

PLANT YNG NGHYMURU  
CHILDREN IN WALES

# Annual Report & Accounts

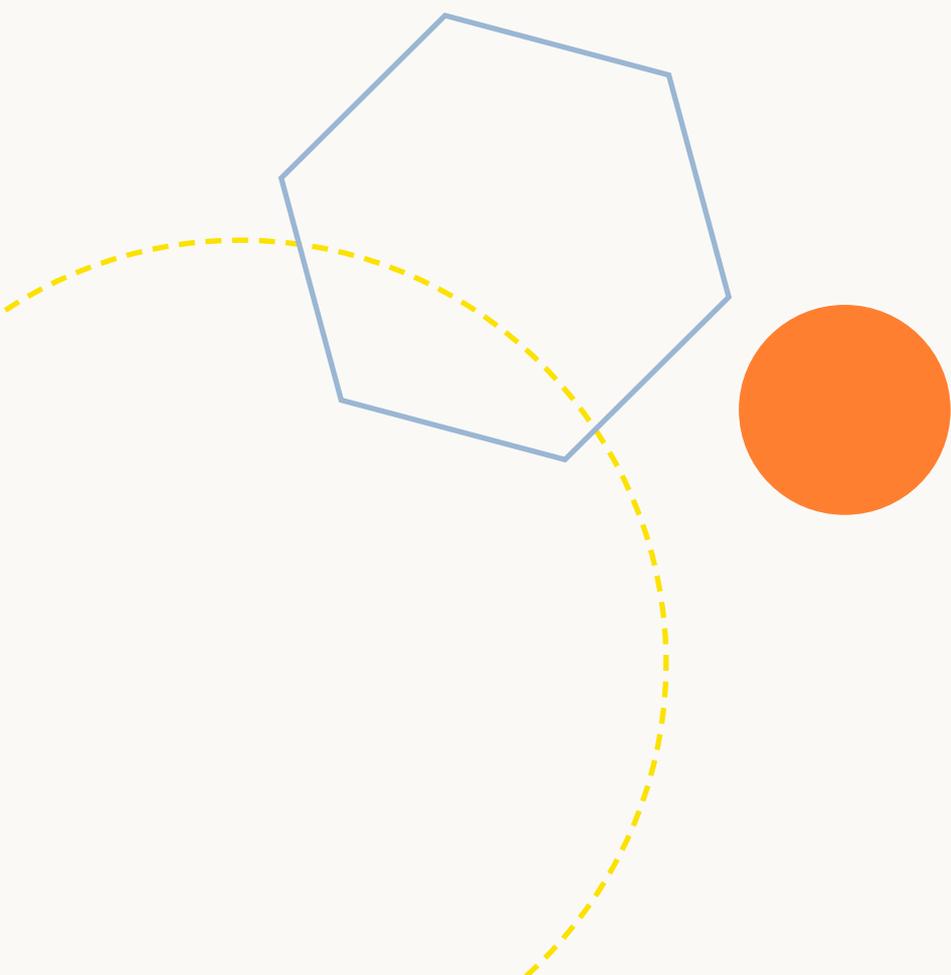
2022 - 2023



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# Welcome from the Chief Executive

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Croeso cynnes, a warm welcome to this year's annual report. Having started in the role of Children in Wales' new Chief Executive in July 2023, I can claim no credit for the achievements of the organisation in the last financial year, but I wish to take this opportunity to note my pride in working for an organisation that makes such a difference in the promotion of children's rights in Wales and to give thanks to my predecessor, Owen Evans, and the directors who stepped up to cover the role in the last year: Sean O'Neill and Paula Timms. Between them, the trustees, our fantastic staff team and the many young people and members they engaged during the last year, the organisation has made great progress towards its vision of **building a Wales where all children and young people have all their rights fulfilled**.

As well as consulting on and establishing that vision, and setting out an accompanying, renewed and re-focussed mission statement, the organisation has made strides in its work, both on behalf of members and with young people directly, in the last year.

On the latter point, over the last year we have seen a schedule of residentials take shape for young people who have volunteered with our Young Wales programme. This has given them the opportunity to have their right to participate in decisions that affect them, feeding into policy making, as well as learning new skills and developing friendships with one another. We further developed this sense of shared purpose among the group at the Young Wales Festival, where we also provided young people with the opportunity to directly meet members of the Welsh Government. We intend to carry on with both the Festival and the programme of residentials, learning from our experiences and, in consultation with young people, enhancing and improving these events.



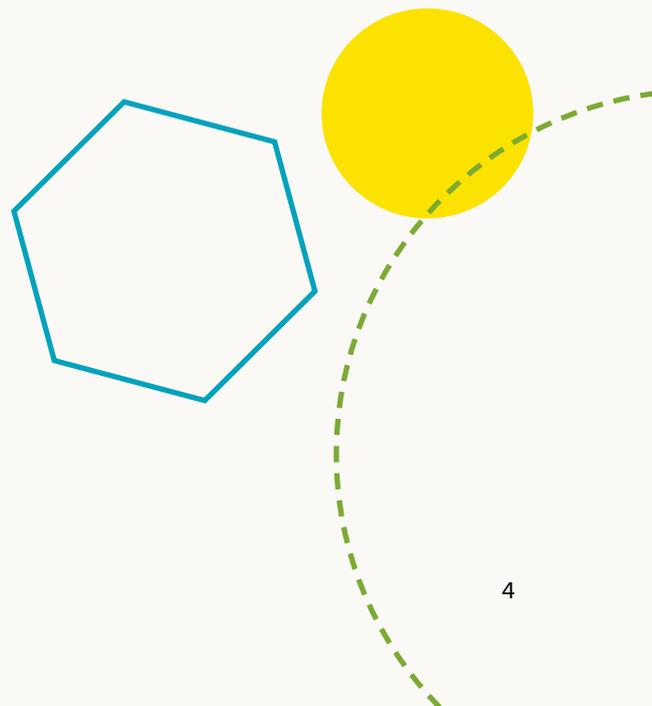
Otherwise, a high point of the year was undoubtedly the visit of Young Wales representatives, alongside staff from Children in Wales, to the United Nations, where they presented their findings on the state of children's rights. As well as ensuring that young people were being listened to at a point of considerable influence outside of Wales, this work gave still further opportunity for young people to engage with Welsh Government.

Building on such high profile work, our campaigning on behalf of members has been varied and effective over the last year. Alongside the huge amount of effort that went into working in preparation for the UN visit and report, we have continued to highlight the stubborn, grim shadow of poverty which looms over an unacceptably high number of children and families in Wales. We have also seen the fruition of a long period of campaigning for the removal of the defence of reasonable punishment, with the introduction of new legislation to protect children from physical chastisement.

