



Children in Wales

Plant yng Nghymru

ISSUE 65 - Spring 2018

www.childreninwales.org.uk

Speaking with one voice

Protecting family relationships

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Putting participation into practice

Young, migrant and Welsh



Also featuring:

- Young Wales celebratory event
- Family Fund
- General Data Protection Regulation
- Child and family poverty
- Children's Commissioner for Wales
- Positive parenting
- Brexit and children's rights
- MEIC Cymru

Welcome

Positive parenting is recognised as important for managing children's behaviour. Guidance and boundaries can aid children's well-being and future behaviours. However, harsh physical punishments have been shown to have negative outcomes for children, both in terms of behaviour and future health and life chances.

Along with partners in the CAU collaboration, Children in Wales has long campaigned to remove the legal defence of reasonable punishment in cases of assault and battery. Currently, there is an anomaly in the law whereby children are not fully protected from assault in the way that adults are. This legal defence means that children are the only group under UK law who can be legally hurt. We believe that children have a right to equal protection, and that removing it would give a strong message about children's rights and well-being.

Parents do however need to feel confident in dealing with bad behaviour without resorting to physical punishment so it is important to ensure that they have the parenting support that they need to learn strategies that work and consequently help them in their child-rearing role.

The Welsh Government recently held a consultation on views to inform the best way of removing the defence of reasonable punishment. This forms part of a wider plan to support children to have the best possible start in life. The proposed legislation will not create a new offence, but instead will prevent it being used as a defence against existing offences of assault and battery.

Reforming the law will be consistent with the Welsh Government's Positive Parenting programmes and remove ambiguity for professionals when working with parents. Equal protection for children will also be consistent with Wales' history of taking the lead within the UK on children's rights, as it was the first country to enshrine the UNCRC into its domestic law.



A change in the law will need to be backed up by information and support for families and professions on positive parenting. We recently held an event in partnership with ISPCAN, BASPCAN, and NSPCC Cymru looking at promoting positive parenting to help make the world a more peaceful place. Speakers at this event included Huw-Irranca-Davies AM, Minister for Children and Social Care, and a range of academics who shared research from the UK and internationally which helped to identify practical ways of improving parenting practice.

Children in Wales is delighted that the Welsh Government is honouring its commitments in its Manifesto to securing equal protection from assault for children. We hope legislation will be clear and straightforward, and build on meaningful engagement with parents from the #TalkParenting campaign and other positive parenting programmes.

Contents

Young Wales	3-5	Conference and meeting facilities	13
Brexit and children's rights	6	Disclosures of abuse	14
Poverty survey 2018	7	Family Fund	15
General Data Protection Regulation	8	Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)	16
Putting participation into practice	9	Young, Migrant and Welsh	17
Positive parenting conference	10-11	Children's Commissioner for Wales	18-19
Protecting family relationships	12-13	MEIC Cymru	19-20

Young Wales celebratory event

Andrea Storer, Children in Wales



On 23 March, over 80 young people from across Wales met at the National Museum of Wales to celebrate the work of Young Wales over the last three years.

The event celebrated the end of the third year of the Young Wales participation initiative, funded by the Welsh Government through the Children and Families Delivery Grant. The aim of Young Wales is to give children and young people a voice and ensure that they are heard by decision makers.



Attendees at the event were able to visit the Young Wales zone where we detailed a timeline of all our work and events since the beginning of our work.

Bethany Roberts MYP, from the Young Wales Project Board, read out a message at the event from the Minister for Children and Social Services, Huw Irranca-Davies AM. We also welcomed the Children's Commissioner for Wales and the Future Generations Commissioner to the event. Both Commissioners ran workshop sessions to discuss their work and priorities.

The Children's Commissioner for Wales also talked about her plan for the next three years, following the large consultation held in the first year of her post, called Beth Nesa/What next?

The event was much more than just an annual conference, with workshops and activities for everyone to enjoy included in the evening. Some of the fun activities including rapping, lyric writing, hoola hooping and a photobooth.

The evening included workshops with Time to Change Wales looking at mental health issues, MEIC Cymru, Youth Cymru, the National Assembly for Wales, Carmarthenshire Youth Council, Public Health Wales, Cardiff Young Carers Group, Cardiff Youth Council, and the Changing Minds project.



Thanks to everyone who attended the day – it was great to look back over all the successes of the last few years. We look forward to the next phase of Young Wales' work. To find out more about the event or the work of Young Wales please contact young.wales@childreninwales.org.uk or phone 02920342434.



North Wales voice

Mandy Davies, Children in Wales

We have a new group in North Wales called 'North Wales Voice' that has been set up to support the work of Young Wales.

The role of the group will be to support our areas of work by developing workshops, being involved in events and advising us of developing our working practice.

The group met for the first time on 17 February 2018 and took the time to get to know each other, did some group work focused activities and made some decisions about what they would like to see happen for the group.

This included:

- How to stay in touch with each other
- Needing more members from other areas for better representation
- Meet with the Young Persons Project Board (South Wales group)
- Meet 4 times a year
- Meeting locations and residential meetings

The group are looking forward to getting started on some Young Wales work and welcoming some new members. If you have questions or would like to know more please contact mandy.davies@childreninwales.org.uk.

Meet the team

Daniel Crookes (Gwynedd)



Toby Jones (Wrexham)



Lily Crawthray (Conwy)



Corey Waxwell (Conwy)



Zacchaeus Hyward(Conwy)



Richard Jones (Conwy)



Commonwealth Day 2018

Chris Richards, Children in Wales

On 12 March, Young Wales attended an event in London to celebrate Commonwealth Day 2018, as part of the British Youth Council's delegation from Wales.

Young Wales accompanied young people from Cardiff, Newport and Wrexham to the event which included a reception in Whitehall, where they were able to discuss their priorities.

This was followed by attendance at the annual flagship Commonwealth Day event attended by The Queen, other senior Royals, members of the Diplomatic Corps, a range of Commonwealth citizens and organisations and over 800 school children.

