

Julie Morgan AS/MS
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol Deputy
Minister for Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Jane Bryant, MS
Chair of Children, Young People and Education Committee

SeneddCYPE@senedd.wales

12th July 2023

Dear Jane,

I am writing to inform you that my report on the compliance with the duty under section one of the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011, was laid before the Senedd on 12th July 2023.

Please find attached a copy of the report, which includes a progress update on the recommendations from the Committee's 2020 Report on Children's Rights in Wales.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie".

Julie Morgan AS/MS
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Deputy Minister for Social Services

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Julie.Morgan@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Julie.Morgan@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.



CHILDREN'S RIGHTS COMPLIANCE REPORT 2023

Report on the Compliance with the duty under section 1 of
the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure
2011.

This report covers the period October 2020 - March 2023

Ministerial Foreword – Julie Morgan MS, Deputy Minister for Health, and Social Services	3	Case Study 11 – Coronavirus and Me and Coronavirus and Us: Listening to Children Through the Pandemic.....	22
Introduction and Background.....	4	Case study 12 - Young Person’s Guarantee	23
Who is this report for?	4	Case study 13 – Recruitment of the Children’s Commissioner for Wales.....	24
What is the Children’s Rights Compliance Report?	4	Accountability	25
What is the UNCRC?.....	4	Case Studies – Accountability.....	26
What is the Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011?.....	5	Case Study 14 – United Nations: State Party Reporting.....	26
What is the Children’s Rights Scheme?	5	Case Study 15 – Young Researchers: UN Reporting.....	27
Who are Children’s Rights Branch?	6	Case study 16 – Children’s Rights Impact Assessments	27
Embedding Children’s Rights.....	7	Recommendations from the Children, Young People and Education Committee’s Report (September 2020)	29
Case Studies - Embedding.....	8	Next Steps: What are the next steps for Welsh Government?	31
Case study 1: Children and Young People’s Plan - An Overarching Policy for Children.....	8	Glossary of Terms	32
Case Study 2: Curriculum and Assessments (Wales) Act 2021 – A Duty to Understand Rights	8		
Equality and Non-Discrimination.....	10		
Case Studies – Equality and Non-Discrimination	11		
Case study 3 – Mental health treatment for Children and Young People: Co-Production of The NEST Framework.....	11		
Case study 4 - Developing a new Child Poverty Strategy.....	11		
Case Study 5 –The Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021	12		
Case Study 6 - Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan ...	13		
Empowerment	15		
Case Studies - Empowering.....	16		
Case Study 7 - Raising Awareness of Children’s Rights Plan.....	16		
Case Study 8 - The Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Act 2020.....	17		
Case Study 9: Children’s rights for babies and young children.....	18		
Participation	20		
Case Studies – Participation.....	21		
Case Study 10 – Review of Young Wales.....	21		

Ministerial Foreword – Julie Morgan MS, Deputy Minister for Health, and Social Services

I welcome the opportunity to publish this compliance report which covers the period October 2020 to March 2023.

This report provides an opportunity to reflect on how Welsh Government has met its duty under section 1 of the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011 to have due regard to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and its Optional Protocols. We set out how we would meet this duty in our Children's Rights Scheme.

Welsh government wants all children to have the best start in life and to fulfil their potential. Children's rights underpin this ambition, which is why we are committed to putting children's rights at the heart of everything we do.

At the time of writing, the Welsh Government, alongside colleagues from the rest of the UK, have been reporting our children's rights work to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. That has given us an opportunity to highlight the breadth and diversity of work that takes place to make rights a reality for children in Wales.

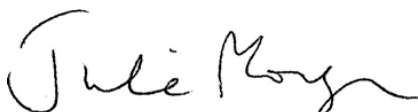
There is much to be celebrated. There have been significant legislative achievements made during the reporting period, which embed children's rights in practice. On 21 March 2022, section 1 of the Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Act 2020 came into force. The Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 received Royal Assent on 29 April 2021. This flagship legislation makes the promotion of knowledge and understanding of children's rights mandatory in our schools, and places rights education as a fundamental foundation of learning in Wales.

But there is always more to do. The last two and a half years have been difficult for many, particularly children. I have taken the opportunity within this report to highlight some of the ways in which the Welsh Government responded to the Covid-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living-crisis that has had, and continues to have, an unprecedented impact on so many children and their families.

This report shines a spotlight on the efforts made by Welsh Government to make sure the rights of ALL children are recognised, respected, and fulfilled. No child should fall through the gap. Every child should have equitable opportunities to live healthy, happy, safe lives.

I remain fully committed as an advocate and champion of children's rights to do all that I can to continue to embed children's rights in the work of government.

.



Julie Morgan MS
Deputy Minister for Social Services

Introduction and Background

Who is this report for?

This report is for anyone interested in children's rights and the work of Welsh Government.

Important information about this report:

- In this report children means any person aged 0-18 years old.
- Any words highlighted in **bold** are explained in the 'glossary of terms' on page 32.
- On the web version of this report, you can click on information [underlined in blue](#). This will take you to resources relating to the words highlighted.
- This report uses the type of words that are often used in schools with children aged 11 and above. We tested this document's accessibility using the Hemmingway App Editor. A score of 10 is good, and anything less is better. Some sections score as low as 6. Other more technical parts score 9. This document scores an average of 8.
- If you want to read this report in a different language scroll to the bottom of the webpage and click on 'Alternative Languages.' Click on the language you want to read this report in.

What is the Children's Rights Compliance Report?

The Children's Rights Scheme says Welsh Government must write a report to explain how they have paid **due regard** to children's rights. This is called a 'compliance report'.

Welsh Government publishes their compliance report on children's rights every two and a half years. This compliance report covers work that has taken place between October 2020 – March 2023.

This report uses the same principled structure used by the **Children's Commissioner for Wales** in their [The Right Way: A Children's Rights Approach](#).

The report includes sections on:

1. Embedding Children's Rights
2. Equality and Non-Discrimination
3. Empowering Children
4. Participation
5. Accountability
6. Next Steps

What is the UNCRC?

The UNCRC or United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is a legal agreement that sets out the rights of every child aged 0-18 years. All children have rights, no matter the colour of their skin, gender, religious beliefs, sexuality, ability, language they speak or anything else. All children have rights no matter what.

The UNCRC sets out how governments should work together to make sure children know that they have rights, and how to claim them. This means working together to give children the basic things they need to grow, be safe, be healthy, be heard and to reach their full potential.

What is the Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011?

The Welsh Government works to improve the lives of people in Wales and make it a better place to live and work.

In 2011 the Welsh Government introduced the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011 (named in this report as 'the Measure').

[Section 1\(1\)](#) of The Measure places duties on Welsh Ministers:

- to have due regard to the Part 1 of **the UNCRC and its parts of its Optional Protocols when making decisions**; and

[Section 5](#) of the Measure places duties on Welsh Ministers:

- to promote knowledge and understanding of Part 1 of the UNCRC and parts of its Optional Protocols to the public (including children and young people).

These duties mean that Ministers must consider children's rights in everything they do that affects children. They must also think about the decisions they make that affect all people and not only children. This includes things such as the environment, the economy or Welsh language and culture.

What is the Children's Rights Scheme?

[Section 2\(1\)](#) of the Measure says that Welsh Government must set out the ways Ministers do or will meet their duties in section 1 of the Measure. The Welsh Government's Children's Rights Scheme, or 'the Scheme', is the document that sets out the things Ministers and those working in Welsh Government need to do to consider the UNCRC in their work.

