster.

UK Youth Parliament provides opportunities for 11-18 year olds to use their elected voice to bring about social change through meaningful representation and campaigning. The House of Commons Debate is an annual event organised by the UKYP. The event brings together around 300 young people (aged 11-18) from Wales, England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. David Abadir, MYP for Cardiff, was elected as Debate Lead for Wales this year.

Young Wales facilitated the Welsh Members of the Youth Parliament to take part in the day, including organising the Make Your Mark ballot in Wales, which allows young people to choose what topics will be debated. Young Wales also run mock debates to prepare those attending for the event.

Speaker of the House of Commons, Rt Hon John Bercow MP chaired the debate which covered a range of topics; a curriculum to prepare young people for life, transport, work experience hubs for 11-18 year olds, allowing 16 and 17 year olds the right to vote and protecting LGBT+ people.

In addition, they marked the 50th anniversary of the decriminalisation of homosexuality in the UK by sharing their reflections on life for LGBT+ young people, 50 years on.

At the end of the debates, the Members of Youth Parliament voted on their campaign for the next year. They decided to focus on lowering the voting age to 16 and a curriculum for life in 2018. These campaigns will be formally launched at the UK Youth Parliament action day in January 2018.

We'd like to congratulate all those who took part for the excellent debates, and look forward to next years event!

To read more about the day, you can visit the UK Youth Parliament website at <http://bit.ly/2iCZpoc>. If you would like to read the official Hansard transcripts of the debates, you can download a copy at <http://bit.ly/2hHlgZp>, and watch a record of the debate on the parliament livestream site, [parliamentlive.tv](http://parliamentlive.tv)



## Young People's Question Time

Andrea Storer, Children in Wales

Young people from across Wales got together on 24 October 2017 to put questions to professionals involved in children's rights.

The event, organised by Young Wales at the Wales Millennium Centre, comprised of young people putting their questions to a broad panel including the Cabinet Secretary for Education, Kirsty Williams AM; Sally Holland, Children's Commissioner for Wales; Dylan Jones, Deputy Headteacher at Ysgol Glan Clwyd; Professor Dame Sue Bailey and Steve Davies, Director of Education at Welsh Government. The event was chaired by Dr David Williams, chair of Children in Wales' Trustee Board.

Questions covered a wide range of topics, from education to online safety and Brexit.

The first question was "How will Brexit affect our futures?" The Children's Commissioner for Wales is working with other Commissioners across Europe, she said, to get leaders to involve children and young people in the Brexit process.

Moving on to education, the Cabinet Secretary responded to the question "Why haven't decision makers been in classrooms in years?"

She said that the student voice is vital to her, and that the new curriculum was designed by putting experts into classrooms.

Responding to a question on mental health and stigma, Dylan Jones noted that schools could do more to alleviate the stigma and agreed with Sally Holland that early intervention is key.

The final question looked to the upcoming year, "What is the most important thing to do this year? What can we work with you on?" Steve Davies remarked that he wanted young people's help in measuring well-being in schools. Professor Dame Sue Bailey challenged young people to come up with ways to engage their much younger peers. Sally Holland said that her mission was to put children's rights at the heart of education and general services. Dylan Jones said that he would like to see enough support to help all pupils achieve their potential. Finally, David Williams said that he wanted to ensure that what was discussed between young people and decision makers on paper was actually made a reality.

If you'd like more information about this event, please contact [andrea.storer@childreninwales.org.uk](mailto:andrea.storer@childreninwales.org.uk).



## Health Youth Summit

Chris Richards, Children in Wales

On 4 November, 85 children young people, and workers came to together for the first National Youth Health Summit in Wales, hosted by Public Health Wales and Young Wales.

The event was a chance for young people to find out more about health and to share their views.

In the morning, Tracey Cooper from Public Health Wales gave a talk on the future of health in Wales, looking at how changing demographics mean we need to take better care of our health now; and how bad experiences in childhood affect our health later in life.

Young people were then able to participate in workshops looking at mental health, sexual health and relationships, and the hand you choose/the hand you're dealt, which looked at issues affecting health that we have a choice over such as diet, and those that have to be managed, such as an ongoing illness.



The afternoon introduced the young people to the participation standards, which are seven principles that should be followed when working with children and young people to ensure they have a say.

This was followed a workshop looking at what our health may be like at age 35 and at age 70, and what good health means at those ages.

Finally, a panel session was held where children and young people were able to ask questions directly. The panel included the Professor Sally Holland, Children's Commissioner for Wales, Sophie Howe, Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, Tracey Cooper from Public Health Wales, and young representatives.



The panel were asked many searching questions on a range of topics, including how we could make this generation the healthiest ever. Questions were raised about accessibility for disabled young people, support for young carers, mental health issues in education, how to reach those who are cut off from society, what funding will be available for health after Brexit and ongoing austerity measures, sexual health services, and how resources can be used efficiently.

The day was a positive and interesting event and young people said they'd like to hold a second event next year. Many people also got involved in the conversation on social media, with the hashtag for the day, #UGOTSUMMIT2SAY, trending number 1 in Wales during the afternoon!

Many thanks to all those who attended for their contributions and making the day such a memorable and useful one.

If you'd like more information, please contact [young.wales@childreninwales.org.uk](mailto:young.wales@childreninwales.org.uk).



# Participation Standards

Chris Richards, Children in Wales



In Wales we have seven Children and Young People’s National Participation Standards, all of which help organisations and individuals ensure that the process, quality and experience of all work involving the participation of children and young people is upheld.

