

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE: RIGHTS TO ACTION





FOREWORD

In November 2000, the Welsh Assembly Government published *Children and Young People: A Framework for Partnership*. That began with a commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Convention sets out how the Assembly Government should act in all dealings with children and young people. *Framework for Partnership* also proposed a new method of planning services for children and young people through partnerships of local authorities, the Health Service, and other local bodies. It promised a simpler way of paying grants to local authorities. It set out a commitment to listening to children and young people. And it referred to plans to establish a Children's Commissioner for Wales.

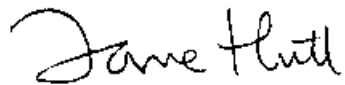
Three years, and one Assembly Election, have now passed since the publication of that document. Many children born then are now walking, talking and attending nursery classes. It is therefore a good time to take stock of what has happened and where we are going. This paper describes briefly what has been achieved over the last 3 years; sets out what is being done at the moment; and outlines the way forward.

Since *Framework for Partnership* was published, the Children's Commissioner has been appointed and published two annual reports. *Funky Dragon* has been set up as a national organisation to represent the views of children and young people, and has held a number of meetings with Assembly Government Ministers. This paper therefore takes account of the views of both an independent Commissioner and young people themselves about what the important issues are. That reflects one of our central commitments. We want to move forward in partnership with children and young people themselves, listening to what they tell us is important in their lives.

We have set out our ambition for **all** children in Wales. We are determined that every one should be able to reach his or her potential. We know that some face far more serious problems than others, through disability, poverty or family circumstances. Helping them must be our priority. We know that safeguarding children must run through everything that we do for them. We are also passionately committed to delivering entitlements to children and young people, not just entitlements to high quality services but also to the respect of adults.

Childhood and adolescence are more than preparation for adulthood. They are a unique and valuable part of life, and the quality of those years is a matter that should concern us all.

We are pleased to present the Assembly Government's proposals for the next stage of our project to transform the lives of children and young people in Wales.



Jane Hutt AM
Minister for Health & Social Services



Jane Davidson AM
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PART 1. OUR COMMITMENT

In Wales – A Better Country the Assembly Government set out our vision of a fairer, more prosperous, healthier and better-educated country. We want to make sure that

children and future generations enjoy better prospects in life, and are not landed with a legacy of problems bequeathed by us.

The children and young people who make up almost one quarter of the population of Wales are our future. We aim to support all children and young people to achieve their potential. We are committed to assisting children and young people who are disadvantaged, for example through disability, poverty, family and community circumstances, illness, neglect or abuse. They need particular help if we are to improve opportunities for them.

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

The Assembly Government has adopted the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child** (Annex 1) as the basis of all our work for children and young people in Wales. We have translated this into seven **Core Aims** through which we will work to ensure that all children and young people:

- have a flying start in life;
- have a comprehensive range of education and learning opportunities;
- enjoy the best possible health and are free from abuse, victimisation and exploitation;
- have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities;
- are listened to, treated with respect, and have their race and cultural identity recognised;
- have a safe home and a community which supports physical and emotional wellbeing;
- are not disadvantaged by poverty.

The UK's Second Report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child was considered in September 2002. The UN Committee's response made 3 specific references to Wales, welcoming:

- that the Convention had been used as a basis for the Strategy for Children and Young People developed by the Welsh Assembly Government;
- the establishment of an independent Children's Commissioner for Wales; and

- the adoption by the Assembly of regulations prohibiting corporal punishment in all forms of day-care, including childminding.

Children and young people, voluntary organisations, and the Children's Commissioner are all working with the Assembly Government to monitor how we are doing in terms of the Convention and making more people aware of it.

Children's Commissioner for Wales

We have established an independent post - **the Children's Commissioner for Wales** – to be the champion of children's rights in Wales. Peter Clarke was appointed on 1st March 2001 as first statutory independent Children's Commissioner in the UK. He has powers to review the effect of policies on, and the delivery of services to, children and young people. He can consider anything affecting them, based on their views.

He has carried out a substantial programme of work in his first two years in office:

- his staff team, now including 3 Assistant Commissioners, is based in two sites in North (Colwyn Bay) and in South Wales (Swansea).
- he began the Clywch Examination in March 2002 to examine safe practices and procedures in relation to children and the performing arts. The report of this is due in 2004.
- he published "Telling Concerns", a review of complaints, whistle-blowing and children's advocacy services in February 2003. The report makes 65 recommendations of which 58 are addressed to local authorities. In July the Welsh Assembly Government agreed to all five recommendations made to it.
- he published his second Annual Report in October 2003, outlining his year's work and his broad proposals for the coming year. The Assembly Government will respond to this in the spring of 2004.

The Assembly Government welcomes the intention of the UK Government to follow its lead and establish a Children's Commissioner for England.

Participation of Children and Young People

As well as establishing a champion for children, we want to listen to children and young people themselves, including those from diverse, minority and marginalised backgrounds. This reflects our commitment to Article 12 of the UN Convention. We are setting up arrangements to hear the voices of children and young people at three levels – nationally, locally and in schools.

Nationally, we have helped to set up **Funky Dragon – the Children and Young People’s Assembly**. It gives children and young people the opportunity to be heard on issues that affect them and to be involved in decision making at national level. Based on a network of local groups, the Funky Dragon Council meets regularly with Assembly Ministers Jane Davidson and Jane Hutt giving children and young people the chance to tell the Assembly Government directly what they think of key policies.

- We have asked every local authority to set up a **Children and Young People’s Forum**. They are a way of making local organisations listen to children – for example in the work of Children’s and Young People’s Partnerships. They also provide representatives for the Council of Funky Dragon.
- We have consulted on proposals for **schools councils** to be set up in all maintained primary, secondary and special schools by July 2005. Schools councils will involve pupils in consideration of the day to day running of schools and in consideration of school policies, for example discussing matters where pupils have a personal interest such as bullying. As part of the consultation we have run events for pupils and their teachers to give their views in a lively and enjoyable way. The consultation also asks for views about guidance to local education authorities and school governing bodies on asking all pupils for their views on decisions that affect them. It is hoped to publish the final guidance by September 2004.
- **Young** people in Wales attended the launch of the European Union White Paper on Youth in November 2001 and represented Wales at the UK hearing of UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in Geneva in October 2002.

Sustainable Development

We are engaging young people in **Sustainable Development** in Wales. Ten young people from Wales attended the United Nations World Summit in Johannesburg last year. The First Minister has given a commitment to involving young people in the development of policy through Funky Dragon and a Wales Youth Forum on Sustainable Development. Young people will be taking part in a Conference on Sustainable Development for Regional Governments from around the world in Cardiff in March 2004.

