

P-05-842 Give young people a voice when commissioning local services in Wales

This petition was submitted by the Changing Minds Campaign Group, having collected 1,387 signatures online and 2,865 on paper, a total of 4,252 signatures.

Text of Petition

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to acknowledge that the current level of young persons' participation in the commissioning of services does not allow for the inclusion of marginalised groups. We request a review of the policies and guidance in place and a recommendation that new guidelines are mandatory for services commissioned to work with young people.

Every young person in Wales needs to be able to share their voice and experience in a way that is meaningful to them, to shape the services that are available to support them. We are asking for your support to promote changes to achieve this goal. As young people we must be able to share our thoughts and views on the projects that we need in our area.

Currently, only youth councils/ forums are consulted- which is not representative of those who struggle to attend such forums such as those 1 in 5 young adults who have a diagnosable mental health disorder. There needs to be a platform for those young people who may not be able to participate in the current schemes due to their mental health to share their opinions on services and projects that are directly affecting them. We are a group of young people that have been involved in the Changing Minds Project coordinated by Newport Mind, which is due to lose funding in November of this year. Because of this we have been learning about the commissioning process, which has led to this petition being created and to our wider #changeit campaign. Direct inclusion of young people with mental health issues in the commissioning process will allow for greater tailoring of service provisions and improve confidence in the services amongst the targeted demographic.

“Involvement in this project enabled me to really understand the concerns of young people and the issues they face. Without these concerns being raised

and included from the inception of any policy which affects them, any initiative affecting young people will be flawed".

Additional Information

The Children's Rights Approach in Wales by the Children's Commissioner for Wales outlines a framework for embedding children's rights within services working with young people. These are guidelines and thus non-binding. Based on the United Nations Convention for the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) Article 12 outlines the right of children to be involved within policies creation and implementation; particularly those which affect their demographic. The Children's Commissioner for Wales Annual Report for the 2016/2017 year (the Report) specifically highlights the Commissioner's wish to see greater integration of young people within the commissioning process. The current guidelines for youth participation in Wales are, amongst other sources, contained within the Children and Young People's Participation in Wales Good Practice Guide 2016. The seven 'Core Standards' contained within the Guide are excellent starting steps. We feel that the non-mandatory nature of these standards and approaches, although partly met within some authorities in Wales, are insufficient for ensuring accountability for all services working with young people. We seek to ensure that young people from marginalised groups have a voice in the decision making processes as well as ensuring that service provision for young people all over Wales are of a similarly excellent standard. Our petition is in line with Recommendation 10 of the Mind over Matter report that highlights the current levels of provision of mental health services for young people, and compliments the work by the Together for Children and Young People Programme. Without change to the current guidelines, young people across Wales will continue to be marginalised. Specifically, those with mental health issues or additional needs who may not be able to take part in the current – and limited – youth participation initiatives will continue to find it difficult to voice their opinions.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Newport West
- South Wales East