As we look forward now to our thirtieth anniversary year ahead, we do so from a stable position, motivated by past successes and our clear focus on the universal fulfilment of children's rights in Wales. Ymlaen.



**Hugh Russell**  
Chief Executive Officer



# Introduction

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We are pleased to present Children in Wales' annual report together with the financial statements of the charity for the year ending 31 March 2023. This report sets out details of the work we have undertaken during the past year.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our young volunteers, our members and those we have worked with for their input and support over the past year.

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 multiple services designed to keep members informed of new developments in the sector, and to facilitate joint responses. Our services include disseminating relevant and timely information, network representation, 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:

- Facilitating a multi-agency and cross-sector workforce to improve influence and contribute to policy and practice development.
- Creating better connections between children and young people across Wales so that their views are heard by government and policy makers – this is achieved through our Young Wales initiative, 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 our training and information services.

# Engaging children and young people

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Young Wales is Children in Wales' participation initiative, funded under the Welsh Government's Children in Wales Grant. The work is shaped by the Young Wales Project Board, and by the priorities identified as areas of importance through local authority Youth Forums.

During 2022-23, we continued our work giving young people a voice through engagement and consultation events. Some highlights of our work included:

## Young volunteers

This year, volunteering has been embedded into the Young Wales Project, with a total of 93 young volunteers from across Wales on-boarded.

Volunteers are provided with a comprehensive induction, including an opportunity to take part in an accredited learning and development pathway and can join the Young Wales Project Board, or different special interest groups of their choice. Meetings took place at residentials, standalone sessions and online. Young volunteers were also offered opportunities to work alongside other project staff, such as with the Price of Pupil Poverty project.

Volunteers took part in the recruitment process for a number of staff including for the Chief Executive post. This helped to develop new skills for young people and increased their participation in the organisation's processes.



## Events

### Young Wales Annual Festival 2022

Our national festival, which was held at St Fagan's Museum of Welsh Life welcomed over 80 young volunteers. Young Wales was delighted to celebrate another year of ensuring that young people had their voices heard by decision makers in Wales.

The event offered a variety of workshop sessions including:

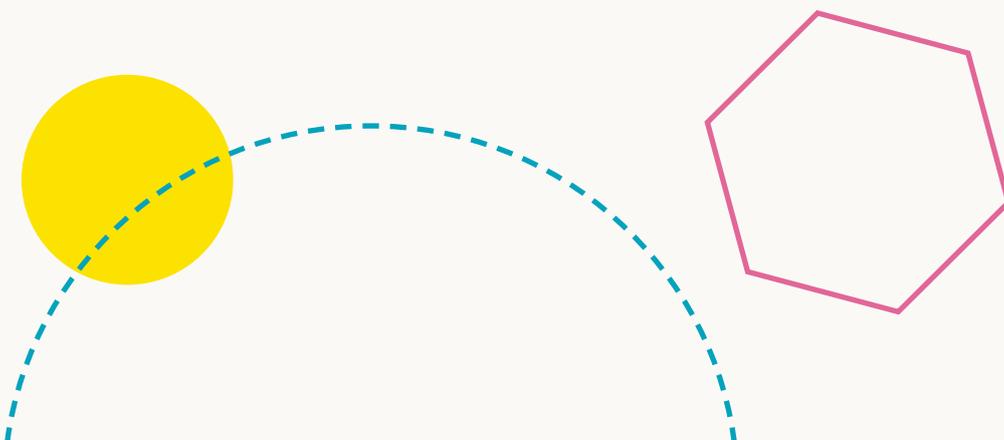
- Everyday Global Citizenship delivered by SSAP
- Young People Changing Museums delivered by Amgueddfa Cymru
- Climate Justice delivered by The Size of Wales
- UNCRC Raising Awareness delivered by Young Wales.

The event facilitated discussions with the Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing, Welsh Government representatives and the Children's Commissioner for Wales with sessions centred around the thematic areas of: Participation and Welsh Government's Children and Young Peoples Plan, Education and Social Justice, Health and Social Services and CCFW's Ambitions for Wales.

An exhibition for 'What Children's Rights mean to me', which was co-produced with young people from across Wales.

Volunteers facilitated a Round Table discussion with questions developed by members of our Young Wales Special Interest Groups, attendees had the opportunity to hear from the new Children's Commissioner for Wales and several other Welsh decision makers on issues prominent to young people in Wales today.

We hosted an array of exhibition stands from partner organisations, members of Children in Wales and other prominent Welsh organisations, focusing upon key issues such as child wellbeing, equality and period dignity, in addition to live music, entertainment and special guests throughout the day.



## **Young Wales residentials**

Young Wales hosted several residentials for volunteers during the year. Residentials give volunteers the opportunity to learn about a variety of topics, to contribute to discussions and have their voices and opinions heard while connecting with peers who share similar passions.

### **May 2022 – Summit Centre, Treharris**

A three-day residential in Merthyr Tydfil with opportunities for young people to have new experiences and learn new skills. The young people received training to develop their presentation, chairing and debating skills as part of this residential.

An induction residential session was also hosted online in May for all new or existing board and SiG members, followed by the weekend residential. During the induction residential young people had the opportunity to socialise, get to know each other, build relationships, take part in fun activities such as a movie and games evening and also attended the following training and sessions:

- Introduction to the UNCRC
- Introduction to the Children and Young Peoples National Participation Standards
- Teamwork and confidence building training
- Consultation on the Young Person's Guarantee
- Consultation on the National Forest of Wales
- Consultation on the Children's Act
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Training
- Consultation on the Tourism Levy
- Consultation on the Liberty Protection Safeguards
- Being a board or group member, peer mentoring and volunteer Training
- Creative writing and digital content production Training
- Introduction to the Board and SiG's
- Evaluation and Feedback

### **October 2022 – The Gower – Young Inspectors**

TGP submitted their kitemark application in September and passed their inspection during the Young Inspectors residential in September at Little Bryn Gwyn, Gower. The Young Inspectors also had the opportunity to participate in team building and confidence building training and enjoyed a trip on a boat around Swansea Bay to complete the residential.