An Education for Sustainable Development panel has been established. One of its aims is to make sure that the principles of sustainable development are included in schools and further and higher education institutions. The Eco Schools initiative now covers almost 600 school across Wales.

Respect

The Children's Commissioner and Funky Dragon have both pointed out that young people are seriously concerned about the lack of respect given to them by adults. The Assembly Government shares this concern. Children and young people should be seen as young citizens, with rights and opinions to be taken into account now. They are not a species apart, to be alternately demonised and sentimentalised, nor trainee adults who do not yet have a full place in society. Adults must not fall into the trap of automatically speaking for them and making assumptions about what they need.

Lack of respect is not just an issue for statutory services. It centres on the way adults behave towards children and young people generally - in restaurants, at bus queues, in schools, leisure centres and shops. Too often families with young children are made to feel uncomfortable, and groups of young people are regarded with suspicion or hostility. The news media frequently give negative messages about young people. There is a need to present a more balanced picture, reporting positive and constructive events and images. We aim to change attitudes so that children and young people are seen as a welcome part of their local communities.

Adults generally expect respect from children and young people. But respect has to be mutual - and it has to be earned. Respect is not a trivial issue. Children are not treated with respect when their needs for additional support are not met. They are not treated with respect when planning decisions do not take account of their need for safe routes to play and other facilities. And, perhaps most of all, they are not treated with respect when the law allows them to be smacked as a punishment.

Corporal Punishment

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child deals with smacking under Article 19, which states that children should be properly cared for and protected from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents or anyone else who looks after them. Article 18 states that governments should help parents by providing services to support them.

The Assembly Government believes that the current legal defence of 'reasonable chastisement' should be ended. We wish to encourage respect for children's rights to human dignity and non-violent forms of discipline, including through public education programmes. We have made representations to the UK Government about this.

We do not accept that smacking teaches children how to behave as they grow up. Children who are smacked are more likely to believe that the strong get their own way and that violence is an acceptable manner of expressing a view or dealing with anger or frustration.

We believe that we must respect what children themselves have told us: that a smack serves to create distrust, fear and dislike, but is not the best way to instil respect for the adult or acceptance of their values.

The Assembly Government has banned smacking in every form of public and regulated care in Wales. We want to make sure that parents and carers have the information and advice they need on effective ways of dealing with children's behaviour, including alternatives to physical discipline. We are funding a public education programme including the production of information leaflets and the provision of advice.

Priority for those most in need

A commitment to preventive services and early intervention underpins our approach to children and young people, as is illustrated by many of the initiatives described in the following sections. Properly targeted preventive services can tackle many of the causes of poor outcomes for children and young people, such as poverty, low quality early years experiences, poor schooling and unhealthy lifestyles. Early preventive intervention is a key theme of the Cymorth programme (page 50). The partnership planning process under the Children and Young People's Framework gives the opportunity to implement this more widely by mainstreaming the preventive approach within discretionary spending.

Preventive services are valuable both for the increases they bring in quality of life for the children and young people concerned and the scope for eventually reducing the likelihood of more serious problems. But it is vital that attention to universal services and prevention does not take away attention from those most in need – such as children at risk of abuse or neglect, disabled children and those looked after by local authorities.

For example, the **Children First** programme aims to deliver better outcomes for those children and young people who are in greatest need, making sure in particular that looked after children, care leavers and disabled children are able to benefit fully from education, health and social care, and are safeguarded. Care leavers are particularly vulnerable and the **National Homelessness Strategy** aims to improve joint working between housing and social services in local authorities, who must keep in touch with and support care leavers, who are one of a number of priority groups for whom local authorities must provide housing.

It will be a long time before preventive services can be expected to have an impact in terms of reductions in the numbers of these children and, in the meantime, it is vital that they remain our highest priority.

Valuing Diversity and Promoting Equality of Opportunity

Children and young people in Wales are not all the same. There is a huge range and diversity of backgrounds, ethnicity, first language, family circumstances, wealth and ability. Our aim is to recognise and value diversity and to tackle inequalities. These are some of the ways in which we are doing this:

- Poverty – We are addressing poverty through programmes such as Communities First, which aims to reduce poverty and improve the lives of people in the most disadvantaged areas in Wales. Cymorth – the Children and Youth Support Fund aims to improve the life chances of children and young people from disadvantaged areas. Many other programmes contribute to alleviating the impact of poverty, and we have appointed a task group to advise us on the creation of a child poverty strategy to maximise their impact.
- Language - we are committed to Wales becoming a truly bilingual country, and our strategy, called *laith Pawb*, sets out actions being taken in support of the language. The strategy aims to make sure that the Welsh language is fully taken into account across the Assembly in every Minister's work. Today's young people hold the key to the future growth and prosperity of the Welsh language. *laith Pawb* emphasises that all children and young people should have opportunity to learn the language and use it. But English and Welsh are not the only languages of Wales. Wales is now fortunate in being home to a number of different cultures and languages. Some of these have been here for well over a century, while others have arrived only in the last generation. The Assembly Government believes that all should be embraced as contributing to the cultural richness of Wales; all represent different ways of being Welsh. We are committed to providing services to children and families that take account of cultural differences and the need to provide services in different languages.
- Disability - Children who have a long-term health problem or are disabled tell us that they want all the things that other children want. We intend that as many disabled children as possible have a full education (see page 29) and take part in activities with other children. Our Children First programme aims to make sure that children who are disabled or have a long-term health condition are able to live with their families and use local services where their needs can be met. We also aim to ensure that there is fairer access to services across Wales and that all services meet minimum standards. These standards will be published in a National Service Framework for Children early in 2005 (see page 37). We have consulted with many children and their parents and carers to find out what they think of services and to help us to write the standards.

- Equality of opportunity - The Assembly Government's strategic agenda in *Wales-A Better Country* included a commitment to promote gender equality, race equality and tackle discrimination. This pledge is reflected across policy areas affecting children and young people and the theme runs through the sections that follow. The Assembly treats its corporate duties under the Race Relations Amendment Act as a priority and this year has launched its Race Equality scheme, with the aim of promoting race equality, tackling racial discrimination and providing good race relations.

Implementation

Part 2 sets out the changes that we wish to put in place to put these commitments into practice.

PART 2: MAKING IT HAPPEN

Leadership

Lord Laming's Report of the Victoria Climbié Inquiry stressed the need for accountability at the most senior level. While the Report was sent to the UK Government, we believe that this principle applies equally to Wales.

