

CYPE(5)-30-19 - Paper 1

National Assembly for Wales CYPE Committee Inquiry on Children's Rights, Autumn 2019

Evidence Paper from the Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services, Welsh Government

Introduction

The Welsh Government welcomes the Children, Young People and Education Committee's Inquiry on Children's Rights in Wales and its scrutiny of the impact of The Rights of the Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011. The Welsh Government is delighted to see children's rights featured so prominently in the important work of the Committee.

Where sections of this evidence paper do not follow the order of the terms of reference for the Committee's inquiry, we have highlighted which of the objectives they correspond to.

The Centrality of Children's Rights in the work of the Welsh Government

The Welsh Government has a proud tradition and an enduring commitment to raise awareness and embed children's rights in policy and practice in Wales.

Children's rights are the fundamental basis for our development of policy, legislation and services in Wales and they underpin our ambition for every child in Wales to have the best possible start in life. The Welsh Government was the first nation in the UK to appoint a Children's Commissioner in 2001 and we adopted the UNCRC as the basis of policy making for children in 2004. Children's rights are the driving force behind key programmes and policies in Wales.

The nature and scope of the Legislation

Wales has led the way in children's rights by enshrining them in law through The Rights of the Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011¹ (referred to as 'the Measure' in the rest of this Evidence Paper). Wales was the first UK nation to make such significant legislative arrangements to ensure the centrality of children's rights.

The Measure places a duty on Welsh Government Ministers to have due regard to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)² when exercising any of their 'functions' including when making:

¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2011/2/contents>

² <https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/>

- Proposed new legislation;
- Proposed new policies; and
- A review of, or change to, an existing policy and/or legislation.

Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011

Under the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011, Welsh Ministers have four duties:

- To have **due regard** to the UNCRC when exercising Ministerial functions
- To produce a **Children’s Rights Scheme** setting out arrangements for complying with the due regard duty
- To publish a **Compliance Report** on how Ministers have complied with the due regard duty, at a minimum of every five years (we’re currently committed to reporting every two-and-a-half years)
- To take appropriate steps to **promote public understanding** of the UNCRC

The Explanatory Note to the Measure explains that:

*“The due regard duty requires the Welsh Ministers to **give the weight that is appropriate** in all the circumstances of the case to Part I of the Convention and the Protocols, **balancing them against all the other factors** that are relevant to the decision in question”.*³

This means that Welsh Government Ministers are required to give appropriate consideration to the UNCRC, balancing the UNCRC against all the other factors that are relevant to the decision in question.

The rest of this evidence paper sets out the comprehensive arrangements the Welsh Government has put in place that flow from The Measure. These arrangements ensure children’s rights and the UNCRC are at the heart of our policy and practice.

³ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2011/2/notes/division/2/1>

Section 1: The Measure's influence on the Welsh Government's decision making⁴

The Welsh Government has demonstrated its commitment to children's rights by leading the way in enshrining them in law through the Measure. Wales was the first country in the UK to take such a legislative approach.

The Measure places a duty on Welsh Ministers to give due regard to the UNCRC, it is not intended to prescribe policy outcomes. The application of due regard to the UNCRC has deliberately been set at a national level and provides a robust framework for all decisions – including policy and legislation. This means that all government activity is captured within this framework and therefore precludes the need to replicate the due regard duty on the face of subsequent pieces of legislation. The Welsh Government is currently undertaking a significant piece of work to examine future options for bringing together Government responsibilities to ensure human rights for all population groups, thus avoiding the need for a piecemeal approach across multiple separate pieces of legislation.

Ministers are aware of their duty to give balanced consideration to children's rights and the UNCRC. Guidance on advising Ministers is available to officials, including on their obligations related to giving due regard to the UNCRC as part of the policymaking process. This requirement applies right across Welsh Government, not just to areas that might be considered to have an obvious link to children's policy.

