



PLANT YNG NGHYMRU
CHILDREN IN WALES



Annual Report and Accounts 2020 - 2021

Welcome from the Chief Executive

2020-21 was a difficult year for us all, as the COVID-19 pandemic presented an unprecedented challenge. Looking back on the year, I am proud of the work of our members – across statutory and third sector services – as professionals across Wales stepped up to meet the challenges of the pandemic through innovation, adaptation and relentless commitment.

I am also proud of the work of our staff at Children in Wales, as we adapted our practices and approaches to ensure that we were able to key our key projects running whilst continuing to provide our highly valued membership services.

Like many organisations, we faced a more challenging financial climate as a result of the pandemic. We took steps to ensure the sustainability of the charity and ended the year with a new (stream-lined) structure and a new (smaller) office – both of which realised savings for us and will continue to realise savings in the longer-term.

Whilst it was vital we found ways to economise over the last year, it was equally important that we invested in innovation in order to ensure that we could continue to meet the challenges presented by COVID, as well as the longer-term demands placed upon a representative umbrella organisation in the 2020s and beyond. As a result, we also ended the year with new branding, a new website and a long-term digital transformation project.

Investing in change during a challenging period is not easy, but these changes have strengthened our online and digital capacity, and will enable us to emerge from the pandemic stronger – harnessing the learning from the past year whilst also looking ahead to the future.

We look forward to continuing to work closely with our members, partners and funders in order to address the challenges we collectively face.



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Introduction

Children in Wales is the national cross sector umbrella organisation for people who work with children, young people and families in Wales. Our core aims are to:

- Contribute towards making the UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) a reality in Wales
- Fight for sustainable quality services and fair shares for all children and young people
- Ensure special attention and treatment for children in need and those who are marginalised
- Ensure children and young people have a voice.

We are a membership organisation and provide high-quality services designed to keep members informed of new developments and to facilitate joint responses, including information materials, training and events. We are a registered charity and an independent, non-governmental organisation.

We are also funded under the Children in Wales Grant from the Welsh Government to improve services provided by:

- A better connected multi agency and cross sector workforce to improve influence and contribute to policy and practice development
- Better connections between children and young people across Wales so that their views are heard by government and policy makers – this is achieved through Young Wales-Cymru Ifanc, an enhanced model of children and young people's participation
- Working to ensure that children and young people, the workforce and policy makers are better informed through training and our information service, for example.

This annual report sets out more detail of the work we have undertaken during the past year. We'd like to thank all members and those we have worked with for your input and support.



Better connected Children, Young People, Families & Workforce

Forums, Networks and Groups

A wide range of professional development Forums, Networks and Groups were facilitated by Children in Wales regularly throughout Wales. Although initially interrupted by the lockdown measures initiated due to Covid-19, the meetings were swiftly moved online and were convened, coordinated and managed throughout 2020-21, most meeting at least quarterly and many supplemented by some form of engagement such as electronic, development of position papers, consultation responses or evidence for Welsh Government meetings or the NAFW between meetings. These include:

- Children in Wales Policy Council
- Children & Young People's NGO Policy Officers Group (Cymru)
- Directors of the National Children's Voluntary
- Organisations in Wales Group
- Wales UNCRC Monitoring Group
- All Wales Children & Young People's Advocacy Providers Group
- All Wales Parenting & Family Support Strategic Leads Group
- End Child Poverty Network Cymru
- Cross Party Group on Children and Young People/Young Carers Workers Network
- Third Sector Additional Learning Needs Alliance/Participation Workers National Network
- Early Years Action Group
- Children's Yearly Rights Network
- All Party Parliamentary Group for Children in Wales (Westminster)
- Senedd Cross Party Group for Children in Wales

Policy Council

The Policy Council allows a broad selection of children and families organisations to network at a policy-maker level to consider pertinent issues with colleagues and to develop collaborative activity. It also enables Children in Wales' trustees and policy staff to hear the views of leaders of key organisations in order for the strategic direction of Children in Wales's work to be informed by them so that key priorities can be established. There were three meetings during the year with invited speakers including Welsh Government officials. The meetings this year focused on issues around the Covid-19 pandemic that were urgent priorities for the sector such as the mental health and well-being of children and young people, and access to education.

Cymru Ifanc/Young Wales

Cymru Ifanc/Young Wales is the national participation hub, working with schools, youth forums, local authorities, national organisations and individuals to ensure that children and young peoples' voices are heard.