### November 2022 – Dolygaer - Young Wales festival residential

The November residential took place across 3 days to support and prepare the Young Wales Volunteers to host the Young Wales Festival as part of Universal Childrens Day. The volunteers had the opportunity to attend the following workshops and sessions:

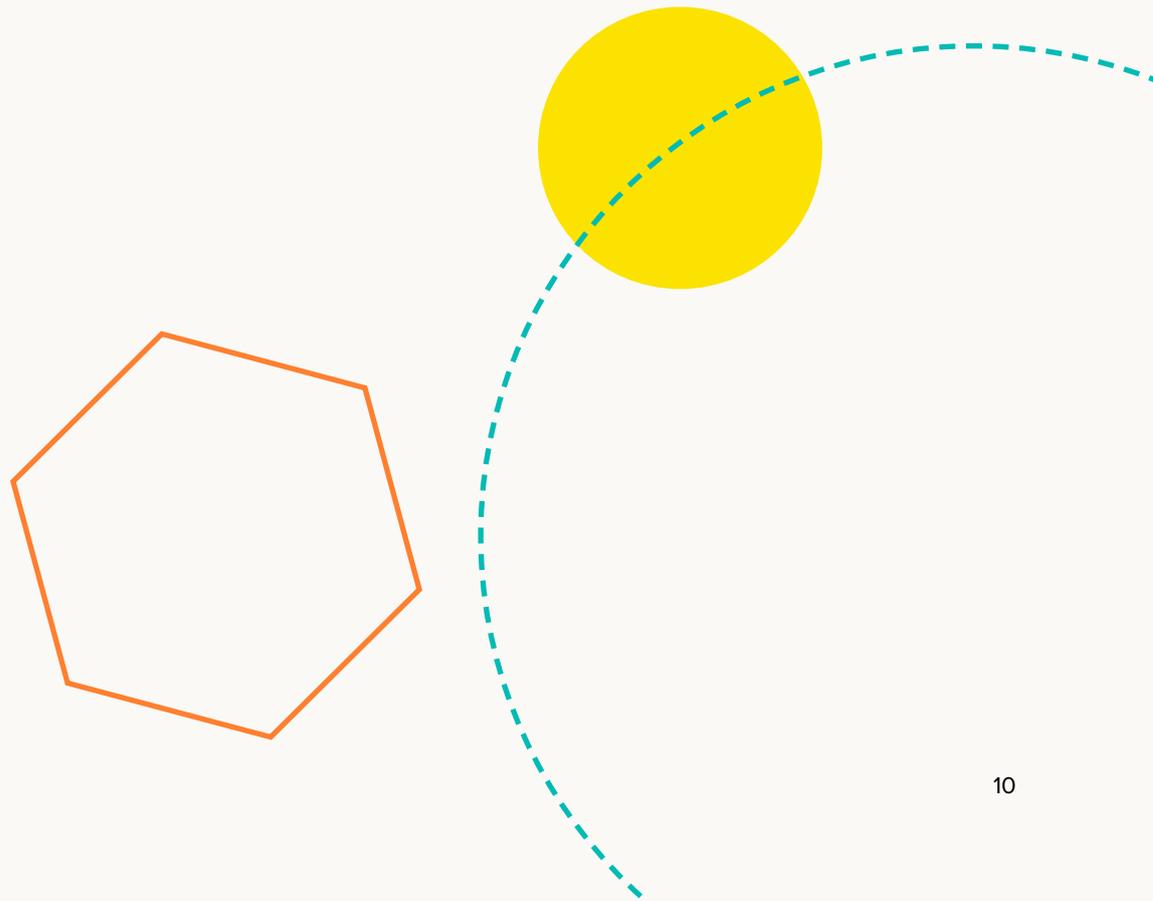
- Induction and Introductions
- Team building and focus exercise
- Learning and development pathway induction
- Hosting and Charing Training
- Preparing Presentations Training
- Writing Biographies Training
- Preparing presentations and rehearsing presentations
- Presentation skills, teamwork and confidence building
- Teamwork training



## Visit to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, Geneva – February 2023

A group of young people from Young Wales travelled to Geneva to present their report on Children's Rights in Wales to the UN. As well as presenting their findings to officials at the UN, the group had the opportunity to meet with the Deputy Minister for Social Services. Priority areas identified by young people in Wales in relation to their rights were:

1. Cost of Living
2. Mental Health and Wellbeing
3. Addiction and Substance Misuse
4. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
5. Children's Rights and Participation
6. Education
7. Crime
8. Life Experiences
9. Play
10. Transport
11. Online Safety
12. COVID-19
13. Climate Change



## Consultation responses

Children and young people took part in surveys looking at issues relating to the Missing Children Research Project, and children's rights in Wales for the report to the UN.

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 20 consultation responses to Welsh Government. Examples include:

- Informal Use of Welsh

The Welsh Government commissioned Children in Wales to gather the voices of young people's experiences of speaking Welsh socially, to guide the Welsh language strategy: Cymraeg 2050 (Welsh Government, 2017a).

199 Welsh young people (age 11-15) took part in one of 15 focus groups held in five Welsh-medium secondary schools. A thematic analysis produced two major themes: opportunity and individual experience.

- Education Reform (Miller Research)

The Welsh Government commissioned Children in Wales to gather the voices of young people's views on the structure of the school year. This primary research was conducted in partnership with Miller Research and one of our associates, overseen by Young Wales. This work engaged with 73 children and young people in 10 classes across 8 schools in Wales.



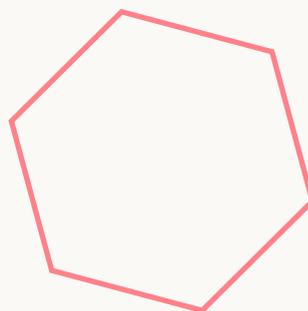
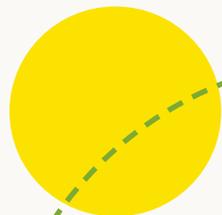
# Better connected families and workforce

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## Forums, networks and groups

A wide range of professional development Forums, Networks and Groups were facilitated by Children in Wales regularly, mostly online enabling attendance from participants throughout Wales. Most groups meet quarterly and many are supplemented by additional engagement such as with the development of position papers, consultation responses or evidence for Welsh Government meetings or the Senedd Cymru / Welsh Parliament 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
- Young Carers Workers Network
- Third Sector Additional Learning Needs Alliance
- Participation Workers National Network
- Early Years Action Group
- Children's Rights in Early Years Network
- Children's Research Network
- Senedd Cross Party Group for Children in Wales



## The Policy Council

The Policy Council allows a broad cross-sector group, including children and families organisations, statutory sector and local authority representatives 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 to help inform the strategic direction of Children in Wales' work and establish key priorities. There were three meetings during the year with invited speakers including Welsh Government officials and the Children's Commissioner. The meetings this year focused on issues around the cost of living crisis, issues faced by care experienced children and children's rights.



