



# Cymru Ifanc Young Wales

Young people's views on Brexit  
*Consultation with young people by Young Wales  
November 2018.*





# Young people's views on Brexit.

## Introduction and context.

Welsh Government commissioned Children in Wales to undertake research to identify children and young people's views on Brexit in the spring of 2018.

Children in Wales is the national umbrella body for organisations and individuals who work with children, young people and their families in Wales. Young Wales is a project based within Children in Wales to ensure that children and young people voices are heard on issues that are important to them and affect them.

The work plan agreed with Welsh Government commenced in April 2018. The key elements of the plan included the development and delivery of workshops in primary and secondary schools, and in a range of out of school settings. These resources were developed by the Young Wales team, who also developed online tools including a survey and a range of Instagram polls. The final event of the Brexit work was a Question Time event held in the Senedd in October 2018.

Throughout the work young people were given the opportunity to be involved in the planning and delivery of the work. Two young people worked with the Young Wales team in the Cardiff office during the summer holiday to help plan and deliver workshops.

As the Brexit work was rolled out to groups of young people there were opportunities for more young people to become involved in a range of activities, including the promotion of the online tools and identifying opportunities for additional workshops. Young people were also engaged in revising resources and tools, to ensure they were up to date.

During the preparation for the Question Time, a group of young people met to review and group the questions submitted by young people from across Wales. This work was undertaken to ensure that as wide a range of questions were presented to the panel, to promote broad discussion.

## Data collection methods.

The information and data for this work was gathered through workshops in schools, with youth clubs and youth forums together with online and Instagram surveys.

**Workshops** - The Young Wales team delivered 39 workshops, to more than 650 children and young people between April and October 2018 in a variety of settings and locations across Wales. The workshops have varied in length, ranging from 45 minutes to 2 hours, depending on the amount of time the schools, groups or youth forums could make available. The average length of a workshop was an hour and a half. The style and content of workshop has varied depending on the age range, group members and setting. Preparation for every session considered the specific needs of the group.

Three different workshops were developed as a framework for working with different age groups and in different settings. The three basic workshops developed can be found in Appendix B, together with the range of resources developed for use in the workshops.

**Brexit Animation** – Young people from North and South Wales have been involved in designing and developing an animation that will reflect a range of young people’s views. This work is currently being finalised.

**Question Time in the Senedd** attended by 50 young people.

There were also opportunities for young people to respond using the online resources.

**Twitter** – Daily messages were shared to promote on line resources and to identify upcoming activities and events.

**Instagram** – Young People over 13 years old were encouraged to log on and follow Young Wales Instagram, to answer the Young Wales Brexit poll. A new Brexit Question was posted on Instagram every day.

**On-line survey** – The survey gave young people an opportunity to give their views on Welsh Government priorities in Brexit negotiations. The survey was also posted on the Young Wales twitter account [@youngwalesciw](#). The survey took less than 5 minutes to complete. Young Wales received 455 responses to the online Survey.

## Findings

### Workshops in Primary Schools.

Young Wales worked with Primary schools in South Wales to gather the views of pupils in their final year before moving up to secondary school.

### **Summary of findings from Primary School Workshops** Full

report in Appendix D including quotes from pupils.

#### **Where / When/ Who have you heard talking about Brexit?**

**Who** – Parents and family, farmers, politicians (David Cameron, Theresa May, Jeremy Corbyn were specifically named). The Senedd and news reporters were named.

**Where** – News, TV, (BBC and S4C) and radio and Newsround on TV.

Brexit also discussed in school and at Brownies.

**When** – All the Time!

**What issues are important for Welsh Government to consider for the future of Wales?** In groups, pupils were given flipchart paper with an outline of a tree Post it notes were used as leaves to note issues important to them for Wales in the future. The areas of concern that primary schools pupils identified on their ‘trees are identified below, in order of priority.