The Scheme aims to support:

- high quality policy making to improve the lives of children and young people.
- children to take part in the development of policies that affect them; and
- children and young people to exercise their rights.

An updated Children's Rights Scheme was published in December 2021. When we were updating the Scheme, we listened to the views of children and young people by:

- publishing a [children and young person's version](#) of the draft scheme for [consultation](#).
- funding a research organisation to gather the views of 84 children and young people.
- including recommendations from the Children, Young People and Education Committee's report, '[Children's Rights in Wales](#)'.

Who are Children's Rights Branch?

It is the role of Children's Rights Branch in Welsh Government to make sure that the plans set out in the Scheme happen.

This means:

- helping people who work in Welsh Government to understand what children's rights are and how their work could affect those rights.
- leading Welsh Government's response to **UNCRC reports and UN Concluding Observations Recommendations**.
- updating the Children's Rights Scheme.
- creating a Compliance Report, like this one, to set out how the Welsh Ministers have complied with the duty in Section 1 of the Measure, every two and a half years.
- supporting the people who work in Welsh Government to involve children in decisions that affect their lives.
- helping the people who work in Welsh Government to complete Children's Rights Impact Assessments (CRIAs). CRIAs provide evidence of how teams consider the UNCRC when they make decisions. There is more information on CRIAs on page 26.
- making sure there are opportunities for children to take part in policymaking. Children's Rights Branch do this by funding **Children in Wales** to work with children.
- making sure people in Wales who work with children know about children's rights.
- working with a group of experts to make sure the Government makes the best policy and decisions it can. This group is called the 'Children's Rights Advisory Group' or CRAG.
- being the main contact between Welsh Government and the Children's Commissioner for Wales (CCfW). CCfW is an independent office funded by Welsh Government.

Embedding Children's Rights

What actions have Welsh Government taken to embed children's rights?

What is Embedding?

The measure places a duty on Ministers to have due regard to the UNCRC when developing or reviewing legislation and policy. This means that Ministers must give the appropriate weight to the requirements of the UNCRC, balancing them against all the other factors that are relevant to the decision in question.

Welsh Government should work together, and with others to make children's rights real. This means using the UNCRC to make sure decisions improve children's lives.

It should be clear that children's rights have been considered when decisions are made.

How are children's rights embedded in Welsh Government?

- Making it clear how plans and policies link to the UNCRC.
 - Making sure Ministers and officials have a good knowledge of children's rights.
 - Making it clear how putting children's rights at the core of decisions improves Government work.
 - Making sure people who make decisions about children have training on the UNCRC.
 - Making sure there is a team who are responsible for children's rights in the Welsh Government.
 - Making sure the resources needed to support and promote children's rights are available.
- Developed a '[Children and Young People's Plan](#).' The Plan explains what the Welsh Government will do to support children and young people in Wales.
 - We have set out a plan of action on how to make Wales a [Nation of Sanctuary](#). This plan embeds clear targets and actions on how to make Wales a place where people who come to restart and resettle are guaranteed their rights to be safe, and free from discrimination.
 - [Changed the law](#) and made physical punishment, like smacking, illegal.
 - Developed [training](#) on the effects of domestic abuse on children and young people.
 - Developed [guidance](#) to help local authorities support care experienced young people to achieve successful futures and independent living.
- Developed a new curriculum that places a [duty](#) on Schools to promote knowledge and understand the UNCRC, and **UNCRPD**.
- All children have the right to a clean and healthy environment. We have set out [plans](#) for how we can work together across Wales, to create a cleaner environment, making Wales a healthier place to live.

Case Studies - Embedding

Case study 1: Children and Young People's Plan - An Overarching Policy for Children

In 2021, Welsh Ministers published their Programme for Government. The Programme for Government sets out the important things they will do for people living in Wales before the next election in 2026. This includes commitments to children. The Children and Young People's Plan, launched on 1st March 2022, shows what the Welsh Government will do to make these commitments a reality for children.

173 children and young people across Wales shared their [views](#) on the draft Plan in January 2022. Five young people who were involved in the consultation also met with the First Minister and Deputy Minister for Social Services in February 2022 to discuss their views on the Plan's priorities.

The plan sets out Welsh Government's ambition for children and young people to:

- have the best start in life.
- be treated fairly.
- be supported through education and training and beyond.
- be supported to help them feel mentally and emotionally strong.
- be supported to have a fair chance in life.
- have a good and secure home to live in.
- receive the support they need to stay together or come back together with their family, if possible.

Progress on the Children and Young People's is reported each year. The first annual update on the Plan will be published in November 2023. Work will take place to involve children in this process.

The Plan is important because Welsh Ministers want the best for children in Wales no matter what their backgrounds are, where they come from or where they live. This means making Wales a happy, healthy, and safe place to grow up, live and to work, now and in the future. A place where children feel listened to and valued.

The Children and Young People's Plan showed how the Welsh Government's plans affect children and their rights. The plan includes policies about education, safeguarding, and how Welsh Government listens to children. This means one clear vision for what Welsh Government's most senior decision makers will do to make sure children's rights are recognised and respected.

Case Study 2: Curriculum and Assessments (Wales) Act 2021 – A Duty to Understand Rights [Human rights](#) is a cross-cutting theme in Curriculum for Wales. In 2021, the Senedd passed [The Curriculum and Assessment \(Wales\) Act 2021](#).

Section 64 places a duty on schools, settings, and providers of Education Other Than at School (EOTAS) including Pupil Referral Units (PRUSs) to:

- 1) promote knowledge and understanding of Part 1 of the UNCRC.
- 2) promote knowledge and understanding of the UNCRPD.

to people who provide teaching and learning in their settings.

Curriculum for Wales can be a starting point to making human rights real in everyday life. When adults that provide learning to children know about, and understand children's rights, they are better able to teach about them. This makes children more able to know what their rights are and how to claim them. Adults who better understand children's rights, are able to make sure children's

experiences of rights in school are better too. For example, in pastoral support or in feeling heard and valued as a learner.

Equality and Non-Discrimination

What is Equality and Non-Discrimination?

No child should be prevented from claiming their rights because of discrimination. Equality is making sure that every child has an equal opportunity to be healthy, safe and the best that they can be.

Equality means treating all children fairly, whatever their home life, ability, race, or gender.

Equality means making sure children's individual needs are met so that they have equal chances to others to fulfil their potential.

Non-discrimination is a right under the UNCRC (Article 2). Adults should understand the barriers children face when accessing services. Adults should also understand that children are often discriminated against because of their age. When adults recognise this, action can be taken to tackle the discrimination.

Adults should understand that decisions taken today can discriminate against future generations of children.

How is equality and non-discrimination embedded in Welsh Government?

- Setting out clear ways to promote equality and tackle discrimination against children in policies and plans.
- Making sure people who work in the Welsh Government have up-to-date knowledge of the Equality Act 2010. This includes regular training about the needs of different groups of children.
- Understanding the needs of particular groups of children to make better decisions.
- Providing information to children in a language or format appropriate to their needs. For example, their age.

What action has Welsh Government taken to promote equality and non-discrimination?