At the national level, Jane Hutt, as the Assembly Government's Minister for Children, chairs the **Cabinet Sub-Committee for Children and Young People**. The Committee aims to make sure that the Assembly Government gives priority to children and young people's needs and interests in its work. It also oversees implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Wales and the Assembly Government's Seven Core Aims for Children and Young People.

The Committee's membership covers the key areas that affect children and young people, including: Rhodri Morgan - First Minister, Jane Davidson - Minister for Education and Life-long Learning, Alun Pugh - Minister for Culture, Sport and the Welsh Language, Edwina Hart - Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration and Andrew Davies - Minister for Economic Development and Transport.

The Cabinet Sub-Committee has decided to concentrate on three themes for the 2003-04 session. These are nutrition and exercise; transport; and transitions.

Jane Hutt is to be supported in her role as Minister for Children by a Director for Children and Families. The Director will have a lead responsibility for all children's health and social care matters and for bringing together the work of all parts of the Assembly Government that affect children. The Director will chair regular meetings of officials working for the members of the Cabinet Sub-Committee and aim to make sure that children and young people are taken into account throughout the Assembly Government's work.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Children Review

The Assembly Government has appointed Gwenda Thomas AM to lead a review of the progress that has been made in safeguarding vulnerable children in Wales. This review will look at the delivery of services on the ground to see how lessons have been learnt, how guidance on good practice has been put into action and will make recommendations on action that is needed. The review team will talk to providers of services, the Children's Commissioner and to children and young people in collecting evidence, and is due to present its report in a year's time.

Children and Young People's Framework Partnerships

Children and Young People's Framework Partnerships have now been formed in all 22 local authority areas of Wales, made up of representatives from local authority and health services and the voluntary sector. They have to make sure that children and young people and their families can take part in their work. Each Framework (plan) sets out the main priorities for all local services affecting children and young people. The Frameworks guide the work of Children's Partnerships (0-10s) and Young People's Partnerships (11-25), sub-groups of the Framework Partnerships which plan in more detail for their age groups. The results of the Framework Partnerships' planning for children and young people are then incorporated in local Health, Wellbeing and Social Care Strategies.

In 2002, local partnerships drew up initial Frameworks, Young People's Strategies and Annual Delivery Plans, and Children's Plans. All received feedback from the Assembly Government on progress in implementing plans. The second round of plans have been received, and the Assembly Government is arranging for all partnerships to receive feedback.

In preparing their Frameworks, Partnerships are asked to *"recognise the importance of culture and first language in Wales,"* and this requirement will be taken account of in the assessment of plans. This includes issues relating to the Welsh language and culture and also extends to other languages and cultures. Wales has a wide variety of cultures, and services need to be planned to recognise cultural differences and to deliver in different languages where appropriate.

These Partnerships are fairly new arrangements. As they develop and mature they will have a major role in setting priorities for children and young people from the education, health and social services budgets as a whole.

The Assembly Government will therefore be using forthcoming children's legislation to strengthen these arrangements. In the first place, the Framework and Children's Partnerships will be made a legal requirement, like the Young People's Partnership. In addition, local authorities will be required to identify a **'lead director for children and young people'** to take responsibility for driving forward planning under the Framework. The identity of the lead director will be decided locally; the Assembly Government does not wish to tell partners how local services will be organised. Local authorities will continue to have both a Chief Education Officer and a Director of Social Services. However, we hope that identifying a senior officer to take responsibility for the Framework planning process will give a high profile to children and young people's issues. This will be reinforced by a requirement to appoint a **lead member for children and young people. Local health boards and NHS trusts** are important partners of local authorities in planning services for children and young people. They will also be asked to identify **lead directors and members for children and young people.**

The Assembly Government expects local agencies to take a joint approach to plan services together to make them as effective as possible. In his latest report, the Chief Inspector for Social Services in Wales refers to the need for local authorities to "give attention to improving arrangements for working together within the authority, with other statutory partners, and partners in the private and voluntary sectors." He highlights exciting service developments taking place, including the increased use of multidisciplinary teams to provide services for disabled children and people leaving care.

He also refers to encouraging examples of authorities working together. There is both a need and an opportunity for increased co-operation across authorities. Examples include the organisation of specialist placements for children and young people, development of workforce and performance management strategies, and the setting up of common procedures with partner agencies across health trust and police authority catchment areas.

In order to encourage a universal approach to the development of joint working arrangements across Wales we intend make use of legislation to introduce a **duty to co-operate** among statutory partners in local authority areas.

To support these improvements we expect local authorities and health boards to work together to set up shared budgets under the Health Act 1999. They are already doing so in some areas, but we would like to see more examples of successful co-operation to make best use of the money available.

Examples of services already being provided or developed jointly range in practice from locating staff in the same building to make it easier for them to work together to multi-agency teams. Joint working does not mean that people have to have the same employer. People from independent agencies sometimes question each other's methods, and this can be helpful in improving services. Joint working provides the opportunity for shared approaches to meeting individuals' needs and for valuable resources, especially the skills and expertise of staff, to be organised effectively and coherently to meet demand.

Health visitors can be based in family centres and social services teams, or police and social services work from the same office. Some disability teams bring together social services, health and education staff, often working with networks of services run by voluntary organisations. The Children First programme and its funding has encouraged some local authorities, health services and voluntary agencies to set up multidisciplinary child protection teams who work jointly to improve support to children and young people who are in care or looked-after. Sure Start and integrated centres (page 43) are two further examples where this process is being promoted. We wish to learn from these examples and extend their good practice across Wales.

We expect agencies to make more use of 'lead professionals' and 'key workers', where a single person co-ordinates care for children in need. The carers of disabled children have told us this is what they want. The Framework for Assessment of Children in Need and their Families requires social care staff to assess needs by seeking and taking account of the views of other agencies and professionals.

CAFCASS

UK Government Ministers have agreed in principle to the transfer of the functions of the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service Cymru (CAFCASS) to the Assembly Government. CAFCASS looks after the interests of children involved in family proceedings, advising the family courts on what it considers to be in the children's best interests. Detailed discussions are in progress.

Inspection

In the light of the existing scope for co-operation between Inspectorates, the Assembly Government does not intend to change the current arrangements for inspecting children's services.

In Wales the Assembly Government's Policy Agreement with local government and the Children First Programme includes performance indicators for children's social services and the National Service Framework for Children will provide standards for children's health and social services.

We propose that the current arrangements for inspection should continue in Wales with the Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (SSIW) and Care Standards Inspectorate for Wales (CSIW) continuing to build on their already established practice of working together and with other inspectorates. This includes working with Estyn and the new health inspectorate in Wales and participating, with the other relevant inspectorates, in the inspection of the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS) and Services for Young Offenders, where this is the best way of achieving the desired outcomes.

