

Children's Rights in Wales:

Meeting in a Box – Engagement summary

October 2019

Background

Thirty years since the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) opened for signatories, the Committee is undertaking a short inquiry to review the impact of the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011.

The 2011 Measure placed a duty on Welsh Ministers to have due regard to the UNCRC and its optional protocols. The Measure means that the Welsh Government should ensure that any legislation, policies and decisions which impact on children comply with their human rights.

As part of the inquiry, the Committee wanted to hear from children and young people across Wales, specifically:

- How well children know their rights;
- If children think they have access to these rights; and
- Which rights are most important to them.

The Committee agreed to use the method set out below.

Approach to engagement

Using a method titled “Meeting in a Box” the Citizen’s Engagement Team developed a resource for teachers, youth workers and youth activity leaders to facilitate a workshop session about children’s rights and gather the views of the



participants. The tool was designed to be used in the participant's setting and included activities for all levels of understanding of children's rights, the Committee's work and the National Assembly for Wales.

45 sessions were held involving **866** participants from all five Assembly regions. Evidence from the workshops was gathered via a survey that activity leaders could complete online or return via freepost.

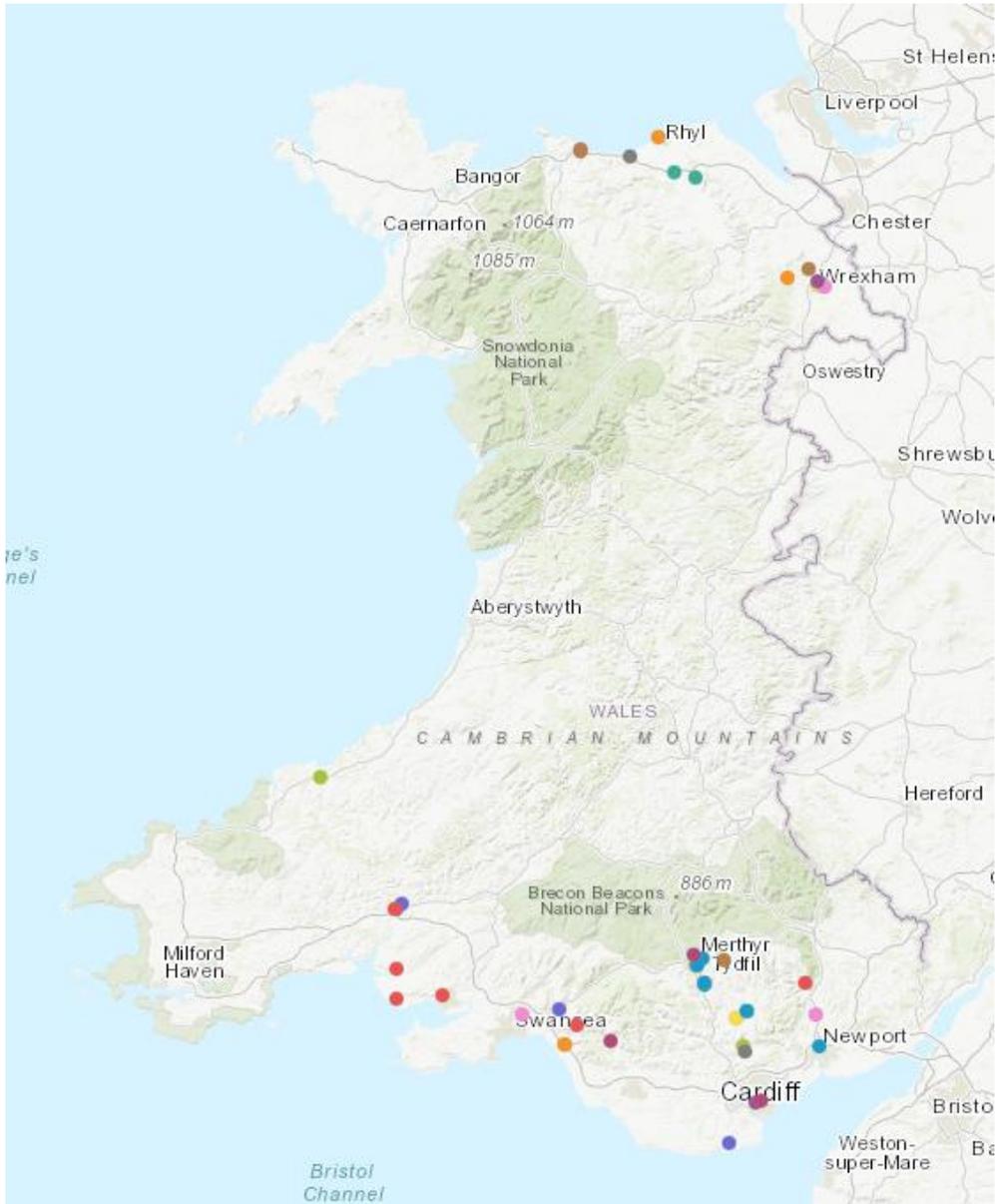
Map of engagement

The aim of the resource was to hear from as diverse a range of Welsh citizens as possible and ensure we weren't only asking groups already familiar with children's rights. The resource was designed and promoted as a workshop session for all levels of understanding of children's rights to ensure respondents weren't self-selecting on the basis of their prior knowledge.

The resource was shared with stakeholders already involved in the inquiry and it was available on the Committee website for anyone to access and take part. Organisations were contacted through the education and outreach teams and included youth services, young people taking part in Assembly education and youth engagement visits, outreach sessions and visits to the Senedd and Pierhead.