- Developed guidance so adults working with children must listen to children who do not have equal chances to be heard:
 - [Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021](#).
 - [School uniform and Appearance Guidance 2022](#).
- Developed plans that promote equality and tackle discrimination against particular groups of children. This includes:
 - work with groups of children who have experienced poverty to develop a new draft Child Poverty Strategy for consultation.
 - developed the [Anti-racist Wales Action Plan 2022](#).
 - a plan to make Wales the most [LGBTQ+](#) friendly nation in Europe.
 - funded a 24/7 [Wales Hate Support Centre](#) to help victims of hate crime. This includes [specific support](#) for children and young people.
 - piloted giving [Baby Bundles](#) to families with new babies. These bundles include rights-based information to support new parents.
 - set up Childcare hubs for children of key workers and vulnerable children during Covid-19.
 - set aside £225m to secure [free school meals](#) for children across Wales by 2024.
 - put children's rights at the centre of our systems and approaches to support [mental health and wellbeing](#) (NEST).
 - expanded the [Flying Start](#) programme to reach around 2,500 more children aged 0 to 4 in every local authority in Wales. We have made plans to extend this in 2023-24.

Case Studies – Equality and Non-Discrimination

Case study 3 – Mental health treatment for Children and Young People: Co-Production of The NEST Framework

The National Youth Stakeholder Group (NYSG) are a group of young people, often with lived experience of mental health and wellbeing. The group works to:

- address mental health issues shared by young people.
- work with the Welsh Government and other organisations across Wales to improve mental health services.

The National Youth Stakeholder Group have co-produced a framework to improve mental health and wellbeing services for babies, children, and young people. This framework is called NYTH/NEST.

NYTH/NEST is a planning tool for people working with babies, children, and young people to develop a whole system approach to support mental health and wellbeing. This means organisations working together to offer the right help at the right time in the right way for babies, children, and young people.

An important part of the NYTH/NEST framework is co-production. Anyone using NYTH/NEST will need to think about how people, including children, are involved in creating mental health and wellbeing services. This means working together with people who use a service in equal partnership because they are best placed to help design it.

In October 2022 NYTH/NEST moved into Welsh Government and it is now in its implementation phase. **Regional Partnership Boards** all have:

- a person who leads NYTH/NEST
- a plan for how NYTH/NEST will be delivered locally.
- a youth stakeholder group. This is a group of young people that the Board works with to make sure the voices of children are listened to.

A set of good practice examples of NEST ‘in action’ will soon be available.

As a part of the NYTH/NEST work with NYSG, young people have produced poems, stories and artwork that tell their story of mental health and wellbeing. Future work includes the development of training and self-assessment tools for NYTH/NEST. These tools will be co-produced with young people and include the creative work they have created.

Case study 4 - Developing a new Child Poverty Strategy

The Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 places a duty on Welsh Ministers to prepare and publish a child poverty strategy and keep it under review.

The draft strategy should be developed with people who have direct experience of poverty, and the organisations that support them. We have been working hard to listen to the voices of people affected by our strategy.

In March 2023 we funded organisations to ask children and young people what matters and what would make the biggest difference for them. This included:

- **Children in Wales** and **Save the Children** spoke to 76 children and young people.
- **Voices from Care** engaged with 26 care experienced young people.

- Wales' **Ethnic Minorities Youth Support Team (EYST)** spoke with 54 Black, Asian and minority ethnic children and young people and **Women Connect First** engaged with 14 Black, Asian and minority young people.
- fifteen organisations and community groups held sessions through a small grants scheme targeted at those with protected characteristics. 1070 children and young people, including children, disabled and **neurodivergent** children and young people, **LGBTQ+** young people, young people being supported because of homelessness, and young parents took part.
- **Wales Council for Voluntary Action** led a small grant scheme on our behalf, open to all Councils for Voluntary Services (CVSs) in Wales. Through the engagement sessions held via this scheme 162 children and young people were included.

Organisations and community groups across Wales also held sessions with children and young people they knew or already worked with. These sessions were delivered in lots of different ways, as part of play or family activity sessions, and at events. This mixed approach enabled 1,402 children and young people to tell us what matters to them and inform our decision about what to include in our strategy.

A lot of the issues adults told us about were similar to the things children and young people said matter to them. However, there were some things that children and young people told us about their experiences that might not be fully understood by adults. The draft strategy includes what we have heard from children and young people with experience of poverty and sets out how the Welsh Government is and will respond to the issues they have told us matter to them and their families.

We will continue to consult on a new Child Poverty Strategy for Wales in Summer 2023. We aim to publish a final strategy before the end of December 2023.

Case Study 5 –The Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021

In 2021, Welsh Government launched its 'Code of Practice' for people who work with children who have additional learning needs (ALN). People with ALN have a learning difficulty or disability which requires specific learning support that is different from the support given to other people their age.

The Code sets out the rules and ways of working for those who work with ALN children and young people aged up to 25 years old. These rules apply to Local Authorities, Local Health Boards, schools, colleges, and universities.

[The Code](#) (specifically page 36 of the Code) says that ALN children and the parents, families and other adults that support them must be listened to and be involved in decisions that affect their lives.

This means:

- listening to the views, wishes and feelings of the children, young people, and their parents.
- understanding the importance of including children, young people, and parents as fully as possible in decisions
- providing information and support to the children, young people, and parents, so they can participate in those decisions.

Supporting children, their parents, and families to participate meaningfully will help them to feel confident that their views, wishes, and feelings are listened to and valued, even if they find it difficult to get these across. By being involved in decisions that affect them, ALN children and their parents should have more awareness of their rights and the support and services available to

them, helping them feel more in control of their learning. Children's needs are more likely to be understood and the support they receive is more likely to work for them. This means children can reach their potential and have every opportunity to be the best version of themselves.

Case Study 6 - Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan

Some people in Wales experience racism. Sometimes it's at school, at work, doing activities or using services. The Welsh Government works hard to make sure people are treated equally and respected. We want to do more. We want Wales to be a place where everyone is safe and feels valued.

We have been working with people across Wales to write a new [Anti-racist Wales Action Plan](#). The Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan or ARWAP was published on 7th June 2022. Its vision is for 'A Wales that is Anti-Racist by 2030'.

The Plan aims to make changes to the lives of people by tackling racism. This has, and continues to include, working with children who have experienced racism.

This includes:

- Black, Asian, and minority ethnic groups
- Gypsies and Traveller communities
- Muslim, Jewish, or other faiths
- Refugees or asylum seekers.

Before the ARWAP was created, we worked in partnership with Wales' Ethnic Minorities Youth Support Team (EYST) to hold a series of 'vision sessions' with children and young people. These sessions allowed children and young people with experience of racism to share their views. These views helped shape the vision, mission, and purpose of the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan.

In 2020-21 public consultation took place on the plan. The consultation was available in an easy read format, along with video for children and young people.

Welsh Government funded community groups and race-based organisations to run engagement sessions with across all parts of Wales. Almost 2000 people took part across all age ranges. Examples of how children and young people were involved include:

- **Tros Gynnal Plant (TGP)** collected views through individual interviews and conversations. These were carried out by project staff specifically with young people using various on-line platforms.
- drawing on a survey developed by the **Race Council Cymru**, the **National Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic Youth Forum** engaged with young people through an online survey, over the phone, and through online focus groups. The Youth Forum spoke to 65 participants across Wales. 21 ethnicities were recorded in understanding the experiences of people and communities,
- **Diverse Cymru** engaged with Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic adults and young people. The majority of participants self-defined as Black.
- **Horn Development Association** engaged 256 families that identify as Black, Asian, or Minority Ethnic living across Cardiff.

The full consultation report can be read [here](#).

All children have rights whatever their background. This includes refugee children who have the same rights as children born in Wales. The Anti Racist Wales Action Plan aims to strengthen children's rights, making sure that the children affected by racism can be free from discrimination, grow up to live healthy, safe lives and be heard in matters that affect them.

Within the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan, specific actions that address the needs of children and young people include:

- *Dealing with experiences of racism*
 - We expect schools to promote race equality in their settings, and to challenging racist and **xenophobic** incidents.
 - Schools in Wales must record and respond to all racist incidents. When incidents happen, schools need to be clear about how they challenge racism.

