

Independent Professional Advocacy

National Standards and Outcomes Framework for Children and Young People in Wales



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Young people's summary

Hello

The Welsh Government wants to make sure all children and young people:

- are listened to
- are involved in decisions that affect their lives
- have the support they need when they need it
- have opportunities to reach their goals.

Sometimes people need some support getting their ideas and opinions listened to. We call this advocacy.

Some advocacy services in Wales are great, others need to improve. We want the same great standard for all children and young people in Wales.

So, we have written this new **National Standards and Outcomes Framework**.

This framework sets out:

- **standards** – for local authorities and advocacy services to follow
- **outcomes** – the difference this will make in children and young people's lives.

Your rights

All children and young people have rights. They are set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child (UNCRC).

You have the right to be listened to and taken seriously (Article 12)

Advocacy services can help you have this right.



Some facts about advocacy

An advocate is someone to help you to be heard when you feel like your opinions are not being listened to.

Advocacy services

Advocacy services can help:

- connect you to an advocate
- speak up for you
- you be heard
- make sure you and your rights are respected.

Local authorities

The law says local authorities must have advocacy services for children and young people.

Local authorities sometimes pay (commission) organisations to run advocacy services for them. Those organisations must:

- have up-to-date policies
- know how to collect information and evidence safely
- report on how they are following the new framework
- train all their advocates.

Active offer

Just having advocacy services available isn't enough. A social worker should tell a child or young person about advocacy services. They should explain what advocacy services can and can't do. They should also explain that advocacy services:

- puts the child or young person's views, wishes and feelings first
- works for them and are on their side.

This is called an active offer. An active offer must be made to children and young people:

- in care
- leaving care
- who need extra support.



1 Children and young people have good quality advocacy services that are easy to find and use.

Advocacy services will:

- give help and advice quickly
- be well advertised
- have lots of different ways to contact them
- be available in lots of different places so everyone can use them including children and young people with disabilities
- be available at different times of the day
- be available in Welsh and English
- have a bilingual answer-phone service that explains how to get help straight away
- agree a plan so children and young people know what's happening and when it will happen
- have well trained staff that understand their job
- gather information and evidence on how they are working
- listen to the views of children and young people so they can improve.



So children and young people can say:

- I can find and use advocacy services when I need them.
- I know where to find information about advocacy services.
- I can get support at any time of the day.
- Someone calls me back, when they say they will.
- I have an advocacy plan and know what is happening.
- Staff were well trained, understood their job and helped me in the right way.
- I can feedback about my experience of the service.
- They told me how my feedback made a difference.

2 Children and young people are kept safe, protected and their privacy is respected.

Advocacy services will:

- respect privacy
- keep information confidential unless they believe there's a risk of harm
- not share information without explaining why
- explain all information before advocacy starts
- keep children and young people safe
- have an up-to-date child safeguarding policy and referral process
- involve children and young people in decisions
- work to keep the advocacy relationship good
- have clear, easy-to-understand ways to complain
- explain ways to get help and advice if children and young people don't think a complaint is being dealt with.



So children and young people can say:

- I know advocacy services respect my privacy and keep my details safe.
- I understand their confidentiality policy and when they might share my information.
- I feel protected and safe.
- When I was told I needed a referral they asked if they could share my details.
- I had advocacy support when I needed a referral.
- I know I can complain if there's a problem.
- I know where to get help and advice if I think my complaint isn't dealt with properly.

3 Children and young people are treated with respect, valued and not treated differently because of who they are.

Advocacy services will:

- treat all children and young people fairly
- make sure no one is discriminated against because of age, gender, race, religion, disability or sexual orientation
- tell children and young people about their rights, including their right to be treated equally
- respect children and young people's cultural, religious and language needs
- support children and young people with communication needs.



So children and young people can say:

- I get advocacy services without discrimination.
- I know my rights and have support to be heard.
- Advocacy services respect my culture and religious needs.
- I can get help in the language I choose.
- I had an interpreter to help me understand things when I needed one.
- They made sure I found out that I can get advocacy services too.
- I had help to communicate.

4 Children and young people can make decisions about the advocacy services they want, and know their rights are championed.

Advocacy services will:

- champion children's rights
- be funded separately from the people who check them
- give children and young people the information they need to explore their options and make decisions
- support children and young people who want to make a complaint
- give children and young people a list of legal advice services if they need it
- tell children and young people they can change their advocate
- support children and young people to; speak on their own, have an advocate speak for them, or both
- help children and young people to prepare what they want to say
- keep case notes up-to date and available
- listen to children and young people's feedback and use it to improve.



So children and young people can say:

- I can choose the advocacy services I want and make decisions.
- I am listened to and respected.
- I know how advocacy services are funded and why.
- I know advocacy services are checked.
- I was told about my rights and given information so I can look at my options.
- I have the right to complain.
- I can change my advocate if I want to.
- I can decide how I want my views presented.
- I feel confident and prepared to talk about decisions.
- Professionals respect my rights.
- Advocacy services are on my side, working to make sure my voice is heard.
- I can give feedback and it will make a difference.

5 Children and young people can take part in the design, planning and rating of advocacy services.

Advocacy services will:

- make it easy for children and young people to feedback on their experience of advocacy
- support children and young people to have a say in how services are planned, designed, delivered, checked and how they employ and train staff
- ask as many children and young people as possible, how they can improve their service.



So children and young people can say:

- I was involved, listened to and helped to shape advocacy services.
- Everyone is invited to get involved and share their opinion.

Going forward

The framework is important. We want to make sure all advocacy services follow it, so it has rules for checking services.

Local authorities and advocacy providers have to:

- collect evidence on the support they give
- include feedback from children and young people
- write reports that are easy-to-understand and available for people to read.



Thanks for reading

You can read more about the standards here:
gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-08/national-standards-and-outcomes-framework-for-children-and-young-people-in-wales.pdf