



**Dim mwy o greulondeb i blant. DIM.
Cruelty to children must stop. FULL STOP.**

**NSPCC CYMRU/WALES
RESPONSE TO:**

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE:
RIGHTS TO ACTION**

**PLANNING GUIDANCE AND REGULATIONS FOR LOCAL
AUTHORITIES AND THEIR PARTNERS ON CHILDREN
AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLANS**

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- 1.1 NSPCC Cymru/Wales welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation on the guidance and regulations on Children and Young People's Plans
- 1.2 The NSPCC's purpose is to end cruelty to children. Our vision is of a society where all children are loved, valued and able to fulfil their potential.
- 1.3 We seek to achieve cultural, social and political change – influencing legislation, policy, practice, attitudes and behaviours for the benefit of children and young people. This is achieved through a combination of service provision, lobbying, campaigning and public education.

CQ Does Chapter 1 sufficiently describe the basis in legislation and principle for the plans and their development?

NSPCC Cymru/Wales welcomes the statement within this guidance that the plan will seek to apply the principles of the UNCRC to children and young people in Wales. We urge the Welsh Assembly Government to ensure that this is more than just rhetoric and that all agencies are measured against their delivery of children's rights as enshrined in the UNCRC.

We welcome the commitment to ensuring that the voices of children, young people and their families are heard in the planning process. This is vital if the plans are to have legitimacy within the local community. We would also welcome more detail on the process of engagement with these groups, particularly those in greatest need that may be harder to reach. Agencies developing the plans need to be encouraged to look at innovative ways of involving children, young people and their families and looking at different approaches for different groups

Under the section relating to *Give the highest priority to those in greatest need* (p.9) we believe that Chapter 6 of the NSF for Children, Young People and Maternity Services, which relates to children and young people in special circumstances, is a good comprehensive list that could act as a guide for partnerships. The partnerships would also have to take into account NSF Chapters 4, relating to mental health, and 5, relating to disability. We believe that by signposting to the NSF a common understanding could develop.

The principles highlight the key role played by Cymorth in developing preventative services. We urge the Welsh Assembly Government to ensure that robust measures are in place after the ring fencing of this funding ends in 2008, to ensure that appropriate funding is still being made available to develop these vital services for children and young people. The children and young people who have benefited most from Cymorth have been those most marginalised, and often these are also the young people and families that are most disenfranchised by the planning process. We would welcome the Welsh Assembly Government agreeing to monitor very closely how funds are pooled to ensure that these young people and their families continue to get the services and support that they need.

NSPCC Cymru/Wales is concerned that the principle *Integrate safeguards for children and young people* (p.9) seems to relate mostly to recruitment and even then does not mention the future changes under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act, which will greatly broaden the scope of people who will be subject to vetting arrangements. We would also welcome an acknowledgement in this section that safeguarding is the responsibility of all agencies developing the plans and that the plans should seek to provide children and young people with a safe environment where they are encouraged to talk about problems and issues that they are facing. The description of safeguarding in this section is too narrow.

Finally we welcome the commitment to acknowledging diversity and the need to reach out to certain communities, such as young people from minority ethnic backgrounds. This section also should recognise the need to reach out to those with a disability and that the plan needs to develop appropriate mechanisms for involving these communities in their work

CQ Is the definition of the CYPP as the defining statement of strategic planning intent and priorities for all children and young people's services in the area sufficiently clear?

CQ Is the resulting relationship and necessary links with other strategic partnership plans and individual agency plans clear?

Under point 13 in this section (p.13) we would welcome the inclusion of any local domestic abuse action plans as one of the relevant plans that needs to be taken into account. NSPCC Cymru/Wales feels strongly that domestic abuse is a child protection issue and this has been reflected in the All Wales Domestic Abuse Strategy. We have concerns about the ongoing development of services for children and young people affected by domestic abuse and would welcome the plan recognising the need to link this provision together.

Whilst local CAMHS plan's are not statutory there should be a clear link between what the partnership can do to help deliver Tier one CAMHS and preventative services and what the regional CAMHS partnerships are looking to deliver across the area. It is vital that there is a dynamic relationship between these two partnerships.