- *Teaching about racism*
 - Teaching Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic histories and experiences is now **mandatory** in the school curriculum. Lots of schools across Wales include the history of Black and ethnic minority communities as part of their curriculum.
 - We expect all schools to be teaching diversity and to create an anti-racist culture.

Empowerment

adults making decisions and hold them to account.

What is Empowerment?

Children's rights should empower children. Empowerment means making sure children have information about their rights and know how to claim them.

Empowerment changes the relationship between children as rights-holders and adults making decisions. Empowerment means adults sharing power with children to make decisions together. This helps children have better control over what happens in their lives.

Adults who understand children's rights and why they are important better support children to take part in shaping decisions that affect them. Children who know about their rights, can better hold the adults' making decisions about their lives to account.

How is empowerment embedded in Welsh Government?

- Giving information to people to increase their understanding about children's rights.
- Removing barriers to the things people need to understand and use children's rights.
- Promoting all children's right to be involved in, and listened to, when decisions are made that affect them.
- Making sure children have the information they need to take part in decisions. For example, creating documents that are easily understood and appropriate to a person's age. This means being clear about opportunities, so children can choose if they want to be involved.
- Making sure children can scrutinise decisions made about them. This means having opportunities to ask questions to

What actions have Welsh Government taken to make sure children feel empowered?

- Produced child friendly versions of key plans that affect children and young people. Examples include:
 - [Children's Rights Scheme 2021](#)
 - [Children and Young People's Plan](#)
 - [Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan](#)
 - [A Period Proud Wales](#)
 - [LGBTQ+ Action Plan](#)
 - [A Wales Report on the UNCRC](#)
- Created [advice, information, and guidance](#) to support children to keep safe online.
- Created a [plan](#) to raise awareness of children's rights to children, their families and people working with them.
- Helped families with positive parenting advice through the '[Parenting. Give it Time](#)' campaign.
- Made sure people, including children, who seek [sanctuary](#) in Wales get support and advice about their rights.
- Produced [resources](#) that help parents to know about the rights of their babies and understand them.
- Made [plans](#) to raise awareness of the importance of children's speech, language, and communication development.
- Produced [resources](#) for parents and those working with families to understand new laws around physically harming children.

Case Studies - Empowering

Case Study 7 - Raising Awareness of Children's Rights Plan.

The Welsh Government first published its [Raising Awareness of Children's Rights Plan](#) in November 2021. The Plan is the first of its kind in Wales.

The Plan aims to raise awareness of the UNCRC to children, families and the people who work with them. Through the Plan, the Welsh Government wants to 'empower children and young people to exercise their rights as citizens of Wales and the world.'

The plan sets out how Welsh Government will raise awareness of children's rights in five areas:

1. Children and Young People
Providing meaningful opportunities for children and young people to have their opinions heard across Wales.
2. Early Years
Raising awareness of children's rights with people who work in the early years sector.
3. Education
Raising awareness with head teachers and education leaders about the UNCRC and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)
4. Public Sector
Providing support to public sector organisations and leaders to embed a children's rights approach in their work.
5. Parents and Carers
Supporting parents and carers to understand the importance of listening to children in matters which affect them.

Some key progress made so far includes:

- We have reviewed how children and young people can take part in policy making. Working with Children in Wales we have changed the way [Young Wales](#) works, and supported a model that is meaningful and inclusive for children to be listened to. (See more about this on page 27).
- We have included questions about children's rights in the [School Health Research Network \(SHRN\) student health and wellbeing survey](#). This helps us to monitor whether the work in the Plan is making a difference. We asked just under 115,000 children aged 11-16 years:
 1. Have you heard of the UNCRC?
 - 7% of children reported that children in Wales do not have rights.
 - 50% of children reported moderate to high levels of knowledge about children's rights. Responses included 'we have rights, and I could list a few.'
 - (40%) knew 'a great deal about their rights' and the UNCRC. '
 - An equal proportion of children (both 50%) reported moderate to high levels of knowledge.
 2. How much do you know about the UNCRC?
 - While 36% of young people reported having heard of the UNCRC, most young people had not (45%) or were unsure (19%).
 - A lower proportion of girls (35%) reported having heard of the UNCRC compared to boys (37%) and people who identified as neither a boy nor a girl (38%).

- We have developed a national parent/carer forum. This is a group set up to listen to the voices of parents and carers in the decisions we make that affect children and families in Wales.
- We have established a network dedicated to understanding the children's rights needs of very young children. This network is called the Children's Rights in Early Years Network (CREYN).
- We have worked with leaders and stakeholders across Wales, to understand what training people need to know about children's rights. Based on what they have said, we have made changes:
 - We have changed children's rights training so that it is based on children's age. e.g., children's rights in early years; children's rights for children; and understanding children's rights for teenagers and young people.
 - We have funded webinars that focus on children's rights issues such as poverty, the cost-of-living-crisis and mental health.
 - We have supported people working in education to develop training modules on children's rights. These online sessions support schools to understand children's rights (including disabled children's rights) and promote them to learners.

Welsh Government will review the Raising Awareness Plan, by the end of 2023, with a revised plan published in 2024 if it is needed.

Case Study 8 - The Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Act 2020

Wales has joined more than 60 nations across the world in working toward ending physical punishment. Physical punishment means violence that causes injury or harm to your body by another person.

The Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Act 2020 received Royal Assent on 20 March 2020 and came into force on 21 March 2022.

This legislation means children have the same legal protection from assault as adults.

The UNCRC forms the foundation of this policy. All children have the right to be protected from all forms of violence. Keeping children safe by removing the defence of reasonable chastisement supports Article 19 of the UNCRC.

In 2021-22 there were 3,245 contacts to social services where physical punishment was a factor. In 1,635 of these, physical punishment was the only factor.

Positive parenting programmes such as 'Parenting. Give it Time' (PGiT) are a key part of combatting the physical punishment of children. Our raising awareness campaigns have promoted PGiT alongside information about 'Ending Physical Punishment'. This aims to promote positive parenting as an alternative to physical punishment.

Our awareness raising campaign, included TV, radio and digital advertisements.

Recently published research provided a snapshot of views from early 2022, before the law came into force. The report found:

- 71% of parents/carers of children aged 7 and under disagreed that it was sometimes necessary to smack a child. This is compared with 63% in 2018.

- Since 2018, there had been an increase in the level of awareness and support for the law. 59% of respondents reported they were in favour of the law change compared with 38% in 2018.

These findings suggest that:

- linking messages on ending physical punishment and positive parenting works.
- efforts to raise awareness of the benefits in changing the law have been successful.

Work is ongoing to raise awareness with children. It is important that information is shared in an appropriate and safe way. This means producing good quality information that protects their wellbeing.

We are working with Children in Wales to share information in schools and existing initiatives. This means discussions can take place between children and trusted adults, in appropriate settings.

Case Study 9: Children's rights for babies and young children

The Welsh Government is committed to making sure all children can claim their rights. Below are two examples of how children's rights are promoted to the families and adults who work and care for babies and young children.

Baby Bundles

The Baby Bundle pilot took place between September 2020 and March 2021. The pilot saw 200 families in the Swansea Bay University Health Board area take part. New parents were provided with essential items and guidance to support them with their new baby. The Baby Bundle was provided as a gift to welcome their new baby to the world, with no strings attached and without stigma.