- Specific to this year, two extensive surveys 'Coronavirus and Me' were carried out in partnership with the Children's Commissioner's Office to gauge children and young people's views on Covid-19 and how the lockdown had affected them.
- The views of children and young people of all ages and from across Wales continued to be sought throughout the year, and formed the basis for 8 consultation responses to Welsh Government.
- Through Cymru Ifanc / Young Wales, children and young people were provided with the opportunity to meet with Ministers, lead officials and policy makers at Welsh Government. This year has been particularly productive and children were enabled to discuss matters around the pandemic and access to mental health services on more than one occasion with the First Minister and the Deputy Minister. Further opportunities were provided for groups of children to discuss with Ministers the Government's Digital Strategy, the National Forest and the Whole School Approach for Mental Health and Well-being. Youth policy issues including mental health, education, youth participation, climate change, transport and inequalities have been shared with Government officials.
- Awareness raising and learning sessions: Online digital awareness training was delivered to a range of young people across the regions.
- Throughout the year, work continued to develop the Cymru Ifanc – Young Wales brand, in particular with greater use of social media. Monthly e-bulletins were distributed and posts were regularly shared on the Young Wales Cymru Ifanc Twitter and Instagram feeds. Followers of these social media feeds increased by 10% and 20% respectively.
- During the year, the Young Wales Project Board met regularly online to advise on and develop the work of Young Wales Cymru Ifanc. The membership of the Boards was developed throughout the year and with input from the Equality & Diversity Inclusion Group 5 new young people joined the Board.
- Inspection work for the National Participation Kitemark scheme has been halted due to the pandemic, however work continued to promote the scheme and we have recorded great interest from a broad range of organisation wishing to adopt the National Participation Standards and have signed up to the Charter as the first step.
- This year 17 young people were voted in as Wales members of the UK Youth Parliament's annual programme of activities led by British Youth Council. The online Make your Mark Ballot has chosen its priorities for 2021 which are Free University, Support our Mental Health and Take Action on the Climate Emergency: Stop Plastic Pollution. Young Wales will now make these issues their priorities throughout this year.
- Events for young people: A national conference held online over 3 days took place, with a number of breakout workshop sessions.

Influencing Practice, Policy Development & Research through Representation & Consultation

As the umbrella body in Wales for the children, young people and families sector, Children in Wales highlights the concerns and promising practice of its multi-agency, cross sector members and partners and children and young people (through Young Wales priorities) to facilitate the development of an integrated children, young people's and families agenda in Wales through representation on a number of groups. This allows us to feed into policy development and practice. During 2020-21, we were involved in the following groups:

Representation on Welsh Government Groups

- Loneliness and Isolation Advisory Group
- Ministerial Advisory Group on Outcomes for Children
- Ministerial Social Care Partnership Board
- Ministerial Advisory Group on Carers
- Ministerial Advisory Group on Play
- CAFCASS Advisory Board
- ECEC Quality Framework task and finish group
- EU Settlement Scheme Strategic Group meeting
- Our Future Wales meeting
- Parenting Expert Advisory Group
- Strengthening Equality and Advancing Human Rights Steering Group
- Vulnerable Children External Advisory Group
- Children's Rights Advisory Group
- Parental Information and communication workstream
- Passporting Benefits task and Finish Group
- Task and Finish Group on CYP Advocacy
- Votes at 16/17 working group
- Strategic Implementation Group for the Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Act
- Expert Stakeholder Group - Children Wales Act
- Operations, Guidance and Training Task and Finish Group - Children Wales Act
- Childcare Offer for Wales Stakeholder Group
- National Primary Care Board
- Children Death Review steering group
- Together for Children and Young People (T4CYP) Programme Board & sub groups

Non-Welsh Government groups

- Third Sector Partnership Council
- Third Sector Funding and Compliance Sub Committee
- TSPC Ministerial meetings - Finance
- TSPC Ministerial meetings - Health and Social Care
- TSPC Ministerial meetings - Housing and Local Government
- TSPC Ministerial meetings
- TSPC Planning meetings
- Education Strategic Stakeholder Group
- Measuring the Mountain steering group
- National Centre for Population Health & Wellbeing Research NCPHWR
- Play Wales Board
- Royal College for Paediatrics and Child Health External advisory group
- 4 Nations UNCRC Group
- British Council Wales Advisory Committee
- Cross Party Group on Care Experienced Young People
- Cross Party Group on Fuel Poverty & Energy Efficiency
- Cross Party Group on Poverty
- CWVYS Board
- Cross-Party Group on Suicide Prevention
- Race Alliance Wales equalities forum
- WCVA Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Group
- We Care Wales Stakeholder Group

International

- Eurochild Management board
- Eurochild National Partner Network (NPN)
- Eurochild Participation Steering Group

Consultation Responses

11 consultation responses or inputs into responses from a variety of perspectives were produced and submitted. Our members and partners have been engaged through our professional networks and electronically throughout the period to inform our responses to Welsh Government public consultations (including via online surveys) and inquiries (written and oral evidence) by the Senedd Cymru Welsh Parliament Committees.