# Influencing practice, policy development and research

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## Contributing to the development and implementation of Welsh Government policies through representation role in Welsh Government and other groups

Children in Wales works to highlight and share the concerns and promising practice of its multi-agency, cross-sector members, partners, children and young people 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 2022-23, we were involved in the following groups:

### Representation on Welsh Government groups

- Budget Improvement and Impact Advisory Group
- Cabinet Cost of living Committee
- CAF/CASS Advisory Board
- Childcare & Play Stakeholder Reference Group
- Childcare Offer for Wales Stakeholder Group
- Children's Rights Advisory Group
- Community Focused Schools External Reference Group
- Corporate Parenting Implementation Group
- ECEC Action Plan Stakeholders Group
- Education Policy & Communications Group
- Engagement and Voice Task & Finish Group
- Fuel Poverty Advisory Group
- Future Generations Stakeholder Forum
- Human Rights Advisory Group
- Income maximisation and benefit take up group
- Loneliness and Isolation Advisory Group
- Ministerial Advisory Group on Carers
- Ministerial Advisory Group on Play
- Ministerial Play Review
- National Forum for CYP Advocacy
- Parenting Expert Advisory Group
- RPB Citizens and Third Sector task and finish group
- Strategic Implementation Group for the Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Act
- Transformation Delivery Group
- Welsh Early Language Screening Review strategic steering group

## Non-Welsh Government groups

- 4 Nations UNCRC Group
- Anti-Bullying Alliance Steering Group
- CLC Strategic Litigation group
- Cross Party Group on Care Experienced Young People
- Cross Party Group on Fuel Poverty & Energy Efficiency
- Cross Party Group on Human Rights
- Cross Party Group on Poverty
- Cross Party Group on Preventing Sexual Abuse
- PHW Building a Healthier Wales Task & Finish Group
- PHW Vaccine Equity Committee
- Play Wales Board
- Royal College for Paediatrics and Child Health National Speciality Advisory Group
- Social Care Wales Early Years and Child Care Network
- Social Care Wales Early Years and Social Care Stakeholders Advisory group
- Third Sector Partnership Council
- TSPC Ministerial meetings
- TSPC Ministerial meetings - Education
- TSPC Ministerial meetings - Finance
- TSPC Ministerial meetings - Health and Social Care
- TSPC Planning meetings
- WCVA Theory of Change Infrastructure Group

## International

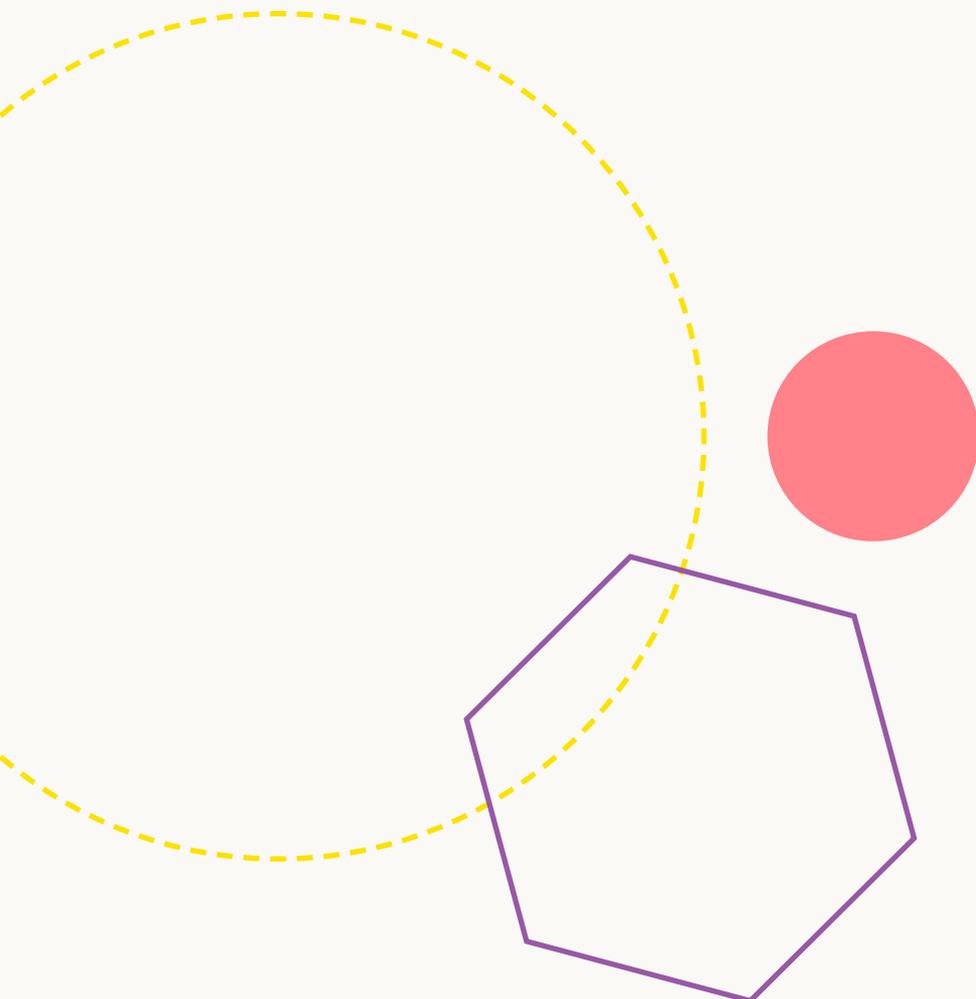
- Eurochild Management board
- Eurochild National Partner Network (NPN)



## Consultation responses

17 consultation responses or inputs into responses from a variety of perspectives were produced and submitted during the year. Our members and partners were engaged through our professional networks and electronically throughout the period to inform our responses to Welsh Government public consultations, selected UK Government consultations and Inquiries held by the Senedd Cymru / Welsh Parliament Committees.

Notable responses were submitted to the Welsh Government consultation on eliminating profit from care and mandatory reporting of children at risk, as part of Proposals for Primary Legislation in relation to children's social care, Continuing Health Care, mandatory reporting and regulation and inspection. We also submitted responses in respect of the Proposal to end the sale of energy drinks to children under 16; Developing a National Framework for Social Prescribing; Changes to statutory guidance on school uniform and appearance policies and the Coal Tip Safety White Paper. In addition, we provided written evidence to the Senedd CYPE Committee inquiries into Pupil Absence, Nationality and Borders Bill (LCM), Radical Reform for Care-Experienced Children as well as Trauma Informed Wales' consultation to develop a national trauma framework.