The Social Services Inspectorate for Wales monitors the performance of social services for children through its programmes of inspection and joint review, and development and improvement work. This includes work to improve performance management and measurement and development of an agreed set of performance indicators for social care. Information from SSIW's programmes and other sources, including the Children First programme, policy agreement performance indicators and statistical returns are brought together and analysed in SSIW's annual performance evaluation of social services authorities. The Assembly Government has made clear its commitment to supporting improvement in social services as part of the Wales Programme for Improvement and the agreement of an

intervention protocol with local government underpins its recognition of the need to require local changes in some circumstances.

The Care Standards Inspectorate for Wales (CSIW) is responsible for regulating social care services, including care in children's residential homes; boarding and residential schools and Further Education colleges; fostering and adoption services. It also regulates day care services for children under 8 years of age, which includes childminding, nurseries and playgroups. It aims to make sure that services provide the highest possible quality of care and protection for children, and does so by:

- deciding who can register to provide services;
- inspecting these services and providing written reports which are publicly available;
- making sure that regulations and National Minimum Standards (NMS) are met; and
- dealing with complaints made about services where they have not been resolved by the service provider.

National Minimum Standards have been produced for each type of service and these standards are widely available to both the providers and parent/carers. CSIW welcomes views and comments about the services from the children themselves as well as their parents/carers.

In the field of education and training, **Estyn** (the Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales) aims to raise standards and quality in education and training in Wales through inspection and providing advice. Estyn has responsibility for the inspection of most aspects of learning including nurseries, schools, pupil referral units, careers services and youth support services. Information from inspections helps providers to improve quality and standards. It also provides the evidence to inform the development of the Assembly's Learning Country programme for education and lifelong learning.

Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW) is being set up from 1 April 2004 to review and investigate the provision of health care by and for Welsh National Health Service bodies. The Assembly is legally required to safeguard and promote the rights and welfare of children in carrying out these reviews and to do so will need to develop effective working relationships with key stakeholders and partners, including SSIW, CSIW and the new Commission for Healthcare Audit and Inspection (CHAI).

Workforce

We know that the workforce is at the heart of our agenda to provide quality services. Over 3,600 people are employed in children's social services in Wales in a range of settings that include social work teams, residential care and support services. There are estimated to be 1,344

social workers, including team managers, most of whom are employed by local authorities. These figures form a small part of the total Personal Social Services workforce of over 70,000.

We also have a dedicated pool of almost 1,900 (March 2001) foster carers who provide an essential, often unrecognised, contribution to the care of looked after children across Wales. However, there is still a shortage of foster carers in many areas and too many children have to be placed away from their home area. A recent survey carried out on behalf of the Assembly Government found that there was a 6% growth in the number of foster families last year in Wales. 74% of "looked after" children in Wales are placed with foster families.

Foster carers are a vital part of the social care workforce who carry out increasingly complex tasks on behalf of local authorities. An effective service needs to be able both to take on new carers and to keep the existing ones. To achieve this good quality support and training must be available. Research will help us to develop a model of good practice for fostering services and to assist local authorities in developing local provision to meet children's needs.

We are committed to ensuring that individuals and families who use social services are able to rely on a workforce that is properly trained, appropriately qualified and effectively regulated. We have established the Care Council for Wales and a strategic framework for tackling workforce issues, including recruitment and retention, is being implemented. Human Resources Planning Guidance has been issued to promote improvement in HR practice and specifically in recruitment and retention.

For service users and their carers the quality and responsiveness of services is generally more important than who delivers them. Social care workforce development is therefore being addressed through a partnership approach, on the basis that social care is one sector with one workforce and that common standards should be applied to all. Partnership arrangements are in place across Wales and include service users and carers, public, private and voluntary organisation employers, further and higher education, and training providers as well as key strategic partners such as ADSS, WLGA and ELWa.

Within that framework we want to ensure that core values skills and competencies are established for all those who work with children whilst at the same time recognising the distinctive contribution of social care to people's lives.

The Care Council for Wales has an essential role in promoting workforce change. Its primary responsibilities are to improve standards and public protection by promoting high standards of conduct and practice among social care workers and high standards in their training. This includes publishing and promoting codes of practice for social care employers and employees and maintaining a register of social workers and social care workers.

The Care Council for Wales also has the workforce development role for the sector. It is responsible for drawing together workforce information and developing national occupational standards for those groups of staff defined by the Care Standards Act as social care workers - this includes staff working in residential care homes for children, managers of those settings and social workers.

We have already put many strong and successful arrangements in place. The Care Council for Wales is fulfilling a clear role for the sector and driving forward the workforce agenda in Wales. However we know that we will only maintain this progress if we remain focussed and give workforce issues the central role that they must have. Within our emerging structure we will want to pay proper attention to the needs of the children's workforce in social care in order that we have sufficient quality staff with the knowledge skills and competencies in place to deliver our objectives for children's services into the future. This will include:

- development of the registration programme across the social care sector We will prioritise those staff who work in residential settings with children and once we have opened those registers we will consider the introduction of job reservation;
- introduction of protection of the title of social worker;
- improving our workforce information to better inform the planning and management of the children's workforce, building on work undertaken in the skills foresight plan and linking in to UK networks and structures where appropriate;
- continuing work on the development of the Health and Social Care National Occupational Standards to ensure that they are fit for purpose across the children's workforce and that they can be used to develop common training and skills units for all those working with children;
- completion of the review of the National Occupational Standards and Care Awards, which has included the specific review, development of, and consultation on, standards for working with children and young people. The proposals for revised awards include those for a revised NVQ 3 Caring for Children and Young People and a new NVQ Level 4 Caring for Children and Young People; and,
- continuing to work with employers to develop the relevance and flexibility of the new social work qualification and supporting them to develop childcare practice opportunities that reflect workforce needs.

Numbers of **staff working in the Health Service** are increasing as a result of increased investment and the success of action to recruitment and retain staff. Latest figures show that the number of staff directly employed by the NHS has risen to 81,400 in 2002, compared to a total of 68,620 in 1997, an increase of 18.7 per cent.

Over the past four years we have invested in increasing the number of training places for doctors, nurses and other health professionals. Wales also published a recruitment and retention strategy for the NHS – the first time an all-Wales plan had been put together. Trusts have also been implementing their own recruitment and retention plans locally.