The map below highlights the regional spread of groups that conducted at least one Meeting in a Box workshop session. Several groups ran sessions with participant across Wales including the Children's Commissioner for Wales and the Welsh Youth Parliament. You can view an interactive version of this map here:

<http://nawresearch.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=0e913fef0f6d4bdea95c82852de535ae>



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| ● Carmarthenshire Youth Council | ● LLamau | ● Wrexham 1st Girl Guides |
| ● Stephens & George Charitable Trust | ● Learning for Life | ● Wrexham Senedd yr Ifanc |
| ● 2nd Cardigan Guides | ● PeoplePlus Cymru, Port Talbot | ● Wrexham Youth Justice |
| ● Bawso-EYST 'Cultures' Youth Club | ● PeoplePlus Cymru, Port Talbot 2 | ● Y5BBPS |
| ● CTW | ● Police Cadets | ● YGC |
| ● Caerphilly Youth Forum | ● Representatives from all of Wrexham High School Councils | ● YoVo |
| ● Children's Commissioner for Wales' advisory panels of young people | ● St Asaph Youth Forum | ● Youth Support |
| ● Conwy Youth Council | ● The Vale of Glamorgan Right's Ambassadors Project | ● Ysgol Emrys ap Iwan Yr 8 (Enrichment day) |
| ● Cyngor Ysgol Cwm Rhymini | ● Together 4 Children and Young People (T4CYP) | ● Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw |
| ● FutureMinds | ● WYP Mid and West Wales | |
| ● Garth | ● WYP North Wales | |
| ● Grwp Gwyndy | ● WYP South East Wales | |
| ● Infinity Explorer Scout Unit | ● WYP South West Wales | |
| ● Islwyn Constituency | ● Willows Youth Club - Merthyr Tydfil | |

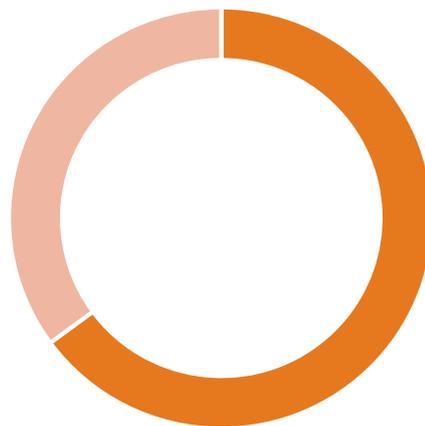
Results

To compile this engagement summary an analysis of a complete data set was conducted; all data can be sourced to individual responses and further analysis can be undertaken by reviewing the initial results.

Key findings and overall themes have been extracted using specific questions asked in the survey. Quotes have been selected on the basis that they illustrate reoccurring themes and therefore summaries the overall comments from the responses or if they demonstrate key issues the Committee need to be aware of.