## Influencing and advocacy

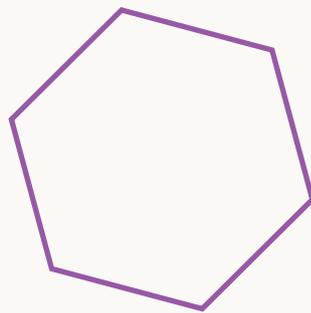
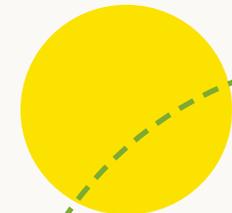
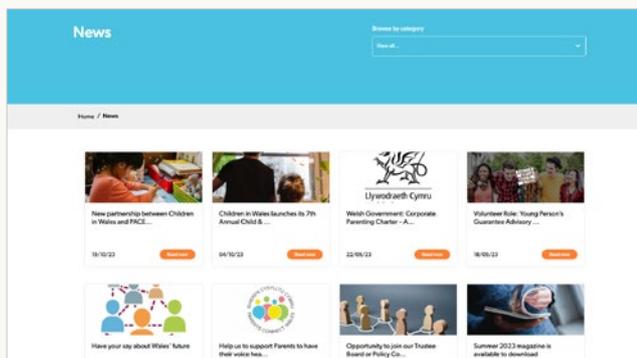
Children in Wales leads and works with others on a range of influencing opportunities, actively promoting these to the sector and members through e-briefings, quarterly magazines, engagement with the media, events and representation at external meetings. Activities during the year included:

- **Parent Participation** – Children in Wales undertook a national scoping exercise with a view to the development of a platform to hear parents' voices. Work included meetings with stakeholders, a survey with over 200 parents participating, focus group sessions and a final report which enabled us to secure 18th month funding to establish the Parents Connect project.
- **Children's Rights** – A significant undertaking this year was the publication of the State of Children's Rights in Wales report as the civil society report submitted to the United Nations to inform their examination of the UK and devolved governments' compliance with the UNCRC. As well as engaging the sector to inform the report, we held a webinar to launch the report and attended the pre-session examination in Geneva in February, where we presented the report to the UN Committee and took part in the evidence sessions.
- **Child Poverty** – We conducted two surveys amongst frontline practitioners and young people to inform our 6th annual report on Child and Family Poverty in Wales, which we launched at a webinar; presented through separate events to the Minister for Social Justice; a broad range of Welsh Government officials and our members
- Our **Cross Party Group on Children and Young People** was re-established in May 2022 with a focus on improving services for children on the edge of care and subject to child protection arrangements, securing widespread engagement from our members, Senedd members and the Welsh Government DMs team.
- This year saw the successful outcome from a long campaign as the **Welsh Government's Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Act 2020** came into force. We continue to work with our members and Welsh Government during the implementation phase of the Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) Act through the development of a children and young people strategy.

- **ALN Reform** - Continuing to engage with Welsh Government and raise concerns through our [TSANA network](#) regarding the implementation of the Additional Learning Needs Act, as well as being commissioned by Welsh Government to manage the awareness raising training of frontline practitioners.
- We continued to influence notable **UK Government** plans to reform the Human Rights Act and legislation in respect of children seeking asylum by responding to Senedd LCM requests, being signatory to UK wide NGO campaigns and influencing the human rights agenda in Wales.
- **Care experienced children** – we have continued to engage in dialogue with partners and Welsh Government in respect of the Programme of Government activities impacting on children in care, including supporting the development of the corporate parenting charter, influencing the Senedd inquiry and Welsh Government consultations, and delivering activities through our training and Getting Ready project.
- 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.

## Media and interviews/articles

Children in Wales responded media enquiries relating to issues affecting children, young people and families - with the Chief Executive delivering comments and interviews in English and Welsh, and Children in Wales' work being referenced in numerous outlets.



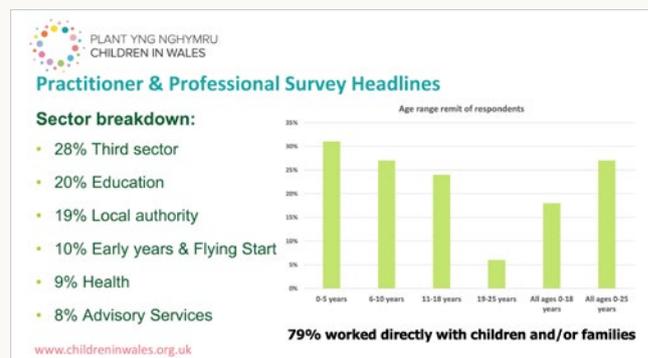
# Better informed children, young people, families and workforce

We have launched our new Vision and Mission Statements following detailed consultation with members, young people and other stakeholders. They can be found on our website here: [Vision Statement | Children in Wales](#)

## Online webinars and training sessions

A series of online webinars and training sessions were 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:

- A series of 6 webinars on themes around children's rights were held, attended by 827 delegates. The webinars addressed the impact of the cost of living crisis on babies and young children, the report to the UN, the annual report on poverty, parenting, mental health and food banks and emergency food provision.
- A Child Poverty Practice and Knowledge Exchange webinar with resources widely distributed afterwards.
- An online Workforce Roundtable event was held to help understand the impact on the workforce as a result of Covid-19, and consult with the Children's third sector to identify and plan for future development, training and support needs.
- 8 training sessions on 'Children's Rights & Participation'
- 4 training sessions on 'Children's Rights and the Early Years', in the context of current legislation, policies, programmes and strategies.



## Briefing services

Children in Wales produces several briefings and newsletters for members and networks.

The e-briefing is circulated bi-weekly and keeps our members up-to-date with the latest policy developments and news. The Young Wales newsletter is distributed bi-monthly with the latest news and information for young people and participation workers. A monthly e-briefing is provided for the End Child Poverty Network.

## 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 @plantynghymru.

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 such as navigating resources, accessing information pertaining to local/national services, advice around safeguarding procedures and much more.

## Children in Wales and Young Wales website

The website continues to be developed as more content 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 every week 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. The website also provides an area accessed by members to provide additional information and benefits.



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

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.