The Baby Bundle pilot contributed to:

- giving all children the best start in life, by signposting families to information and advice about parenting and support programmes.
- tackling discrimination by providing all families with access to the same essential items.
- tackling poverty, by removing some of the costs families face when a baby is born.
- protecting the environment by avoiding single-use products, reducing the amount of packaging used and using local suppliers wherever possible.

An evaluation of the pilot was undertaken. The Baby Bundles were positively welcomed by parents who took part. Building on the success of the pilot, Welsh Ministers have committed to offering Baby Bundles to more families across Wales.

Lessons learned from the pilot will be further explored and included in how the service is designed when it is rolled out across Wales. Importance will be placed on **signposting** new parents to information and guidance. This includes information on Children's Rights and will help to make sure babies can have the best possible start in life.

Listening to babies and young children.

All children should be listened to. This can be challenging in practice, especially in the Early Years.

Welsh Government funded Children in Wales to research and find ways of listening to babies and very young children. Children in Wales have trialled approaches with [babies](#) (0-1 years old), [toddlers](#) (1-2 years old) and [pre-schoolers](#) (3-4 years old).

As a result of the trial, the following resources were developed:

- rights in Early Years posters provide key messages for providing positive rights based environments for [babies](#), [toddlers](#) and [pre-schoolers](#).
- [resources](#) were made to support people working with pre-schooler children to understand the new curriculum.
- [talking point posters](#) were developed to support adults to listen to babies and young children.
- an infographic on the [digital rights of children](#) was produced. This helps adults understand how to respect and protect children's rights in the digital environment.

Participation

What is Participation?

All children have the right to shape decisions that affect them, their families, and the communities they live in. Participation means listening to children when decisions are made that affect their lives.

Children should have all the information they need to understand what decisions are being made. Children should know when decisions are being made that affect them and should be given opportunities to be involved in those decisions.

Opportunities to shape decisions should be offered in ways that are appropriate to children's age and maturity. Being young or relatively immature is no reason for discounting children's opinions, or for giving them less attention in decision-making processes.

Participation should be a safe, enabling, and inclusive process. Participation should support conversations between children and adults working with them.

How is participation embedded in Welsh Government?

- Identifying gaps and opportunities where participation should happen across the Welsh Government.
- Involving children in the planning and design of services.
- Removing the things that stop children participating. For example, information that is hard to understand, transport, language.
- Giving extra support to children who need it.
- Learning about how other organisations do this well.
- Developing clear targets to listen to children who may not always be heard.

- Including children when staff are recruited who have responsibilities that impact on them.
- Giving feedback to children. This means telling them how their views have been taken into account.
- Adopting the [National Participation Standards](#).

What actions have Welsh Government taken to make sure children feel listened to?

- Funded [Young Wales](#) to update the way we listen to children to make sure children have good opportunities to take part.
- Funded the [Coronavirus and Us](#) survey which listened to children about the impact of the pandemic on their lives. We put in place systems that helped them overcome the issues they faced.
- Involved children in the recruitment of the Children's Commissioner for Wales.
- Funded Young Wales to employ a participation worker specifically to understand the needs of and work with disabled children.
- Supported young people to [research](#) children's rights issues in Wales, and to share those issues with the United Nations.
- Provided funding for children to have equal access to activities and new experiences through the [Summer of Fun](#) and [Winter of Wellbeing](#), as we recovered from the pandemic.

Case Studies – Participation

Case Study 10 – Review of Young Wales

Young Wales is a project run by Children in Wales for Welsh Government. Young Wales aims to give children in Wales a voice on issues that affect them, so that their views can be heard, particularly by Ministers in Welsh Government and other policy makers.

Young Wales aims to be as inclusive as possible, so that those children who find it hardest to have their views heard are able to do so as well as those who find it less difficult.

During the period October 2020 – March 2023, Young Wales supported over 1000 children to take part in 41 participation opportunities.

Throughout 2022, as Wales recovered from the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, Welsh Government and Children in Wales have worked closely together to create a new model that makes sure children are provided with meaningful opportunities to share their views.

This includes:

1. Holding more face-to-face meetings.

Four times a year, Young Wales Forum Members meet at residential weekends across Wales to discuss the issues that matter to them. The Young Wales quarterly residentials will be rotated around Wales to ensure children and young people from all geographic parts of Wales have opportunities to participate in-person.

2. Having opportunities to become leaders.

Young Wales focusses on developing children as leaders, providing training and accreditation that helps them do their job as forum members to the best of their ability. This includes learning about the UNCRC, the [National Participation Standards](#) and what forums are, and do.

3. Setting up groups to focus on issues important to children and the Welsh Government.

As part of Young Wales's updated participation model, new children and young people advisory boards have been set up. Advisory boards work on a particular issue in Government and contribute to designing and evaluating policy in that area. These are:

- Young Carers Advisory Group
- Young Person's Guarantee Advisory Board
- LGBTQ+ Advisory Board
- Keeping Safe Online Youth Group
- Budget Improvement Plan Group
- Young Wales Project Board
- National Youth Stakeholders Group

4. Making sure there is proper support for vulnerable children.

In early 2023, Welsh Government gave further money to Children in Wales to employ a worker whose role is specifically to support disabled children and children with additional learning needs. This person has experience of supporting children who may be less likely to have their voice heard to overcome the barriers they face and leads on projects like the Additional Learning Needs Ambassadors Programme in Wales.

Below are examples of where specific support has been provided to overcome barriers to participation because of listening to children:

- electronic equipment was bought for children who were digitally excluded during the pandemic to enable them to be involved. A **hybrid model** (online and in-person) of participation has continued since the pandemic to make sure as many children can take part as possible.
- contributions from children in the consultation on Welsh Government's Single-Use Plastic Products Bill directly led to changes to the Bill about the medical needs of disabled people. Actions were put in place to make sure disabled people's rights could be upheld, by still being able to access the equipment they needed, even if it were made of single-use plastic. These changes were fed back to children in accessible [infographics](#) to raise awareness.

Case Study 11 – Coronavirus and Me and Coronavirus and Us: Listening to Children Through the Pandemic.

Coronavirus and Me

In January 2021, Welsh Government teamed up with the Children's Commissioner for Wales, Children in Wales, and Welsh Youth Parliament to seek the views of children and young people.

The Coronavirus and Me survey covered themes including health, education, the impact on children's social lives and the needs of specific groups. This was the second nationwide survey of its kind.

A symbols version of the survey was available and picture activity tasks were used as an alternative to the text version of the survey. This supported young children and children with additional learning needs to take part.

19,737 children took part aged between 3-18.

The [results](#) helped Welsh Government understand how best to support children during and beyond the pandemic.

Coronavirus and Us

In September 2021, the Children's Commissioner for Wales produced the report, '[Coronavirus and Us](#)'.

The Commissioner noted on their [website](#), the things Welsh Government did well in response to the findings of the surveys:

- Ministers, including the First Minister, met children and young people to listen to their experiences and answer questions.
- the First Minister and his officials met regularly with Commissioners and other decision-makers to listen to concerns and answer questions.
- the Government protected most legal entitlements for children with Special Educational Needs.
- funding was made available by the Government for a Summer of Fun. £12 million was set aside for free activities for children across Wales over the 2021 and 2022 summer holidays.
- all schools offered online teaching through free digital tools and software available on Hwb.

- during the firebreaks and lockdowns between December 2020 to March 2021, children were able to attend childcare hubs. These were children of key workers and children from vulnerable groups.
- Welsh Government made sure that children who receive free school meals were fed when schools were closed. This included during school holidays. We were the first Government in the UK to do this.
- no children under 18 were charged with breaking Covid-19 rules.