The number of qualified Speech and Language Therapists has risen from 229 whole time equivalents in 1998 to 348 in 2002. In addition, work to strengthen safeguards for children has been progressing - the number of consultant paediatricians has been increased from 92 in 2001 to 123 in 2002. Numbers of registered children's nurses has increased from 1,080 in 2000 to 1,136 in 2002 and an additional 30 training places are being provided.

In the education sector, over 28,000 teachers are employed in maintained schools in Wales, supported by over 12,000 support staff. The quality of learning experienced by pupils is dependent on the skill, professionalism and commitment of these staff.

Youth work in Wales is delivered in a variety of settings locally throughout Wales. Staff need to be appropriately trained through the existing local and national routes of qualifications. We are committed to supporting the training of youth workers in Wales and increasing support for their continued professional development.

The Assembly Government is committed to raising standards in all staff in schools. We have established the General Teaching Council for Wales, which acts as a voice for the teaching profession and has a duty to safeguard and promote high professional standards. The Council keeps a register of teachers and registration is a condition of employment. It hears disciplinary cases relating to misconduct and can suspend teachers from its register – so preventing them from teaching. The Council has developed the first Professional Code for Teachers in Wales, setting out the standards of conduct and practice to which teachers should aspire.

Through the Council, the Assembly Government is funding programmes of continuous professional development for teachers. This is in addition to the role that LEAs play in teacher development.

The role played by support staff will become increasingly important in future. The National Agreement on Raising Standards and Tackling Workload signed in January this year by the Welsh Assembly Government, DfES, employers and unions representing teaching and support staff introduced changes to the school teachers' contract that will progressively reduce teachers' workload. Support staff may, with appropriate training, take over some of the work done by teachers.

We shall work with colleagues in the UK Government on workforce issues where their initiatives are consistent with our approach in Wales.

In the next part, we set out the action the Assembly Government has taken to implement our commitments to children and young people, under each of the seven core aims. Those being put in place now and in the near future are highlighted below.

Immediate and Future Action

Part 3 sets out what the Assembly Government is doing for children and young people under each of its core aims. It includes the following future developments:

- Arrangements being made to place **Area Child Protection Committees** on a statutory footing; for a new duty on local authorities to **promote the education of looked after children**; for action to remove obstacles to the **sharing of information** between education and social services departments; and for a **duty to co-operate** between statutory partners in local authority areas to promote the well-being of children and young people.
- **Screening services**, looking after the health of both mother and baby, are being improved to make sure that high standards of services are provided evenly across Wales and that families can make full use of what is available.
- By September 2004, the Assembly Government aims to provide every child with a **free, part time education place** in the term following their third birthday. **School breakfasts** will be provided free as a choice each day to all pupils in primary schools in Wales, beginning in Communities First areas in September 2004.
- Regulations on **school exclusion** came into force in January 2004 increasing the involvement of children and young people in the exclusion process. They give to all pupils of secondary school age the right to appeal against their exclusion and have their views heard at any hearings.
- **14-19 provision** is being transformed to make sure that by the end of 2010 all young people gain the skills they need and no pupil leaves school without qualifications. **Assembly Learning Grants** and funding under the *Reaching Higher* strategy will help the least well off young people and students from all backgrounds into further and higher education.
- Guidance to local education authorities and schools will be issued early in the spring term 2004 on their new responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act to **improve access for disabled pupils** to school.

- Training and education for **young offenders** is being developed in ways appropriate to Wales and the principles set out in the draft All Wales Youth Offending Strategy Guidance. A 12-month project began in July 2003 to decide what needs to happen.
- The **Children First** programme providing almost £72 million since 1999 to improve education, health and social care for looked after children and those in need, is being continued beyond the original deadline of March 2004.
- We have appointed Gwenda Thomas AM to lead a review of progress made in **safeguarding vulnerable children** in Wales. The review team will talk to providers of services, the Children's Commissioner and to children and young people and will report in a year's time.
- The **Task Group on Child Protection in Black and Minority Ethnic Communities**, established to look at the effects of culture, racial harassment, racial discrimination and institutional racism, will advise how child protection policy and practice can be improved in its report expected during the first half of 2004.
- A **National Service Framework** setting out standards to improve the quality of services that children and young people receive from the National Health Service and social services across Wales will be published early in 2005.
- We are encouraging children and people in Wales to become more physically active and healthier. In every local authority area, the Sports Council for Wales, schools and local partners are working together to enhance the range and quality of PE and school sport. This initiative has been developed in partnership with the New Opportunities Fund, which is providing £48m to improve facilities for sport in schools.
- The national **free swimming** scheme, launched in 2003 to increase use of sport and recreation facilities by children and young people, is being evaluated to make improvements in 2004, building on the benefits in its first year of increased participation, particularly in the most deprived communities.
- We are committed to **extend to 16-18 year olds reduced and free bus travel** that is already available to older and disabled people. Consultation with service providers is planned for 2004. We also plan to extend **20mph zones and safer routes to school** to make local roads safer for children, encourage exercise and reduce damage to the environment.
- Additional funding over the next few years will allow the Urdd to employ additional youth workers and increase the range of **cultural, sports and leisure activities available in the medium of Welsh** for children and young people.

- The Assembly Government is working with the New Opportunities Fund and local partnerships to develop at least one **integrated centre** in each local authority area. These centres will bring together open access play, early years' education, community training and childcare, along with other family support services such as parent and toddler groups.
- The **Child Poverty Task Group** will report in March 2004 on its recommendations for a child poverty strategy and measures that will show how successfully we are dealing with child poverty. We shall be producing a child poverty strategy based on its work.

PART 3 THE SEVEN CORE AIMS



AIM 1: A FLYING START IN LIFE



Based on UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Articles 3, 29 and 36



Our approach to services for the youngest children is built upon the evidence that interventions at this stage can be highly effective in preventing later problems.

Before the birth

Health services play an important role even before babies are born. Health promotion schemes encourage mothers to eat healthily and avoid dangers like alcohol and cigarettes. Screening services look after the health of both mother and baby, and help families prepare in practical and emotional

terms for the changes ahead.

Screening is now being improved across Wales to make sure that high standards of services are provided evenly across Wales and that families can make full use of what is available.

Twf

The Assembly Government is committed to creating a 'truly bilingual Wales'. As part of this Strategy outlined in *laith Pawb* (page 6) we are promoting the spread of language through the family in a pioneering project run with the Welsh Language Board. Twf aims to show the benefits of raising children bilingually and ensure that the language is passed on from generation to generation. Twf project workers work closely with health visitors, midwives and with a range of early years organisations to provide information about the advantages of bilingualism to families.

