



Children's Commissioner for Wales

A Plan for all Children and Young People: 2016–19

Championing children and young
people's human rights



“ I aspire to a Wales where all children and young people have an equal chance to be the best that they can be. ”

Sally Holland, Children’s Commissioner for Wales



The work of the Children’s Commissioner is guided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and she strives to ensure that it is implemented fully in Wales.

The Children’s Commissioner for Wales is an independent children’s rights institution established in 2001. The Commissioner’s principal aim is to safeguard and promote the rights and welfare of children.

In 2016 very many children and young people in Wales lead safe, happy and active lives and feel listened to and respected by the adults around them. However, there are large groups of children who miss out in a variety of ways:

- Children and young people want to feel safe out and about in their local communities and have things to do. Children from less well-off families are less happy with facilities in their community and feel less safe than others. Children aged 3-7 want the Children's Commissioner to put play as her top priority.
- Too many children report everyday experiences of bullying and this is children aged 7-18's top priority for the Children's commissioner to tackle.
- Children who need extra help with their mental health wait too long for the right care. This is parents' and professionals' top priority for the Commissioner's work.
- Children and young people who need extra social and health care experience a 'cliff edge' when they turn 18, with poor transition planning and support.
- More children are looked after in foster, kinship or residential care than previously and not enough of these children have stable care or good enough outcomes when they leave care.
- Children receive a mixed message that they have rights to keep them safe under the UNCRC but the law gives them less protection from physical assault than adults have.
- Many children, young people and adults are concerned that children's provision, like play and youth centres, and financial support for families with children, have lost out more than other groups in the last few years of cuts to public funding.

The Children's Commissioner's aspirations for children and young people in Wales

By 2019 I hope that Welsh Government and public services will have made significant progress towards delivering the following improvements for children:

- Children and young people will have access to the mental health services they need in a timely manner. There will be stronger programmes for promoting emotional health and wellbeing in place in our health and social services, schools and youth services
- Children's contemporary experiences of bullying will be better understood and more schools will prevent and tackle bullying effectively
- There will be better access to play, culture and leisure activities by children who are most likely to miss out on these, particularly those living in poverty and disabled children.
- Care leavers will have better access to safe and secure housing options and an active offer of a job, education or training place,
- All young people requiring continuing health and social support will have improved transitions to adult services
- Children will have the same legal protection as adults from physical assault
- Children and young people will be better involved in public services, including my own organisation

I will promote these improvements by encouraging public services to commit to the UNCRC and improve how they plan and deliver their services as a result. I will seek to influence and shape Government policy and legislation so that it delivers for children's rights. I will help individual children and young people whose rights have been breached and seek to address the systemic implications of such breaches, challenging services to do better in the future. I shall do these things through listening to and collaborating with children and young people as active citizens with an important contribution to make to their schools, communities and nation.

I will work with the other Children's Commissioners in England, Northern Ireland and Scotland to urge the UK government to implement the concluding observations of the UN Committee of the Rights of the Child, due to be published in June 2016.

PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



Priorities **2016-2019**

- **Mental health, wellbeing and tackling bullying**
- **Poverty and social inequalities**
- **Play and leisure**
- **Safety (in the community, school and at home)**
- **Raising awareness of the UNCRC and promoting its adoption across public services**
- **Transitions to adulthood for all young people requiring continuing support and care**

A plan for all children and young people

Over the three years I will focus on all age groups from 0-18+ in a series of activities. The What Next II Beth Nesa consultation has given me information about children's priorities for their rights, and the concerns of adults who care about them or care for them.

My Beth Nesa consultation showed that under 7s can be included to express a view and I will work to ensure that the experiences of the youngest children are listened to and recognised. Under 7s asked me to prioritise play opportunities during the next three years. I will promote children's rights to play and access leisure and cultural activities, whatever their circumstances.

Children from 7-18 have identified bullying as their top priority. I will work with children and others to identify and promote effective ways of tackling bullying. The issue of bullying is also connected to mental health and wellbeing – the overwhelming concerns of professionals and parents.

In 2016-17 I will launch a three year project to improve the transition from childhood to adulthood for those who need support and services – this includes care leavers and those with chronic health conditions and disabilities.

I will work with children and young people throughout Wales and through both English and Welsh languages. I will ensure that I listen to children and young people who may have most difficulty in accessing their rights, including disabled children, looked after children and those from ethnic, linguistic and sexual minorities. I will measure how I engage with different groups throughout Wales so that I can be held accountable for this by children and young people.

How I will carry out my work.

The Children's Commissioner's work targets rights issues at 3 levels

1. Underpinning policies and laws for children's rights
– I will work to influence and change these so that they fulfil the Welsh Government's commitment to putting children's rights at the centre.
2. Effective implementation of these policies and laws throughout Wales and for all groups of children – I will monitor how children's rights are fulfilled, promote best practice and challenge those who do not respect rights.
3. Children and young people's experiences and outcomes
– I will listen to children and young people and seek real changes in their everyday quality of life and equal chances to fulfil their potential

Where required, I will use the powers set out for me in legislation to hold Government and public bodies to account on how they deliver human rights to children and young people.



Sally Holland
Children's Commissioner
for Wales

Strategic Goals for the Office of the Children's Commissioner for Wales

Overall goal¹

To achieve positive outcomes in the lives of children and young people in Wales and their ability to access their rights

Strategic goals (the Four Ps / y Pedwar D)

To keep children's rights at the centre of how we work and to work with all public services in Wales to achieve the same goal (Provision / Darpariaeth)

To assist children and young people to access their rights (Protection / Diogelwch)

To include children and young people's expertise in informing and directing our work and to work with all public services in Wales to achieve the same goal (Participation / Dweud eich Dweud)

To ensure that children and young people know that they have an independent champion called the Children's Commissioner for Wales and that they have rights under the UNCRC (Promotion / Deall eich Hawliau)

¹ These goals and plans are based on the following sources:

- The views of children and young people, professionals and parents expressed in the Beth Nesa II What Next consultation in 2015.
- Other key sources of evidence including the Children and Young People Well-being Monitor for Wales (published December 2015)
- The analysis of the current state of children's rights in Wales and The UK as reported to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2015 and the Committee's list of issues arising from the committee session in October 2015.



0808 801 1000 / 80800*

post@childcomwales.org.uk

* Text us for free (start your message with COM)

@childcomwales

www.childcomwales.org.uk

Write to us:

Children's Commissioner for Wales

Freepost RRGL XLYC BHGC

Swansea SA7 9FS