The service features a mixture of testimonies, performances and readings from different parts of the Commonwealth.

Young Wales also attended a lunch at the Office of the Secretary of State for Wales to celebrate Commonwealth Day.

Young people from Cardiff and RCT youth forums came to this meeting along with Children in Wales Chief Executive Catriona Williams OBE. The event was organised and hosted by the Secretary of State for Wales as part of the Commonwealth Big Lunch programme in partnership with the Eden Project.

The aim of the event was to engage across the community as Commonwealth citizens who benefit from shared language, laws and values. The Commonwealth Big Lunch is part of a wider set of events building up to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in April.



Leaders at this meeting will discuss common challenges and focus on delivering:

- A more prosperous future
- A more secure future
- A more sustainable future
- A fairer future

Ahead of Commonwealth Day, Young Wales also facilitated a meeting between young people meeting and Lord Ahmed, Minister for the Commonwealth and the UN at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The meeting covered a variety of topics of interest and importance to young people including youth unemployment, marine conservation, climate change, social and democratic inclusions and countering violent extremism.

If you would like more information, please contact Chris Richards on 02920 342434 or email chris.richards@childreninwales.org.uk.

Welsh MYPs meet to discuss campaigns for the year ahead

Chris Richards, Children in Wales

Welsh members of the UK Youth Parliament (UKYP), along with youth forum members from across Wales, came together in Cardiff in January for Convention 3 of the UK Youth Parliament.

The UKYP provides opportunities for 11-18 year olds to use their elected voice to bring about social change through meaningful representation and campaigning. Young Wales facilitates this work in Wales, ensuring Welsh MYPs are able to get their voices heard.

The Convention was held across the UK following the annual debate in Westminster, where MYPs held debates on topics of importance for young people, voted on through the Make Your Mark Ballot.

It was decided that the campaigns for the year ahead should look at the issues of votes at 16 and the Curriculum for Life.

In Wales, the work on the Curriculum for Life would include the Welsh Baccalaureate and the current work on creating a new curriculum. The issue of the voting age being lowered to 16 is also very timely, as the Welsh Government has consulted on the issue of local election reform, including allowing 16 year-olds in Wales to vote.

The Convention, held on 20 January in Cardiff, gave MYPs and youth forum members a chance to look at ways of taking these forward in their local areas. In addition, Young

Wales will be bringing groups of young people together to take forward these campaigns in Wales.

The UKYP Day of Action was also launched on 26 January to kick off the campaigning for the year. Both campaigns will run for 12 months this time, allowing MYPs the chance to reflect and track their progress over their term.

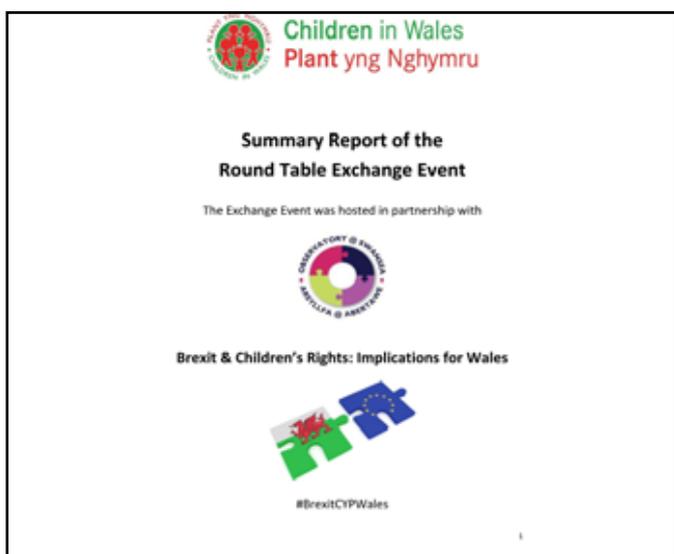
Young Wales now will accompany MYPs to the Youth Leadership Development Programme in April. This prepares the young people for their work representing young people in their area.

For more information about this work, please contact young.wales@childreninwales.org.uk or call 02920 342434.



Brexit and children's rights

Sean O'Neill, Children in Wales



Since the outcome of the referendum on leaving the European Union in June 2016, Children in Wales has been working in partnership with our members and partner organisations as well as young people to look at the implications that Brexit may have.

Our work is mainly focused on the implications for children rights, and the impact of leaving the EU will have on their families and the services which support them in Wales. The promotion and protection of children's rights and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) provides the platform for this work.

In particular, we are working with the Observatory on Human Rights of Children, Eurochild, UK Child Rights Alliances and the Wales UNCRC Monitoring Group to maximise opportunities to ensure young people's voices are heard in the process of leaving the EU.

The 5 guiding overarching principles for our work are:

- That there is no roll back on the existing rights of children and young people in Wales as part of the Brexit negotiation process
- That there is no roll back on the existing rights of children and young people in Wales following the date of departure from the EU
- That children and young people have mechanisms in place for their voices to be heard as part of the Brexit process
- That opportunities are in place for the engagement of the children's workforce and services which work to support children, young people and their families in Wales
- That full compliance with the UNCRC is maintained by all decision makers

On 8 November 2017, a Round Table Exchange event was held in Cardiff looking at the implications of Brexit on the rights of children. The event was organised by Children in Wales, and hosted in collaboration with the Wales Observatory on Human Rights of Children and Young People. The aim of the day was to look at the emerging issues and to identify the priorities and implications for children's organisations and those they work with.

Following this event, Children in Wales has produced a briefing paper giving feedback from the event and a summary of the main discussions and findings from the day.