Sure Start

In disadvantaged areas Cymorth – the Children and Youth Support Fund – gives particular attention to the early years. It is designed to support the Communities First initiative (see page 49). About £13 million of the near £40 million Cymorth fund in 2003-04 is for Sure Start projects for young children aged 0-3. These make sure that health, social services and early education services work together to help expectant mothers and the families of the youngest children.

Sure Start schemes are tailored to local priorities, and all are different. Some focus on young parents, helping to build their confidence and self-esteem. Some help parents improve their relationships with their children. Some provide special help for young mothers who are still at school. Sure Start fosters close partnerships between health visitors, primary health care teams, social services and early year's education. It aims to ensure that babies and pre-school children in the relevant areas have access to early and comprehensive assessment when there appear to be difficulties, so that targeted support can be offered quickly. By early screening and intervention, support and education, Sure Start is tackling some of the problems that can hold a child back in the early years.

Sure Start in Swansea works with the Minority Ethnic Women's Network to support children under four, their mothers, and pregnant women from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities. The project provides playgroups, parent and toddler groups, information leaflets in relevant languages, and encourages mothers to play and read with their children by using the library and the story sacks that are available. In addition, a Sure Start midwife and BME link workers have developed tailored health services to meet the needs of this group. An evaluation of this service showed the importance of culturally sensitive outreach in order to meet the needs of these families.

The Dental Health Project in Cardiff aims to improve the dental health of young children by distributing appropriate feeding cups and brushes and by giving advice. A scheme in Monmouthshire organises a toothbrush exchange. In Merthyr Tydfil, the 5-a-day fruit and vegetable project, a partnership between the Local Health Alliance and Sure Start funded by the Community Food Initiative, provides free fruit and vegetables, purchased from local retailers, to 10 families in the Aberfan area.

Parenting Support

Parenting is a vital but challenging role, and the Assembly Government recognises that parents need help. This is provided primarily through Cymorth, and in particular through its Sure Start strand. We wish to encourage provision of programmes to provide support to parents and assist in managing children's behaviour problems. A range of programmes already exists, including the Webster-Stratton Basic Parenting Courses and Dinosaur Schools. They can

include play, helping children learn, positive reinforcement, limit setting, alternatives to smacking, problem solving, and effective communication skills. All of these can provide support to parents.

Webster-Stratton parenting programmes for children with behavioural and related problems have been thoroughly evaluated since they were first developed 25 years ago. A number of evidence-based initiatives for reducing children's aggression and behaviour problems and increasing social competence at home and at school are in development in Wales. Sure Start projects across North Wales have been delivering the Webster-Stratton Incredible Years Parenting Programme as part of their services to families for several years now. A new project began in October 2003 that will evaluate the effectiveness of the Programme in improving parenting skills and reducing child behaviour problems in pre-school children. An Enhancing Parenting Skills course has now been developed and is offered to a range of staff working with children and families, including specialists in children's mental health, school nurses, health visitors and social workers. The work is led by Dr Judy Hutchings and is based at the University of Wales College, Bangor.

Programmes of this type can be valuable for professionals (therapists and parent educators from psychology, social work, education, nursing and psychiatry) who are working with families of young children with conduct problems and can help to build useful links between families and schools.

Parenting programmes combined with crèche support are a key feature within the Family Support theme of Cymorth. They aim to encourage parent involvement in their child's development, and can include work to improve access to toy libraries, music, dance and art classes, promote alternatives to smacking by advising on effective ways of dealing with children's behaviour. Carmarthenshire's "Parents Support Parents" scheme involves parents as trained volunteers promoting positive models of parenting in families in the home and in an organised group.

Early Years Education

Good quality early years education is a key factor in providing every child with a flying start. By September 2004, the Assembly Government aims to provide every child with a free, half-time place in the term following their third birthday, and has provided the funding needed to achieve this in schools, the voluntary sector and private nurseries.

Developing Language and Literacy Skills

Encouraging parents and adults to share books with babies helps build up a lifelong love of books and reading, and has been shown to help in early language development and later literacy learning. We are supporting the **Bookstart** programme, which provides bilingual books for babies in every family in Wales when they have their health check at 8 months old.

Language and Play programmes have been established in every local authority in Wales as part of the National Basic Skills Strategy. These encourage parents to help their babies and young children by talking, playing, reading and singing to them. The Programme is used in parent and toddler groups, playgroups, health clinics, family centres, nurseries and schools. It is designed to fit in with the work of Sure Start projects by helping parents develop understanding of their children's development.

The availability of childcare through the medium of Welsh is of great importance within the context of the *Iaith Pawb* strategy. Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin, the Welsh medium nursery education movement, provides a particularly effective means of enabling children whose parents do not speak Welsh to become bilingual, and we support Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin to achieve this. The Assembly Government, through the Welsh Language Board, has increased the level of funding available for Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin in the current financial year from £771,000 to £1,000,000.



AIM 2: A COMPREHENSIVE RANGE OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES



Based on United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Articles 23, 28, 29, and 32



The Learning Country sets out the Assembly Government's major programme of reform and innovation in education and training, in schools and other learning settings, creating educational opportunity to meet the particular needs of learners of all ages in Wales. Its key elements are:

- **The Foundation Phase:** The Foundation Phase will help children aged 3 to 7 to learn, persevere, become self-reliant, and enjoy challenge. It will provide them with opportunities to succeed, to make mistakes and to cope with failure. The Foundation Phase is about developing children's aspirations, motivation, socialisation, self-esteem and mastery of learning.
- **Narrowing the Gap:** We have also committed ourselves to narrowing the gap between the best and least well performing schools. There is a clear link between deprivation and poor performance that must be tackled. With the Welsh Local Government Association we have already carried out a study that told us what works in secondary schools that operate in difficult circumstances. Work on a similar study of primary schools is under way, with results expected in summer 2004.
- **Class Sizes in primary schools:** At September 2003 only 2.3% of infant pupils were in classes of over 30. Numbers of junior pupils in classes of over 30 had reduced from 29% at September 2000 to 13%, as a result of additional funding. Further funding will be provided in 2004-05 to remove the remaining junior classes over 30.
- **14-19:** The Assembly Government is committed to transforming 14-19 provision and to ensuring that no pupil leaves school without qualifications by the end of the decade. Our new approach aims to give:
 - more choice and flexibility in relevant courses and qualifications, designed to help young people develop the essential skills they need for life and work;

- learning pathways designed to meet each individual's needs;
- personal support, careers information and learning guidance for individuals to help them make the best possible choices and stay in learning as long as they need to; and,
- a better balance between skills, knowledge and experience.

