Children’s Rights in Wales

We want a Wales where children’s rights are a reality for each and every child.
Wales has its own government that works to improve the lives of people in Wales and make our nation a better place to live and work.

We aim to be open and responsive to the needs of citizens and communities. We have responsibility for most key areas of public life including:

- Local councils
- Education
- Planning
- Welsh language
- Culture
- Environment
- Transport
- Health

All children and young people in Wales are important.

We want them all to have the best lives possible. To make sure this happens, everyone needs to take notice of children’s rights in their work.

The Welsh Government is made up of:

- The First Minister who is the head of the Welsh Government
- Welsh Ministers appointed by the First Minister, each with a different area of responsibility
- The Counsel General provides legal advice for the Government
- Deputy Ministers who carry out particular areas of work on behalf of the Ministers
- lots of staff working to support Ministers.
What is the UNCRC?

The UNCRC is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. It’s a list of rights for all children and young people, no matter who you are, where you live or what you believe in. They apply to you up to the age of 18.

The UNCRC lists 42 articles – rights that children and young people have to be safe, to play, to have an education, to be healthy, and be happy.

We took all the rights in the UNCRC and sorted them into 7 different areas, called The Seven Core Aims.

The UNCRC in Wales

In 2011, we decided to take an extra step and make the UNCRC law in Wales.

This law is called the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011.

The Measure has changed the way we work. It means we have to consider children’s rights in everything we do.

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**Early years**

I have everything I need to give me the best start in life!

**Education and learning**

I can take part, enjoy learning and have the best education possible.

**Health, freedom from abuse and bullying**

I have a healthy life in all areas including emotional health and I’m kept safe from harm or abuse.

**Play, sport, leisure and culture**

I enjoy playing and have opportunities to enjoy sport and cultural activities with my friends.

**Participation and respect**

I am listened to and treated with respect.

**A safe home and community**

My home is a safe place to live and I have lots of things to do close to where I live.

**Freedom from poverty**

I don’t have to live in poverty and we have enough money for what we need.
How does the Welsh Government help children and young people get their rights?

**As a Government we make sure children’s rights are in our laws and policies.**

We give instructions to local services like schools, hospitals, councils and national parks. When we make these instructions we think about children’s rights so that these local services are also thinking about them.

**We make laws**

For example:
- the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011 says all Welsh Ministers in the Welsh Government must think about children’s rights, including their right to have a voice, when making decisions that affect them.
- the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 tells Local Authorities they must give opportunities for children and young people to participate.

**We let people know about children’s rights**

Including:
- children and young people across Wales.
- parents and carers.
- people who work with and for children and young people.
- people who work for the Welsh Government.

**Raising awareness – letting people know**

The law says we must try to make everyone in Wales aware of the UNCRC. We do this in lots of ways but the three main ones are:

- **Providing different types of information** – we help people understand the UNCRC and children’s rights. We have postcards, posters, lesson plans, activity sheets and lots more.
- **UNCRC training** – we make sure there’s training for all our staff and others, like youth workers and the police.
- **Participation** – we give money to many children’s organisations so they can help you be heard in decisions that affect your life.

**We have a Children’s Rights Scheme**

This explains how we are doing what we should and are thinking about children’s rights. The Scheme:

- explains the things we must do, such as making sure staff are trained and that they follow the rules, to make certain we consider children’s rights.
- explains our roles and responsibilities in making sure children and young people access their rights.
What this means for you

We want everyone to enjoy their rights so we have put in place things like:

**School Councils** – Every school must have a school council so pupils have a voice in running their school.

**A Children’s Commissioner for Wales** – The Commissioner champions children and young people. The Commissioner is independent of Welsh Government. Find more information here: www.childcomwales.org.uk

**School nurses** – All secondary schools in Wales must have a nurse.

**School Councils** – Every school must have a school council so pupils have a voice in running their school.

**Counsellors** – All secondary schools must have counsellors to help pupils have good mental health.

**Child Poverty Strategy** – This helps to make sure we’re doing all we can to support children and families living in poverty.

**Play areas** – All councils in Wales must make sure there are enough spaces to play.

**Free Swimming** – If you are aged 16 or under, you can swim for free at your Local Authority swimming pool.

**Free Breakfast in Primary Schools** – Every child attending a primary school in Wales can enjoy a free, healthy breakfast at school each day.

**Discounted Travel** – Our discounted bus travel scheme for young people helps them access services anywhere in Wales.

**Welsh Language Education** – Supporting the use of Welsh in Schools helps give you access to education in the language of your choice.
Go on!
Explore children’s rights!

This website is all about the UNCRC. It brings together different opportunities to get involved. It also has information, training, resources and contacts to help children, young people and organisations across Wales. Click here

Local Authorities must, under law, give opportunities for children and young people to participate and have a voice. They must also let them know where and how to get involved. You can contact your Local Council and ask them how you can get involved. Click here

Young Wales makes sure there are different ways for children and young people to have their say on issues that are important to them, and be heard by the government and others. Click here

Meic is an advocacy and information service for children and young people up to age 25. The service is free, confidential and can be contacted 24/7 by telephone, instant message or text. Meic is there to listen, provide information and support. Click here

Sally Holland works for every child and young person in Wales. She and her team support them to find out about children’s rights, listen to find out what’s important to them, provide advice and support if they think they’ve been treated unfairly, and speak up for them on important issues. Click here

To find out about your rights visit: childrensrights.wales

To contact us:
email: childrensrights@gov.wales
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