The Standards identify the key issues that all workers should be aware of when working with children and young people in Wales.

They were developed originally by the Participation Unit, but recently refreshed in 2016 by a partnership between Youth Forum workers and Young Wales, and informed by consultations with young people.

The work was supported by the Welsh Government, who identified the role of the Participation Standards in guidance. The Standards are also underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, which puts the involvement of children at the heart of improving well-being.

You can download the Standards at <http://bit.ly/2zHB0al>

## National Participation Charter

The National Participation Charter is underpinned by the three pillars of the UNCRC – Protection, Provision and Participation.

During 2017, Young Wales developed the National Participation Charter which can be used by organisations and services to illustrate their commitment to the Participation Standards. It is a statement of intent that they are working in line with the Standards, however, they must achieve the National Kitemark to use the logo.

Every year a sample audit of organisations will be undertaken in order to test compliance. The Charter lasts for a maximum of two years.

## Kitemarking and inspections

The National Participation Kitemark is awarded to services who have demonstrated that they are achieving all seven National Participation Standards. A certificate is awarded and the kitemark is endorsed by Welsh Government. If an organisation does not pass the inspection, they will be given feedback on how to improve, to be able to make another application.

The Self-assessment tool can be used by organisations to see how they are doing with participation internally.

For the kitemark, every organisation will need to provide at least three pieces of evidence per Standard to show the range of work that has taken place over the previous 12 months.

## Further information

For more information about the Standards or the kitemarking process, please contact [chris.richards@childreninwales.org.uk](mailto:chris.richards@childreninwales.org.uk) or call on 029 2034 2434.



## Inspire Awards 2017

Catherine Lewis, Children in Wales

On 15 November 2017, Young Wales attended the Inspire Awards in Cardiff.

The awards celebrate children, young people and adults who have the courage and strength of character to stand up for and/or befriend others who are being bullied, taunted, isolated and ignored by others. They were organised by Nicola Bartlett, Training and Development Manager at Cardiff Against Bullying which is part of Families First programme.

Cole Falkingham-Smith, from Fairwater School won the young person award for primary schools while both Mathew Jones from Ysgol Glan Taf and Kira Major from Mary Immaculate High School shared the secondary school young person award, after the judges found it impossible to split them.

The whole school awards for primary schools and secondary schools were won by St Paul's and St Teilo's respectively.

Jim Price, from the Young Carers Project was named winner in the alternative provision category while Duncan Evans from The Court Special School was presented with a special recognition certificate.

Guests were entertained by the Cardiff High School Senior Choir and presentations were given by Christ the King Roman Catholic Primary School and Thornhill Primary

School. Pupils of both schools spoke passionately about the things they have done to create a friendly, supportive and caring environment.

Young Wales was invited to have a stand at the event and as well as sharing information about the project we asked pupils to contribute to the Welsh Government's new online Safety Action Plan by answering the question "What really annoys you about the internet, social media, apps or games". Responses included

- I don't like how children are having arguments in front of the public eye
- When people talk to other people on the internet that they don't know
- When people bully other people for things they cannot change like their looks or acne
- When people hide behind the screen and bully others
- Some people think it is ok to say whatever they want about other people on social media – this isn't right
- Internet trolls as they can upset people

Pupils also felt that the most important aim of the Action Plan should be for everyone to be more aware of child protection and for anything that badly affects children and young people to be removed.

You can find out more about the awards at [www.cardiffnewsroom.co.uk/releases/c/16986.html](http://www.cardiffnewsroom.co.uk/releases/c/16986.html).



## A Voice of the Region

Mandy Davies, Children in Wales



Tom Blackwell was part of the Senedd yr Ifanc in Wrexham when Young Wales offered to take some of the members to take part in a Public Health Wales residential to produce their Annual Quality Statement for young people.

Shortly after the Public Health Wales residential, the World Health Organisation (WHO) were looking for people to be the 'Voice of the Region' based on the theme 'Leave no-one behind' which drives the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development.

Having understood a little of Tom's story while working together we contacted him through the Senedd yr Ifanc to see if he would be interested in sharing his story, he agreed that it was something he would like to be involved in.

The communications team from WHO, Faith, David and Lasse came to visit Tom in his hometown of Wrexham to create his film, and invite him to attend the WHO 67th Regional Committee in Budapest.

Tom said, "They took shots of me mountain biking around Erddig, and requested a clip of local team Wrexham Football Club. It was a really nice interview, they wanted to know all of me, not just the dark times. And they wanted my story as well – they didn't just want my views. They wanted to hear from someone who'd lived through a difficult background - that certainly placed more of a responsibility on me and I wanted to get my experiences across."

At the 67th Regional Committee in Budapest Tom took part in a breakfast meeting 'Strengthening Community and System Resilience,' speaking about resilience from an individual's perspective and where that came from for him. At lunchtime, Tom took the podium at a Ministerial Lunch to address Ministers from many different countries and expand on his story and the importance of 'leaving no one behind.'

This is what Tom had to say in his address about why he feels a child with adversities needs to be resilient, "The three values that I feel creates a resilient child with adversities is to have consistency while growing up, to have stability and to have the continuity of those values and that truly makes a happy child." (Ministerial Lunch, 12 September 2017, taken from transcript).

Reflecting on his experience of state care, Tom said his life was "...inconsistent, instable and ever changing. Feeling safe and comfort was impossible when you're always in a changing landscape, when not only are you moving house but also you're moving in to a place where there are 3 or 4 or 5 or sometimes 6 or 7 new children who also have been taken from their family and have similar issues and the social impact and that isolation of being a member of that culture and society' (Ministerial Lunch, 12 September 2017, taken from transcript).