## Publications

Children in Wales produced three publications, including The State of Children's Rights Report as the civil society report to inform the United Nations examination of the UK and devolved Governments; the 6th annual Child & Family Poverty Survey Findings [report](#), Poverty and Bullying [report](#). A [young people's version](#) of the Poverty and Bullying Report was developed.

Children in Wales also 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 and available online, in the Members' section of our website, for all members to download. Each magazine is themed and combines information about policy development, research and contributions from member organisations.

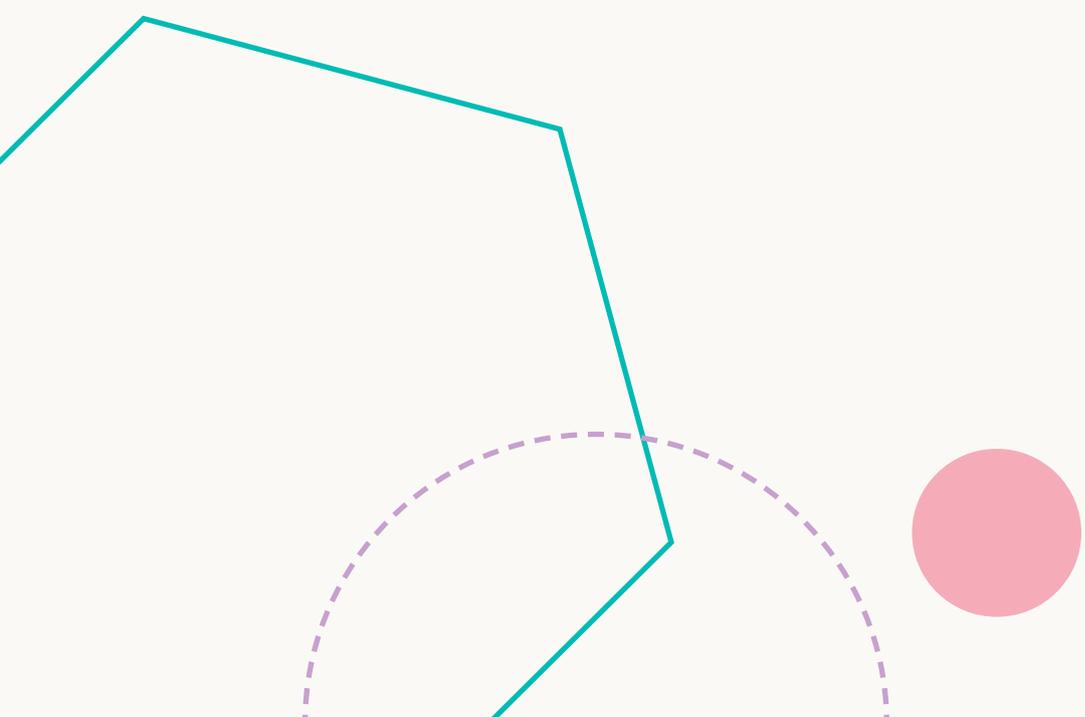
Themes for 2022/23 were:

Spring – Working and Engaging with Parents and Families

Summer - Adapting the Children's Sector Workforce in response to new challenges

Autumn - Celebrating Pride and Championing Equality and Diversity

Winter - Children & Young People's Participation – highlighting good practice across the sector.



# Membership

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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.

At the end of 2022/23 Children in Wales had 285 members - a steady increase on the previous year, of which, 205 were organisational members (ranging from local authorities to small nurseries), 42 were individuals (including professionals working in the children's sector), 38 were students and young people, who are able to join for free. The growing number of young people choosing to be members contributed greatly to this year's increase and are primarily drawn from our Young Wales initiative.

## **During the year we held the following member-only event:**

11 May 2023 - **Workforce Development event**

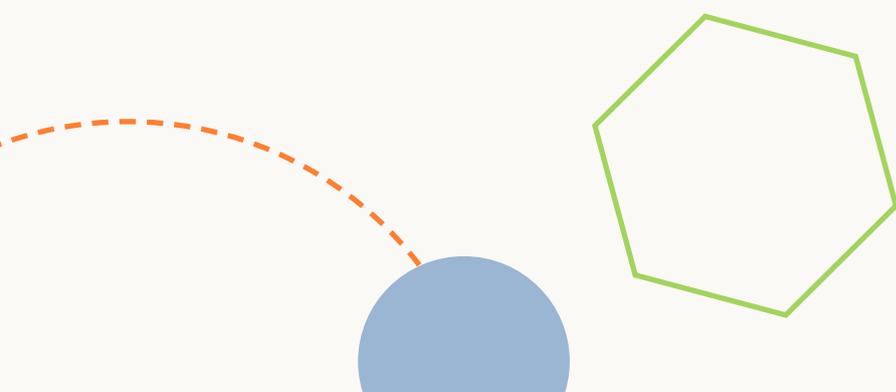
59 members attended

Children in Wales organised a Workforce Roundtable event where we sought to understand the impact on the workforce as a result of Covid-19, and consult with the Children's third sector to identify and plan for future development, training and support needs.

Guest speakers included:

- Sarah Crawley, Director, Barnardo's Cymru and South West
- Cathryn Thomas, Assistant Director Improvement, Social Care Wales
- Sarah Day, Chief Executive Officer, Practice Solutions
- Darren Mutter, Head of Children's Services, Pembrokeshire County Council
- Genette Webster, Social Care Workforce Development Team Leader, Vale of Glamorgan County Council

A number of workshops were also organised where members were able to work in smaller groups.



# Training and consultancy

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## Development and delivery of training and consultancy

2022-23 has been a busy and productive year for the Training Department, our versatility and response to moving our training provision to online platforms during the pandemic has enabled us to continue to be an economically competitive option for commissioners and individuals booking our training provision. Our training work continues to develop and also now includes delivering a range of training as part of the training framework for Powys, which has enabled the development of courses including Supporting Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking children and Child Sexual Abuse.

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 and sexual exploitation, teenage development, mental health and LGBT+ issues.

As a national Children's 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 Wales Safeguarding Procedures, as well as successfully completing the delivery of Co-production: Working with care experienced young people to shape better services. 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 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. Our range of associate trainers has grown so that we are able to continue to respond to the changing workforce needs of the children's sector.

We have also embarked on a number of project focused pieces of work such as the WG Corporate Safeguarding Guidance development, as well as completing Welsh Research on Missing Children and Stakeholder Engagement - Preventing and Responding to Child sexual abuse in Wales.

## Independent review mechanism

Children in Wales hosts the work of the Independent Review Mechanism Cymru. The IRM is a service initiated in 2004 for the benefit of the foster carer and adoptive carer applicants who were not happy with the decisions being made by agencies with regards to their ability to foster or adopt children and young people.