**The Enviroment:** *“Less people using cars, more people travelling by train, bus or walking and cycling. I’d like to see a green Wales without pollution.”*

**The Community and a Peaceful Society:** *“I would like to see Wales as a famous and strong place, I want a world where everyone is kind and nice and more respect for the community.”*

**The Welsh Language:** *“More welsh schools, Welsh a living language forever....and ever.”*

**Financial:** *“More money for doctors, policemen, less for stars and sporting stars.”*

**Political:** *“Have another referendum, but learn more about it, then we would be ready for a referendum.”*

### **Ysgol y Wern Primary School Cardiff**

The first Brexit workshop was held in Ysgol y Wern primary school in Cardiff on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2018. BBC Radio Cymru attended the workshop and interviewed some of the pupils for an item that was broadcast on BBC Radio Cymru's morning news programme Post Cyntaf on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

**Social Media:** The workshop generated much interest on social media not only from here in Wales but also across Europe, for example:



Eurochild @Eurochild\_org Mar 29

Some positive news coming from Brexit negotiations - Welsh government to ask views of [#children](#) Congrats [@ChildreninWales](#) and [@YoungWalesCIW](#) for bringing [#childparticipation](#) to the political agenda! <https://bit.ly/2GAiVyH> [#BrexitCYPWales](#)

## **Summary of findings from Secondary Schools.**

When working in schools, where time was often limited to a 35 minute slot, one of the exercises used was to ask participants to identify their top three issues and outline the reason for their choice. A sample of the key issues for young people, ranked in order of volume of responses identified below. Full report and quotes in Appendix E.

### **Question: What are the top three issues most important for Wales?**

*(Direct quotes from workshops are noted in Italics)*

**Environment:** *“Fly tipping causes pollution and it makes Wales dirty and it is ruining our mass amount of tourism.”*

**Ability to Travel:** *“Easy travel to different countries, because I would like to live abroad or go to university/ college abroad or live abroad”*

**Education:** *“Education to be varied and include things that are needed when you’re older; being taught things such as politics because if younger people are uneducated, it’s harder to vote. More education about politics”*

#### **Human Rights:**

*“A country where we have all our human rights, because people will stay healthy and death rate won’t increase.”*

*“Help immigrants as they’re human and deserve to have their human rights.”*

#### **Prosperous communities.**

*“A place with lots of wealth, with more money so our communities will be stronger.”*

**Trade:** *“To be high up in the single market, so companies will stay in Britain and have jobs and it will make money.”*

**Health and Wellbeing:** *“Prioritise NHS, it is important that everyone has health care.”*

**Improved services and facilities:** *“More clubs for kids to decrease boredom and anti-social behaviour.” “Keep youth centres open.”*

**Votes at 16:** *“The voting age to be dropped to 16, because I believe more younger people should have the chance to vote.”*

### **Summary of finding from Youth settings.**

The evidence gathered from young people is again ranked in order of volume of responses. A sample of the key issues for young people are identified below. Full report and quotes in Appendix F. (*Direct quotes from workshops are noted in Italics*)

### **Question: What are the top three issues most important for Wales?**

**Education:** *“We need opportunities for studying abroad, concerned there will be less opportunities to study abroad and it could be more expensive.”*

**National Health Service:** *“Funding mental health facilities, there’s not enough funding as there is especially for young people. Ensure good mental health services for young people.”*

**Economic Growth EU and/or Global relationships:** *“Ensure continuation of social funds as they have been a massive benefit to Wales.”*

**Freedom of movement and travel:** *“Young people need the opportunity to be able to see the rest of the world. I’m hoping to go to University next year and considering a year abroad however it could be more difficult or not possible.”*

**Engaging young people:** *“We should be kept up to date with what’s going on. The news is too complicated to follow around Brexit.”*

**Votes at 16:** *“Brexit is going to affect us when we are older but we have not been able to have our voices heard like everyone over the age of 18 which is unfair.”*

**Youth Voice:** *“We are the next generation and it will affect us especially”. “Brexit will impact on me as a person and as a country.”*

### **Question: Is there enough information available for young people around Brexit?**

Most groups replied to this question with a 100% no, many saying that they did not have or had not seen any information aimed at young people.