Evidence was prepared and submitted responses to consultation opportunities by several Senedd Committees, most notably to the Children, Young People and Education Committee inquiries into Children's Rights and the impact of COVID-19, and the ELGC Committee inquiry into the pandemic.

Provide information and liaison for the TSPC and associated Ministerial meetings

Children in Wales continued to be the representative body for the Children and Families sector on the Third Sector Partnership Council, participating in meetings across the year, representing the views of the sector on a variety of issues – largely connected to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic upon children and young people and the third sector professionals/organisations who work with them.

Meetings have been held and ongoing relationships developed with Welsh Government Ministers, Deputy Ministers and officials across a range of WG departments, as well as Senedd members. The Young Wales programme has facilitated meetings for young people with the First Minister and members of his cabinet in respect of the impact of Covid-19, digital inclusion and education matters (as some examples), and the policy team continue to regularly engage with officials in relevant departments across Welsh Government aligned to our thematic priorities. Policy leads also met with a number of Senedd members as part of our work programme of work to develop and promote our children's manifesto, and we have also represented the sector at roundtable workshops with ministers on the impact of Covid-19 on children.

Campaigns and Advocacy

CIW leads or works with others on a range of campaigns, actively promoting these to the sector and members through e-briefings, quarterly magazine, engagement with the media, the organisation of events (for both members and the public) and representation at external meetings. Activities during the year included:

- 'State of Children's Rights in Wales' - Report completed for the UN Committee with civil society organisations. Work towards this included 2 consultation workshops, an evidence gathering session (90 organisations contributed), the development and submission of the Report, and the launch event of the report and presentations in many meetings.
- Children in Wales worked to develop 3 manifestos setting out recommendations in advance of the Senedd elections. One engaged with our members at our Policy Council and this was launched in March with the other national children's charities in Wales. Another focused on child poverty, produced with the End Child Poverty Network Cymru and launched with 10 recommendations and the third, Early Years Advisory Group manifesto, promoted the priorities for pre-school children and their families.
- A survey of our members on the initial impact of the pandemic on them led to a report presented to Welsh Government, network groups and our members
- A survey and report on the impact of the pandemic on children and families in low income households
- Continuing to work with our members and Welsh Government during the pre-implementation phase of the Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) Act
- Raising concerns through our networks regarding the implementation of the Additional Learning Needs Act
- Children in Wales with members of the All Wales Advocacy Providers Group continues to campaign for quality and sufficiency in advocacy through the implementation of the National

Approach to Statutory Advocacy

- Children in Wales continues to engage with Brexit/Post EU membership developments and influence decisions where possible, building on the recommendations from our publications on children's rights and Brexit.
- Continue to campaign for further implementation of the UNCRC in Wales and the UN Concluding Observations through our training, policy and advocacy work



Better Informed Children, Young People, Families & Workforce

Briefing services

Children in Wales produces a number of briefings and newsletters for members and networks.

The frequency of the ebriefing was increased from weekly to bi-weekly during the early phase of the pandemic in order to keep members up to date at a particularly challenging time. Our ebriefing keeps our members up-to-date with the latest policy developments and news. The Young Wales newsletter is sent out monthly with the latest news and information for young people and participation workers. We also send out a monthly e-briefing for the End Child Poverty Network.

Online webinars and training sessions 2020-2021

In-person events and conferences were not possible this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Instead, a series of online webinars and training sessions was held during the year for the children and families workforce and other stakeholders. This enabled participants from more remote regions to attend events they would have not otherwise been able to. These events included:

- Specialist webinar focusing on 'Listening and supporting children and families, while taking care of ourselves', delivered by a psychoanalytic child & adolescent psychotherapist
- A webinar 'Supporting families with distress and trauma' enabled 180 people to attend
- Online launch event of the CIW with national children's charities of our Manifesto for the Senedd elections
- Launch event organised for the 'State of Children's Rights in Wales', which was the culmination of a 6 month project to identify the main issues and priorities for the UN Committee to consider as part of the current CRC reporting round
- 9 training sessions on 'Children's & Young People's Participation' (3) 'Digital Safeguarding' (6).
- Training event on the Children's Act organised with Cambrensis and Welsh Government on 29th October in order to raise awareness of the Act.
- Internet Use & Children's Rights training session which attracted 103 delegates.