The proposals will provide enhanced opportunities for all abilities and build on some of the innovative and creative approaches to tackling disengagement funded through Cymorth. We have introduced the Assembly Learning Grant to help the least well off young people to access further and higher education. Funding is also being made available under our *Reaching Higher* strategy to encourage students from all backgrounds into higher education.

- **The Welsh Baccalaureate** aims to encourage young people to achieve qualifications at intermediate (level 2) and advanced (level 3) levels. It helps young people develop a wide range of essential skills including key skills, modern foreign languages, citizenship, work and voluntary experience. It can include a number of different qualifications such as A level, GNVQ or NVQ. The Baccalaureate is currently being piloted in 18 schools and colleges for 16-19 year olds from September 2003, with 6 further schools and colleges joining the pilot from September 2004.
- **Iaith Pawb** encourages young people to learn and use the Welsh language in all aspects of everyday life, including education and training. The Assembly Government recognises the important role young people have in securing the future of the Welsh language and the part that the education system has to play in this. We are committed to making sure that all young people can acquire Welsh language skills. We also wish to extend provision and improve access to Welsh medium education so that individuals are empowered and able to make a real choice of the language medium in which they wish to live their lives.

Within these approaches, we have a range of specific education initiatives, some of which respond to points made by children and young people through Funky Dragon or by the Children's Commissioner. The theme of respect, referred to in the opening chapter, runs through all of these. Respect between children, which means that bullying is not tolerated; respect of teachers for pupils, which means that their needs and views as individuals are taken into account; and the respect that good teachers earn from pupils.

Assessment and Testing

We have noted the comment of the Children's Commissioner that children and young people have never been subject to so much testing. National Curriculum tests for 7-year-olds have been ended and a Review Group has now been established to review the current arrangements

for testing and assessing 11 and 14-year-olds. The Group started its work in early September 2003 and will report its findings at the end of March 2004.

Listening to Learners

Members of Funky Dragon have made clear that they sometimes feel their views are not respected and their complaints are not considered. In response, we are taking steps to make sure that the views of users of education services – both pupils and their parents and carers – are heard and acted upon in developing policy and guidance. Schools are required to have procedures for dealing with complaints. Guidance will be issued in February 2004. We will also be consulting on supplementary guidance relating to handling of complaints involving pupils. Estyn, the Schools Inspectorate for Wales, issued for consultation *Listening to Learners – a guide for Inspectors and Providers* in October 2003. The consultation period ended on 19 December 2003 and it is hoped to issue the final document in the summer of 2004.

Bullying

Bullying is a real concern to very many children. Bullying can have a powerful and damaging effect on a child or young person's experience of education and view of themselves. It is one of the ways in which children show lack of respect for one another. Funky Dragon have raised this with Ministers and it is clear that they feel very strongly we must all work together to tackle bullying wherever it occurs.

The Assembly Government takes these concerns very seriously and we are determined that schools should reduce the incidence and impact of bullying, teach children how to manage their relationships effectively, and reduce the risks, especially through better supervision in lunchtimes and playtimes. *Respecting Others*, the Assembly's new anti-bullying guidance was issued in September 2003 to all schools and others interested. It looks at the effects of bullying and offers practical solutions for preventing and dealing with incidents.

Exclusion

Exclusion from school is a difficult and controversial area. It can damage a child or young person's life chances. The school can also suffer if they feel that they can no longer cope with challenging behaviour, or would like more support, as highlighted in the Children's Commissioner's Annual Report (2001-02).

The Gorseinon Community Garden Project, in collaboration with the Prince's Trust, provides open activities aimed at **excluded youngsters** such as bird-box making, mural painting and assisting young people to run their own events.

The Youth Works project in Wildmill, Bridgend, is developing community activities involving local young people directly in **improving the local environment** and in video and arts projects which deal with local issues.

We are conscious of the need to balance the interests of all concerned in such difficult situations and are looking at a range of proposals. New regulations came into force in January 2004 increasing the involvement of children and young people in the exclusion process. They give to all pupils of secondary school age the right to appeal against their exclusion. They also give all pupils the right to have their views heard at any hearings.

Transitions

Far too often young people have difficulty when moving from one stage of education to the next. This can lead to a loss of confidence and enthusiasm for learning. Pupils in their first year at secondary school often see as many as 11 teachers teaching as many subjects in different rooms in the course of a week. Sometimes secondary school teachers have only limited knowledge of the ground covered by pupils in the last year of primary school.

The Assembly Government is addressing this problem head on. We are making sure that all schools say how they will plan and deliver the curriculum across Key Stages 2 and 3 as pupils move from primary to secondary schools, how they exchange information, and how they will meet pupils' personal and social needs. This can include ways of familiarising pupils with their new school, for example where primary school pupils visit their secondary schools while in Year 6. Individual advice and guidance from a member of staff - usually a form teacher - can be valuable. Some schools also have "buddy" systems - where new pupils are paired with an older pupil.

When moving from one stage of education to the next, a continuation of language provision is also important. *laith Pawb* sets out to conduct further research in this area in order to provide for young people's linguistic needs.

Young people also need access to expert advice and guidance to develop the skills to make choices and prepare for their transition to the world of work. Careers Wales provides advice and guidance to young people aged 13-19. Assessment, training and support through Youth Gateway and other programmes for young people that have difficulty in making transition choices, particularly unemployed 16 and 17 year olds, are also available. From April 2004 Careers Wales Online will provide an inter-active website to help all young people update their decision-making skills.

Inclusive Education

Some children cannot easily access education without special help. Ensuring all children and young people are included involves much more than putting every child in a mainstream or special school. It is a continuing process concerned with breaking down barriers to learning.

- Draft guidance on Inclusive Education was been issued for consultation between October and December 2003. The Guidance provides practical examples of the steps that schools, local education authorities and other providers should consider. It is hoped to issue final guidance, based on the responses received, in the summer of 2004.
- Since April 2002 Wales has had its own Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice, which emphasises the need for LEA's to meet the needs of pupils in accordance with parental preference for Welsh or English medium education and educational support. When assessing a pupil it is appropriate to do so in the pupil's preferred language of either English or Welsh.
- In October 2003 we brought into force provisions in the Disability Discrimination Act which require local education authorities and schools to plan to improve access for disabled pupils to school premises and to the curriculum. Guidance on these new responsibilities will be issued early in the spring term 2004.
- We are funding 10 pilot projects to evaluate the effectiveness of approaches to pupil disengagement, including providing learning mentors in schools, running Webster-Stratton programmes for young pupils and using trained army personnel to deliver outdoor activity training.
- Young offenders have the same entitlements as all other young people in Wales, though they may need more support to make sure they are able to get them. They should have access to appropriate training, education and wider experiences and opportunities to meet their needs and help them live full and constructive lives after their sentence is completed. Training and education for young offenders is being developed in ways appropriate to Wales and the principles set out in the draft All Wales Youth Offending Strategy Guidance. A 12-month project began in July 2003 to decide what needs to happen.
- Children who are looked after by local authorities (sometimes referred to as "being in care") may have particular problems. They may not have had help and support from their parents or may not have been attending school regularly. Whilst they are looked after, usually with foster carers or, in a few cases, in children's homes, they may have to move away from their home area and they may have to change school. Some children move around a lot from carer to carer and the change and stress in their lives can make it hard for them to settle in school and make friends. They may not attend or be more likely to be excluded. Many leave school with no educational qualifications.