One group reported a result of 80% No and 20% Yes.

One group responded with a very clear no from all 35 participants.

### **Comments gathered during discussions:-**

- Enough information is available but I just don't know what is true or not true.
- There's information but I don't understand it, it is too complicated to understand.
- Too much but it is all boring.
- They told lots of lies before the referendum so I don't know what to believe.
- I hear a lot about Article 50 but it's not made simple for young people.

### **Question: You're in charge of Brexit negotiations, what would you do?**

- Ensure things funded by EU funding still have funding.
- Hold a second referendum (70% of participants agreed with this). □  
Provide good quality information so people are more educated.

### **Should young people be engaged with politics?**

- 100 % -yes
- Quote from workshop  
*"As 16 year olds are allowed to vote now we should start learning about politics at 14 so we have two years to learn what we should be voting for and create our own view so we can prepared for elections and make decisions ourselves."*

In order to capture as wide a range of views as possible workshops were held with the Ethnic Youth Support Team (EYST) in Swansea, Young Farmers Cymru, and the North Wales Project Board.

See appendices. H, I and J.

### **In summary:**

During the work undertaken in workshops, children and young people have shown considerable interest in the issue of Brexit and an eagerness to share their thoughts and views on the issue.

Children in Primary Schools and young people in secondary schools had definite views on Brexit, all had heard about Brexit and many had been involved in previous discussions with friends or family.

As evidenced, there was a wide range of issues covered in discussions. For children in primary schools the issues focused on environmental and community issues, the importance of the Welsh language and money to fund doctors and policemen. Children in Primary schools also referred to a second referendum.

Many of the issues identified by younger children were also important in secondary settings, such as the environment, communities, and the importance of health services. For young people other priority issues included opportunities to travel, human rights and education.

For young people in youth settings, while they also reflected many of the issues identified in secondary schools, they also identified global relationships, freedom of movement, votes at 16 and hearing youth voices as their priorities. *“We are the next generation and it will affect us especially. Brexit will impact on me as a person and as a country.”*

## Brexit Survey results.

The Welsh and English versions of the Brexit survey questions and the results are published in full in Appendix C.

The survey asked a range of questions, the responses are recorded in Appendix K (graphs and charts) and Appendix L (written responses).

One response from the text responses is included here as it summaries the majority of responses received,

*Everything; there should be complete transparency and communication with young people. Brexit is something that will affect younger generations the most, and as we enter hoping for the terms listed in the Chequer's agreement, which will potentially offer a mass amount of economic uncertainty which can lead to a number of social issues arising (i.e. funding issues for NHS and education should trade and industry be affected), this next year is crucial for informing young people on exactly what will happen, and what may happen, once we finally leave the EU.*

*People need to be aware of how each term will affect Wales, and how this may affect their futures. People are already concerned about rising tuition fees, being unable to get a job as Welsh industries, especially the steel industry, are already struggling.*

*Many people I know in my local area don't know what Brexit will mean for us and with schools not being able to fully talk about politics in order to avoid bias or influencing young people, the Welsh Government need to do something, for everyone, to inform and prepare us, who had no say in the referendum and no representation either, for something that will shape all of our futures, regardless of how positive or negative that may be.*

*We may not be able to reverse Brexit, but the Welsh Government can certainly work to ensure we are taken into consideration and social issues, such as the potential for unemployment to rise, the NHS and education sector to struggle with funding or other issues such as trade and how a lack of EU regulation could affect our environment. But this cannot just be done with one simple leaflet, or a few links shared over social media. This needs to be delivered through workshops, in classrooms, in adverts, the news, information packs, that can be shown over the course of the year as we close in on the 29th of March.*

## **Instagram Polls.**

During August and September Young Wales developed a series of Instagram polls, asking a specific question in each poll. The poll was promoted through workshops and on social media, to encourage workshop participants aged over 13 to remain engaged with the project.