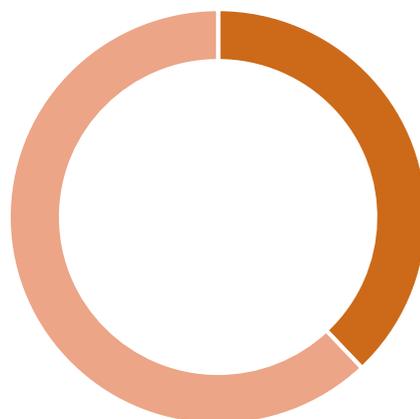
Results have be calculated from the number of respondents who answered the specific question and not the overall number of respondents to the survey.

1. How many of the participants said they had heard of children's rights?



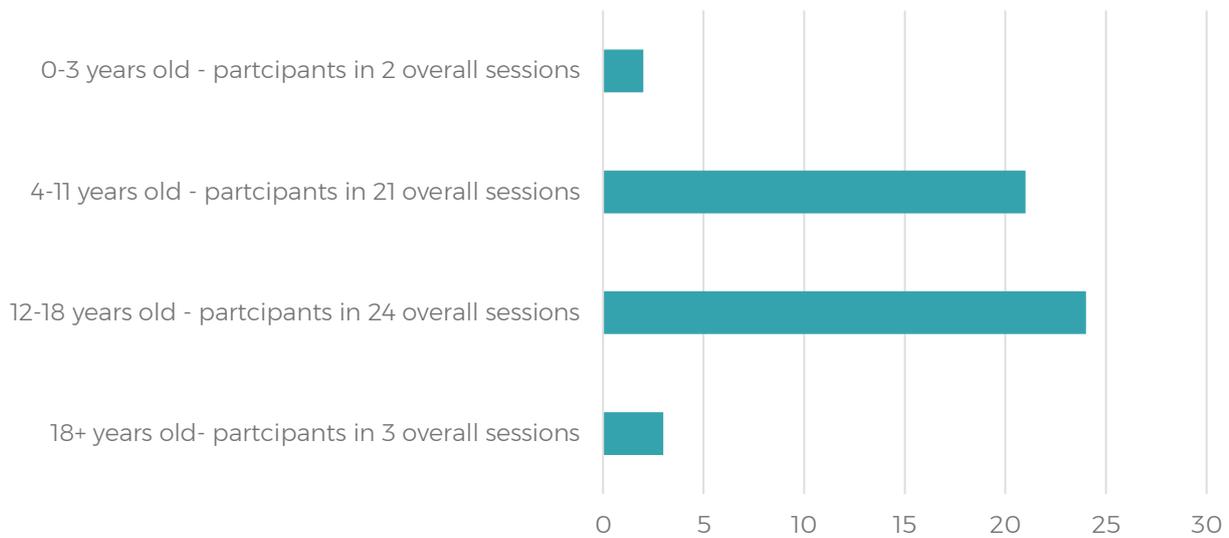
■ Yes 505 ■ No 273

2. How many of the participants said they had heard of 'United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child'?