Development and delivery of a training programme

2020-21 has been another busy and productive year for the Training Department as it undertook to transfer all of our training provision online in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. After the initial lockdown period the organisation was ready to deliver online sessions from mid May 2020 well ahead of many other training providers. Our trainers have rapidly become experts in hosting courses on different platforms, researching and utilising software to enable interactivity and participatory elements within sessions. We continued to provide a range of topics through our advertised open training programme. We also had a high number of requests for commissioned training delivered as bespoke sessions to staff groups who could access the sessions from across Wales via the online platforms.

The move to online training proved to be a lifeline for many in the children's workforce who were struggling to maintain meaningful engagement with the children and families that they were supporting, and missing the workplace contact with colleagues. Our trainers ensured that the

sessions were friendly and welcoming, providing a safe space for practitioners to express their experiences and feelings about the challenges they were facing due to the pandemic. Where possible sessions also contained a wellbeing element with simple mindfulness exercises and breathing techniques. The evaluation feedback consistently demonstrated that attendees really appreciated the opportunity to continue to learn in a supportive environment and to meet others in real time who were in a similar position.

Our core work remains that of Safeguarding the Welfare of Children and Young People and related topics. The courses that proved popular during this period were those aimed at better understanding and supporting the needs of young people, particularly in relation to knife crime, criminal exploitation, teenage development, mental health and LGBT+ issues.

As a national Child Rights organisation, our training team continued to promote the implementation of the UNCRC across all courses. This included training around the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the importance of engaging children in What Matters conversations, to ensure that the voices of children subject to child protection are heard. We maintained funding from the Welsh Government to promote techniques for children's participation, the UNCRC and the national Participation Standards for children and young people. These sessions were delivered to the child and family workforce at no charge, were well attended and inspired many practitioners to try out new ways to get children and young people at the heart of their activities.

As ever we have been working to keep up with the current trends and the difficulties facing children, young people and families. To this end, we have responded to our members' requests, by developing and running new courses, and adapting existing training. We developed a new course specifically to address the impact of trauma in the context of Covid 19 that ran many times. We maintained our strong links with Commissioners who appreciated how adaptable we have been and the skills and tools imparted to their staff through this difficult time. Although the online training is very different to traditional venue based training, we discovered many benefits particularly the ability to bring together workers spread geographically across Wales. It has also helped to make training more accessible for those on part time contracts, with limited transport and those with caring responsibilities.

We continue to draw upon the expertise of our Associate Trainers to deliver specific pieces of training and courses, augmenting and supplementing the range of courses we offer. These have covered topics such as Life Journey training, Telling children Difficult Information, Motivational Interviewing, Autism in Early Years, Mindfulness in the Workplace, Supervision and Leadership.

Towards the end of the financial year we successfully applied to the Welsh Government for funding to set up an online Learner Management System to help in our work to support the continuing professional development of the child and family workforce. This exciting development will enable us to host more courses and in time provide a range of live, blended and asynchronous training to meet the needs of a diverse workforce. It will also transform the administration and reporting of training courses enabling us to identify trends, and focus our energies to what is needed by our members.

Social media

Children in Wales uses Twitter to promote its activities and resources, as well as new policy and

documents using our accounts, @ChildreninWales and @plantyngnghymru.

Young Wales also has a separate Twitter account, @YoungWalesCIW and information is also promoted through Instagram @YoungWalesCIW.

Information Support

Children in Wales staff continued to provide information and signposting for professionals/members of the charity; responding to queries by phone, email; through network meetings and through our training service. A wide range of issues were covered including navigating resources, accessing information pertaining to local/national services, advice around safeguarding procedures and much more.

Children in Wales website

2020-21 saw a new user- and child-friendly website developed, and launched in March 2021 along with a complete re-branding. The website will ensure greater alignment across key work-streams and enliven the organisation's online presence. The new website has allowed the integration of both the Children in Wales and Young Wales pages and will continue to be developed over the coming year as more interactivity is added.

The website is a key resource and gateway to Children in Wales' policy and other information, as well as news from the sector. It is updated daily with policy information, resources and news.

Part of the website features an integrated learning management system (LMS) showcasing the organisation's training programme and webinar series enabling automated booking and payment systems.

Presentations, workshops, contributions and information provided at conferences and events

This year, Children in Wales' staff have participated in a range of activities facilitated by external bodies, such as research, dialogue and online events, which contribute to our key representative function as an umbrella organisation and our national role in policy and strategic development.