When Tom turned 18 he was allocated social housing which is the point he had a realisation that now he has responsibilities to himself, both financially and emotionally, which was quite overwhelming but he very quickly got 'into the swing of things.' He said, "I just felt that I'd been left to myself, no one is going to help me, and I don't have parents to support me. If I don't look after myself I may as well die." (Ministerial Lunch, 12 September 2017, taken from transcript).

Tom has shown his strength and resilience to get to this point, he is now studying in Durham University as well as newly joined the Royal Naval Reserves and is very clear about his own goals and what he will do to achieve them.

In his summary he said, "I became consistent and stable. I realised that no one else is going to be there for me so I became that, I became my own rock. I realised that only I could change my future and ensure its success." (Ministerial Lunch, 12 September 2017, taken from transcript).



Reflecting on all the children and young people he had come to know throughout his childhood he could see that not many had made it as well as he had and had an important message,

“I’m the odd one out, one well known line I have heard is ‘No one left behind’ too often most are left to fend for themselves, lost in poverty, ‘no one left behind’ at this moment is a fallacy; The difference for me? I wouldn’t let them leave me.” And continued, “All of them struggle so much to find themselves in this world and to give back because they’ve felt nothing, you know, if you don’t have anything to build you up, how can you build the next generation?” (Ministerial Lunch, 12th Sept 2017, taken from transcript)

Working with WHO to be able to produce his film and attend the 67th Regional Conference in Budapest was made all the more positive because there was constant support from the team, they were on hand to answer questions and queries beforehand and made sure they were available to Tom during the conference, being clear about the schedule, a truly good model of participation. This made putting forward the message that he should not be an exception, everyone deserves an equal opportunity to thrive and do well regardless of what adversity they may face more, tangible and integral to the importance of the conference and the message that we should ‘leave no one behind’.

If you would like to see Tom’s film go to:  
<https://youtu.be/tc5LM5H-3cA>.

## Equal legal protection for children in Wales

Lynne Hill, Children in Wales

Children in Wales welcomes the news that the Minister for Children and Social Care, Huw Irranca-Davies has re-affirmed the Welsh Government’s plans to introduce legislation to remove the defence of reasonable punishment for smacking children.

If brought into law, this would give children the legal protection that adults are entitled to. Currently, the law allows for the physical punishment of children, but we believe that there are more positive ways to manage a children’s behaviour. Changing the law would make a clear statement that hitting children is wrong.

The Welsh Government has already engaged on this issue with with parents through its #TalkParenting campaign, which has had nearly 1,000 responses so far.

Further engagement with the public and interested stakeholders will come in the New Year through a formal consultation.

Along with partners, Children in Wales has long campaigned for our children to have equal legal

protection to adults. We hope legislation will be clear and straightforward, and build on meaningful engagement with parents from the #TalkParenting campaign and other positive parenting campaigns.

You can read more about the announcement on the Welsh Government website.

You can also find more information on this topic through the Children are UNbeatable! campaign, at <http://www.childrenareunbeatablecymru.org.uk/>.

*‘Sdim Curo Plant!  
 Children are Unbeatable! Cymru*

## The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill

Catherine Lewis, Children in Wales

Royal Assent of The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill is expected early in 2018. This will be followed by a formal consultation on the Code of Practice and the regulations that underpin the legislation. Following amendments, the Code and regulations will then be laid before the National Assembly of Wales for approval. It is anticipated that this process will take until the end of 2018. As the Welsh Government want to implement the legislation from the start of an academic year, implementation will be probably commence in September 2019. Children and young people already receiving Special Education Needs support will then be transitioned over to the new system on a phased basis.

The implementation of the Bill will be 17 years after a report published by the Audit Commission described the existing special education needs system as inefficient, bureaucratic, costly and insufficiently child-centred. Children in Wales is concerned that during that time, a whole school generation of children and young people have been part of a system that is no longer fit for purpose. However, we acknowledge that many professionals, parents and young people have been innovative in their approach to working within the system and many areas are already working within the 'Spirit' of the new reforms.

Children in Wales has closely followed the passage of the Bill through the Assembly. This has included meeting with the then Minister for the Lifelong Learning and the Welsh Language, Alun Davies, who introduced the Bill into the Assembly in December 2016 and giving both verbal and written evidence to the Children, Young People and Education Committee who carried out the scrutiny of the Bill. The organisation also organised an event where stakeholders shared their views of the proposed legislation with Committee members. TSANA, Third Sector Additional Needs Alliance, a professional network which is chaired by Children in Wales also submitted amendments to the Bill which were considered by the Committee at Stage 2 and the whole Assembly at Stage 3. It was pleasing that some Welsh Government amendments responded to some concerns previously raised by Children in Wales and TSANA and resulted in:

- A change in the process for making the Code of Practice from a draft negative resolution procedure to an affirmative resolution procedure
- A requirement for a local authority to have an early years additional needs officer



- For non-maintained publically funded providers of nursery education to have regard to the Code of Practice
- For a template to be provided for the Individual Development Plan

Children in Wales is also delighted that following lobbying by the Children's Commissioner for Wales and organisations including Barnardo's Cymru and Children in Wales, both the UNCRC and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Disabled People will be included on the face of the Bill. However, unlike the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act, the duty of due regard to the Conventions will be at a strategic level and on a local authority and an NHS body rather than individuals.