The importance and impact of Children's Rights Impact Assessments (CRIAs)

Children's rights are enshrined in Welsh law. This means that whenever we use any of our powers to make a decision, we are required to consider the impact on children and young people.

To ensure that officials support Ministers to comply with their duty to have due regard to the UNCRC, Welsh Government has developed a Children's Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA). CRIAs support Ministers to comply with the duty to have due regard to the UNCRC as set out in the Measure.

The CRIA clearly sets out the process which officials should follow to ensure compliance with the CRIA process of due regard and how to provide advice, which allows Ministers to give balanced consideration of issues, including how the articles of the UNCRC have been considered.

⁴ Please note that this section of the paper covers the following issues identified the terms of reference from the Committee's inquiry: financial allocations, general measures of implementation, the due regard being implemented in practice, CRIAs being used as a meaningful tool, effective embedding across portfolios.

CRIAs are carried out in order to advise Ministers about the impact policies, programmes or legislation might have on children and young people, so this can be taken into account when decisions are made. They help to guide officials and support Ministers in their making decisions about policy, resource allocation and implementation. The CRIA may highlight areas that might not have otherwise considered and where identified impacts on children and their rights can be mitigated. The CRIA process is relatively new so the Welsh Government welcomes feedback on the CRIAs done to date. Our aim is to implement a proportionate approach that supports high quality CRIAs.

The impact of children's rights on financial allocations

In recent years, the Budget process has adopted an integrated approach to impact assessments, which includes consideration of children's rights. This enables Welsh Government to fulfil its responsibility to consider strategic spending decisions through a number of lenses to understand their impact.

This year's Budget preparations have been shaped by our eight cross-cutting priority areas of early years, social care, housing, skills and employability, better mental health, decarbonisation, poverty and biodiversity.

Each of these areas has been led by a Minister – who has no direct portfolio responsibility for the immediate priority area - to work across government to ensure that we are maximising all the work that we do across different departments, with the resources we will have available to us in the 2020-21 Budget. We recognise these areas as having the greatest potential contribution to long-term prosperity and well-being, including the impacts on children's well-being.

Our aim is to support young people to make the most of their potential. We know an individual's experiences during their early years will play a significant part in shaping their future and are critical to their chances of going on to lead a healthy, prosperous and fulfilling life.

General Measures of implementation

The Measure is a progressive piece of legislation that integrates the UNCRC into Welsh law. We agree with the submission to the inquiry from the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) that Wales "has gone further than the UK Government and any other devolved authority in the UK to integrate the Convention in domestic law".

The Measure fulfils the expectations of the UN Committee on Integration of the Convention into domestic law as a general legislative measure of implementation. EHRC research concludes:

“The Measure has added a new basis for judicial review. This means that the Convention may be relied on before a UK court to challenge a decision taken by a Welsh Minister.”⁵

The Welsh Government is satisfied that the Measure and the supporting arrangements are influencing and impacting policymaking and decision making at the right level and provide a robust and appropriate framework for embedding children’s rights.

⁵ The impact of Legal Integration of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Wales, EHRC, Dr Simon Hoffman, Wales Observatory on Human Rights of Children and Young People and Sean O’Neill, Children in Wales, August 2018

Section 2: A Comprehensive System of Support and Challenge to Underpin the Measure

The Measure requires Ministers to have due regard to the UNCRC when exercising any of their functions. The Measure is radical and far-reaching in its scope and nature. But the Measure should not be seen in isolation: it does not operate alone. It is a key part of a wider, comprehensive offer of support and challenge to ensure that children's rights are embedded in Welsh policy and practice.

Support

Policy makers and practitioners are able to access significant support through training, information and resources to help them develop policy and deliver services that embed children's rights:

1) Training

As well as the training available internally to Welsh Government officials, the Welsh Government continues to fund support for professional organisations through expert training from the University of Wales, Trinity St David (UWTSD). Training by UWTSD is provided free-of-charge to organisations such as local authorities (including elected members), health boards, police liaison officers and Sport Wales. The Welsh Government also funds open access awareness raising training through the grant funding of Children in Wales.

