



STATEMENT: FIRST OFFICIAL ANNIVERSARY OF THE CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

To mark the first official anniversary of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (thereafter 'Committee') issuing their Concluding Observations to the UK and devolved governments, the UNCRC Monitoring Group wish to take this opportunity to give recognition to the advancements made since last July, whilst also reinforcing the need for greater urgency if the Committee's recommendations are to be fully implemented as intended.

The Committee welcomed the positive steps being taken by the Welsh Government towards fully incorporating the UNCRC into domestic law, recognising that good progress had been made to secure and protect the rights of many children and young people, which have since been built upon by the appointment of a Cabinet Secretary with specific responsibility for children's rights and the establishment of a Children's Rights Advisory Group with external representation.

We also recognise the positive actions to address a number of the key concerns raised by the Committee and by the UNCRC Monitoring Group in our [report](#), in respect of action to address children and young people's poor mental health, to improve the outcomes for children in and leaving care and to close the gap in education attainment.

We also welcome more recent announcements of future priorities including the commitment

- To consult on proposals to remove the defence of reasonable chastisement prior to introducing legislation in the third year of the current Assembly term
- To reform the voting system and extend the voting franchise to 16-17 yr olds.
- To review and consult on a new Refugee and Asylum Seeker Delivery Plan as part of a programme of work to deliver the recommendations of the NAFW Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee Report.

The progress being made by the NAFW to establish a Youth Parliament for young people in Wales will also give further affect to children's participatory rights and scrutiny of the democratic process.

The Committee however identified a number of areas which require urgent attention if children's rights in Wales is to be further realised. In particular, we would wish to draw attention to the following priorities where progress could be accelerated.

That the Welsh Government

- Ensure that quality Child Rights Impact Assessments (CRIAs) are consistently undertaken on all proposed policies, budgetary decisions and legislation likely to impact on children and young people, and that these are routinely made available in a timely manner to external stakeholders, and for scrutiny by children and young people who should also be engaged in their preparation.
- Strengthen coordination and evaluation of the implementation of the UN Convention, with sufficient human, technical and financial resources, including ensuring that a high-level strategic implementation group within Welsh Government is in place and which is in line with the arrangements set out in the Children's Rights Scheme to comply with the due regard duty.
- Publish a programme of action for children and young people which sets out how children's rights are being fully integrated into the Welsh Government policy and legislative forward work programme
- Ensure that all new and existing legislation is fully compliant with the Convention, and that the existing due regard duty is consistently adhered to.
- Strengthen the routine analysis of all Government spending on children, and publish CRIAs of budgets.
- Ensure there is a comprehensive national strategic approach, and a permanent structure, for the systematic participation of all children and young people in Wales.
- Increase all efforts to eliminate child poverty and ensure that there is progress being made in the delivery of the Child Poverty Strategy and that this progress is reported on.

That the WG make urgent representation to the UK Government

- in respect of the adverse impact changes to legal aid is having on children
- to ensure that there is no diminution of children's rights protection in the law from the Brexit process
- to support the serious concerns identified by the Committee in respect of child poverty levels, and the adverse impact of welfare reform on some children and their families.

About the Wales UNCRC Monitoring Group

The Wales UNCRC Monitoring Group is a national alliance of non-governmental and academic agencies, tasked with monitoring and promoting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in Wales. The UNCRC Monitoring Group was established in 2002 and is presently facilitated by Children in Wales, the national umbrella organisation. Since 2002, the Group has worked with the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and submitted civil society reports to inform successive UK State Party Examinations.

Members of the Monitoring Group are representatives of, and nominated by, non-governmental organisations and academics which are as follows - Barnardo's Cymru, Centre for Welsh legal Affairs- Aberystwyth University, Children in Wales, Children's Commissioner for Wales (observers), NSPCC Wales/Cymru, Play Wales, Save the Children Wales, UNICEF (observers), Wales Observatory on Human Rights of Children and Young People and the Welsh Local Government Association (observers)



Children in Wales
Plant yng Nghymru

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