You can follow the passage of the Bill on the National Assembly for Wales website. If you would like more information about the work that TSANA has been doing, please contact [catherine.lewis@childreninwales.org.uk](mailto:catherine.lewis@childreninwales.org.uk).

## Brexit and children's rights in Wales

Sean O'Neill Children in Wales

A quarter of the UK's population are children, and that means over 700,000 children and young people living in Wales. For the most part the impact that Brexit might have on their rights has been absent from discussion about leaving the European Union.

With that in mind, Children in Wales and the Wales Observatory welcomed almost 90 delegates and speakers to Cardiff Bay on 08 November to discuss Brexit and its implications for children's rights in Wales

The day focused upon a variety of issues and concerns, from securing the fundamental rights of children post-Brexit, the damage done to social cohesion by the divisive debate, the potential loss of funding to communities and services in Wales, and the lack of meaningful opportunity for children and young people to participate in the referendum, or the Brexit process.

Attendees discussed what they thought were the biggest impacts of Brexit and what their priorities were, and how they and young people could be engaged further as Brexit progressed.

A report on the discussions will be available in due course. The briefing paper which formed the basis of the discussion, can be downloaded from the Children in Wales website at

Since the event, Children in Wales joined other children's rights organisations around the UK, in writing to UK parliamentarians. The letter called on them to ensure that the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights was incorporated into the EU (Withdrawal) Bill. Catriona joined executives from Coram, The Children's Society, National Children's Bureau, Children England, Children in Scotland, Children and Families Across Borders, Children's Rights Alliance England and Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights) in co-signing the letter in The Telegraph.

Children in Wales also provided evidence to the Joint Committee on Human Rights inquiry Implications of the EU (Withdrawal) Bill. The evidence focused on the importance of the EU Charter of Fundamental Human Rights. It can be downloaded from our website at <http://bit.ly/2As7Xc7>.

As this work progresses more information will be included in the E-brief and our website, but you can also join in the discussion online, through #BrexitCYPWales.



## Getting More Involved in Social Care - Disability

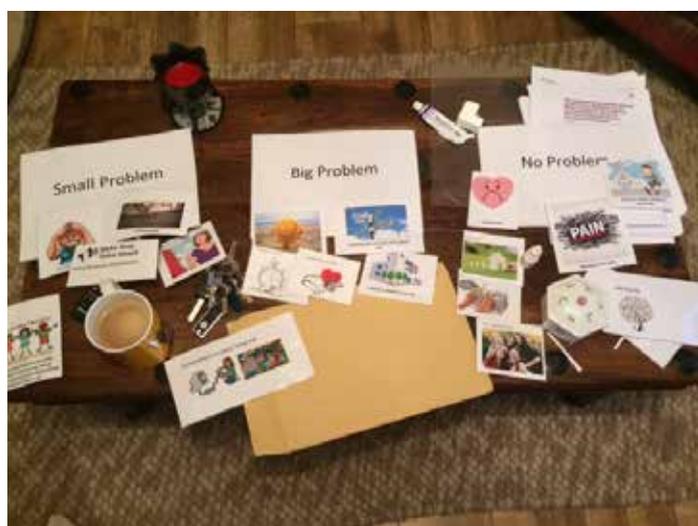
Danni Richards, Children in Wales



The Getting More Involved in Social Care project has been doing some exciting work with disabled children and young people over the last couple of months. We have selected and recruited participation trainers to work with on participation and rights. The young people had an initial getting to know you meeting at the Harvester where we engaged young people using ice breakers. We have lots of work to do over the next few months as the young people will be training other young disabled people on participation, their rights and how to be involved in the

care planning process. The young people will be working towards accreditation and exploring how they can make their training accessible, fun and interactive.

We also worked with young people with arthritis. We ran a variety of workshops and activities to inform the project, and the young people shared their views on what matters to them in terms of their health. We explored this in detail and found it is more than just physical health, but emotional and mental health too. The young people gave very detailed accounts of what matters to them, for example, the fact that the medication they have to take can be very aggressive and impact the way they feel, their moods, their sleep and education. They felt it was important to have hospitals close to home and access to physiotherapy and hydro therapy if this is needed.



Young people often felt guilty and that they were burdening parents and friends when they were having a bad day so they felt it would be invaluable to have an online support group where they could speak to other young people with the same impairment. This would enable them to offload and help with managing their feelings. Education was a huge priority for the young people they often felt pressured to catch up and unsupported when they needed time off.

The young people felt very strongly that they would benefit from some home tutoring when they were unwell to avoid missing chunks of work. The young people also highlighted that it was more difficult when they transitioned from primary school to secondary as in primary they have one teacher however, in secondary they have several teachers and felt they missed the one person point of contact. This often led to young people not asking for help when they were in pain. Parents raised points around not knowing what reasonable adjustments to ask for exams and said they had failed to recognise that they are carers. They would like to know and understand their rights as carers and how to access groups and support for this.

Finally, we have been working with the Vale Speak Up project. This project has been developing role plays of social work assessments. Young people have been using forum theatre to practice how to have their voices heard during an assessment and how they can prepare for assessments and be part of their care planning process. We interrupted the role play at different points to discuss different parts of the assessments and to get input from other young people in the group. Well done to the young people for their creativity and excellent drama skills. The young people's views will be used to inform the Getting More Involved in Social Care project. The young people came up with some great ideas about how they can prepare for assessments and build confidence.



They also looked at different skills practitioners can have that would help them to feel included and able to participate in their assessments. Additionally we looked at their rights and what these meant in assessments.

