



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Cymry Ifanc
Young Wales

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The Journey so Far

An update to the Policy Agenda
“We are on the Way” aimed to
transform the lives of disabled
Children and Young People

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The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to honouring its obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. These are reflected in the seven Core Aims that we have set as a foundation for all our policies and programmes for children and young people. Every child should:

1. Have a flying start in life and the best possible basis for their future growth and development
2. Have access to a comprehensive range of education, training, and learning opportunities, including acquisition of essential personal and social skills.
3. Enjoy the best possible physical and mental, social and emotional health, including freedom from abuse, victimisation and exploitation.
4. Have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities.
5. Be listened to, treated with respect, and be able to have their race and cultural identity recognized.
6. Have a safe home and a community that supports physical and emotional wellbeing.
7. Not be disadvantaged by child poverty.

The Seven Core Aims apply equally to disabled children and young people. However, we recognise that there may be some additional barriers to overcome if they are to have the same opportunities and access to everyday activities as their peers.

In December 2008 we set out our agenda for disabled children and young people in 'We are on the Way'. That re-affirmed our commitment to honouring our obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child for all children. It set out our policies and programmes for disabled children and young people under the Seven Core Aims, which reflect the Convention. This report provides an update on progress since then.





A flying start in life and the best possible basis for their future growth and development...

Support when families first find out their child is disabled and in the early years.

In September 2009 we launched the Early Support Programme in Wales. Early Support is designed to improve the delivery of services to disabled children under 5 and their families. Under it, and working with Children in Wales and a voluntary sector partnership, we have developed a multi agency approach aimed at bringing services together to determine what a child's and family's needs are and put the parent at the centre of the planning process. We now have a range of Early Support materials available, ranging from a Family Pack to Developmental Journals, which have been developed to help families and professionals move out of a model of crisis intervention and bring an element of planning into the lives of families with young disabled children. A wide range of Early Support training courses are also now available and consultants have been appointed to help each local authority and their partners in Wales to implement Early Support.





Access to a comprehensive range of education, training and learning opportunities, including acquisition of essential personal and social skills...

Equipping all disabled children and young people with the skills they need to reach their full potential.

Following a positive evaluation by Estyn we have extended the “Unlocking the Potential of Special schools” project and made a further £4million available for the three years from 2009-10. This funding is available to all local authorities in Wales to enhance provision to promote inclusion and develop the role of special schools by identifying and disseminating good practice and building capacity in mainstream schools to meet the needs of pupils with additional learning needs (ALN).


We have carried out widespread preliminary consultation on options for the reform of the ALN framework. In the light of that we launched four pilot schemes in September 2009. The aim of these pilots, together with other initiatives, such as Early Support Programme and Transition Key Working is to lead to the development of an innovative and much improved system for ensuring pupils with ALN have their needs met and receive a first class education. The developing Quality Assurance



Framework which will include a self-evaluation tool for schools, quality standards and processes to enable local authority monitoring and evaluation of provision for ALN promotes a consistent approach to meeting the needs and monitoring the outcomes of pupils with ALN across Wales. Following consultation we have published guidance on Access to Education and Support for pupils with Medical



Needs on the Assembly Government website. It includes policies for schools to download and emphasises the need for continuity in education and the impact that medical conditions can have on a pupil's education, health and social well being.



Enjoy the best possible physical and mental, social and emotional health, including freedom from abuse, victimisation and exploitation...

Ensuring that disabled children and young people have access to the services they need and keeping them safe from harm.

We have made clear our belief that having a real person to support a young person and their families through transition is very important. That is why, since 2008, through a combination of Welsh Assembly Government Funding and match funding from the 'Reach the Heights' European Social Fund (ESF), we have made available almost £3m to establish and support transition key working across Wales.

The Care Co-ordination Network UK (CCNUK) is working with us to ensure the new key workers are supported by a robust framework which includes appropriate training, key worker standards and an innovative audit tool – all of which will help ensure that as many young people as possible have access to this valuable service to enable their transition into adulthood to be a seamless and rewarding journey.