Public information

During the year, Children in Wales continued work to raise public and professional awareness of both the problems affecting children, young people and families in Wales and ways that their lives can be improved. One of the ways in which we carried out this work was through our quarterly magazine, which is published online. Each magazine is themed and combines information about policy development, research and contributions from member organisations.

The themes for 2020/21 were as follows:

- Spring 2020 - general children theme
- Summer 2020 - Wellbeing during the Coronavirus Pandemic
- Autumn 2020 - Education News and Life After Lockdown
- Winter 2020 - The Emotional Health and Wellbeing of our children and young people during lockdown and Covid-19

Membership Support Services

Children in Wales is a membership organisation. Full membership is open to organisations and individuals from third, statutory and independent sectors who support the strategic aims of the charity. The activities of the organisation are driven for the benefit of children and young people in Wales.

The Charity and its members are dedicated to a programme of activities based on the mutual desire to benefit children and young people across Wales regardless of gender, class or ethnic background. The activities of the organisation are driven for the benefit of children, young people and their families in Wales. The organisation's approach is inclusive and public participation is encouraged through service user engagement in activities

At the end of 2020-21, Children in Wales had 222 members, of which 176 were organisations and 46 were individuals. The slight increase in membership this year was primarily due to many more organisations wanting to join and receive discounts to our ever-expanding training course programme and informative ebriefings.

Unfortunately, members' income during this membership year was severely disrupted, of course, by the COVID-19-19 pandemic. In an attempt to support our membership, Children in Wales decided to waive all fees for the first six months of the year (from April to September 2020). This offering was greatly appreciated by many and nearly all members went on to pay their fees for the remainder of the year from October 2020 to March 2021.

During the year, steps were taken during the year to adapt the frequency of our information services (via ebriefings) to ensure members were provided with vital information and updates at a particularly uncertain time at the beginning of the pandemic. Our highly valued training service was adapted for online delivery – ensuring that members could continue to access vital professional development and learning opportunities in spite of the lockdown restrictions.

Towards the end of the year, we undertook work to develop a members log-in section on our new website, in order to enable members to access resources and information, as well as manage their membership account, through an easy to use interface.

In the final quarter, we also undertook work to review our membership offer and pricing ahead of 2021-22, in order to launch a new pricing system for 1 April 2021, taking account of the changed financial climate resulting from the pandemic.

Governance

Trustee Board

Children in Wales is managed by a Trustee Board which deals with the finance and governance of the organisation. During the year 2020-21, the Trustee Board comprised 13 members. The Board is constituted with up to nine members elected from the membership of the organisation and up to three appointees. Additional Trustees can be co-opted to the Board for a period of one year. Elected and appointed Trustees serve for up to two terms of office of three years each.

Dr David Williams, Aneurin Bevan Teaching Health Board (Chair)

Suman Bhogal (Treasurer)

Ann Shabbaz, Hafan Saff Cyf (stood down October 2020)

Jane Newby

Professor David Egan, Cardiff Metropolitan University

Sarah Crawley, Barnardo's Cymru

Bethan Webber, Home Start Cymru

Dr Mike Shooter (stood down October 2020)

Diane Daniel

Dr Nia John, Royal College of Paediatrics & Child Health in Wales

Cherrie Bija, Faith in Families

Emeritus Professor Patrick Thomas

Jenny Williams, Conwy County Borough Council

Deborah Jones, Voices from Care Cymru (from October 2020)

Jackie Murphy, TGP Cymru (from October 2020)

Finance and Human Resources Committee

The Trustee Board has one sub-committee, the Finance and Human Resources Committee (F&HR Committee) which meets in advance of each Board meeting. The committee is chaired by the Treasurer.



Financial Summary

Expenditure

Better connected Children, Young People, Families & Workforce	£336,852	25%
Influencing Practice, Policy Development & Research through Representation & Consultation	£376,004	28%
Better Informed Children, Young People, Families & Workforce	£487,701	36%
Membership Support Services	£61,606	5%
Governance	£86,359	6%
Total	£1,348,522	100%

Income

Better connected Children, Young People, Families & Workforce	£306,908	1%
Influencing Practice, Policy Development & Research through Representation & Consultation	£353,376	24%
Better Informed Children, Young People, Families & Workforce	£441,689	28%
Membership Support Services	£60,209	35%
Governance	£86,702	5%
Membership Subscriptions	£13,349	7%
Total	£1,262,233	100%