If you would like more information about our the Getting More Involved project and our work with disabled children and young people, please contact [danni.richards@childreninwales.org.uk](mailto:danni.richards@childreninwales.org.uk).



**Children in Wales**  
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**Please help us to make a difference**

Children in Wales needs funding to help us be a powerful and effective force for change in children, young people and families' lives.

Leaving a gift in your Will is a way of showing that you believe in the future of our children, young people and families' in Wales and will enable us to continue to influence the policy decisions that affect them.

You will also help us to create more opportunities to work with children and young people themselves, so that they can play an active role

in identifying their concerns and helping us to develop practical solutions.

For more information about making a legacy donation, please email: [marcia.jones@childreninwales.org.uk](mailto:marcia.jones@childreninwales.org.uk)



## Getting More Involved in Social Care - Care experienced young people

Emma Sullivan, Children in Wales



A huge thank you goes out to the care experienced young people and professionals across Wales who have supported our project so far, to develop our new e-guide for young people on the topic of health assessments. Seeing your LAC nurse and having a health assessment was an important issue to young people, and we held a series of workshops across Wales to explore the issue further to talk more about children's rights and well-being. Care experienced young people were able to ask key questions that they wanted answered - specifically around areas of consent and their rights to privacy. Our guide is designed for young people if they want to know more about their health assessments and what to expect. It can also be used by specialist LAC nurses and other health professionals who support care experienced young people.

It is now published and available online in both English and Welsh - you can check it out at [www.childreninwales.org.uk/resources/looked-after-children](http://www.childreninwales.org.uk/resources/looked-after-children)

Our guide on health assessments complements our previous work to date, including:

- Children's rights, health and well-being
- Ways to well-being
- Talking about mental health
- What you eat and how much you move

We are currently developing further resources for young people on issues including managing money and the impact on health and well-being, health and well-being support in education and contact with siblings. Each topic area is decided by the young people that we work with,

who have a lot of fantastic ideas about how things could be done better in the future. We are now able to use our guides to deliver training to care experienced young people across Wales so that they are aware of their rights under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

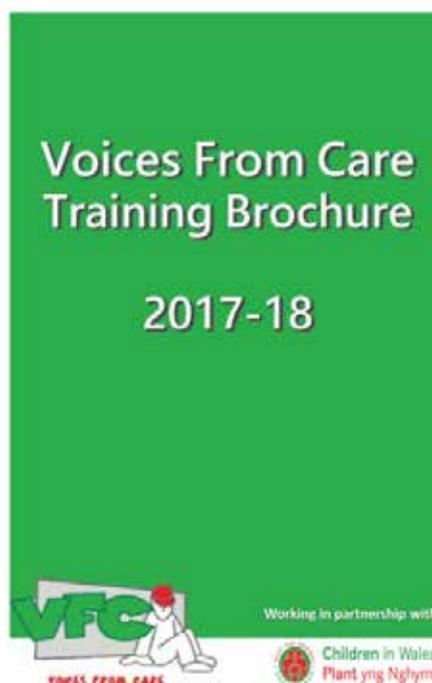
### Training opportunities for professionals

We are also working in partnership with Voices from Care to develop and deliver new training modules for professionals across the health and social care sector working with care experienced young people. We are proud that all courses will be co-delivered by young people who have been in the care system. Our approach to providing this training is supported by key principles which underpin the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014, namely:

- Co-production
- Voice and control
- Prevention and early intervention
- Collaboration/Multi-agency working
- Well-being

All of our training is suitable for a multi-agency audience. Our training brochure shows the sort of courses which will be available initially which can be accessed at [www.childreninwales.org.uk](http://www.childreninwales.org.uk)

If you are keen to know more about the project or wish to work in partnership please contact [emma.sullivan@childreninwales.org.uk](mailto:emma.sullivan@childreninwales.org.uk).



## County lines exploitation – Gangs, drugs and Wales

Mike Mainwaring, Children in Wales

Supply lines of drugs from Bristol into South Wales and from Manchester and Liverpool to North Wales have always existed. As a drugs worker in the early 90s working in a Street Drugs project in Port Talbot, I was aware that users would regularly drive or get on the train to bring back heroin and other little used (at the time) drugs. County Lines as emerged as a phenomenon over the last ten years and is starting to affect Wales.

County lines is the police term for urban gangs supplying drugs to suburban areas and market and coastal towns using dedicated mobile phone lines or “deal lines”. It involves child criminal exploitation (CCE) as gangs use children and vulnerable people to move drugs and money. Gangs establish a base in the market location, typically by taking over the homes of local vulnerable adults by force or coercion in a practice referred to as ‘cuckooing’.

County lines is a major, cross-cutting issue involving drugs, violence, gangs, safeguarding, criminal and sexual exploitation, modern slavery, and missing persons; and the response to tackle it involves the police, the National Crime Agency, a wide range of Government departments, local government agencies and VCS (voluntary and community sector) organisations. County lines activity and the associated violence, drug dealing and exploitation has a devastating impact on young people, vulnerable adults and local communities. It involves using children as drugs mules (carrying drugs for others), children being trafficked within the UK, the young people being trapped by drug use (dependence), debts owed to the gang leaders and or the threat of violence. The young people can be drawn in through the allure of money, kinship and status, do not recognise they are being groomed (often by other young people) or recognise their exploitation by others. The glamour and exciting sooner turning to isolation and fear.

It is interesting that children who have been caught up in county lines are being treated by police as just that - children. They are being referred to the National Referral Mechanism. The National Referral Mechanism is the process for identifying and providing support for potential victims of modern slavery, including trafficking. For children, support is provided by local authorities.

