

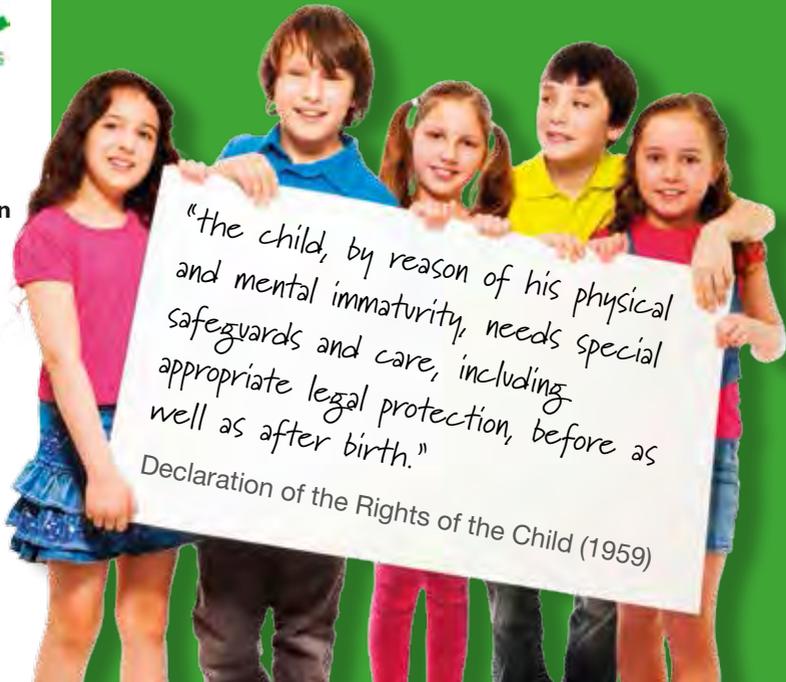


Believe in children



National Children's Charities Manifesto for the National Assembly for Wales Elections 2016

Delivering change for children in Wales





Since devolution there has been a strong tradition of child-centred policy making in Wales. However, in recent years the policy response to children has been fragmented and focus has wavered.

Wales adopted the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, (UNCRC), as the basis of all policies for children and young people. The Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011 was intended to ensure the distinct needs and rights of children were considered when making legislation and policy. In 2012, a decision was made not to pursue a Children and Young Persons (Wales) Bill to continue this progress.

As national children's charities in Wales, we understand that the basic building blocks for implementing the Measure, scrutinising progress and realising children's rights needs strengthening. There is fragmented governance of issues affecting children at national and local levels which jeopardises children and young people's outcomes.

- 1 in 3 children in Wales live in poverty
- Children in the most deprived areas of Wales are almost twice as likely to die as those in the richer areas
- At the end of 2014, 20.7% (53,700) of 19-24 year olds in Wales were estimated to be NEET

We believe that strengthened scrutiny and governance arrangements, including increased powers for the Children's Commissioner for Wales through legislation, are needed to ensure that the interests of children are given due priority in policy in Wales. We also believe that such structures would help those working with children to take earlier action when problems arise and secure better outcomes for children, as they would be supported by a coherent, joined-up policy framework.

National children's charities in Wales call on all political parties to deliver the following priorities for children:

1

Robust structures in Government:

A Children's Minister with oversight of and accountability for all Welsh Government children's policy areas and a National Assembly for Wales Scrutiny Committee for Children and Young People.

2

Driving positive local action:

Clear direction from all areas of the Welsh Government to ensure that children and young people's distinct issues are at the centre of planning and delivery of services at the local authority and regional level.

3

A strong legal framework:

A Children and Young Person's Bill in order to:

- Build on and strengthen the requirement of due regard to the UNCRC
- Establish and embed robust participation structures
- Secure changes through legislation, strengthening the Children's Commissioner for Wales remit including revised accountability to the National Assembly for Wales, and
- Give children equal protection from assault under the law.



“To be healthy, you need to eat healthy food and keep fit by doing sport. I’d like to go swimming, but I can’t get there”

Child affected by
Parental imprisonment, Cardiff

“No one should be worse off because of the background they come from”

Secondary school pupil,
Cardiff

“I worry who will care for my family if I go to University”

Young carer, Flintshire



“Young people with learning disabilities should have the same choices as all other young people.”

“We can only choose from a few courses whereas everyone else gets a proper choice”

Young people with additional learning needs, Pembrokeshire

“Our lives are in limbo. We all want to contribute to society, we want to further ourselves. There should be opportunities to access higher education, with reduced fees and funding.”

Asylum seeking young person, Cardiff





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