2) Information and Resources on Children's Rights

Information and resources are provided free-of-charge to professionals and the public through the recently-updated Welsh Government's Children's Rights website⁶ and social media activity. The Welsh Government has updated the website and resources, in light of the 30th anniversary of the UNCRC, particularly focussing on learning resources, which are accessible to every school and youth organisation in Wales.

3) Participation – the voice of children and young people

Article 12 of the UNCRC recognises the rights of children and young people to have a say in decisions which affect them. The Welsh Government is committed to ensuring children and young people are full and active citizens in Wales whose views are taken into account and has taken positive steps to facilitate this approach. We have funded Children in Wales to develop Young Wales, which works with existing youth groups, forums and councils to bring together their collective voice. This is invaluable to the Welsh Government when considering new legislation or developing new programmes and policies.

The Welsh Government also works closely with Children in Wales and Young Wales on the promotion of the National Participation Standards for Children and Young

⁶ <https://gov.wales/childrens-rights-in-wales>

People which reflect the rights-based ethos that is integral to working with children and young people. The new participation kite mark recognises public bodies and public service boards who are excelling in involving children and young people in policy development, decision making and delivery of these services.

Wales is the only country in the UK so far to consult children and young people on their views on Brexit. The new Youth Parliament is providing a focal point for the views of young people in Wales – supporting views to be expressed and influence political debate and decision making.

External Advice and Challenge

As well as this support to embed children's rights, the Welsh Government recognises the value of expert external advice and welcomes challenge from the sector in supporting world class policy making and service delivery. We provide the sector with significant funding and wide ranging access to Ministers and lead policy makers to help drive progress on children's rights:

1) Children's Commissioner for Wales

The Welsh Government was the first UK nation to appoint a Children's Commissioner (2001). The Children's Commissioner plays a crucial role as an independent champion of children's rights in Wales and helps to hold the government to account in a range of ways, including by publishing an annual report. The 2017-18 report⁷ made 15 recommendations for the Welsh Government. The Welsh Government was pleased to accept or accept in principle all of the Commissioner's recommendations⁸. The government's response demonstrates how seriously children's rights are being taken across the Welsh Government, as does the comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding between the Children's Commissioner and the Welsh Government.

The Commissioner has a significant range of opportunities to offer advice, expertise and challenge to the Welsh Government and public bodies funded by the Welsh Government. In addition to the annual report, the Children's Commissioner also publishes quarterly reports setting out her view of the progress that the Welsh Government is making against her recommendations.

The Commissioner has a range of regular meetings with Welsh Government Ministers to follow up issues of interest and concern. At official level, the Commissioner and her office engage in a significant number of task and finish groups that help to develop Welsh Government policy and practice.

⁷ <https://www.childcomwales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Annual-Report-2017-18.pdf>

⁸ <https://gov.wales/childrens-commissioner-wales-annual-report-2017-2018-welsh-government-response>

The Commissioner also submits formal written responses and policy statements in response to formal consultations.

The Commissioner's framework for working with children, *The Right Way*⁹, contains helpful information about ways to embed children's human rights and the benefits of doing so. *The Right Way* is about placing the UNCRC at the core of planning and service delivery and integrating children's rights into every aspect of decision-making, policy and practice. The Welsh Government seeks to share and promote the use of *The Right Way* with sector partners.

2) Children's Rights Advisory Group (CRAG)

The Children's Rights Advisory Group is comprised of a range of experts from across the sector with membership from the Office of the Children's Commissioner for Wales, Wales Observatory on Human Rights of Children and Young People, UNICEF UK and Children in Wales.

CRAG meets on a quarterly basis to advise the Welsh Government about children's rights. CRAG is able to give advice to individual policy teams and offer support and challenge on CRIAs. CRAG has also been particularly engaged in working with the Welsh Government to develop a revised Children's Rights Scheme and co-produce plans to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the UNCRC.