The World Health Organisation said the work on Coronavirus and Us, and how Welsh Government responded, was a good example of children's involvement.

Case study 12 - Young Person's Guarantee

In November 2021, Welsh Government launched its Young Person's Guarantee (YPG).

The Young Person's Guarantee is a commitment made by Welsh Government to make sure that young people in Wales have the support they need to reach their potential.

The Young Person's Guarantee guarantees an offer of support to young people, to:

- either gain a place in education or training, or.
- help to get into work or to become self-employed.

The guarantee is for every young person aged 16-24 who lives in Wales.

Listening to young people is a fundamental part of developing a Young Person's Guarantee that works for young people in Wales.

In May 2022, the Welsh Government launched its National Conversation with Young People. The National Conversation aims to listen to the voices of young people most affected by the Young Person's Guarantee. This includes young people *Not in Education, Employment or Training* (NEET) and other young people who might be less likely to be heard.

During phase one of the National Conversation young people fed in their experiences of getting training, education and work including:

- their aspirations.
- the challenges they faced.
- their awareness of support available to them.
- their ideas for improving engagement with young people in the future.

Young people participated through surveys, focus groups and sessions facilitated by external organisations.

The Young Person's Guarantee National Conversation report: phase 1 and a participant update can be read [here](#).

The second phase of the Young Person's Guarantee National Conversation explored in more detail some of the key issues raised in phase 1. The National Conversation helps shape and inform the YPG offer moving forwards.

The Young Person's Guarantee is designed to provide the right support at the right time for young people. It provides young people aged 16 to 24 in Wales with access to:

- one simple route to access the guarantee via Working Wales. This means support and advice from advisers. Advice is provided in many forms, including online and face to face.
- self-employment advice and support available through Big Ideas Wales.
- places on one of the Welsh Government's outreach Community Employability programmes, (including Jobs Growth Wales Plus, Communities for Work Plus and ReAct Plus programmes).
- help to find an apprenticeship.
- a new course search platform, for further education or higher education
- a referral to one of the programmes funded by other partners, such as the Department for Work and Pensions or Local Authorities.

A Young People's Guarantee Advisory Board has been set up to continue listening to the voices of young people. The work of the Advisory Board will also build on feedback gained from the National Conversation. For more information visit the [Young Wales website](#).

Case study 13 – Recruitment of the Children's Commissioner for Wales

In April 2022, Rocio Cifuentes took up the role of Children's Commissioner for Wales, serving as the fourth Commissioner since the role was created in 2000.

The process for choosing the new Commissioner is a long and complex one. The Commissioner's role is to promote and protect children's rights in Wales, and so it is extremely important that the right person is appointed.

Children and young people were meaningfully involved throughout the process of choosing Rocio Cifuentes.

The Minister for Social Justice chaired a cross party panel to consider applications. They were supported by a young person's panel.

The young person's panel ranked the personal statements of suitable candidates. These were written specifically for children and young people. Their rankings helped shape the decision to invite six applicants to the interview stage.

The six shortlisted candidates delivered a presentation to a year six class of school children from Gwyrosydd Primary School. Each candidate presented for five minutes, then were asked the same three questions by three of the pupils. These sessions were filmed and provided to both the young person's panel and cross-party panel for consideration. A report was also provided outlining the children's feedback on each of the six candidates. This report was considered by both interview panels.

Each of the shortlisted candidates were interviewed by a young person's panel and their scores and feedback were provided to the cross-party panel.

The cross-party panel also interviewed the candidates and considered the range of feedback from children and young people, the school presentations, and the feedback from the young person's panel before making their recommendation for appointment.

Accountability

What is Accountability?

People who have a duty to help children claim their rights must be accountable. This means showing how and why decisions that affect children have been made the way they have.

To be accountable, there must be ways of checking how well decisions support children's rights. This includes finding ways to change and improve if decisions have negative impacts on children's rights.

To do this well, decision-makers must be honest and provide reasons for their decisions and actions.

To claim their rights, children must know they have them. Children should also know when they aren't able to claim their rights, and how to make a complaint or challenge decisions and actions.

How is accountability embedded in the Welsh Government?

- Giving children information on how they can ask questions and challenge decision-makers.
- Making children aware of their rights. This means giving them information to understand the responsibilities and obligations of duty **bearers**.
- Using Children's Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) to consider how decisions affect children's rights.
- Making sure staff understand their responsibilities and obligations to children.
- Publishing updates showing how we've worked towards making rights a reality.
- Feeding back regularly to children.

- Providing children with accessible information about how to make complaints or hold staff to account.

What actions has Welsh Government taken to make sure they are accountable for their work on children's rights?

We have:

- produced [Children's Rights Compliance Reports](#), like this one, every two and a half years since the Measure was introduced.
- set up a group of senior officials (Directors) to lead work on the Children and Young People's Plan.
- published at least 216 Children's Rights Impact Assessments (CRIAs). CRIAs evidence the impact of decisions made on children's rights.
- prepared submissions and responded to the UN Committee on Children's Rights, showing what our responsibilities are for children, and the work we do fulfil them.
- published a [children's complaints leaflet](#) explaining what how children can give feedback to Welsh Government and how to complain if section 1 of the Measure is not being met. This includes information about other places children can get advice too. For example to [Meic Cymru](#) and to the [Children's Commissioner's Office for Wales](#).

Case Studies – Accountability

Case Study 14 – United Nations: State Party Reporting

How states apply the UNCRC is monitored by the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Around every five years the Committee reviews how well each state puts into practice the rights in the UNCRC.

All Governments in the UK have to work together to report to the UN. This is the main way in which the Welsh Government is held to account for its work on children's rights.

Other organisations, and children, have also been involved throughout the process.

The current reporting cycle began in 2020.

Organisations including the [Equality and Human Rights Commission](#) and [UNCRC Monitoring Group](#) sent reports to the UN, advising them what they should ask the UK Government to report on.

Along with the Children's Commissioners of Northern Ireland, Scotland and England, the Children's Commissioner for Wales published a joint [report to the UN Committee](#). The Commissioners also produced a report "[Are we there yet?](#)". This report was based on the views of children in all four nations.

The UN Committee then produced its '[List of Issues](#)' to the UK Government in February 2021. These are the important issues the UN expected UK Government's to report progress on. This included questions for Welsh Government.

On 15th June 2022, the UK Government [responded](#) to the UN List of issues. In its response, it showed progress made across the United Kingdom on children's rights.

In September 2022, Welsh Government published a [report](#) focussed on work that happens in Wales. This is work that Welsh Government has the power to lead. To be accountable to children, a [young people's version](#) of this report was also published.

Alongside the UK Government's response, The [Children's Commissioner for Wales](#), the [Equality and Human Rights Commission](#) and the [UNCRC Monitoring Group](#) sent second reports to the UN, and were invited to Geneva to answer questions about their reports.

The [Children's Commissioner for Wales](#), in partnership with the Commissioners from Northern Ireland, Scotland and England, also sent a [children's response](#). Young people's versions and a [symbols version](#) of this report were created.

6 Young Wales volunteers led a [nationwide piece of research](#) with children across Wales and submitted their report for consideration. This project was funded by Welsh Government. A dedicated case study to this can be read below.

The UN Committee also met with the UK state party, including Welsh Government, in May 2023, where the UN Committee asked questions about progress made on the UNCRC.

Following the meeting with the UK Government, the Committee produced a report outlining its Concluding Observations and Recommendations. This report sets out the things the UN thinks the UK must do to improve their work on children's rights. This report was published in June 2023.