This includes the following areas:

- Information, knowledge and education
- Impact on Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health
- Social Cohesion
- Future funding arrangements: Implications for services and communities
- Workforce
- Engagement with young people
- Protecting existing rights, entitlements and safeguarding arrangements

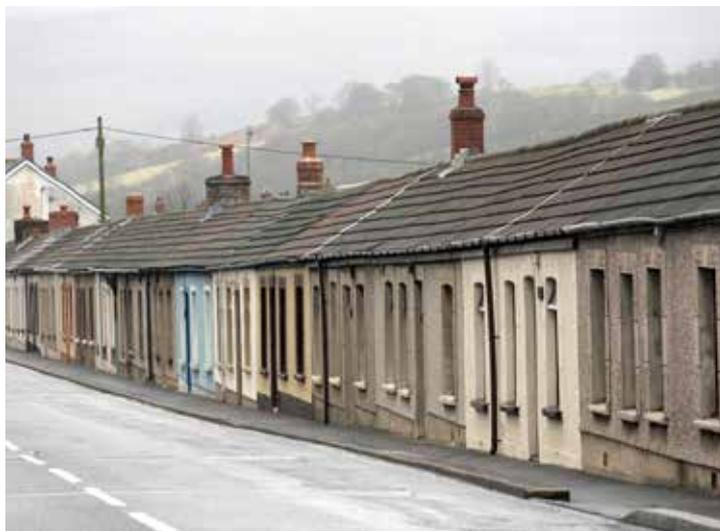
The report also makes recommendations to Welsh Government on how they can protect rights, support disadvantaged communities, and include children's voices in the decision making going forward.

You can download the report from the Children in Wales website at <http://bit.ly/2FUqHjj>. If you have any questions about this work, please contact sean.oneill@childreninwales.org.uk.



Poverty survey 2018

Cheryl Martin, Children in Wales



Figures published by End Child Poverty UK in January 2018 show that 28% of all children in Wales are living in poverty, with this figure much higher in some areas. Children are said to be living in poverty if they live in families with an income below 60% of the median income.

Children in Wales wants to help reduce the numbers of children who are living in poverty, and mitigate the impact on children, young people and their families.

For the past three years, Children in Wales has conducted a workforce survey and published a report of our findings *:Child and Family Poverty in Wales: A snapshot of key issues raised by families*. We are repeating the survey for 2017/18 to give us an up to date picture of poverty in Wales and to identify trends over the three year period.

Last year's survey identified the most common poverty related issued as:

- Impact of Welfare Reform and associated changes to the benefit system
- Housing (in relation to sufficiency and availability of social housing, and housing quality)
- Impact of the Bedroom Tax or spare bedroom subsidy
- Food Poverty (including the increase in the use of foodbanks)
- Debt
- Energy costs
- Rising cost of living (including families struggling with everyday essential costs)

Common poverty related problems were intensified for lone parent families, families with a disabled child or parent, large families and families living in rural communities.

How much has changed in the past year?

We are keen to hear from you, to help us understand what are the main poverty related issues currently facing children and families in Wales today and how much this has changed over the past year. We are interested to hear about both 'positive' and 'negative' changes, or where there has been little or no change.

Your information will help us in our work with policy makers, including Welsh Government Ministers

We are especially keen to get responses to identify what are the most pressing issues in relation to child poverty in Wales today. If you have, and are able to share any case examples from practice to support your answers, we would also be very keen to receive these.

Our survey

To take part in the survey, please visit <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/TP9PKV9> for the English version or <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/TPSHXRH> for the Welsh version by 13 April 2018.

For more information about our annual survey or our work on child poverty, please contact Cheryl Martin on 02920 342434 or email cheryl.martin@childreninwales.org.uk.



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

Louise O'Neill, Children in Wales



Further to the previous article in the Winter magazine, we thought it would be a good idea to remind you about the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) that will be coming into effect on 25 May 2018. If you store information about people at your workplace, including work you do at home or on laptops and other electronic devices, then I would strongly suggest that you start the process of ensuring you will be compliant with the new laws.

You can find lots of helpful information about the GDPR and what it will involve on the Information Commissioner's Office website at <http://bit.ly/2FUf6kb>. The document called *Preparing for the GDPR - 12 steps to take now* is particularly useful in setting out what you need to do to comply with the new law. Alternatively you could contact the Information Commissioner's Office in Cardiff directly on 029 2067 8399 or wales@ico.org.uk for advice.

The law around storing and sharing information about people is changing, so please have a look into this. Failure to comply with the new law could lead to huge fines.

In preparation for the new legislation, Children in Wales has been looking at our own existing Data Protection procedures for a few months now.

We are currently in the process of:

- Updating our Privacy Notice
- Undertaking a data audit to find out what information we hold within the organisation, where and how it is stored
- Asking all our contacts for their permission to store their information safely and securely, and how they would like to hear from us in the future, eg, by email or phone
- Updating all our marketing flyers and booking forms for events, conferences and training
- Updating the forms we use when working with children and young people
- Providing training for all staff

Hopefully this will help the type of things that you may need to consider at your place of work, but please do get in touch if you need any further information. Please send an email to membership@childreninwales.org.uk or ring 029 2034 2434.



Putting participation into practice

Mike Mainwaring, Children in Wales

Participation means taking part in decisions that effect your life. This is a fundamental right for children and young people and is enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) under Article 12. Children in Wales is a rights-based organisation and participation is at the heart of our work, ensuring children's voices are heard by Welsh Government and highlighted throughout its training.

To complement our own participation work, Children in Wales has been running introductory sessions on children and young people's participation. The training has been very well received, although participants have said that they would appreciate longer and more in-depth sessions. Due to this demand we have developed a one day course which will be run in March.

The training focuses on the theory of participation, including practical audits of current practice and action plans to increase participatory opportunities and improve practice. Age-appropriate strategies for including children and young people that are explored along with practical and creative methods of engagement.

Previous participants have gone away to use the training to develop ideas for improving their Looked After Children Forums; ensure learners are encouraging CYP Participation; research project: creative engagement methods for/with young people; use practical examples of carrying out participation work with children and young people; use this to develop youth board within health; use the training as part of training with a youth board.