⁹ The Right Way: A Children's Rights Approach in Wales - <https://www.childcomwales.org.uk/resources/childrens-rights-approach/right-way-childrens-rights-approach-wales/>

Section 3: Progress in developing children’s rights and better outcomes in Wales

This evidence paper has set out the scope of the Measure and the comprehensive arrangements in place to support it. The focus of this paper will now turn to the outcomes for children and young people which flow from these arrangements.

This combination of expert support and challenge means the Welsh Government has a comprehensive approach to embedding children’s rights and ensuring better outcomes for children and their families. The Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) recently commissioned a report about the impact of the 2011 Measure¹⁰. It concluded that the 2011 Measure and the supporting arrangements had led to a significant, positive impact on policy in Wales:

“We have no reservations in concluding that the Measure has achieved its objective of embedding the Convention in policy-making in Wales.

The due regard duty has established a new framework for policy development, which in turn has resulted in greater attention to, and visibility for, children’s rights in policy processes undertaken by Ministers and their officials.

In our assessment, the Measure has had a significant impact on the way policy is undertaken by the Welsh Government: it has clearly established the Convention as a reference framework for policy decision-making in Wales.”

The Welsh Government agrees. It is clear that this approach is bearing fruit. There is tangible evidence of this, meaning real improvements in the rights and wellbeing of children and young people in Wales. Some of the most significant recent examples of progress include:

- The Children (Abolition of the Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Bill which takes our commitment to help protect children’s rights a step further and, if passed, will help end the physical punishment of children in Wales;
- The Curriculum for Wales 2022 framework will provide guidance to support a rights based approach and human rights education; and
- Our commitment to extend the voting franchise to 16 and 17-year-olds. This means that 16 and 17-year-olds will be eligible to vote in 2021 Assembly elections and 2022 local government elections.

Looking forward, protecting Wales’ future generations was a fundamental principle of our groundbreaking Well-being of Future Generations Act. This requires public bodies to consider people’s wider well-being (including children and young people), when providing services and to think more about the long-term impact.

¹⁰ The impact of Legal Integration of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Wales, EHRC, Dr Simon Hoffman, Wales Observatory on Human Rights of Children and Young People and Sean O’Neill, Children in Wales, August 2018

Section 4: Effectiveness of the Children’s Rights Scheme and last Compliance Report that demonstrates the action taken by the Welsh Government to fully implement the Measure

Children’s Rights Scheme

Section 2 of the Measure requires Welsh Ministers to produce a Children’s Rights Scheme. The Children’s Rights Scheme¹¹ (referred to as “the scheme” in the rest of this document) sets out the arrangements in place to ensure that Welsh Ministers comply with the duty of due regard when exercising any of their functions.

It is designed to help officials to understand and carry out their responsibilities to support Ministers to comply with the due regard duty and ensure that children’s rights are considered in undertaking their work. It is an important document, which helps operationalise the Welsh Government’s commitment to children’s rights¹².

We are currently working closely with our expert advisory group on children’s rights (the CRAG¹³) to develop a new version of the scheme. We value the expert opinion of the CRAG and the wider sector and we are committed to taking a collaborative approach, working with stakeholders both inside and outside Welsh Government to ensure that the new scheme is as effective as possible. Section 3 of the Measure requires Welsh Government to consult with:

- Children and young people;
- The Children’s Commissioner (who is represented on the CRAG); and
- Other persons or bodies as the Welsh Ministers consider appropriate.

We are also required to seek the agreement of the National Assembly before we publish a new scheme and we look forward to receiving the committee’s report following this short inquiry and considering its recommendations to help shape the final draft of the Children’s Rights Scheme for consultation. The plan to update the scheme includes developing a children and young persons’ version. We expect the new scheme to be in place by spring 2020.