The Welsh Government will now consider and set out the steps it needs to take to respond to the recommendations set out by the UN.

Case Study 15 – Young Researchers: UN Reporting

As part of the work to report to the United Nations on children's rights, it has been essential to understand this from the perspective of children themselves.

In 2022, Welsh Government funded Children in Wales to support a group of Young Wales volunteers to produce a [Children's](#) Report. The volunteers acted as researchers to understand the important issues children face when trying to claim their rights.

The Research Process

1. The Young Wales volunteers reviewed documents and reports that showed what was important to children.
2. The volunteers contacted all 22 Local Authority Areas, and a wide range of organisations working with children to better understand priorities for children.
3. Using the information collected, Young Wales volunteers developed research questions to ask children and young people.
4. Between 2020 to 2022, over 1000 children and young people contributed to the report through workshops, festivals, events, and advisory groups.
5. Taking all feedback into account, the volunteers developed a report to submit to the UN.

The report made key recommendations on a range of issues relating to children's rights.

Listening to children in Geneva

In early February 2023, 6 volunteers from Young Wales were funded by Welsh Government to travel to Geneva. Here they met with the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Alongside young people from across the UK and Jersey, Young Wales Volunteers had two meetings with the Committee. During these meetings, they were able to express their views on children's rights in Wales and give recommendations from the report. These recommendations set out what children think should be done to improve things.

The UN Committee considered what children had to say when they made recommendations to the UK and Welsh Government.

Case study 16 – Children's Rights Impact Assessments

The Children's Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) is the main tool Welsh Government uses to make sure we are paying due regard to children's rights. CRIAs evidence and record how policy decisions impact on the rights of children. Teams and departments within Welsh Government must complete CRIAs when they develop new policies or make changes to ones that already exist, if they will affect children in any way.

In December 2021, we updated our [CRIA template](#) to take account of previous UN recommendations for strengthening our children's rights guidance for staff. The new template

includes prompts for staff to think about how their work affects different groups of children differently, and the importance of research and data.

During this reporting period, we also produced a new [staff manual](#) and e-learning module to support people completing CRIAs. These resources provide guidance on how to complete CRIAs well, and key things to think about when completing them. For example, they suggest different ways teams can listen to the views of children and support teams to think about any potential discrimination to children. They also promote the Children and Young People's National Participation Standards. These outline key issues and good practice staff should be aware of when working with children and young people.

Since January 2020, all completed CRIAs have to be published on the Welsh Government website. This not only holds us to account to the public but provides good practice examples for others to see. Between October 2020 - March 2023, 98 CRIAs have been published.

The CRIA requires policy makers to write down which rights are affected. If decisions have a negative impact, actions must be taken to address this.

CRIAs are used to inform our advice to Ministers.

The Welsh Government has a dedicated Children's Rights Branch that provides advice and guidance on completing CRIAs. During this reporting period, the Branch has reviewed and given advice on 94 CRIAs. Additionally, the Children Rights Advisory Group (CRAG) provides feedback and external scrutiny on draft CRIAs.

Recommendations from the Children, Young People and Education Committee's Report (September 2020)

In our last Compliance Report (2020), we said that we would act on the accepted recommendations made by **Children, Young People and Education Committee** in September 2020.

Below is a brief outline of the progress made:

- Following public consultation, a new Children's Rights Scheme was published in November 2021.
- We have continued to reiterate the importance of children's rights in our work. Examples set out in this compliance report show how we have:
 - embedded children's rights into our laws, policies, and strategies.
 - made particular effort to guarantee the rights of children who are least likely to be able to access them.
 - produced resources to raise awareness of children's rights to babies, children, young people, their families, and people who work with them.
 - learned from others, and improved the ways we listen to children. This includes listening to children themselves to the people who work with them. We have taken suggestions from the members of the **All-Wales Participation Workers Network**, and organisations who attend the **Children's Rights Advisory Group**.
 - updated our guidance and processes for staff, to improve the ways we are held to account.
 - published our CRAs to be more open in our children's rights work.
- We have developed an introductory e-module for people working in Welsh Government. This module provides an introduction to children and young people's rights in Wales and shows why they are important to consider as part of Government work.
- We have developed opportunities for Ministers and officials to engage more regularly with children. This provides learning opportunities to understand first-hand the issues that affect children.
- We have strengthened our CRA guidance, making it clear when and how CRAs should be completed and published.
- Since January 2020, all completed CRAs have been published online as a matter of course.
- We have set out in our 'Budget Improvement Plan (BIP)' the steps we will take to make budget decisions that impact on Children's Rights.
- We are working with children to develop a children's BIP. This will make our information about budget decisions easier to understand and make us more accountable to children.
- We have strengthened guidance in our staff manual on considering the impact of budget decisions on children's rights.
- We have developed a specific plan to raise awareness of children's rights across Wales.

- We have made understanding human rights a mandatory part of the Curriculum for Wales.
- The updated 'Children's Rights Scheme' recognises children may need help to make a complaint. We have published a [children's complaints leaflet](#) explaining what how to give feedback and how to complain if due regard is not being paid. This includes information about other place children can get advice too. For example to [Meic Cymru](#) and to the [Children's Commissioner's Office for Wales](#)
- In 2021, the First Minister wrote to the UK Government calling on them to ratify the optional protocol on a communications procedure.
- We have worked with Children in Wales to develop a sustainable representative model for Young Wales.
- We produced and published a specific Wales report in response to the UN List of Issues, we also produced a young people's version of the Wales Report.
- We have produced regular updates to members of Senedd Cymru on progress relating to children's rights.

Next Steps: What are the next steps for Welsh Government?

- We welcome the UNCRC Concluding Observations Report, which was received by the UK State Party, including Welsh Government in June 2023.
- We are taking the time to carefully think about what the UN has said to do to improve children's rights work in Wales.
- We will write a response setting out the actions we will take and publish this.
- We plan to include children and young people in this process, as well as members of the Children's Rights Advisory Group.
As the report covers the UK State Party as a whole, we will also be working with the others state party members.
- We will also:
 - produce an Annual Update on the Children and Young Peoples Plan. This will be published in November 2023.
 - review the Raising Awareness of Children's Rights Plan. We will do this in consultation with children, families and people working with them in Wales. We will publish a new Plan in 2024.
 - continue to improve the way we listen to children in Wales. We will work hard to make sure opportunities are inclusive and good quality.
 - evaluate and review the [National Participation Standards for Young People](#) in Wales, and its Kitemark process.

Glossary of Terms

Advisory Board of Young Wales:

- **Young Carers Advisor Board:** This group contributes to, and shapes what Welsh Government does to support young carers in Wales.
- **Young Person's Guarantee Advisory Board:** The Young Person's Guarantee Advisory Board provides guidance and advice to Welsh Government on the progress being made under the guarantee. For more information, see page 10.
- **Keeping Safe Online Youth Group:** The purpose of this group is to shape the future activity, that Welsh Government undertakes with key partners and stakeholders to keep children safe online. Children have the opportunity to provide advice and guidance to Welsh Government about the advice and support they receive.
- **Budget Improvement Plan Advisory Group:** The group has been created to specifically work with the Budget Improvement Team to co-produce a young person's version of Welsh Treasury's Budget Improvement Plan. They have been in operation since November 2022 and will continue to work with them throughout 2023 until the young person's version of the BIP is published alongside the Draft Budget in December 2023.
- **Young Wales Project Board:** All Young Wales volunteers are invited to join the Project Board and attend meetings in person or online at each of our 4 free to access residences across the year. The Project Board aims to scrutinise and advise Young Wales on its work for and with children and young people.
- **The National Youth Stakeholders Group (NYSG)** is for young people with lived experience or a special interest in relation to mental health and wellbeing. The group addresses mental health issues shared by young people. For more information see page 11.