This year, the IRM staff have also continued in their work to develop and modernise the service to ensure that it is accessible and sustainable for all parties. New panel members have been recruited with particular emphasis on increasing diversity of the panel and representation of people who have lived experience of fostering and adoption.



# Funded project work

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During the year, Children in Wales was also involved in the following funded project work:

## **Social Care Third Sector Grant**

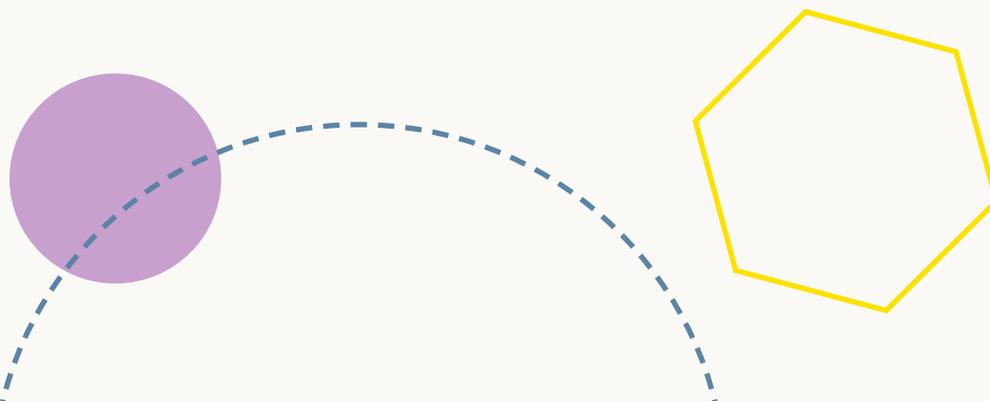
Funding from Welsh Government Social Care department to provide training to the social care workforce from a children's rights awareness raising perspective, engaging with members to disseminate knowledge and good practice. The focus for this year has been working with care experienced young people in a coproduced way. CIW also developed and delivered a Safeguarding course in British Sign Language.

## **Young Carers**

With funding from Welsh Government, Children in Wales has continued to facilitate the Young Carers Professional Network through meetings and support. This year we held an in person network meeting at the Wales Young Carers Festival which was attended by 15 representatives from projects working with young carers and young adult carers across Wales. Julie Morgan MS and Welsh Government colleagues joined and had the opportunity to participate in the meeting. Members shared their feedback on the Wales Young Carers Festival and had the opportunity to share progress made in their service area in the ongoing rollout of the young carers ID Cards. Young Wales also had a stall at the event and engaged with over 100 young carers on the day. We have secured funding for our programme of work with the professional network for 2023-24.

## **Tackling the Impact of Poverty on Education Programme (previously the Price of Pupil Poverty)**

Funded by Welsh Government, the project was renamed this year as it entered a new phase, ending the direct pilot work with schools. The work has moved into delivery of a universal approach, building on lessons learnt from the pilot and the needs of schools across Wales. The guides that we developed previously are still very much a prime focus and we continue to promote them as an effective tool to successfully tackling poverty in school settings. Key work areas over this period have been the re-brand and refresh of all resources linked to the programme that we have developed including the full toolkit for schools aligning with the new approach of positive language and feel around equity and poverty. The development of a community platform has enabled all schools to access our guidance, training on poverty, best practice and case studies, and support to implement and embed the price of pupil poverty guides, also providing opportunities for schools to share practice and ideas.