Following recommendations made by a Welsh Assembly Government-led Task and Finish Group on arrangements for funding post 16 additional learning needs in schools





and further education, a Delivery and Implementation Group has been convened to take forward a number of key issues, including improvements to transition arrangements.

The Group will also look at consistency of approach and regional collaboration in planning support services across Wales. Improved planning is essential to ensuring more local choices for young people whose post-school options may currently be limited to a residential college facility far from home.

All local authorities in Wales now have an identified lead officer to implement key actions within the Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Strategic Action Plan for



Wales. Stakeholder Groups have been established within each local authority, which means that there is now a focal point at local level for the families of children with ASD. Data collated from a local mapping exercise undertaken by each local authority to identify any gaps in service provision and the completion of a baseline survey questionnaire has given a clear indication of the strengths and weaknesses in each area of Wales, and has enabled regional identification of need and co-ordination of planning to take place.

Focused and tailored work has since been undertaken at local level, which has resulted in 22 projects which address health, social care and educational issues costing £282,094 currently being implemented.

Since last autumn the Welsh Assembly Government has held several workgroups which are involved in developing awareness raising materials. These workgroups are led by representatives from Autism Cymru, The National Autistic Society, Regional Support Officers from Improving Social Care in Wales (SSIA) and others. The materials, which are available on the Welsh Assembly Government Web Site were launched by the Deputy Minister for Social Services in February 2011 and are targeted at a wide range of practitioners groups, including those working in health, education and social services throughout the age range.

Disabled children and young people frequently need to use highly specialised health services. The Children and Young People's Specialised Services Project was



established in 2003 to develop high quality, equitable and sustainable specialised children's health services across Wales. All-Wales Standards have now been launched for Universal, Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition, Neonatal, Palliative Care, Cardiac, Respiratory, Neurosciences, Nephrology, Inherited Metabolic Disease and Endocrine services. The Anaesthetics and Surgery standards were issued for consultation in 2009 and the final document was published in November 2010.

The standards were developed by an external working group comprised of stakeholders relevant to the speciality. Key to the development of the documents has been the representation of the users of the service to support the philosophy that the service should be built around the child and family.

The Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes initiative applies to both mainstream and special schools. The Class Moves! Programme for special schools has been published and has been disseminated with training. Following this training a request was made for materials to be available for special units in mainstream schools. The production of the materials for these units is underway.

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Have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities...

Making sure that disabled children and young people have places to go and things to do

The National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services clearly states that disabled children and young people should have equality of access to play and leisure services, including holiday play schemes, after school clubs and pre-school provision, with appropriate support if necessary. We have continued to allocate £250,000 per year for play opportunities for disabled children. Local authorities are expected to set aside an additional £250,000 per year from resources already allocated to create a fund of £500,000 per year. The funding is to be used primarily to increase pre-school play opportunities for disabled children.



We know that families who have children with disabilities and/or health conditions can often benefit from having a short break. They offer invaluable support for disabled children and their families and provide opportunities for children to become more independent, widen their horizons and have new experiences. They give them the chance to form real friendships outside their family. At the same time their families get a break from caring and a chance to recharge their batteries. For the last 3 years, we have provided over £1.5 million per year to local authorities throughout Wales to promote and improve short break services for disabled children, young people and their families. From 2010/11 financial year, the funding is provided through the Local Authorities' Revenue Support Grant system.

Appropriate facilities are important when leisure opportunities are provided. In addition to the two mobile Changing Places toilets commissioned to be used across Wales, 6 fixed Changing Places Toilet facilities have been provided at major cultural venues across Wales. Each Changing Places toilet is designed to include the correct equipment and appropriate amount of space to provide a safe and clean environment for disabled people who cannot use standard accessible toilets and their carers.





Are listened to, treated with respect,
and are able to have their race and
cultural identity recognised...

Ensuring that disabled children and young people help to shape the services they use and are treated with respect.

In January 2004 the Welsh Assembly Government agreed that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) would be used as the basis for all of its policy for children and young people. In January 2011, the National Assembly for Wales unanimously passed the proposed Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure. Wales is leading the way in the UK, being the first UK administration to seek to embed the 'United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child' into law.