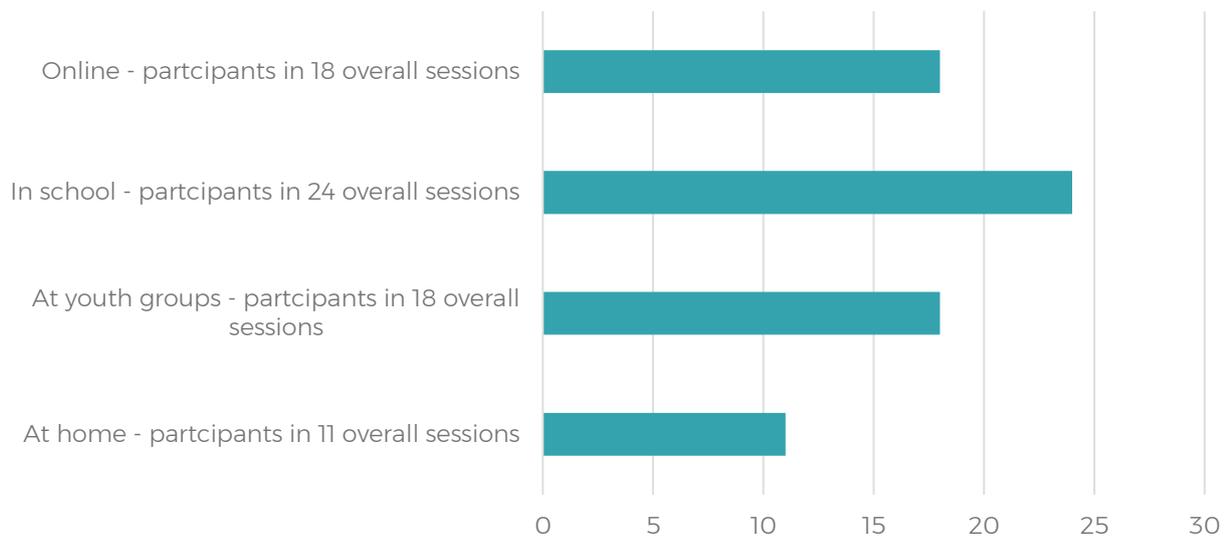


■ Yes 288 ■ No 471

3. How old were the participants when they first found out about their rights?

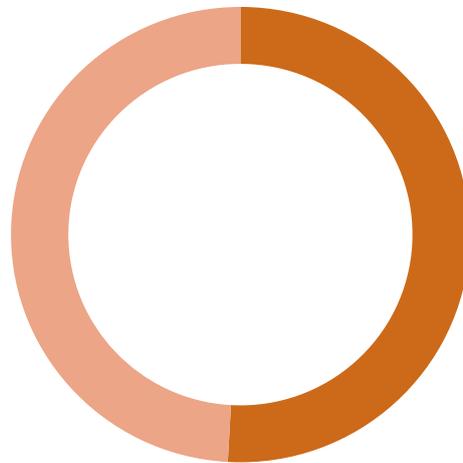


4. Where did the participants find the best information about their rights?



Also, at least one participant found the best information from the Children's Commissioner for Wales, when at a uniformed group session or in the news.

5. Participants were asked if they thought their rights had improved or not, and which areas they felt were worse or better. Comments were coded as negative or positive.



■ 29 positive comments were feedback ■ 28 negative comments were feedback

Selection of comments from the children and young people who participated:

"I didn't understand rights when I was in year one but when I went up to juniors we talked more about them. Being older helps you understand the rights more."

"They are better now but there's always room for improvement."

*"Worse: Travel, Education, Support for the Disabilities and to be listen to/
Better: Physical & Mental Health, Safe in my neighbourhood and safe at home."*

Selection of comments from session leaders:

"Fel grwp cyfa oeddent yn teimlo fod rhan fwyaf o'r hawliau yn cael eu bodloni. Soniodd un aelod o'r grwp yr hoffem mwy o gefnogaeth i unigolion yn ysgol sydd yn cael trafferth adref - As a group they felt that most of the rights were being met. One member of the group mentioned that we would like more support for individuals in a school struggling at home."

"I first found out about my rights in nursery. I remember they used puppets to explain them to me."

"Schools still not promoting children right so not as many young people know about them, awareness has improved, laws now look at children right,