Children in Wales currently runs training on substance misuse, child sexual exploitation and homelessness and there is clear links to gangs. The role of gangs is an issue, such as the grooming of young girls and boys for child sexual exploitation and there is demand for more

in-depth training specifically on gangs and how this is and might affect Wales in the future. We have developed a training which will be rolled out in 2018 beginning with the first training in Children in Wales Cardiff Office on 25th April. The training will cover the history of gangs; the law; current trends; sentencing; the links to drugs, child sexual exploitation and child sexual abuse; safeguarding and supporting young people.

If you would like more information about this work or are interested in booking some training, please contact [training@childreninwales.org.uk](mailto:training@childreninwales.org.uk).

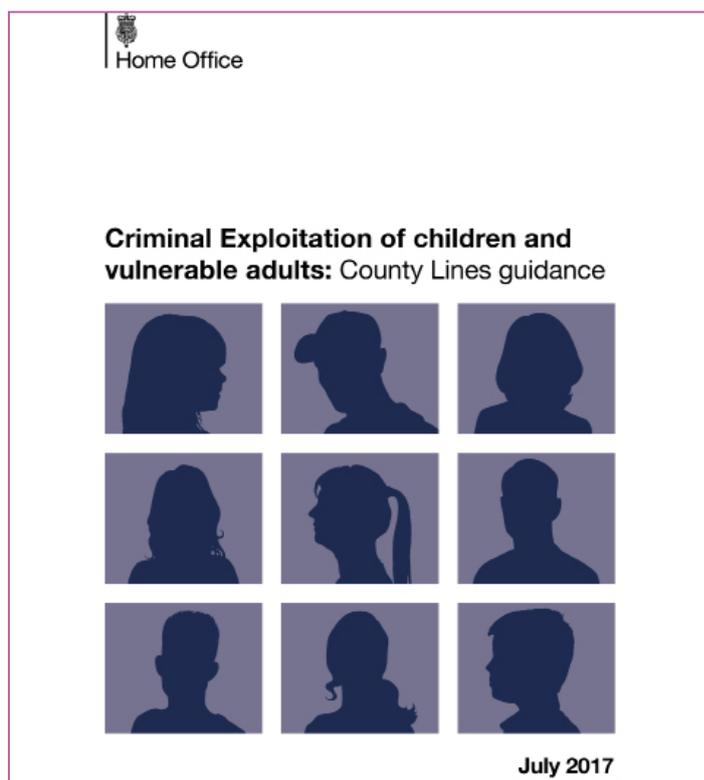
### Resources and further information

NSPCC: *Gangs and young people How you can help keep children and young people safe*  
<http://bit.ly/2B99hxs>

Home Office: *Preventing youth Violence and Gang Involvement: Practical Advice for Schools and Colleges*  
<http://bit.ly/2jb0brU>

Home Office: *Criminal Exploitation of children and vulnerable adults - County Lines guidance*  
<http://bit.ly/2zVJo6p>

Home Office: *Advice to Parents and Carers on Gangs: Helping Young People make the Right Choice* <http://bit.ly/2iDHT9>



## Child Poverty Regional Event, South East Wales – 17 October 2017

Cheryl Martin, Children in Wales



Following our successful Child Poverty Conference held in June 2017, Children in Wales organised a follow-on event to take forward and discuss some of the themes which came out of the Conference, such as partnership working, engagement and participation, evidencing impact and sustainability. This symposium was hosted by Tai Calon Community Housing, one of the largest social housing providers in Blaenau Gwent, and attracted 25 people from a range of disciplines, including local authorities, housing, social care and education.

The event was a great opportunity for organisations and projects to join together, discuss progress on the Welsh Government initiatives to tackle child poverty, talk about the challenges faced by practitioners working with children, young people and their families and share good practice on what works in tackling child poverty.

The format of the morning was a mixture of speakers and round table discussions, based on the Future Generations' Sustainable Development Principle, also known as the '5 Ways of Working.'

We heard from three different speakers: Alison Jones, South East Wales Education Achievement Service, gave a presentation on Closing the Gap in Education through effective use of the Pupil Development Grant and the work they have done with a number of primary schools on a project called '10 10', working with 10 schools in deprived communities on 10 ways to raise attainment levels amongst. Alison also directed participants to various tools, including Welsh Government and Estyn guidance and the Family and Community Engagement (FaCE) toolkit.

Following the presentation there were round table discussions on what was currently happening in different sectors/organisations that help children and young people close the education gap, and what could be done differently or better to support children and families to raise attainment levels, using the Future Generations Sustainable Development Principle.

Ruth Macdonald, Action in Caerau & Ely (ACE), gave a presentation on their Children First Pilot, which they are developing in partnership with Cardiff Council and Public Service Board. This is an initiative they have undertaken independently of the Welsh Government Pioneers for Children First. Ruth's presentation gave an overview

of the background to ACE that has provided a springboard to build partnerships with key stakeholders to create 'A long-term place-based approach to improve the lives of children, young people and their families, building a resilient and vibrant community.'

The presentation was followed by round table discussions on whether participants were aware of or involved in developing local Children First initiatives and what roles different sectors/organisation could play in developing place based approaches, again using the Future Generations Sustainable Development Principle. For both round table discussions, ideas were recorded on flip charts and collected at the end of the session. These will be used to inform policy and good practice in the area of child poverty.