Most polls were live for one or two days, to encourage a regular return to the poll. 300 people signed up to the Instagram account and most polls received more than 200 responses.

A sample of the questions and results are highlighted below, the full response is in Appendix M.

*Should young people have say on Brexit? – Yes 98% No 2%.*

*Should young people be informed about politics in school?*

*Yes 96% No 4%.*

*Is there enough information for young people on Brexit?*

*Yes 15%, No 85%.*

*Should Young people be able to vote for their future? 89% Yes.*

*11% No.*

*Should we keep the EU's strict regulations on the environment?*

*Yes 78%, No 22 %*

*Will Brexit change your career plans? Yes 55% No 45%*

*Will Brexit have a positive or negative effect on your rights?*

*Positive 10%, Negative 90%*

*Will farming in Wales thrive or decline after Brexit? Thrive 32% Decline 78%.*

*Are you worried about how the health service will be affected by Brexit?*

*Yes 80% No 20%*

*Do you know what the chequers deal is? Yes 38%, No 62%*

The questions test out some of the responses gathered from face to face workshops and reflect the evidence gathered face to face, while also giving a numeric indication of the strength of young people's views.

## **Natural Resources Wales asked Young Wales to include the following questions:**

**How do you think Brexit will affect Wales' natural environment and resources?**

**What would you like to see changed?**

**What would you like to remain the same?**

The result full results can be found in Appendix M.

The results focused on the following areas of concerns:-

- Concern for farmers' ability to trade post Brexit.
- Natural resources would go down.
- The rising cost of fuel.
- Loss of EU funds
- Litter, the environment, the need for clean rivers for fishing and concerns about pollution.
- Developing sustainable and renewable energy.

The results also identified possible benefits:-

- We could start using our natural resources more.
- Clean air, we will be healthier, and it could improve mood and mental health.
- Provide recycling bins and encourage people to use them.
- Try to dispose of more waste and use less packaging.

The results were gathered from workshops with young people in youth settings reflects, and reflect young people's knowledge and concerns about the environmental issues, pollution and fishing and farming, which had also been identified throughout the school workshops.

### **Brexit animation.**

The Brexit animation is currently being completed.

The work was designed and developed with young people.

## **Question time event.**

The Young Wales question time event, sponsored by Vikki Howells AM, was held in the Senedd on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2018. The flyer for the event is in Appendix O.

The event was chaired by James Williams BBC Cymru Wales Brexit Correspondent.

The Panel members were:

Huw Irranca-Davies AM, Minister for Children, Older People & Social Care

Ruth Coombs, Head of Wales, Equality & Human Rights Commission

Mari Arthur, Director Sustain Wales

Meri Huws, Welsh Language Commissioner

Dr David Williams, Chair of Children in Wales and Clinical Director of Aneurin Bevan Health Board.

The questions submitted by young people and discussed at the event are included in Appendix P.

The event was attended by 50 children and young people, along with youth workers and support staff.

## **Conclusions and recommendations.**

### **Conclusions.**

This has been a very interesting, challenging and engaging piece of work for the Young Wales team and the young people who were actively involved in the design and delivery.

All the children and young people were very aware of Brexit and keen to share their views. The workshops in schools took place during the last few weeks of the summer term, once exams and tests were over. This period is a more relaxed time and enabled young people to engage in this work away from the pressure of examinations.

The engagement with youth forums and out of school groups ran throughout the summer, with the final few workshops being delivered in September.

While there was positive engagement from the North Wales Young Wales Young Peoples' project board, and from Young Farmers, the current challenges facing some of the youth services in North Wales, limited opportunities to engage face to face with as many young people as we had hoped. However we did ensure that the information about the survey and Instagram polls were actively promoted through all our contacts.

