



Children in Wales Plant yng Nghymru

National Assembly for Wales Cross Party Group on Children and Young People

Wednesday 12th July 2017

Seminar Rooms 1 & 2, The Pierhead Building

12.30pm–13.30pm

Presentation

Lynne Hill—Policy Director Children in Wales

The National Children and Young People's Participation Standards

Attendees

Julie Morgan AM, Chair

David Melding AM, Vice-Chair

Catriona Williams OBE, Secretariat, Chief Executive Children in Wales,

Samuel Hulett – Secretariat, Policy Information Assistant, Children in Wales,

Helen West - Assembly Member Support Staff, National Assembly for Wales

Nancy Cavill—Assembly Member Support Staff, National Assembly for Wales

Sian Curely – Chief of Staff, Office of Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent

Esther Goodhew – Family Support Worker, Afasic Cymru

Mike Greenaway – Director, Play Wales

Haley Humphires—Head of Governance and Quality Tŷ Hafan

Denise Inger—Chief Executive Director, Snap Cymru

Catrin James—Policy Officer, Urdd Gobaith Cymru

Tracy Jones— Head of Community, Tŷ Hafan,

Jess Matthews—Programme Manager, The Fostering Network,

Jane O'Toole— Chief Executive Officer, Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs,

Jan Pickles— Service Head Devolved Nations, NSPCC

Helida Ramog— Compliance and Quality Assurance Director, BAWSO,

Lewis Robin— Senior Advisor, National Assembly for Wales

Gwendolyn Sterk— Public Affairs Manager, Welsh Women's Aid,

Charlotte Wooders— Programme Officer, The Fostering Network,

Apologies

Debbie Donaldson—Independent Sexual Violence Adviser, Cardiff Royal Infirmary,

Arfon Jones—Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner North Wales, Police and Crime Commissioner

Mutale Merril— Chief Executive, BAWSO

Liz Saville-Roberts MP –Member of UK Parliament

Sian Thomas— Consultant Nurse - Child Health, Royal Gwent Hospital,

Simon Thomas AM –National Assembly for Wales

Rachel Thomas— Head of Policy and Public Affairs, Children's Commissioner for Wales,

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks

Julie Morgan AM began by welcoming the group and making introductions.

2. Annual General Meeting: Formal business, including election of Chair and Secretary

The group nominated Julie Morgan AM as Chair. David Melding AM and Llyr Huws Gruffydd AM were nominated as Vice Chairs. Catriona Williams was nominated as Secretariat.

3. Introduction to Presentation

Catriona Williams began by talking about the fact that today was the first official anniversary of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child's (the Committee) Concluding Observations to the UK and devolved governments, and the statement by the Wales UNCRC Monitoring Group on the Welsh Government's implementation of the Committee's recommendations.

The monitoring group welcomed the positive actions of Welsh Government to review the work on children and young people's mental health, to consult on how, not whether, to remove the defence of reasonable chastisement, consultations on the extension of the franchise to 16 and 17 year olds, and the beginning of establishment of a Youth Parliament for Wales.

Catriona noted a greater urgency in implementing the remaining recommendations and expressed hope that resources would be made available to 'keep rights in focus' by ensuring that Child Rights Impact Assessments (CRIAs) are consistently undertaken on all proposed policies, budgetary decisions and legislation likely to impact children and young people.

The National Participation Standards for Children and Young People

Lynne Hill presented the refreshed National Participation Standards for Children and Young People.

The standards that had been originally developed by the Participation Unit, based in Save the Children, were refreshed by Young Wales working with young people and participation officers during 2016. They are underpinned by the Children and Families (Wales Measure) 2010 and The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 guidance.

Each standard identifies the rights of young people and the commitments of organisations.

Some local authorities have developed young inspectors who undertake inspections of local services, with a kite mark offered to successful services. However due to capacity issues, some authorities were using a Participation Charter, a shorter form for the kite mark with an organisation being able to provide a register to local authorities of which organisations have good standards.

4. Discussion

A discussion was held on the participation standards. Attendees were glad to see that the standards were still continuing, including young inspectors and noted both that they are still relevant to children and young people and that the refreshed posters were useful.

An interest was expressed in seeing the Safeguarding Boards' reporting in October compared with the standards. Making the structure real was identified as a key task and a desire for help making it more robust was voiced. Lynne Hill, Children in Wales, noted that this was something that Young Wales could help with.

Carl Sargeant AM, Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children, had written to Cabinet colleagues about the Standards which attendees were pleased about.

It was noted that the Participation Standards are on the agenda, but that incorporating them into delivery was a key priority. The Participation Standards should be used to consider the impact that delivery is having on children and young people. Another suggestion was that the Youth Forums could be expanded; they exist and some are very active but not all Local Authority Areas have them. It was suggested that they should be included in the process. In addition, Lynne confirmed that Young Wales is still widening its reach by trying to include other participation groups.

The discussion touched on how marginalised and vulnerable children and young people were involved. Lynne confirmed that Young Wales is trying to reach as many children and young people as possible, but that there were some challenges, since some groups were hard to reach. Catriona noted that it was important to see that no groups were missed out, eg BAME groups.

As far as implementation is concerned, it was suggested that the starting point was the work that already exists, and creating a national level measure by working with organisations already in place. Lynne agreed and noted that Young Wales was already trying to complement existing work and not aiming to duplicate existing activity.

Catriona asked if there were any specific tips that AMs could offer; David Melding AM suggested writing to the clerk of each Assembly committee, outlining the standards and asking how the committee deals with them. Engaging them by asking if they require training or support. Committees, he noted, are key. There are opportunities to view and discuss things in Plenary, he said, but committees can get into the details in a way that Plenary wouldn't have time or opportunity.

Discussion then turned to the anniversary of the Concluding Observations. Disappointment that the response wasn't longer was expressed, along with the fact that the ALN Bill has been delayed.

The group expressed concern that health legislation doesn't have as much focus on the UNCRC as social care legislation does. It was noted that the UNCRC doesn't get enough attention from Local Health Boards. It was pointed out that there are safeguarding concerns at hospitals, for instance children and adults mixed in waiting rooms, beds in adult wards being used for young people. The pre-existing safeguarding concerns at Local Health Boards were suggested as useful levers to

introduce the UNCRC. It was noted that information sharing between health boards was not as good as it could be and that independent members of the boards need to collaborate in order to provide rigour. Third sector links with Health Boards were stressed as important.

The group then discussed the announcement from Welsh Government that it would consult on how to remove the defence of reasonable chastisement. It was welcomed by the group, especially since members had been campaigning for it for many years. It was noted that a united front would be required in order not to lose momentum and to reassure politicians. It simultaneously needed to be about equal protection and not normalising violence, as well as education and supporting parents. Catriona Williams noted that if anyone required more information they could contact Children in Wales.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.