The final presentation was given by Ross Watts, Head of Communities at Tai Calon. Ross is responsible for the Community Investment and Involvement Team and spoke passionately about the work done by the housing association to support tenant families and children to improve their quality of life, by creating opportunities and vibrant neighbourhoods, including cinema nights, fun days out for children and families and school holiday activities.

Children in Wales would like to thank all those involved in making our first regional Child Poverty Event such a success. We are now planning a similar event in North East Wales for early 2018. For more information about our work on tackling child poverty, please contact [cheryl.martin@childreninwales.org.uk](mailto:cheryl.martin@childreninwales.org.uk).

### **Sustainable Development Principle – 5 Ways of Working Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs**

- Long Term - the importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs
- Prevention - how acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives
- Integration - considering how the public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies
- Collaboration - acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives
- Involvement - the importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves

## Working with fathers

Jon Trew, trainer

I was recently asked by a young father whether I thought it was OK for him to take his three year old daughter into a male changing room when they go swimming. I said that he should, but his question got me thinking about how the presence of children can effect men's behaviour for the better.

Most men are not monsters and if you take a three year old girl into a male changing room, men will behave appropriately. My advice was to say loudly when going in "alright guys - I'm bringing my daughter in" to give everyone a heads up. However the presence of children amongst a group of men in my experience changes the dynamic and atmosphere for the better.

It is interesting that even the faces of young children actually improves the behaviour of most men. In Woolwich, in London after the riots, shop owners worried about the negative effects of the security shutters have started painting the faces of babies on them. The idea was that the sight of young children subconsciously encourages less violence and promotes better behaviour. Local mobile phone shop owner Zaphir Awan said "Most passers-by who see him smile. I wish we could keep the shutters down and open the shop at the same time. That would be ideal.

This belief that men behave better when children are around is not just a gut feeling, there is some real science behind it. According to the Fatherhood Institute, the act of caring for babies renders men more nurturing, and is correlated with raised levels of hormones associated with tolerance and trust called oxytocin. Other hormones released are called cortisol which encourages sensitivity to infants and prolactin which promotes bonding. Among males, physiological changes can occur with 15 minutes of holding a baby; and the more experienced a male is as a caregiver, the more pronounced are the changes.

So when children are around men and men are acting in a caring role, it does have positive effects. I've been really impressed by the charity MenCare . They are an international campaign that believe that society can be transformed by the involvement of men in the caregiving of children. We don't keep children safer by segregating them from men but by the opposite, by involving men more in their caregiving. Amazingly the benefits of men becoming more involved with the caring of children does not just effect men and their children but improves the lives of women too, by reducing domestic violence and improving relationships.

To find out more about Children in Wales' training courses on working with fathers, please visit our website, [www.chidreninwales.org.uk/training](http://www.chidreninwales.org.uk/training).



## Update from the Children's Commissioner for Wales

Professor Sally Holland, Children's Commissioner for Wales

"You're so ugly, I don't know how you dare show your face in public", a sentence uttered to me over two decades ago, but a sentence that has stuck in my mind ever since. Luckily this, and another small incident in primary school, are my only personal experiences of bullying in school. But they've stuck in my mind. Because those words hurt.

Since becoming Children's Commissioner I've heard from literally thousands of children and young people who have shared experiences with me of bullying, experiences which can have a devastating impact on a child's life. This is why I decided to undertake a large scale consultation with over 2000 children and nearly 300 professionals, to explore their feelings and experiences of bullying.

We engaged with children in a projective exercise that allowed children to express their feelings and experiences through an imaginary character called 'Sam.' Cartoons, pictures, blogs and vlogs were submitted by children and young people from across Wales. During the analysis of the content, I was particularly struck by the strength of the negative emotions in the pictorial and written data, which reinforces how destructive bullying can feel for children.

Making rights a reality for all children in Wales



# SAM'S STORY

**Listening to children and young people's experiences of bullying in Wales**

"It will get better. There is always someone to talk to. Whether that's your mum, sister, teacher or peer. There is someone who wants to help; and you have to let them."

Secondary School Pupil



### Sam's key messages

- Difference is seen by children as a key issue in bullying. This includes issues such as ethnicity, poverty, disability and gender stereotyping
- Isolation is another cause of bullying: this is portrayed as children with no friends and sometimes new to the school
- Parents are often seen as unresponsive or ineffective
- A trusted person to talk to seems to be a key pathway to deal with bullying and often, that trusted person is a teacher

Key findings from nearly 300 professionals working with children and young people:

- Consistency; a number expressed a wish for more consistency across schools within local authority areas and across Wales as a whole. The material collected suggests a very diverse and uneven picture
- Monitoring: participants noted there was no standard or consistent national system for monitoring instances of bullying
- Nature of bullying: whilst there were certain typical characteristics that made a child more vulnerable to being bullied, there was also a very wide range of possible factors and that this was a complex issue
- - Definition of bullying: recurring theme was the importance of clarity about what bullying is

Back in 2003, the first children's commissioner for Wales (and the first in the UK), Peter Clarke spoke about how 'bullying is a subject that almost always comes up in my conversations with children and young people'.

That year, the then Welsh Assembly Government published 'Respecting Others', guidance which aimed to provide information on tackling bullying in schools. Fourteen years on, that guidance has not been reviewed.

Bullying is an age-old problem but I believe that we have the means and motivation to prevent and tackle it in 21st century Wales. I want to see a radical overhaul of how it's tackled and recorded because currently, the lack of consistency in how schools and authorities are handling and reporting cases of bullying in schools is leading to some children feeling isolated and others unsure of what to do if they are aware of others being bullied.