The guidance needs to be more explicit about how LSCB's will be involved in the planning process. We do not feel that this guidance or *Safeguarding Children: Working Together Under the Children Act 2004* provides an adequate guide as to what relationship is between LSCB planning and the single plan. Will the LSCB have an "audit" function in ensuring that safeguarding is prominent in the plan and that the services meet the needs of the vulnerable children and young people they represent? We firmly believe that more thinking needs to go into these links to avoid confusion and we would welcome any clarification this guidance can offer.

CQ Is this list of non-statutory consultees adequate? Should any be removed or added?

NSPCC Cymru/Wales welcomes the intention to involve children and young people in the needs assessment stage of planning. The effective networks that are already in place such as school councils and local youth forums, do provide an excellent foundation for involving children and young people in this process. We would welcome an acknowledgement in the guidance that not all the children and young people who would access these services would be represented on these existing forums and that there is a duty during the planning process to ensure that children and young people who are in greatest need are consulted with, encouraged and supported to be involved in the planning process. Without this duty there is a possibility that the children and young people who do get involved are the ones who are able to, rather than those who are most in need, for example homeless young people and young carers to name two groups. We would welcome the acknowledgement here that local partners need to actively outreach to the communities and not just rely upon existing forums. Where best practice is developed in reaching certain groups there should also be a mechanism for this to be shared between partnerships when delivering services.

CQ Is 10 weeks a sufficient period for full consultation of the draft CYPP with all stakeholders? If not, what should the period be?

NSPCC Cymru/Wales welcomes the positive step to produce different versions of the plan, particularly to make it more accessible to children and young people. We hope that alongside producing this version there will be an active dissemination strategy, which encourages feedback and involvement.

The ten week consultation period would depend on how much information is sought and also how aware of the process and the reason for consultation children and young people were. We certainly feel that for the initial plan this ten week period could be very difficult to meet as there would need to be time to work with children and young people to explain the purpose of the plan and what it seeks to deliver. Even after the initial plan involving children, young people and their families who may have been traditionally marginalised from previous planning processes will be

considerably challenging. To make this engagement genuine and sustainable the ten week period would probably have to be extended. It would be advisable to seek examples of previous participation work with these groups and see how long the process took and then set a realistic timeframe from there.

Obviously the timeframe is only one aspect to this consultation period, as there is also the need to ensure that the structures are in place to deliver genuine participation in the process and consultation. These will need to be flexible and adapted to meet the needs of a diverse range of children and young people. These need to be in place before embarking on consultation.

CQ Are the arrangements for revision, adoption and publication clear and appropriate?

This section should not just relate to publication, but should also include dissemination, to highlight that this is a transparent and active process that engages with the wider community.

Within this dissemination element NSPCC Cymru/Wales would also like to see an agreed feedback mechanism for anybody who has been involved in the process, particularly children and young people. We believe this feedback should demonstrate how the views of children and young people impacted on the plan. This ensures that the planning process is dynamic and also would move towards developing a sustainable involvement.

We agree that the plan should be available on the authority's website, but believe that any other agencies involved in developing or delivering the plan should also have a link to the plan on their websites. We firmly believe that this will encourage a more visible demonstration of the partnership process.

CQ Is the timetable for plans for 2008-11 outlined in paragraph 45 appropriate?

Whilst we feel that the timetable is appropriate, we reiterate the point we made previously relating to the 10 week consultation period and the need to allow sufficient time to involve children and young people genuinely in the process. There needs to be a recognition that children and young people operate on different timescales and have other commitments, e.g. exams, holidays, etc, that need to be planned into any consultation process.

CQ Are the arrangements for annual review clear and appropriate?

CQ Is this description of the content of the Plan clear and appropriate?

NSPCC Cymru/Wales believes the description of the content of the plan to be clear and appropriate. We would welcome a restating at the beginning of this section that the underlying principle of the plan is the UNCRC and the explicit link between this and the Welsh Assembly Government's 7 core aims. This should be replicated in the introduction to all the single plans, to encourage the use of the UNCRC as a benchmark for delivering services on a local level as well as a national one. There should also be an explicit link throughout the plan with how the services proposed will make the UNCRC a reality for children and young people in Wales.

CQ Is the narrative for Core Aim 1, which includes key statutory duties and key policies sufficient? If not, what changes would you propose?