Participants commented on the usefulness of the training by stating:

"The discussions and knowledge of the trainer"
"The practical examples of involving young people"
"Different examples of encouraging participation"

Future Training

The course is aimed at practitioners working directly with children and young people who want to expand their practice into enabling and involving children and young people in their organisations day to day decision making processes. The course will give participants the tools and skills to work with children and young people, preparing them to take part; developing their skills and making the most of their participation. The course will cover the background theory but mostly concentrate on practicing skills to use in the workplace. Participants will leave the course better informed, more knowledgeable about children's rights and participation and with the confidence to use these skills in their workplace.

The course will involve an organisational audit, examine areas for development, action planning and skills development for themselves and their staff teams. Participants will take away a toolkit of activities to use with children and young people and the confidence to put them into practice.

For more information please visit the Children in Wales website or email training@childreninwales.org.uk.



Positive parenting conference

Geraldine Murphy, Children in Wales

Timing was perfect for a Promoting Positive Parenting Conference that took place in Cardiff on March 14th. It was held as the Welsh Government consults on removing the legal defence of 'reasonable punishment' in cases where adults are charged with assaulting a child. This will give children the same level of legal protection against assault as adults. Closing this loophole will bring Wales in line with dozens of countries including the Republic of Ireland, Germany, New Zealand and Spain and give Welsh children equal protection under the law.

The conference was hosted jointly by four organisations, Children In Wales, NSPCC Cymru, BASPCAN, a membership association for the child protection workforce in England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, and with IPSCAN, the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect.

Delegates and speakers explored the relevance to practice in Wales of IPSCAN's International Study on Promoting Positive Parenting. The study covered 23 different countries from all 5 regions and the diversity of respondents provides a rich variety of perspectives and insights into how to prevent violence towards children. It also raises a number of critical issues for exploration about how best to promote positive parenting.

The conference was jointly chaired by Des Mannion, NSPCC's Head of Service for Cymru/Wales, and Catriona Williams, OBE, Children In Wales Chief Executive. The Minister for Children and Social Care, Huw Irranca-Davies gave the first speech of the day. The Minister said that the way parents support their children in their formative years is more important than other factors such as social class or family structure. He stressed that physical punishment of a child is no longer acceptable in a modern, progressive Wales and that it goes against the Welsh Government's commitment to giving all children the best possible start in life.

'We now know that physical punishment can have negative long term impacts on a child's life chances and we also know it is an ineffective punishment. If there is any potential risk of harm to a child, then it is our obligation as a Government to take action. This is why we are committed to removing the defence of reasonable punishment, which reinforces our long-standing commitment to children's rights, based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.'

Jenny Gray, OBE, from ISPCAN and Enid Hendry from BASPCAN, presented the main findings of the report and led discussions with delegates about how to improve parenting practice to achieve positive outcomes for children and young people in Wales. Jenny Gray stressed the importance of working with parents and caregivers. She noted that public health approaches to prevention of violence against children have identified primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of prevention. She suggested that services to parents and caregivers should include all three levels.

Enid Henry reported on the main barriers to implementing positive parenting programmes that were identified in the study. These are funding, parental engagement and participation, social and cultural attitudes, workforce, lack of political will, major stresses on families, inadequate legal, policy and standards framework, and inadequate services.

Essential elements of violence prevention strategies are set out in the report's recommendations. These include the promoting of positive parenting which has a key role in social learning and enhancing relationships. It is seen as the core to preventing harmful interactions, harsh parenting, and the sorts of perceptions which justify maltreatment. Providing parenting support through the first years of a child's life is strongly supported by evidence to improve parenting, reduce parental stress, enhance the resilience of children, and prevent child maltreatment. The promotion of positive non-violent parenting should therefore form a key element of a country's strategy to prevent violence against children and improve their developmental outcomes.

Dr Arnon Bentovim, Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist and Director of the organisation Child and Family Training, spoke about the impact of toxic childhood stress on brain health and how it disrupts normal development of brain structure leading to deficits in tested memory and attention capacities. He noted that an unsafe, unpredictable family environment will teach children that they are in constant danger of being harmed, even when they are safe. It will then be difficult for those children to build relationships and become confident in their abilities. This puts these children at high risk of developing anxiety and depression, and to react with anger and oppositional behaviour. But promoting positive parenting has a key role in social learning and enhancing relationships and, in turn, is the core to preventing harmful interactions, harsh parenting, and the sorts of perceptions which justify maltreatment.

In the afternoon, the focus was on looking at examples of good practice in supporting parents. Enid Henry set out the main features of effective parenting programmes. These involve a sound programme theory, clearly defined target population, appropriately timed, acceptable to clients, sufficient sessions, well trained and well supervised staff, and robust monitoring and evaluation.

Ceri Wyn Jones, Lead Family Support Worker for the Flying Start Parenting Team in Gwynedd and Danny Creek, Lead Family Support Officer for the Families First Parenting Team in Gwynedd outlined their approach to supporting parenting. They stressed the importance of investing in the workforce which includes motivational Interviewing, coaching, quality supervision, NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming), on-going support from in-house training for personal and professional development, access to specialist training for multi-agency working and a focus on annual service improvements.

Diane Hunter, Development and Impact Manager in the NSPCC's Children's Services Directorate gave a talk about Building Blocks which is a creative, home based programme, that teaches parents and carers practical skills to help them care for their children satisfactorily.

Perhaps the most memorable presentation of the day was that of Faye, a mum of three and Kelly, a mum of two from Ebbw Vale, who are ambassadors of NSPCC Cymru/Wales' Take 5 campaign. They spoke about how they have used positive parenting techniques with their children. In conversation with Viv Laing of NSPCC Cymru/Wales Faye said

"In the past I've lost control and got upset and angry, but it's not good for anybody in that situation. When you've lost control, you can feel guilty afterwards. You shout when you don't want to. You realise afterwards in hindsight you could have dealt with the situation better."

Kelly said: "It's important to Take 5 because if you lose your cool and start shouting it's going to make the situation worse. Take 5 minutes, calm down and get yourself together. When we both have calmed down it makes the situation better."