We are at a critical time in relation to education in Wales, with the reform of the curriculum well underway and the long-standing guidance on bullying finally under review.

## Children's Commissioner for Wales/GDPR

The purpose of 'Sam's Story' is to highlight the real impact that being bullied is having on children's lives and to ensure these strong messages play a part in shaping the new curriculum, teacher training and the reform of anti-bullying guidance.

The good news is that there are encouraging whole-school approaches being adopted in many schools in Wales, such as the Kiva programme from Finland and Restorative Approaches. Additionally many secondary school students are taking the initiative to campaign and find solutions to identity based bullying such as homophobia, sexism, Islamophobia and racism. I would like every child and young person in Wales to be protected in these ways.

It was recently Anti-Bullying week. In conjunction with the Equality and Human Rights Commission in Wales and Penygawsi Primary School, my team created resources for schools linked to the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework, aimed at improving pupil wellbeing, which are available on our website - [www.childcomwales.org.uk](http://www.childcomwales.org.uk).

## General Data Protection Regulation: What does it mean for you?

Louise O'Neill, Children in Wales

Have you heard about the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)? GDPR is a European Union directive and its basic objective is to enforce stronger data security and privacy rules, among organisations, when it comes to protecting personal data. The law comes into effect in the UK in May 2018 and understanding the key elements, auditing and documenting all the information you currently store, and ensuring all your data collection and procedures are GDPR-compliant, is going to be a lengthy process.

We would like to suggest that it's now time for you to start thinking about this or to seek help from a third-party expert (such as a trusted partner or consultancy). Individuals and organisations will also need to ensure their security alert systems are equipped to spot and react to any break-ins quickly because, under the GDPR, data breaches will have to be reported within 72 hours.

So why is all of this so important? Failure to comply with the new law could lead to a huge fine and the rules are quite clear on the fact that whoever is responsible for the breach – whether an employee, a malicious attacker, or a partner or other third party – is irrelevant; it will be the organisation that foots the bill and suffers any consequent reputational damage.



A very useful document about the GDPR, called Preparing for the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) - 12 steps to take now can be found at <http://bit.ly/2Ai3xRS>. Alternatively you could contact the Information Commissioner's Office in Cardiff on 029 2067 8399 or [wales@ico.org.uk](mailto:wales@ico.org.uk) for advice.

Children in Wales will be starting its data audit in January 2018 and will be circulating a survey for you and your colleagues to complete. Please look out for this email!

If you need any further information, please do get in touch with us at [membership@childreninwales.org.uk](mailto:membership@childreninwales.org.uk).

## MEIC update: Summer Trends

Andrew Collins, ProMo Cymru

Traditionally a quiet period for Meic, summer 2017 was very busy compared with previous summers.

- Significant increase in mental health contacts including suicidal calls and threat to life contacts requiring police intervention
- Doubling of contacts by instant message to nearly half of all contacts – outstripping phone calls for first time
- nearly 5000 website visits including referral traffic from 120+ websites,
- Online campaigns, promotion and engagement yielding doubling of social media impressions to 200K+, doubling of video views, and increase in followers

### Feedback from Children and Young People

Survey results of 150+ young people at Pride Big Weekend showed a high level of bullying due to LGBT identity with nearly 75% of those surveyed experiencing bullying themselves, or knowing someone who had.

Children and young people contacting the helpline reported that as a result of the help received, most were better informed about where to go for help, and better able to look after themselves. Most had benefited from being given helpful suggestions or information, support to express themselves, putting them in touch with another helpful service.

I was really anxious before speaking to someone but later I was relaxed, calm. Love that it's confident, I didn't have to sign up or provide any personal details to get the support I needed. Amazing work. Definitely be recommending this to my friends" "Meic is a place where teens like me or young adults can express themselves and talk to people about how they feel and get the support they needed or need end I'm glad that my friend recommended this site To me it has helped me a lot"

### Collaboration with Professionals

Our online campaigns and promotion work is proving successful in engaging with a wide range of professionals.

Meic now regularly supports the Children's Commissioner's Rights Hour with messages being shared and retweeted including the Children's Commissioner for Wales, and the Children's Commissioner for Scotland.

Collaboration with the Wales Observatory on Human Rights of Children and Young People informed the production of Meic's interactive video supporting our children's rights campaign attracting 1000+ views and by a mostly hitherto unknown audience.

Meic is due to become a Trusted Partner of the Hwb - the Welsh Government website providing online tools and resources to all schools in Wales - so all its articles and resources will be hosted by and accessible through the Hwb. This will include anti-bullying resources developed in partnership with SchoolBeat.

Participation in Crucial Crew is proving invaluable; there is a direct correlation between our participation at these events and follow up contacts to the helpline. "I heard about you at a crucial crew meeting not long ago and remembered and thought that you could help me out and you did :)"

### Looking forward

As this magazine goes to print, it is hoped that Meic's future going forward from April 2018 will be confirmed. Having continued to enhance and develop it, it is clear from the statistics and comments from children and young people themselves, that the service is highly prized and valued.

### Note to Professionals: How Meic can help you support children and young people

Meic is a free, bilingual, confidential service available to children and young people 16 hours per day (8am - midnight), 7 days a week, 365 days a year, including all holidays

Accessed via:-

--> Phone 080880 23456

--> Text: 84001

--> Instant message: [www.meic.cymru](http://www.meic.cymru)

For information, e-mail [info@meic.cymru](mailto:info@meic.cymru)