NSPCC Cymru/Wales broadly supports the narrative under Core Aim 1. We feel that it is essential that the Welsh Assembly Government includes in this section of the plan a duty to include actions that promote non-violent discipline, as this is one of the key policy objectives of the Welsh Assembly Government. The Children Are

Unbeatable Alliance in Wales has already worked with a local authority (Torfaen) to deliver an awareness raising seminar, which was supported by the Welsh Assembly Government. NSPCC Cymru/Wales strongly urges the Welsh Assembly Government to ensure that its commitment to the campaign and equal protection is made real through this guidance by insisting on the development of programmes that promote this message.

- CQ Are the Priority Outcomes and Outcome Measures included in the Core Aim 1 Template below inclusive and appropriate? Are they any outcome measures missing? Do agencies currently collect data that does not inform policy analysis/implementation and should be discontinued?**
- CQ Is the narrative for Core Aim 2, which includes key statutory duties and key policies sufficient? Does the narrative also need to include more information on services and initiatives that contribute?**
- CQ Are the Priority Outcomes and Outcome Measures included in the Core Aim 2 Template below inclusive and appropriate? Are they any outcome measures missing? Do agencies currently collect data that does not inform policy analysis/implementation and should be discontinued?**
- CQ Is the narrative for Core Aim 3, which includes key statutory duties and key policies sufficient? Does the narrative also need to include more information on services and initiatives that contribute?**

As earlier stated we do not believe that this guidance clarifies the role of LSCB's in the planning process and how they ensure that the plans include safeguarding. We would recommend that there is further discussion to provide both LSCB's and Children and Young People's Partnerships with clear guidance on their roles and their respective responsibilities for safeguarding.

The section is also quite clear about the safeguarding responsibilities of the social services function of local authorities, but does not highlight other agencies responsibilities, such as educations under the Education Act 2002, or other agencies under section 28 of Children Act 2004. This section needs to reflect that safeguarding is not just the responsibility of social services, but all agencies that come into contact with children and young people. We would recommend that this section includes an acknowledgement of this point. In this particular section there is also extremely limited cross reference to *Safeguarding Children: Working Together Under the Children Act 2004*, leading to a feeling that the section has been written without engaging with the broader safeguarding agenda.

We are very disappointed that the report of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Children Review, *Keeping Us Safe*, is not mentioned at any point in this guidance. The Welsh Assembly Government has accepted the majority of the recommendations from this review, but there is no indication of how the planning process will look to deliver the challenges listed in the review. This guidance provides a golden opportunity to look at how some of the challenges can be overcome, but in its present format this guidance is not addressing them. We would recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government looks again at this report and alters this guidance as appropriate to focus on delivering the challenges.

Whilst the question about Core Aim 3 and Core Aim 6 is discussed later, we do believe that local domestic abuse strategies should be included in this section. Domestic abuse is a child protection and safeguarding issue and this is clearly the position of the Welsh Assembly Government in the All Wales Domestic Abuse Strategy. We would urge the Welsh Assembly Government to acknowledge this under Core Aim 3.

NSPCC Cymru/Wales believes that a considerable amount of work needs to be carried out on this section in order for it to link in with the wider safeguarding agenda of the Welsh Assembly Government.

CQ Are the Priority Outcomes and Outcome Measures included in the Core Aim 3 Template below inclusive and appropriate? Are they any outcome measures missing? Do agencies currently collect data that does not inform policy analysis/implementation and should be discontinued?

NSPCC Cymru/Wales believes that the measures in this section are not robust enough. Those on pp.42-44 relating to *Safe from abuse, victimisation and exploitation* are all measures relating to process and not outcome. Even if these measures were “positive”, it might not necessarily follow that children and young people were being better protected.

We also urge the Welsh Assembly Government to take into account the work that is currently underway to look at how LSCB’s will monitor and evaluate their progress. Work is ongoing to look at what data is measured and how this relates to their role in safeguarding. It will be vital that these elements are joined up with what is collected for the single plan.

In the section relating to *Adopt healthy sexual behaviours*, we would encourage the Welsh Assembly Government to examine ways in which they can measure the level of sexually harmful behaviour displayed by young people. This may be through working with the police or the MAPPA arrangements. We would welcome further discussion on this topic.

Under *Every child and young person has a healthy lifestyle* there is no measurement relating to mental health. NSPCC Cymru/Wales would suggest waiting times for a tiered service from CAMHS, as this would demonstrate the demand for service. There would also be value to look at youth suicide rates, which have been previously produced by the Office of National Statistics.