For more information, please contact Geraldine Murphy on 02920342434 or email geraldine.murphy@childreninwales.org.uk.



Protecting family relationships - good contact in care

Emma Sullivan, Children in Wales



Children in Wales has recently launched a new guide for care experienced young people on good contact in care. Having contact with your birth family is a really crucial issue for children and young people. Children and young people want to be listened to and to have a say when decisions are being made about what kind of contact they have. We also know from our work with kinship carers that contact features as a major concern for them too. Arrangements are often negotiated and re-negotiated to ensure plans are working well. It is essential to make sure that contact is safe and is meeting the best interests of the child. This should be at the heart of any decision making and planning.

Good contact

The new guide has been designed to get children and young people thinking about their contact arrangements and what they would like these to look like in practice. It also includes case studies and quotes from children and young people who have experience of managing these issues as well as details of where to get advice and support if needed.

We asked young people what 'good' contact meant to them. Words they used to describe good contact include safe, normal, enjoyable, longer, normal, supported, welcome, easy, choices, and not so emotional.

Young people said the following about good contact:

- "It's fun and enjoyable."
- "I have an understanding of where I came from and my family story."
- "I felt happier and more settled in my placement."
- "I like the chance to be a role model for my younger brothers and sisters."
- "It was important to keep that family bond, I think in the long term it's important as I won't always be in care."
- "I just wanted to feel part of my family and know what's going on, how people are doing and tell them how I'm doing."

Social media

Now more than ever, children and young people are communicating with friends and family on social media including WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter and more.

Managing the use of social media brings its own particular challenges for looked after children and their carers, but we know when this is managed safely it can be a really good option for children and young people to help maintain family relationships

A recent study carried out by the University of East Anglia's Centre for Research on the Child and Family has found that the use of social media can bring "psychological and emotional benefits to young people in care outweighing the potential risk it poses". This research raises interesting questions as to how professionals can be more creative in using these technologies to their advantage whilst also keeping children and young people safe.

Children in Wales worked in partnership with Voices from Care to develop this guide and we will be looking to take this piece of work further by ensuring this issue is kept on the agenda with key stakeholders and corporate parents across Wales.

Our guide on contact complements and sits with additional resources we have created for young people on

topics including children's rights, health and well-being, mental health, healthy eating and exercise and health assessments. Contact was raised by children and young people as a key issue for their emotional health and well-being. This raises key questions about how contact plans and arrangement are prioritised to ensure children and young people are being listened to and respected in their right to family life (Article 8, UNCRC).

The guide is available online at www.childreninwales.org.uk/resources/looked-after-children. Young people can download it on their phone or tablet or alternatively it can be used by professionals working with children and young people who want to know more about their rights to family contact, what they can ask for and how to get advocacy and support around this issue.

If you want to know more about the project, please get in touch by emailing Emma.Sullivan@childreninwales.org.uk.

Conference and meeting facilities

Children in Wales has a conference room at our head office in the centre of Cardiff, which is available for hire.

With good natural light, the conference room is situated on the ground floor and is fully compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act. The room can accommodate up to 35 people theatre style, 22 people boardroom style and other layouts can be arranged. The room is equipped with a LCD Projector, flip chart stand, pens and pad, screen, OHP, TV and DVD/ video recorder. Arrangements can also be made to hire a laptop and other equipment at an additional charge.



Refreshments can be organised on-site, however buffet lunches will need to be organised by the hirer. Children in Wales is in regular contact with local caterers, so recommendations can be offered.

For more information, please visit <http://www.childreninwales.org.uk/aboutus/facilities/conference-meeting-facilities/>.

Helping professionals deal with children's disclosures of abuse

Cecile Gwilym, NSPCC



"I never went and asked for help, but no-one ever asked me". - Young person (No-One noticed, No-One Heard, Allnock & Miller, NSPCC, 2013)

The NSPCC has launched a brand new project, "Professionals Breaking the Silence", which aims to help professionals deal with children's disclosures of abuse. Key findings from NSPCC research, No-one Noticed, No-One Heard (Allnock & Miller, 2013), highlighted a need for better awareness among professionals of the signs of abuse and to reduce the barriers to disclosure, as too often children's disclosures of abuse go unheard or unnoticed. Early disclosure is important given delays in disclosing abuse exposes children to significant further harm, and evidence suggests early disclosure is associated with better emotional outcomes into adulthood (Pipe et al., 2007)¹.

Being a good listener is seen as a key desirable personal quality for a professional, as identified in a literature review by Cossar et al (2013). Other desirable qualities identified included being easy to talk to, welcoming, friendly, kind and understanding. The importance of being able to speak to someone they know will believe them has also been highlighted (Ungar, et al, 2009; Miller and Allnock, 2013; McElvaney, Greene and Hogan, 2014; McElvaney, 2015; Tucker, 2011).

However, those receiving disclosures are often unprepared to handle these appropriately because of lack of information, fear and their own emotional reactions (Fontes and Plummer, 2010). Faller (2007) points to the role of embarrassment or discomfort in 'blocking' professionals' ability to hear a disclosure and respond adequately.

Young people's and professionals different understandings of what is meant by the term 'listening' has also been highlighted as an area of concern. A research project by Mcleod (2006) found that even though social workers had described making significant efforts to listen to them, young people did not feel that their voices had been heard. The professionals understood listening as "paying

respectful attention" to what the young people had to say, while young people felt that "listening was demonstrated by delivering services that accorded their expressed wishes".

While this brief overview of available literature shows that children and young people value "listening", it's also apparent that, from children and young people's perspectives, the current system does not always meet their needs, and there needs to be more evidence-based information and training, particularly around communication skills (Allnock and Miller, 2013; Jobe and Gorin, 2013) to enable professionals to listen in the way that children and young people need them to. There is also a lack of information and tools around what listening means in practice.