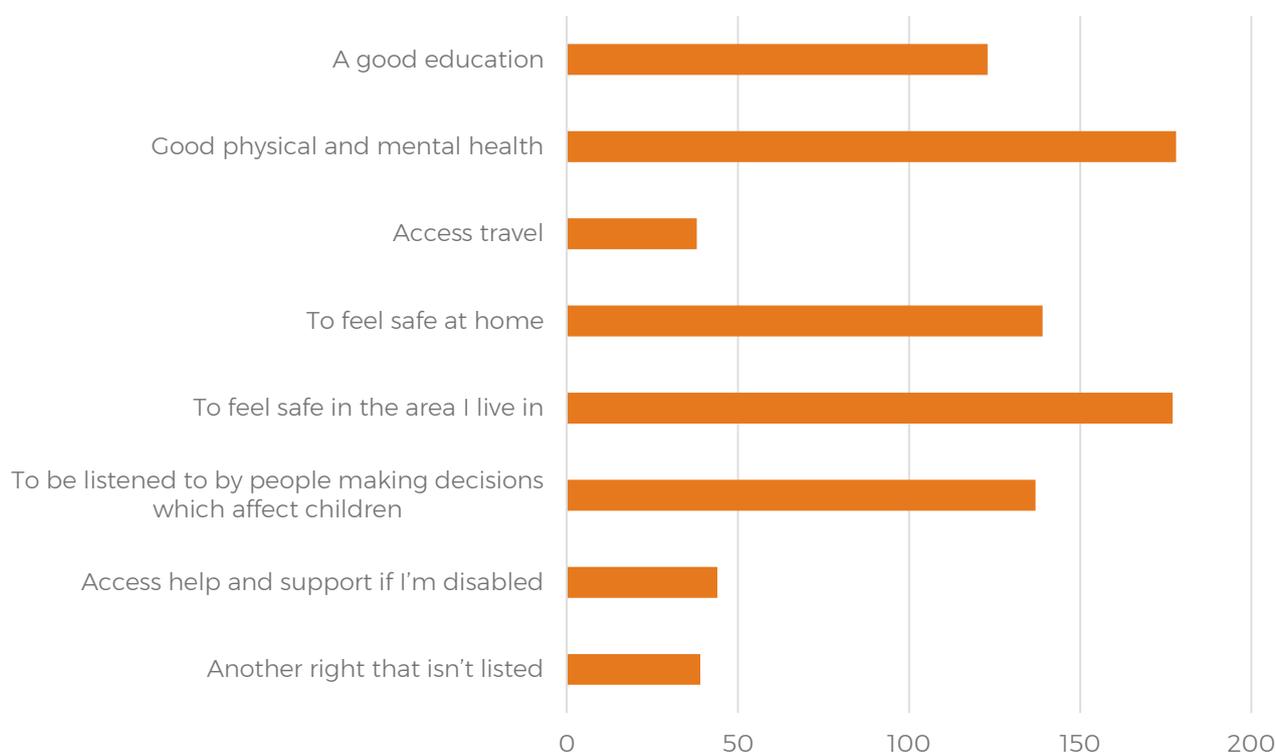
smacking law helps children rights, primary schools need to know more to educate about children rights."

"8 young people said the session was the first time they had heard of their rights."

"This was their first time learning about their rights so they had no concept of improvement."

"Pupils felt that their rights were being met ok but more could be done. The main overall issue was the feeling that adults were not listening to them and respecting their views."

6. Participants were asked to vote for which right they thought the Welsh Government should do more about. They were given the options below:



Their right to **Good physical and mental health** gained the most votes (179) with **To feel safe in the area I live in** narrowly second (178). They were closely followed by their right **To feel safe at home** (139), **To be listened to by people making decisions which affect children** (137) and **A good education** (123).

The numbers of young people choosing **Access help and support if I'm disabled** (44) and **Access to travel** (38) were similar to **Another right that isn't listed** (39).

Rights which participants didn't feel were covered by the options fell into the following themes:

- Respect from others;
- Support to build their confidence;
- Support if something had happened to them including having someone they trusted to speak to;
- Privacy; and
- Access to their preferred language.

Comments from participants suggesting another theme or specific right:

"Hawl i bod diogel ar lein - Right to be safe online"

"Diogelwch economaidd - economic security"

"Do not bully: Article 23"

"To be happy we need to try to stop bullies"

"The right to a clean environment"

"Your right to use your own language and celebrate your own culture and religion"

"Encourage rights in school"

"Rights should be a set subject in school"

"Access to post-16 education"

"Transport is a big issue"

"Improve the whole curriculum so it's more like the curriculum they have in Sweden and Norway"

"Article 40 - your right to legal help if have been accused of a crime"

"lgbt - article 2 relating to not being treated differently because of who they are"

"The right to practice my own religion"

"Seeing family if they do not live with you"

"Right to have fun"

7. Was there anything else the participants said the Welsh Government should do for them?

Comments from participants:

"Maybe Welsh Government could use a mascot to promote rights because our school mascot Rico the Raccoon helped me learn so much more about rights."