All Government's in the UK: In the UN State Party Reporting case study (page 27), 'Government' or 'UK State Party' means all governments within the United Kingdom. These are the UK Government, Welsh Government, the Scottish Government, the Government of Northern Ireland, and governments of overseas territories and crown dependencies. These include Jersey, Bailiwick of Guernsey, Alderney, Sark, and Isle of Man

All Wales Participation Workers Network: this Network is led by Children in Wales. It is a group of people who either have responsibility for participation, or an interest in improving opportunities for children to be listened to. The Network meets 4 times a year.

Children's Commissioner for Wales: Rocio Cifuentes is the [Children's Commissioner for Wales](#). They started in post in April 2022, and will be the Children's Commissioner for seven years. Their job is to promote and protect children's rights in Wales.

Children's Human Rights Approach:

- **Embedding:** Putting children's rights at the centre of planning and delivering services.
- **Equality and non-discrimination:** ensuring that every child has an equal opportunity to be the best they can be.
- **Empowering children:** enhancing children's capabilities so they are better able to take advantage of rights.
- **Participation:** listening to children and taking their views meaningfully into account
- **Accountability:** authorities should be responsible to children for decisions and actions that affect their lives

Children in Wales: Children in Wales is a national organisation that supports organisations and individuals who work with children, young people, and their families in Wales.

Compliance: Compliance means meeting the rules or standards set. In this report, compliance means reporting on how we have paid due regard to children's rights.

CYPE Committee: The Children, Young People and Education Committee has been set up by the Senedd to look at policy and legislation, and to hold the Welsh Government to account in specific areas. These areas include children and young people; education; and health, care services, and social care as they relate to children and young people.

Diverse Cymru: Diverse Cymru is a Welsh charity supporting people faced with inequality and discrimination.

Due regard: how consideration is given to children's rights when decisions are made by Welsh Government.

Duty Bearers: Along with the Government, all people who care for children and young people are duty bearers under the UNCRC. That means adults working with children have a responsibility to uphold children's rights.

Ethnic Minorities Youth Support Team: EYST aims to meet the needs of Black and Minority Ethnic children and young people, families, and individuals. This includes refugees and asylum-seekers living in Wales. This includes challenging negative stereotypes about ethnic diversity and increasing awareness of diverse communities who live in Wales.

Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC): EHRC champions equality and human rights for all. There is a specific Commission for Wales called EGRC Cymru.

Horn Development Association: Horn Development Association provides a diverse range of support to communities living across Cardiff.

Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA): IIAs are used to support the scrutiny of decisions made in government. By completing the IIA document, officials have to think about the impacts of their decisions on people's lives, particularly vulnerable people. IIAs are similar to CRIAs but are completed for decisions that affect all people in Wales, not just children.

LGBTQ+: LGBTQIA+ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (or sometimes questioning), intersex, asexual, and others. The "plus" represents other sexual identities.

Mandatory means that people must do something. This could be in law or set out in policy.

Ministers: [Ministers are the Members of the Senedd](#) (Parliament) who are in the Welsh Government. Ministers are appointed by the First Minister of Wales and have specific areas of Welsh Government policy to look after. Ministers speak on behalf of the Welsh Government in the Senedd and answer questions from Members.

National Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic Youth Forum: The National BAME Youth Forum aims to highlight and advance the voices of young people from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic backgrounds aged from 11 to 25 years old.

Nation of Sanctuary: Wales is aiming to become the world's first 'Nation of Sanctuary.' Our vision is of a Wales wherever people seeking sanctuary go, they are met with welcome, understanding and celebration of their unique contribution to the rich tapestry of Welsh life.

Neurodivergent: Neurodivergent is when a person's brain processes, learns, or behaves differently than what is considered 'typical.' That means they have different strengths and challenges from people whose brains don't have those differences.

Optional Protocols: These set out extra requirements needed to address the changing needs of children. The Protocols were written after the UNCRC was adopted, and used to address new concerns about children. These are 'optional' because they are not automatically binding on the Governments which have signed up to the UNCRC. If Governments want to adopt the protocols, they must sign up to them separately.

In 2000, two optional protocols were added to the UNCRC:

1. One asks governments to ensure children under the age of 18 are [not forcibly recruited into their armed forces](#).
2. The second calls on states [to prohibit child prostitution, child pornography and the sale of children into slavery](#). These have now been ratified by more than 120 states, including the countries within the United Kingdom.
3. A third optional protocol was added in 2011. This enables children whose rights have been violated to [complain directly to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#).

Race Council Cymru: Race Council Cymru is a national organisation that supports organisations and individuals across Wales to combat prejudice and discrimination based on race. Race means the colour of a person's skin or other physical feature.

Regional Partnership Boards: Local authorities and Local Health Boards have to set up groups called Regional Partnership Boards or RPBs. Members of the RPB work together to make sure services that meet the needs of people in the local area are available.

Save the Children: [Save the Children](#) is a worldwide organisation. In [Wales](#), Save the Children is dedicated to tackling child poverty so that young children have the support they need to grow, develop and learn.

Schools Health Research Network (SHRN): SHRN is a partnership between Welsh Government, Public Health Wales, and Cardiff University. The Network was established in 2013 and aims to improve young people's health and wellbeing in Wales. Through surveys SHRN works primary and secondary schools to create good quality information about children's health and wellbeing.

Scrutinise: scrutinise means to examine closely. In this report, when we talk about scrutiny, we mean opportunities to examine and ask questions about the decisions we make. This means having your voice heard in the planning of decisions and policies, and feeding back on what works well and what does not.

Tros Gynnal Plant Cymru (TGP Cymru) is a Wales-wide charity working with children, young people and families providing a range of support including advocacy services for children looked after, youth homeless support, and restorative practices with veterans. TGP Cymru also supports Gypsy Roma and Traveller children and families as well as young people who have asylum seeker or refugees' status.

United Nations: The United Nations is an organisation that includes almost all the world's countries, or nations. It is called the UN for short. By the 21st century the United Nations had more than 190 members. The main goal of the United Nations is world peace.

UN Concluding Observation Recommendations: Every 5 years, the UN examines the whole UK, including Wales, on how well it is meeting its promises under the UNCRC. They assess how

progress has been made towards giving every child the opportunities and protections enshrined in the UNCRC. The suggestions they give to the Government are known as the **UN Concluding Observation Recommendations**.

UNCRC Monitoring Group: The Wales UNCRC Monitoring Group a group agencies and organisations tasked with monitoring and promoting the UNCRC in Wales. This group is separate to government. The UNCRC Monitoring Group was established in 2002 and since May 2016 has been facilitated by Children in Wales

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD): The UNCRPD sets out the rights of all disabled people. The Welsh Government has set out an intention to incorporate the UNCRPD into law in Wales. 184 countries around the world have adopted the Convention.

Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA): WCVA is a national organisation that supports voluntary organisations across Wales. WCVA aims to enable voluntary organisations to make a bigger difference in Wales.

Welsh Government: Wales has its own government, which works together to make policies and laws that make Wales a better place to live and work The Leader of the Welsh Government is known as the first Minister. The responsibility of the people working in Government includes improving education, health, transport, planning, social services, culture, Welsh language, the environment and [much more](#).

Women Connect First (WCF): WCF is a charity in Wales set up to support and empower Black and Ethnic Minority Women to reach their potential.

Xenophobic means disliking or treating someone differently because they are from another country.