Compliance Reporting

Section 4 of the Measure requires Welsh Government to produce a compliance report¹⁴. The requirement is for Ministers to publish a report, at least every five years,

¹¹ <http://www.assembly.wales/Laid%20Documents/GEN-LD9732%20-%20Children%27s%20Rights%20Scheme%202014-22042014-255569/gen-ld9732-e-English.pdf>

¹² It should be noted that the Children’s Rights Scheme is a key part of a wider, comprehensive offer of support and challenge to ensure that children’s rights are embedded in Welsh policy and practice (set out in Section 2 of this Evidence Paper).

¹³ The membership of CRAG comprises sector experts from the Office of the Children’s Commissioner for Wales, Wales Observatory on Human Rights of Children and Young People, Unicef UK and Children in Wales.

¹⁴ <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-06/rights-of-children-and-young-people-compliance-report.pdf>

about how they and the First Minister have complied with the due regard duty. In keeping with our wider commitment to the UNCRC, Ministers have demonstrated the importance of children's rights to the Welsh Government by requiring mid-term reports, which increases the reporting cycle to once every two-and-a-half years. The compliance report sets out how Ministers have complied with their obligations under the Measure, how they have put in place the arrangements relating to Section 1 of the Measure, the way in which the Welsh Government applies the duty to have due regard to the UNCRC generally, and what impact it has had.

We published the third compliance report in February 2018. We are confident this evidences the actions taken by the Welsh Government to implement the Measure. Producing the report provided an opportunity to move beyond the words on the statute book to think about what the Measure means in practice. Welsh Government welcomed the opportunity to use the guidance issued by the Children's Commissioner's office in *The Right Way*¹⁵ to review our work and commitment to the UNCRC over the last few years.

The compliance report was structured around the five principles of a children's rights approach¹⁶, demonstrating the Welsh Government's continuing commitment to children's rights and to encourage other public bodies to make use of this framework. In particular, the compliance report provides information about Welsh Government activity designed to support children's rights. The report details how the CRIA process is underpinned by a range of activities to promote knowledge and understanding of the UNCRC. This includes training provided to Welsh Government officials and Welsh Government-funded training for practitioners working with children and young people.

External Training Provision

The evaluation report about the University of Wales Trinity Saint David's provision of training on the UNCRC showed that 1,627 people from eight different workforces engaged in the training between October 2015 and October 2018.

¹⁵ The Right Way: A Children's Rights Approach in Wales

<https://www.childcomwales.org.uk/resources/childrens-rights-approach/right-way-childrens-rights-approach-wales/>

¹⁶ The guide is intended to offer a practical framework, grounded in the UNCRC, to help public bodies integrate children's rights into every aspect of decision making, policy and practice. The five principles of a children's rights approach are:

- Embedding - integrating the UNCRC in decision-making through procedures and actions.
- Equality and non-discrimination - ensuring that every child has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents, and that no child has to endure poor life chances because of discrimination.
- Empowering children - enhancing children's capabilities as individuals so they are better able to take advantage of rights, and to engage with, influence and hold accountable individuals and institutions that affect their lives.
- Participation - listening to children and young people and taking their views meaningfully into account.
- Accountability - authorities being accountable to children for decisions which affect their lives. It includes giving children and young people information and giving them access to procedures which enable them to question and challenge decision makers.

Evaluation of the training has been extremely positive - 91% of participants judged the training to be of an excellent or very good standard. The evaluation found that participants' understanding and awareness of the UNCRC had increased. Attendees reported that they felt able to implement and put that knowledge into practice as well as sharing their knowledge with their own colleagues and organisations.

The Welsh Government has extended the contract with UWTSD to provide training and the Welsh Government is continuing to work in partnership with UWTSD to provide free training on the UNCRC and children's rights to public sector partners.