Within this context, the NSPCC aims to develop a set of tools/guidance/support for professionals to help them better listen, hear and notice young people's disclosures. The project is a novel and innovative way to help increase confidence among professionals who work with children to recognise and to act upon the signs of abuse, and ultimately improve children's experiences of the disclosure process.

The project seeks to translate research into practice and to:

- Use key research findings based on asking children about their experience of disclosing abuse
- Gather professionals' views on their experiences of dealing with disclosure.
- Gather professionals' views on the barriers they face when dealing with children disclosing abuse
- Gather professionals' views on developing a practical resource.

The NSPCC has been gathering the views of professionals in education, health, social care, the police and the law through an online survey (available at: <https://www.snapsurveys.com/wh/s.asp?k=151730760346>) and has also organised focus groups in Wrexham, Cardiff and Swansea.

The project will run until Summer 2018. Materials will be launched during Autumn 2018.

If you would like more details about the project, please contact Cecile Gwilym, Project Lead:
Cecile.Gwilym@nspcc.org.uk, 02920 108 051.

Family Fund – Grants for Disabled Children and Young People

Harriet Hey, Family Fund



Raising a disabled child or young person can be a struggle emotionally, physically and financially. Family Fund provides grants to families raising disabled children and young people, helping to ease the additional pressures and allowing disabled children to have the same opportunities as others.

Family Fund has recently received an additional £100,000 in funding to help families in Wales from the Garfield Weston Foundation. Families can now apply for grants for essential items such as clothing, bedding, washing machines or other white goods, or household items such as beds. This includes families in Wales who had received a grant in the last three years and were therefore not eligible to apply again due to changes in funding. Family Fund estimates that this funding will allow them to make grants to over 200 more families in Wales who have previously been unable to apply for support due to funding changes.

Charlotte's Story

Charlotte is 12 and lives in South Wales. She has cerebral palsy, autism and severe learning difficulties. Her mum, Hayley, said "She loves going swimming, gymnastics lessons, and listening to music, in lots of ways she's like any other 12 year old girl. She is very social and loves being around people."

"Recently, our dishwasher broke, and the door had to be held on with a cable tie which is obviously not ideal, but it caused problems for Charlotte too. She has special beakers which need to be kept sterile, and trying to achieve this with a broken dishwasher is not easy. What's more, Charlotte loves water and has no awareness of danger so a washing up bowl full of water could cause a potential risk for her. We applied for a grant for a new dishwasher and it's made a world of difference, we also purchased the extended warranty which means we shouldn't have to worry about it for a while!"

"In the past we have applied for a Haven break, that was lovely just to get away and have a bit of a holiday, and we've also applied for other household appliances which have been really helpful. Without the grant this time we'd have had to carry on with the broken dishwasher as I just wouldn't have been able to afford to buy a new one myself. It really has had a massive impact, so thank you Family Fund."

Their support is not only financial, Family Fund also run an online sleep support hub, Tired Out, designed to make it easier to find information, tips and resources about disabled children and sleep. You can keep up to date with sleep-related news, read family stories and find sleep services in your area at www.tiredout.org.uk.

Family Fund's Digital Inclusion programme offers free tablet training sessions to parents and carers, helping them keep up with their children and get the most out of their devices. Training is free to families who have received a tablet through a Family Fund grant, and covers a range of useful topics including customising devices to address accessibility needs, parental controls, and how to get the best out of built-in apps.

To find out more about Family Fund and how they could help families in your area visit their website: www.familyfund.org.uk or email info@familyfund.org.uk. You can also keep up with the latest news from Family Fund on Facebook (facebook.com/familyfund), Twitter ([@FamilyFund](https://twitter.com/FamilyFund)) and Instagram ([@Family_Fund](https://instagram.com/Family_Fund)).

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Alyson Francis, Public Health Wales

There has been a lot of interest in Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in Wales over the last year. Whilst this may be nothing new for some, for others it is bringing a very different way of looking at the work they do and appreciating the people they work with. What is new is that lots of people are talking about the long-term impacts of early childhood trauma.

In response to this interest the ACE Support hub has been established. The purpose of this team is 5 fold

- Spreading information and knowledge about ACEs
- Sharing evidence about what organisations can do differently to help prevent and mitigate ACEs
- Developing knowledge and skills amongst professionals, providing training for them to enable themselves and their organisations to change practice
- Pulling learning from individuals, communities, organisations and the wider system and sharing it
- Driving change and system transformation at local and national levels.

During the last 6 months we have been working with others across Wales to develop training for schools, youth services and the housing sector. We are developing an ACE Skills and Knowledge framework which will be out to consultation March following a series of focus groups across Wales in February. The framework will set out skills and knowledge across a number of tiers (awareness of ACEs through to specialist and leaders). We expect the framework will be useful for both individuals, teams and organisations to identify learning needs. Of course, training on its own is not going to bring about change, so we have been working on tools to support organisational readiness too, which will be available over the coming months.

We are holding ACEs in Practice events across Wales early this year, following a successful launch event in North Wales earlier this month; further dates will be available soon. Working with others, we have begun the development of an ACE informed vision for Wales to bring a common long-term goal this agenda. If you would like to be involved in any of our work, or learn more get in touch at ace@wales.nhs.uk or follow us on Twitter @acehubwales or Facebook acehubwales.

New Research

Public Health Wales and Bangor University have published a new report on how sources of resilience from individuals and communities may protect those who suffer Adverse

Childhood Experiences (ACEs) from their damaging impacts on mental health. The Welsh ACE and Resilience Survey found that the more ACEs people suffered, the greater their risk of mental illness across the life course.

The proportion of Welsh adults having ever had treatment for a mental illness rose from 23% of those with no ACEs to 64% of those with four or more. Compared with people with no ACEs, those with four or more were almost four times more likely to be currently receiving treatment for a mental illness, six times more likely to have ever received such treatment and almost ten times more likely to have ever felt suicidal or self-harmed.