The children and young people that we engaged with were very knowledgeable and keen to engage in any discussions on Brexit.

Their wide range of views are reflected in this report and the breadth and depth of knowledge is striking as demonstrated in the evidence gathered in workshops and through the online survey and Instagram polls.

**Information:** While the young people expressed views reflecting both leave and remain, the stronger view from young people was to remain. A very wide range of issues were identified by young people including the environment, education, human rights and opportunities to travel and study abroad. Young people are very keen to understand how the new relationship with Europe will develop and how it will affect their future options.

**European funding:** Young people expressed concerns about the potential impact of the loss of European funding for their communities and for their own opportunities. Young people were concerned about the future of Erasmus+ and the impact of the loss of this funding on young people's opportunities.

**Trade and the Single market:** There were many concerns expressed about the impact on trade and employment, particularly in relation to the current discussions about leaving the single market, and the potential for companies to relocate to Europe and leave the UK.

**Health and wellbeing issues:** Questions were raised relating to the potential loss of medical and nursing staff post Brexit, and a sense that that the NHS would not be able to attract doctors and nurses from abroad.

**Free movement:** Two issues have emerged relating to free movement: Firstly the opportunities to study abroad. Secondly the concerns of children and young people who have moved to this country, see Wales as their home, but now do not know what their status and position will be after April 2019.

**Understanding politics:** The recent Brexit activity has prompted young people to take an increased interest in politics, seeking a better

understanding and more opportunities to be engaged. Most of the young people we spoke to felt that they are not given any information about the Brexit process, other than through the news media, many young people do not trust this information. *“We should be kept up to date with what’s going on around Brexit.”* was a message we got from many young people. The fact that teachers generally avoided the topic because of fear of being accused of bias has meant young people have felt unable to discuss Brexit in school.

**Votes at 16:** Many young people feel very strongly that they should have been able to vote in the referendum, and believe that their vote would have influenced the outcome.

### **Recommendations for Welsh Government:**

The very clear message from young people in Wales is that they want to be informed and involved in the Brexit process.

Young people engaged in this work also demonstrated that they also want to be able to understand and educated about political processes, about how decisions are made and how they can become involved. While the new Welsh Youth Parliament will assist in this process, it should not be left to do so alone.

Brexit has alerted young people to the importance of having a voice in all things that are important to and for them. There is both a need and an opportunity to engage and inform young people firstly about the Brexit process as we move into the final months of negotiations, and secondly to look at how young people are enabled to understand the functions and structures of Government and democracy, to help them become active and engaged Welsh citizens.

The Welsh Government should consider how it can make information available to young people, in a form that is fully accessible to them.

The Welsh Government should consider how young people are given the information and tools to understand, learn about and engage with democratic processes, including the roles of the Welsh Government and the UK Government, thus enabling them to become active and informed citizens.

### **Recommendations for UK Government:**

The UK Government should also have a role in informing and enabling young people to learn about and understand the political processes that impact on their lives. Information for young people should be made available in an accessible format for young people across the UK, to ensure they understand how the function of UK Government, and the function of the Government in their own nation, works in relation to their life.

## Appendices

Appendix A: Young people's voices in the UK, literature review.

Appendix B: Plans and resources for workshops.

Appendix C: Holiadur Brexit: Brexit Questionnaire.

Appendix D: Findings from Primary School Workshops.

Appendix E: Feedback from Secondary Schools Appendix

F: Workshops delivered in Youth settings.

Appendix G: Youth Services continued.

Appendix H - Brexit workshop with EYST, Swansea.

Appendix I: Comments from young people at Young Farmers Cymru meeting.

Appendix J: Workshop with North Wales Project Board.

Appendix K: Results of the Brexit survey.

Appendix L: Written responses to the Brexit Survey questions

Appendix M: Instagram Polls.

Appendix N: Natural Resources Wales

Appendix O: Brexit Question Time information.

Appendix P: Question submitted by young people for  
Question time event