Section 5: How effectively the Welsh Government responds on a strategic basis to the Concluding Observations

The 2016 Concluding Observations report

The UN's Concluding Observations report was published on 12 July 2016¹⁷. Some of the key areas identified in the report were:

- Introducing a statutory obligation to conduct a child rights impact assessment when developing laws and policies affecting children;
 - Votes for 16 and 17 year olds;
 - Establishing national youth parliaments;
 - Changing the law to give children and young people equal protection from assault as adults;
 - The reduction of funding for childcare and family support;
 - Tackling child poverty;
 - Investing in child and adolescent mental health services, and developing strategies at national and devolved levels
- Extending the voting franchise to 16 and 17 year olds. This means that 16 and 17 year olds will be eligible to vote in 2021 Assembly elections and 2022 local government elections;
- The Children (Abolition of the Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Bill which takes our commitment to help protect children's rights a step further and, if passed, will help end the physical punishment of children in Wales;
- Practical action to tackle poverty. This includes measures like debt and welfare benefit advice, helping people into or back work and increasing skills to support in work progression. The Welsh Government also supports the delivery of a more generous social wage – cash equivalent services which have the effect of leaving money in the pockets of Welsh citizens - through programmes such as Pupil Development Grant access scheme, which helps parents afford everyday items their children need at school; our childcare offer and the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

¹⁷ <https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2016/08/UK-CRC-Concluding-observations-2016-2.pdf>

Section 6: Extent to which Welsh Government ensures its duties within the Measure are translated into work of public bodies we fund

Article 12 of the UNCRC relates to the participation rights of children and young people. Article 12 is deemed a “general principle” as it plays a fundamental role in realising all the rights in the Convention for all children. UNICEF summarises Article 12 as follows:

‘Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously.’

Participation is about listening to children and young people and taking their views meaningfully into account. It includes supporting them to freely express opinions and taking their views seriously when decisions or actions are taken which affect their lives, either directly or indirectly.

Participation

As a nation, Wales has been at the forefront in the UK of promoting the importance of children’s rights in legislation, policy and practice. Wales is also recognised internationally, particularly for its work on children’s participation under Article 12 of the UNCRC, which ensures children and young people are consulted and involved in decisions that affect them.

Improvements include progress towards lowering the voting age in Wales to 16, the establishment of a Youth Parliament and the formal consultation of children and young people about Brexit - Wales was the only nation to consult young people.

Young Wales

We fund Children in Wales to deliver Young Wales - a national participation-platform for young people to engage with government about policies and decisions, which affect them. The Welsh Government wants all children and young people to have opportunities – for example in school councils, youth forums and Cymru Ifanc Young Wales - to actively participate in decision making at local, regional and national levels in Wales.

Young Wales works with existing youth groups, forums and councils to gather the collective voice of children and young people to influence legislation, policies and programmes. It also uses social media to reach children and young people who are marginalised, shy, disadvantaged, unconfident, or secluded.

The National Context – supporting participation across Wales

The Welsh Government issued statutory guidance to local authorities to promote and facilitate participation by children and young people in decisions, which might affect them. In 2015, this statutory guidance was updated to take account of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, which puts the effective involvement of

people and communities at the heart of improving well-being, in addition to being one of the five ways of working set out in the Act.

The Welsh Government is clear that statutory guidance must be implemented across Wales and the participation of children and young people in decision making is to be embedded into mainstream delivery. Since 2014, officials from the Welsh Government have regularly visited local authorities to get a picture of participation by understanding how this duty is being delivered locally. A further programme of visits is being planned for spring 2020.

National Children and Young People's Participation Standards.

The participation standards were reviewed and refreshed in 2017 by a partnership of youth forum workers and Young Wales members and informed by consultations with young people. The national task and finish group developed a new kite mark and self-assessment process and a new Charter mark. The standards identify the key issues that all workers should be aware of when working with children and young people in Wales. The standards are underpinned by the UNCRC and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The All Wales Participation Workers Network.