Resilience resources including having access to a trusted adult in childhood, supportive friends and being engaged in community activities such as sports, reduced the risks of developing mental illness; even in those who experienced high levels of ACEs. Overall, having supportive friends, opportunities for community participation, people to look up to and other sources of resilience in childhood more than halved current mental illness in adults with four or more ACEs from 29% to 14%, and ever having felt suicidal or self-harmed from 39% to 17%. The full report is available at <http://bit.ly/2EGBIcT> and accompanying infographic is online at <http://bit.ly/2EL7ww5>. If you missed the earlier reports, or would like to see a short animation take a look at <http://bit.ly/2HAYhMu>.



Living in Post-Brexit times: How it feels to be young, migrant and Welsh

Rocio Cifuentes, EYST Wales



**Ethnic Minorities
& Youth Support
Team Wales**

**Tîm Cymorth
Lleiafrifoedd Ethnig
& Ieuenctid Cymru**

"You're not really sure if you're welcome anymore.. I mean, I used to feel Welsh but now I'm not sure...it's like the Brexit vote means you're not allowed to feel Welsh or say you're Welsh" - Young female of Bangladeshi-Welsh heritage

As Director of EYST Wales, a Wales-wide charity supporting ethnic minority young people, families and individuals in Wales, this is the kind of comment our youth workers are hearing again and again from the young ethnic minority people we support. Whether in Swansea, Newport, Cardiff or Wrexham, young children living across Wales are facing increasing hostility because of their skin colour, because of their religion, because of the language their parents speak, or because they are seen as being 'not from here'. And with 10% of school age children in Wales being from non-white, non-British backgrounds, this is no minority issue.

Racism and its latest incarnation Islamophobia has been increasing in Wales notably since the 9/11 terror attacks in New York and the 7/7 attacks in London, after which the ensuing 'War on Terror' became effectively a 'War on Islam' with Muslims becoming public enemy number one characterised in popular discourse and the public imagination as a 'threat to our way of life'. For anyone born since then - so for all children in Wales - this post 9/11 reality is all that they have ever known.

Unhappily, for many Muslim children, it feels almost normal to be called a 'terrorist' 'Osama bin Laden', a 'Paki', a 'suicide bomber', to be spat at, have their headscarves pulled, or to be ostracised in playgrounds. This is almost expected, especially following a terrorist attack in the UK or European country. When one Muslim commits a crime, the 2 million other Muslims living in the UK are incriminated, particularly by the media, in a way which is sadly unique to this religion. Very recently, there have been the appalling 'Punish a Muslim' letters which have been sent to Muslims, including in Wales, and also widely reported on social media. The degree of terror these letters have created cannot be underestimated. Imagine, for one second, that your children were Muslim, and were – even theoretically speaking - the target of such vitriol.

And since the Brexit vote these challenges have widened - now, it is no longer just the Muslims or the Black people, now we have a new threat in the popular imagination – 'Migrants' – or people who came here legally from Poland, Romania, Germany, Spain and other EU countries, but who are now, so they are told, no longer wanted or welcome in the UK and in Wales. 'We voted for you to leave', is the message that many frightened young children, who have only ever known Wales as their home, have been given in schools, or in their neighbourhoods. Even white, Christian, Middle-class children and families have been targeted and unsettled in a way never before experienced by them. The target is widening – and who knows who will be next?

Why is this our current reality? Why do so many people think that there are 'too many' people 'coming over here' when the reality is that Wales, like any other country is made up of layer upon layer of people who have migrated and settled here from all over the globe - from Italy, Somalia, Poland and Bangladesh - and is the richer for it. Not to mention Welsh migration to Patagonia, Spain, Australia, America, some of it violent and bloody.

Of course, education is key. Helping pupils to understand and learn the facts and history about race, refugees, migration and Muslims is one of the biggest challenges and opportunities we have, and yet it seems that pupils are not taught much about these topics currently. In EYST we regularly go into schools to deliver lessons on these topics, delivered by EYST staff who are diverse and include brown people, Muslims, refugees, etc. This face to face experience of meeting and talking to people from these groups has a huge impact on pupils' attitudes and understanding.

The new school curriculum designed by Donaldson aspires to make pupils in Wales 'ethical informed citizens of Wales and the world'. To achieve this ambition, schools need to ensure they are giving their pupils the right information, tools and messages to respect the diversity and human rights of their fellow class mates regardless of their race, religion, language, or place of birth. In this Brexit- Trump era, it is more important than ever that we all take up this challenge, for if we tolerate this then who knows what will be next?

For more information about this topic or the work of the Ethnic Minorities and Youth Support Team Wales (EYST) please contact Rocio Cifuentes at director@eyst.org.uk.

Tackling Islamophobia: a duty on us all

Professor Sally Holland, Children's Commissioner for Wales

It was with a group of young people in Butetown, Cardiff, that the issue of Islamophobia was first raised with me in my role as Children's Commissioner.

I had recently started in post and was undertaking a major consultation asking children and young people in Wales to help set my priorities. Like many other discussions I'd had all over the country, members of the group spoke about a range of issues: some wanted better access to opportunities, others wanted more places to spend free time and improved mental health support.

But there was one issue that resonated with every young person in the room.

When I asked them, many of whom were Muslim, if they had any concerns that were directly related to their faith, the response was overwhelming. They all had views on how Islam was portrayed in the media and the sometimes distorted views that their non-Muslim peers had about their religion.

Unfortunately, many had also directly experienced racist abuse.

This, as I learned from further meetings with young Muslims over the year that followed, was extremely common.

I've listened to young Muslims who've been called 'terrorist' at school, been told to 'go back to your own country' and told to take off headscarves in the street. Many have raised concerns about the way Islam is perceived by others and how this makes them feel, and the damaging effect that Islamophobia has had on themselves, their families, or someone they know.

All young people in Wales face challenges: exam stress; navigating the digital world; managing relationships; but our young Muslims are having to face an increasing rate of Islamophobia that has become so prevalent that it is woven in to their day-to-day lives.

These experiences are backed up by recent UK Government figures that show that religious hate crime has risen in the past year. The charity Show Racism the Red Card has also said that it has received an increase in support calls from teachers across Wales who are dealing with racism and Islamophobia.