We aim to publish new guidance on bullying around children and young people with special education needs and disabilities in the summer 2011.

In June 2009 we launched our guide 'A New Model for Delivering Advocacy Services to Children and Young People in Wales'. The guidance includes specific advice on Integrated Specialist Advocacy Services for the improved coordination and coherence of advocacy services for vulnerable children and young people, including those with a disability. We have also funded and launched the National Advocacy and Advice service (MEIC) for children and young people. This service includes a National



Helpline which is the first of its kind in the UK to be rolled out on a national basis. This helpline gives children and young people the opportunity to get help on issues important to them if they feel they are not being listened to or getting the support they need.

We remain committed to the principle of extending children and young people's entitlement and participation in key decisions. The Education (Wales) Measure, made in December 2009, gives children and young people with SEN and/or disability unprecedented rights to appeal or make a claim of disability discrimination to the Tribunal. These rights will be piloted in two local authorities from September 2011 to explore how to communicate and

support children, not just in the processes themselves, but in ensuring that they understand their rights and are able to express their views and utilise these rights.

A new Pupil Voice Wales web-site was launched in March 2010. This web-site aims to be more accessible and engaging for children and young people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities. It was produced following considerable consultation with children and young people concerning their needs, and how they would like to be involved. The site will include links to social networking sites.

Specifically with the needs of young people in special schools in mind, a new section of the site has been developed with and for young people with additional learning needs. This section will contain a range of information and video-based materials to encourage and enable children and young people with more diverse needs to get involved in decision making processes and to share good practice.

Case studies uploaded onto the Pupil Voice Wales site aim to show a range of good practice examples from across settings in Wales, including children and young people with disabilities and additional learning needs. These reinforce the message that participation is for all.





Have a safe home and a community that supports physical and emotional wellbeing...

Making sure that disabled children, young people and their families have homes which meet their needs and the equipment they need to use to lead an ordinary life.

As part of making the community a friendlier place for disabled children and young people, we have recently updated national planning policy to encourage the inclusion of 'Changing Places' toilet facilities in plans for all new and public commercial buildings as part of Technical Advice Note 12: Design (TAN 12).

Phase 1 of the Posture and Mobility review reported in October 2009 and described service provision across Wales including how current services are managed. Phase 2 of the review was made available to Assembly Members in October 2010 and progress is already being made on tackling the key issues identified in the Committee report and the review.

In February 2011 the Minister for Health and Social Services announced that more than £2 million additional Welsh Assembly Government funding will be invested in reducing waiting times for wheelchair services, particularly for children and young people.





Are not disadvantaged by child poverty...

Minimising the effects of child poverty on disabled children and young people

The Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 was passed by the National Assembly for Wales in November 2009, and given Privy Council approval in February 2010. This important piece of legislation will help improve the lives of vulnerable children and families in Wales, and of those disadvantaged by poverty. It sets a clear direction for our aim of improving the quality of life and equality of opportunity for disadvantaged children and families across Wales. The Measure placed a duty on Welsh Ministers to develop a new Child Poverty Strategy for Wales. This new Strategy (and its accompanying Delivery Plan) was issued for a three month period of public consultation in May 2010. During this three month period consultation events were held across Wales with variety of stakeholders, including Children and Young People's Partnerships, and specific workshops with children and young people,

A revised Child Poverty Strategy was published on 3 February 2011. This confirmed the Welsh Assembly Government's three strategic objectives for tracking child poverty – which are:


- 1) To reduce the number of families living in workless households;
- 2) To improve the skills of parents/carers and

young people living in low-income households so they can secure well-paid employment; and 3) to reduce the inequalities that exist in the health, education and economic outcomes of children and families by improving the outcomes of the poorest,

It is widely recognised that children living in certain families in Wales are more at risk of poverty than others. Analysis suggests that children from some vulnerable groups experience a “poverty penalty” and the evidence suggests that families with a disabled adult and / or disabled child are particularly at risk. Our new Child Poverty Strategy for Wales reflects the needs of these at risk groups with some specific policy action focussed on the needs of such groups to ensure that those “hardest to help” are not left behind, as we strive to meet our 2020 child poverty targets.