"Improving transport because some children are missing school and appointments".

"Better policing."

"We need the right to vote (article 12). You should introduce the UNCRC and rights into the school curriculum. "School trips - I can't afford to go to trips and I am missing out."

"I think you shouldn't be charged to go on a school trip since you have the right to have a break from working in school."

Comments from session leaders:

"Roedd rhai aelodau wedi derbyn hyfforddiant hawliau plant trwy'r fforymau ac eraill heb glywed am hawliau plant o gwbl- amrywiad eang o ran dealltwriaeth - Some members had received training on children's rights through the forums and others had not heard of children's rights at all - a wide variety in understanding."

"Our pupils felt that the Welsh government should make it compulsory for all schools to be rights respecting school and the teaching of rights should be in the curriculum."

"The group felt that generally there was a lack of information available to them about their rights in any tangible sense, and that they didn't really feel part of the community."

"Make them more aware of these rights at an early age."

"The government should involve young people from low income backgrounds in decisions affecting them and their community. Provide more money for schools to provide a better education and to stop cutting the funding on youth centres."

"They were amazed at the amount of rights and what they covered."

"The group believe that the Welsh Government and Assembly are doing their best to ensure children know their rights, and they found the session very beneficial."

"A number of the group highlighted the issue of being protected from exposure to drugs. They felt that not enough was being done. One young person mentioned about a local shop knowingly selling Vapes to underage children. Also more work need to be done to educate adults on children's rights."

"Improve the right to be safe because feeling safe is important."

"Many pupils talked about how poverty affected them and they felt that money shouldn't be a barrier to learning. They suggested all school trips be free."

"Welsh Government should reach out to young people more. For decision makers to attend groups such as the T4CYP mental health forum to meet with and listen to young people's views along with sharing their work in young person friendly language."

"YP felt that bullying was a major issue in and out of school."

"They didn't feel safe and would like more children and youth provisions in place to report to."

8. Was there anything else session leaders wanted us to know about the participant's thoughts on children's rights:

Comments from participants:

"We have the right to speak Welsh or English in our country"

"We have the rights to be proud of who we are"

"100% in school - my mother does not understand"

"Boys and girls shouldn't be split up because it's sexist"

"The right to special help if you have been abused, hurt or neglected, or lost a parent"

"We have the right to be looked after properly if we don't live with our family. We have the right to stand up for ourselves and say no to things we don't like"

"No-one care's about young people aged 16-17 ... only my YJS (Youth Justice Services) Officer listened to me, Children's Services didn't"

"Police stations have closed, so police not there unless there is a problem. Drugs openly being sold - dealers don't bother to hide it - more people carrying knives to feel protected - more police presence needed"

Comments from session leaders:

"A few of the students voiced concerns over Brexit and that recent behaviour of UK politicians and world leaders is putting them off taking an interest in politics."

"Angen mwy o waith i hysbysebu'r ffairth bod yna hawliau i bobl ifanc. Mwy o waith gyda rhieni i annog nhw i drafod gyda'u phlant - More work needed to publicise the fact that there are rights for young people. More work with parents to encourage them to have discussions with their children."

"The group are part of a resilience programme for low confidence / young people with social / emotional needs. They felt their rights were sometimes adhered to but not always with respect for them, particularly in schools."

"Our group YoVo which stands for "your voice matters" are Children's Rights Ambassadors for the looked after community in Neath Port Talbot. The Ambassadors' champion the UNCRC within this community and the wider community. They would like more to be done for children in care especially when receiving information and having their views listened to and acted upon. They would like to see a focus on their right to see their family and more support to complain if they aren't getting their rights."

"More session to know about your rights, more should be done in schools to promote young people rights."

"Young people thought that not being able to speak to each other in class or use the toilet can be against their rights. Disabled children are not supported due to cuts, they felt this was unfair."

"This was an excellent resource and well worth participating in. We need more opportunities to respond to the Welsh Government. By far the Right our group wanted the Government to work more on was listening to young people."

"Free or VAT free sanitary protection; more on rights under Articles 10 (contact with parents) and 15 (freedom of association), right to privacy."

"YP have many concerns, biggest growing drugs problem and groups of youth."