It's not surprising. Islamophobia is a growing problem across Europe and has been amplified in Britain over the



last two years by debates surrounding Brexit and the actions of some world leaders.

The young Muslims I have spoken to are concerned that, if more isn't done to highlight this issue, it will only get worse.

For this reason, I've worked with some of our country's young Muslims to develop a resource to help raise awareness of, and tackle this issue in schools.

It consists of three step-by-step lesson plans, all linked to outcomes of the curriculum, that I hope will increase pupils' understanding of Islam, underline the harm caused by Islamophobia, and give pupils an opportunity to hear directly from their Muslim peers.

Through discussion of hobbies and interests the resource also demonstrates how much young people from Wales have in common, while also celebrating the diversity of modern Welsh society.

One thing I'm particularly proud of is that this resource has given young Muslims an opportunity to describe themselves and their religion in their own words through video; something that many stressed was missing on the pages and screens of mainstream media.

Another quality that makes this resource unique is that it presents the views of Welsh Muslims. Views spoken in Welsh accents; views spoken through the medium of Welsh.

I want children and young people to know that this isn't an issue that happens in a place far away; Islamophobia is lived and experienced by young people here in Wales.

I'm pleased to say that it has received positive feedback so far from schools. Teachers have told us that it is an 'excellent resource' that allowed them to tackle a sensitive issue in a way that was 'balanced, varied and enjoyable'.

Feedback from pupils has been equally positive. One year 9 pupil said that they were 'unaware of the huge impact this problem has on people's lives' before using the resource, whilst another said they were 'more likely to notice media stereotyping' after taking part in the lessons.

My work as Children's Commissioner is guided by the UN convention on the rights of the child; a list of human rights that all children and young people have, including rights to be safe and to follow their own religion.

If we want children to succeed, they must be given full access to these rights. When any young person is subjected to hate, threats and abuse, these rights are clearly contravened and it has a devastating effect on their ability to learn, grow, and be happy.

I want all schools in Wales to be built on foundations of children's rights: places that value equality, promote diversity, celebrate differences and allow all of our children to succeed as individuals.

This is why this resource, and the message it conveys, is so important.

Of course, it isn't just for schools to tackle Islamophobia. Rejecting hate, fostering love, and treating others as we would want to be treated in our communities is a duty on every single one of us. This duty is perhaps best summed up by the words of a young Muslim featured in my resource, who, when asked what Islam meant to him, said: "Love for your brother what you love for yourself."

Meic update: Winter trends

Andrew Collins, ProMo Cymru



The final three months of 2017 proved to be the busiest for Meic

- 1,600 phone calls, texts and instant messages, making it the busiest period of the year
- 5,700 web visits, including over 2,000 in November alone
- Successful Anti-Bullying Week campaign, with teaching resource being viewed over 1,000 times
- 4,000 video views across YouTube and social media
- 145,000 social media impressions
- Became the first ever Trusted Partner on Welsh Government Hwb website

- More content produced with young people than ever before
- More bilingual articles than any other quarter in 2017
- Recommissioned by Welsh Government

Meic Recommissioned

We are delighted to confirm that Welsh Government has recommissioned the Meic project for a further 12 months, meaning we will continue to run through 2018-19. We can't wait to build on the success of 2017-18, reaching even more young people to support, inform and advocate on their behalf.

Anti-Bullying Week 2017

In November last year, Meic delivered a campaign to support Anti-Bullying Week. Working with SchoolBeat, we created a bilingual 15-minute lesson resource which could be used by teachers - as part of a form class presentation or year group assembly - or used by any professionals who work with young people.

The resource centred around one incident of 'bullying', told three times through the eyes of each of the characters. Each character had an accompanying video, which added more information, or a new perspective, to the story.

The lesson objectives were:

- To consider the difference between ‘banter’ and ‘bullying’
- To think about the role we all play in stopping bullying
- To know where to find help, advice and support

Working with Welsh Government, we created and hosted the resource on Hwb, so that it was easily accessible for all schools and ensured good coverage. In doing so, Meic became the first ever ‘Trusted Partner’ for Hwb, meaning we can create resources to be directly uploaded to the platform for use by teachers and professionals.

We received excellent feedback regarding the school resource. It was promoted as part of Hwb’s e-newsletter and included as a ‘Featured Resource’ on their homepage throughout Anti-Bullying Week. Additionally, SchoolBeat officers delivered the resource in assemblies across Wales and a promotional social media campaign ensured the resource was well used. In total, the resource was viewed over 1,000 times online, with the videos gaining over 800 YouTube views.

Website, Social Media and Contacts

In the final 3 months of 2017, Meic received a record amount of contacts from young people. With over 1,600 phone calls, texts and instant messages. It was the busiest period of the year.

Looking Forward

At the time of writing, we are currently putting the finishing touches to our Healthy Relationships campaign, which will be launched on 14 February to coincide with Valentine’s Day. As part of this campaign, we have worked with a young spoken-word poet to tell one person’s story of being in an unhealthy relationship. We’re really excited to launch the video and hope to report on its success in the next edition.

Note to Professionals:

How Meic can help you support children and young people :

- 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
- For information, e-mail info@meic.cymru

Similarly, the website - www.meic.cymru - received over 5,700 visits, a record high for 2017. Peaking in November, it suggests the Anti-Bullying Week campaign helped to raise Meic’s profile significantly.

On social media, we recorded 145,000 impressions for messages sent, while the number of followers continues to grow at nearly 4,000.

Feedback from Young People

“Oh my gosh the lady was was sooooo nice I wouldn’t of told me mum and dad had she not gone through everything with me and helped me work it out”

“I would like to say how much of a fab service this is and people really need to raise awareness of you and your work as this could help so many”

“Thank you so much! I will have a look now and jot down all the points I need to raise with them, see if they can help. Thank you again! Whoever you are you’re a blessing! :)”