There is a lack of appropriate data collected on children and young people’s experience of abuse and crime and this is why the failure to utilise the work undertaken by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Children Review is such a glaring omission. Evidence on the prevalence of child maltreatment suggests that as many as one in six children experience serious abuse at some time in childhood, but there is no reliable information about incidence and trends. This makes it very difficult to plan services for preventing and responding to child maltreatment.

We would strongly urge the Welsh Assembly Government to use this guidance as an opportunity to fill this statistical void by commissioning an annual survey of the incidence of child abuse and neglect, giving both local and national data. This provides the opportunity to find out about all children and young people, not just those who are in contact with a statutory service. NSPCC Cymru/Wales have evidence from the ChildLine service to demonstrate that there are a number of children and young people in Wales that are contacting the service in distress, but are not necessarily in contact with statutory services.

By adopting this approach the Welsh Assembly Government would be demonstrating a commitment to genuinely exploring the lives of children and young people in Wales, providing a clear measurement tool and also partly meeting the recommendation by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child that the British Crime Survey should be expanded to include data on children and young people.

CQ Is the narrative for Core Aim 4, which includes key statutory duties and key policies sufficient? Does the narrative also need to include more information on services and initiatives that contribute?

CQ Are the Priority Outcomes and Outcome Measures included in the Core Aim 4 Template below inclusive and appropriate? Are there any outcome measures missing? Do agencies currently collect data that does not inform policy analysis/implementation and should be discontinued?

CQ Is the narrative for Core Aim 5, which includes key statutory duties and key policies sufficient? Does the narrative also need to include more information on services and initiatives that contribute?

NSPCC Cymru/Wales welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation in relation to the proposed new advocacy model. We recognise how advocacy services fit with Core Aim 5, in terms of encouraging participation. This section does need to recognise, though, the importance that advocacy plays in safeguarding some of the most vulnerable children and young people in Wales. Whilst the model is to move to an advocacy for all position, this needs to recognise that initial developments will have to focus on those who need the most support. A clearer link to Core Aim 3 needs to be made around the development of advocacy services in Wales, as when developing the plan agencies need to be aware of what children and young people will be most in need of advocacy.

CQ Are the Priority Outcomes and Outcome Measures included in the Core Aim 5 Template below inclusive and appropriate? Are there any outcome measures missing? Do agencies currently collect data that does not inform policy analysis/implementation and should be discontinued?

The measurement of advocacy needs to be more clearly defined and linked to the new advocacy model that is currently being consulted upon.

CQ Is the narrative for Core Aim 6, which includes key statutory duties and key policies sufficient? Does the narrative also need to include more information on services and initiatives that contribute?

CQ Are the Priority Outcomes and Outcome Measures included in the Core Aim 6 Template below inclusive and appropriate? Are there any outcome measures missing? Do agencies currently collect data that does not inform policy analysis/implementation and should be discontinued?

As with the measures for Core Aim 3, these demonstrate the lack of appropriate data collected on children and young people in Wales and their experience. The measurements for the outcome relating to safe from crime are completely inappropriate as they merely measure the offender rate among young people and not the impact of crime. These measures view children and young people as offenders rather than victims.

Again, we urge the Welsh Assembly Government to fund an annual survey that explores the experience of abuse and neglect in more detail. This could then provide baseline measures for the plans.

CQ Would it be more logical to link safeguarding and protection to Core Aim 6, rather than Core Aim 3?

As discussed in a previous response NSPCC Cymru/Wales would prefer domestic abuse to be recognised in the section relating to safeguarding, which supports its status as a child protection issue. The links between these aims is clearly apparent. NSPCC Cymru/Wales would like to see the elements in Core Aim 6 directly relating to safeguarding transferred to Core Aim 3, as this is a stronger statement and is more closely linked to preventing children and young people from experiencing abuse.

Workforce Planning

NSPCC Cymru/Wales welcomes the section relating to workforce planning and is pleased that the Welsh Assembly Government is exploring how multi-agency training can be developed. Whilst there is obviously considerable working to be done on this section and the topic in general, we would like to see more clarity over how the training responsibilities of LSCB's are factored into the broader training developed via the planning process. Providing multi-agency training on issues relating to safeguarding and child protection are within the remit of LSCB's, so the relationship around who is responsible for what is vital.

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