Families First is the Welsh Assembly Government’s key programme for delivering better integrated support for





families living in poverty. It aims to drive improvements to the design and delivery of family support – and in so doing – reduce the number of families developing complex needs. Families First was established in 2010 with the announcement of two Families First Pioneer Consortia: One in north Wales (Wrexham, Denbighshire and Flintshire Local Authorities), and one in south Wales (Rhondda Cynon Taff, Blaenau Gwent and Merthyr Tydfil Local Authorities). Following the UK Government’s decision to end the Child Trust Fund, the Deputy Minister for Children announced that the Welsh Assembly Government will invest more than £3million in supporting disabled and looked after children, via the Family First Pioneer Areas. £500,000 of this funding has been made available for the next financial year, specifically to support disabled children and their families and will be split evenly between the Families First consortia.

In 2008, we agreed to commit £500,000 over the following two years to raise awareness of the benefits to which parents and carers of children with disabilities are entitled. Citizens Advice Cymru are delivering the campaign as a pilot for 2009-10 and 2010-11 to increase benefit up-take as part of the existing successful Better Advice Better Health initiative. The initiative, which operates in all 22 Local

Authority areas, provides local and co-ordinated provision of general and welfare advice by Citizens Advice Bureaux in co-operation with primary health teams. Citizens Advice Cymru works closely with other initiatives and disability organisations across Wales to ensure that appropriate expert advice is made available to families with disabled children. Key to this is the establishment of robust referral systems. Since the launch of the scheme in July 2009, 2,044 families/children have been helped with over £1,962,288 confirmed gains to date.

The Minister for Social Justice and Local Government has recently agreed that current funding to Citizens Advice Cymru to deliver the Better Advice Better Health, Children with Disabilities Campaign should continue in 2011-12 followed by a procurement exercise tendering for the delivery of the current schemes plus the Council Tax Benefit take-up scheme, currently operated via local authorities, from 2012-13.

An independent evaluation of the scheme began in March 2011.

We have continued to support the Family Fund Trust to provide practical help to families with severely disabled and seriously ill children in the form of grants for things like household equipment, driving lessons or holidays. In July 2009 we helped launch a new online scheme from the Fund called Family Fund Extra, which gives disabled children's families online discounts at leading retailers.





Websites and Publications referred to in this leaflet

Access to Education and Support for Children and Young People with Medical Needs

Wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/medicalneeds/?lang=en

The Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Strategic Action Plan for Wales

Wales.gov.uk/topics/childrenyoungpeople/publications/autisticspectrumdisorderplan

Anaesthetic and Surgery Standards

Wales.gov.uk/publications/accessinfo/drnewhomepage/healthdrs/healthdrs2009/cypssprojconsultn/;jsessionid

Welsh Network of Healthy Schools Schemes

Wales.gov.uk/topics/health/improvement/children/schools/wnhss/?lang=en

The National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services in Wales.

www.wales.nhs.uk/nsf

www.psucymru.org.uk/nsf

A Guide to the Model for Delivering Advocacy Services for Children and Young People

Wales.gov.uk/topics/childrenyoungpeople/publications/deliveringadvocacyservicesguide



Pupil Voice Wales Website

Pupil.voicewales.org.uk

Child Poverty Strategy for Wales and Delivery Plan

Wales.gov.uk/consultations/childrenandyoungpeople/cpstrategy

Family Fund Extra

www.familyfundextra.org.uk

Autism Awareness Raising Materials

www.wales.gov.uk/topics/health/nhswales/majorhealth/autism/?skip=1&lang=en

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm

Summary paper (UNCRC)

[www.uncrcletsgetitright.co.uk/documents/UNCRC%20Leaflet%20\(English\).pdf](http://www.uncrcletsgetitright.co.uk/documents/UNCRC%20Leaflet%20(English).pdf)

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