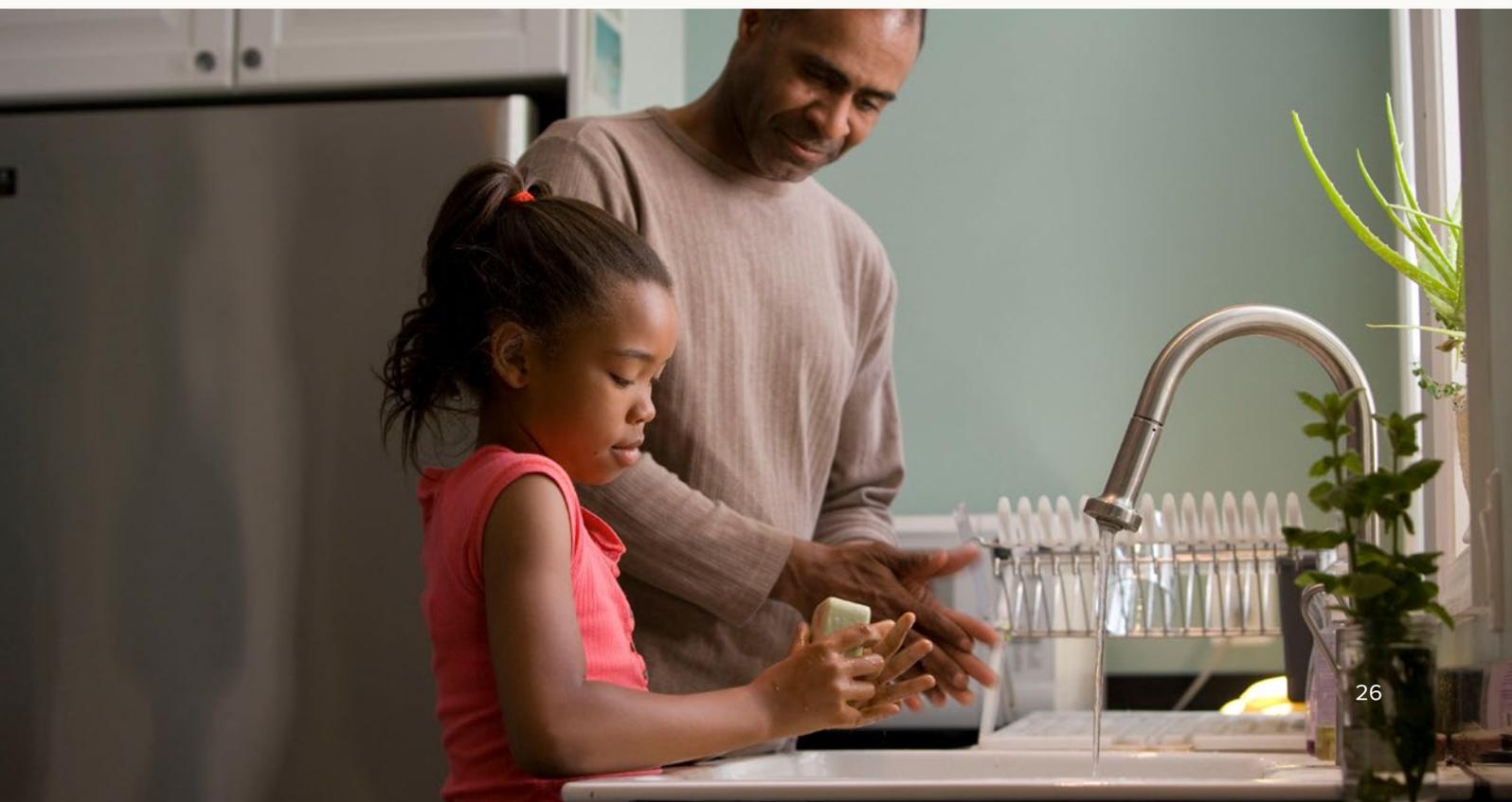


## **Getting Ready Project**

Funded by the Welsh Government Housing and Homelessness Division and delivered in partnership with Voices from Care Cymru, the Getting Ready project is complementing the When I am Ready scheme by providing support and information for young people to safely transition from care. It includes considerations around delaying leaving care, where this is appropriate and possible, and reducing the risk of homelessness and housing instability. Children in Wales has worked with local authorities to develop a package of bespoke resources for care experienced young people across Wales on a range of thematic areas, notably financial education and budgeting, and have released tailored resources for four local authority areas. We have been delivering workshops to a range of professionals and foster carers, as well as workshops for care experienced children across Wales. Working with our delivery partner Voices from Care Cymru, we successfully secured funding for 2023-24.

## **Parent Participation (now Parents Connect)**

We initially secured short term funding (3 months) from Welsh Government to undertake a scoping exercise working with parents and local organisations working across Wales who are currently engaging parents as part of their work. This consisted of research and consultation with parents and organisations, and the production of a report on our findings and next steps. The purpose of this project was to capture existing engagement mechanisms across Wales and to inform our approach to engaging parents nationally, with a view to then develop a Wales wide platform for gathering parent's views, which would lead to more meaningful participation in the form of co-production. We successfully secured continuation funding for 18 months until March 2024 to develop the Parents Connect project, employing a project lead to establish parent and professional advisory groups; develop online resources for engaging parents and to trial different approaches to engage parents and carers.



## **Children (Removal of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Act 2020 – Children and Young People**

Children in Wales secured continued funding from the Welsh Government to deliver work in support of the implementation of the Children Act. This year, the first part of this programme of work to deliver a children and young people strategy in support of implementation of the Children Act was completed. An engagement plan to consult with relevant stakeholders such as professionals in education, youth engagement and voluntary sector organisations which also including children in schools and Young Wales Volunteers was implemented and opinions and ideas were recorded and reviewed.

The information and opinions from this exercise will be used to i) develop a suite of resources for schools and other organisations containing a guidance document, session plans, story narratives for early years, a poster and a short, animated film which together will explain changes in law within the context of children's rights in age appropriate formats ii) produce an asynchronous training resource for school staff and other professionals iii) Undertake an awareness-raising plan to help promote the resources and cascade information about the legislative changes.

Further funded projects included:

- Hands on Heritage - creation of a children's rights resource produced by young volunteers, funded by the National Museum of Wales
- Development of Participation Approaches and Training, funded by Careers Wales
- An Early Years Consultation with Parents, funded by Wrexham County Borough Council
- A Poverty Strategy consultation with young people, funded by Welsh Government
- Stakeholder Engagement on CSA Action Plan review, funded by Welsh Government
- Missing Children from Care - Research with young people, funded by Welsh Government



# Governance

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Children in Wales were very pleased to announce that Helen Mary Jones was appointed as our new Chair at our 2022 AGM, following a recruitment campaign and a rigorous interview process.

Helen Mary is very familiar with the work of Children in Wales and has been one of our Trustees since 2021. She was a former Member of the Senedd (1999-2011 and 2018-2021), as well as a former CEO of Youth Cymru. Helen Mary now works as a freelance consultant and sits on several boards, including Social Care Wales.

Helen Mary said, “It is a huge privilege to have been elected to fulfil this important role. There has never in recent years been a harder time for children and families, and I am looking forward to working with the Children in Wales staff team to support our members in the vital work they do for children and young people. Promoting children’s rights must now, more than ever, be at the heart of decision making here in Wales and children’s voices must be heard.”

Our 2022 AGM was also Dave Williams’ final formal meeting as Chair of Children in Wales. Dave has made a huge contribution to our work over the last 9 years as Chair and Board member, and the Board and staff of Children in Wales are extremely grateful to him. Thank you Dave.

On leaving Dave said, “It’s been a great privilege to serve on the trustee board of Children in Wales. I’m proud of all that we have achieved over the years and would like to thank all the staff and trustees of Children in Wales throughout my involvement. I leave at a challenging but exciting time. The organisation & leadership with Helen Mary as the new chair of Trustees is ready and equipped to meet that challenge. I look forward to supporting the vital work as we move forwards.”

## **Trustee Board 2022-23**

Helen Mary Jones (Chair)

Suman Bhogal (Treasurer)

Bethan Webber, Cwmpas

Cherrie Bija, Faith in Families

Deborah Jones, Voices from Care Cymru

Dr David Williams, Aneurin Bevan Teaching Health Board (stood down October 2022)

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

Emeritus Professor Patrick Thomas

Fateha Ahmed, EYST

Jackie Murphy

Jenny Williams, Conwy County Borough Council

Kyle Eldridge (from October 2022)

Liam Maguire, Valleys to Coast (from October 2022)

Sarah Crawley, Barnardo’s Cymru

# Financial summary

FY23

Expenditure	£	%
Better connected Children, Young People, Families & Workforce : £ / %	£441,256	28%
Influencing Practice, Policy Development & Research through Representation & Consultation: £ / %	£412,743	26%
Better Informed Children, Young People, Families & Workforce: £ / %	£649,808	41%
Membership Support Services: £ / %	£64,227	4%
Governance: £ / %	£13,994	1%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>£1,582,028</b>	

Income	£	%
Membership Subscriptions	£6,558	1%
Better connected Children, Young People, Families & Workforce: £ / %	£539,457	35%
Influencing Practice, Policy Development & Research £ / %	£431,597	28%
Better Informed Children, Young People, Families & Workforce £ / %	£374,845	24%
Membership Support Services £ / %	£73,535	5%
Governance £ / %	£106,183	7%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>£1,532,175</b>	