The network provides a pan-Wales forum to support the development and sharing of policy, research, expertise and best practice of children's rights and participation across Wales. The network's membership consists mainly of children and young people's participation workers from local authorities in Wales. It also engages in critical dialogue with policy makers and decision makers to contribute and influence the strategic implementation of participation and children's rights in Wales.

The network provides a forum to, among other things:

- Share practical resources and promote best practice that supports the effective implementation of participation and children's rights in Wales;
- Share expertise and best practice of children's rights and participation in Wales;
- Be an independent voice for professional stakeholders and strategically influence policy development and decision-making relating to children and young people in Wales; and
- Support continuous professional development of practitioners and to share information / good practice of children and young people's participation across Wales.

The Welsh Government has supported the network for many years by hosting the meetings and contributing and leading on discussion about participation and how the network can influence the development of Welsh Government policy.

30th Anniversary of the UNCRC

The 30th anniversary of the UNCRC is a major milestone and we will be celebrating it with key partners in the children's sector to highlight the importance of children's rights and our commitment to them.

In addition to raising awareness of children's rights and the UNCRC, we are working with the children's sector to listen to the views of children and young people by launching a campaign to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the UNCRC. As part of the awareness raising campaign, we have organised #childrentakeoverwales - children and young people will have the opportunity to "take over" a variety of activities and events in different settings across Wales.

This will happen in the lead-up to a celebratory event on the 20 November 2019. The event will also celebrate the organisations who have achieved the participation standards kite mark award.

Corporate Procurement

Welsh Government officials are working with the commercial team to strengthen procurement processes to ensure all relevant contracts let give due regard to children's rights.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act provides a governance framework for public bodies to improve how they serve the interests of children and young people. The Act supports commitments such as the UNCRC and provides for better decision making by ensuring public bodies look to the long-term; help prevent problems occurring or getting worse; take an integrated and collaborative approach; and involve people of all ages – including children and young people.

Section 7: Extent to which the Welsh Government has implemented its duty to promote knowledge and understanding of the UNCRC amongst the public, including children and young people

Article 42 of the UNCRC requires governments to actively work to make sure children and adults know about the Convention. This is because the public, including children and young people, need to know about their rights in order to exercise them.

Section 5 of the Measure requires that “Welsh Ministers must take appropriate steps to promote knowledge and understanding amongst the public (including children) of the UNCRC.”

Raising awareness of the UNCRC and children’s rights is a significant priority for the Welsh Government and its sector partners.

The Welsh Government will use the 30th anniversary of the UNCRC to update the current information and resources¹⁸ provided to the public, including children and young people, and will launch a national awareness raising campaign about children’s rights.

We have been working with the Children’s Rights Advisory Group¹⁹ to develop and promote the campaign and we are developing new branding and material to raise awareness of children’s rights and the UNCRC. A series of events have been arranged and new social media accounts on Facebook and Twitter have been created. Children and young people will be directly involved in the campaign through #childrentakeoverWales.

Children and young people are involved in the design and running of the 30th anniversary celebration event, chairing, co-chairing, leading or co-leading presentations and workshops. Prior to the event children and young people will be involved in a number of activities, including contributing short film clips to show at the conference.

As part of the awareness-raising campaign, a number of music workshops have been held with schools, to help make children’s rights real and relevant to children. Children and teachers, including the chief executive of the Urdd, the largest children’s movement in Europe, have also met with the Deputy Minister to discuss Children’s Rights.

The Welsh Government website about children’s rights²⁰ has been refreshed and went live in October 2019. It contains links to all CRAG members’ sites. It also contains links to training resources which can be used in schools or other youth settings. Further training is available from the Children’s Commissioner and Children in Wales.

¹⁸ ¹⁸ <https://gov.wales/childrens-rights-in-wales>

¹⁹ The membership of CRAG comprises sector experts from the Office of the Children’s Commissioner for Wales, Wales Observatory on Human Rights of Children and Young People, Unicef UK and Children in Wales.

²⁰ <https://gov.wales/childrens-rights-in-wales>