We are trying to make things better through our Children First programme, by reducing the number of changes of carer and changes of school. Schools must now pay particular attention

to the attendance and education of looked after children by having a senior teacher with specific responsibility for monitoring their performance and developing Personal Education Plans for each pupil. Care plans for children must include details of their education needs and how they are to be met and those who are still looked after until they are old enough to leave school, must be helped by the local authority to pursue their education or follow a training course. The forthcoming Children Bill will include a **new duty on local authorities to promote the education of looked after children**. It will also **remove obstacles to the sharing of information between education and social services departments**.

Information and Advice

In 2001-2004 the first national information and advice project was developed for the Assembly Government by Canlaw-online. This included a database of information for young people and a handbook issued to all 16 year-olds. We are now working with partner organisations and young people to plan a second national project covering the 11-25's and due to run from October 2004-March 2008.

Community Focused Schools

Schools are valuable resources that can play a full part in the life of the communities they serve. The Assembly Government wants to see schools rooted in the wider community, drawing on the community for support and demonstrating the importance of education and training for people of all ages. Many schools recognise the influence of family, peers and the community on pupils' learning and consider the wider needs of learners, including family well-being and health promotion for example.

The Assembly Government sees schools as providing a base for education and training as well as a range of family services such as family support, childcare, health and enterprise promotion, which might include training courses and even commercial use. This expansion of activity is particularly important in areas of deprivation where alternative facilities often do not exist.

We know that many already provide a wide range of services to enhance community life and learning. The Education Act 2002 gives governing bodies increased powers to provide services to the communities they serve. Guidance to assist schools and their partners in developing or enhancing a community focus was issued in December 2003.

Cefn Hengoed Community School is an 11 – 16 mixed comprehensive school of over 700 pupils serving the east side of Swansea. The school's mission statement "If you believe it, you can achieve it" expresses the strength of its dedication to see its students enjoy success.

Much of the school's academic success can be attributed to a commitment to work with its community, which has evolved to the point where the school now caters for learners from 1 to 83 years old. An on-site leisure centre provides first class sporting facilities both for pupils and local community. The school offers provision for community use and lifelong learning that includes:

- an on-site NVQ skills centre;
- a comprehensive adult education programme via the Eastside Initiative;
- a family centre;
- the Jackanory Nursery;
- an in-house learning centre;
- a base for the Glantawe Youth Initiative; and
- a "Learning House" for pupils with attendance difficulties.

Creating an environment for learning

Many schools in Wales are coping with out-dated buildings. Since the Assembly was set up in 1999 there has been increased investment in our school buildings, to meet our commitment that by 2010 all school buildings should be in good physical shape and properly maintained. Local authorities themselves decide which schools should benefit from grant and which works should be carried out at individual schools in light of local need and priorities. There is a commitment to provide £560 million in funding over the next 4 years with local authorities determining the priorities for investment in their own areas.

In his Annual Report 2002, the Children's Commissioner's highlighted pupils' concerns about the state of school toilets. Where capital investment is required Assembly funding can be used. In future schools councils may be able to help school management to develop strategies for improved cleaning and maintenance standards.

School Breakfasts

The Assembly's school breakfast initiative will provide the choice of a free, healthy breakfast at school each day to all pupils in primary schools in Wales by September 2006. It aims to improve the health and concentration of pupils, and to help raise standards of learning and builds on other initiatives aimed at healthy eating and nutrition. At the same time it will provide an additional source of childcare. It will be started in Communities First areas in September 2004, and introduction will take into account the existing out of school breakfast clubs.



AIM 3: THE BEST POSSIBLE HEALTH, FREE FROM ABUSE, VICTIMISATION AND EXPLOITATION



Based on United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Articles 6, 18-20, 24, 26-29, 32-35, 37 and 40



Our aim is to promote health and wellbeing for all children and young people and to ensure timely accessible services for those who experience illness, disability or other problems. In all our policies for children and young people, we are committed to the principle that children are children first and their needs must be met in an appropriate and age-sensitive manner.

We are also committed to ensuring that children are safeguarded from abuse, neglect and exploitation. This is a theme that runs through all services provided for them, but in which health and social services have a lead role.

Priority for those most in need

Children First

While all children need universal health and education services, some children have particular needs that require specialist support if they are to live a fulfilled life. The **Children First** programme is central to delivering better outcomes for those children in greatest need. It has provided funding of almost £72 million since 1999 to improve the management and delivery of local social services to children and young people who are in need and their families, in particular looked after children, care leavers and disabled children. Many in these groups have poorer health and education outcomes and training and employment opportunities than their peers.

The broad priorities and objectives for Children First have remained consistent over the years. They aim to ensure that looked after children and those in need are able to benefit fully from education, health and social care, and are safeguarded. Those with disabilities should have their needs met in the community and those leaving care should be able to move successfully into

adulthood. The programme requires that service users and their carers are involved in planning the services they receive and that local authorities have effective complaints and advocacy services.

Current initiatives to support Children First include work to help local authorities improve the availability of placements for looked after children, the development of the Integrated Children's System and of advocacy services for children in need. We are also strengthening arrangements for reviewing care plans for looked after children and producing National Service Framework modules for disabled children and children in special circumstances.

The **Wassup!** mentoring scheme was set up by Swansea City Council and the Involve Volunteering project in July 2002 to encourage adults to volunteer and befriend children and young people who are looked after. Adults volunteering to be mentors are given appropriate training and undergo security checks before they are able to work with the children and young people. The scheme focuses on activities such as fishing trips, cinema visits and shopping and pays all out of pocket expenses of both the mentor and young person.

The first issue of **Your News**, Newport's newsletter for families who have a disabled child, was published and distributed in Summer 2003. This newsletter will be issued quarterly and aims to inform families of what is going on in the area as well as raise awareness of disability issues among professionals. It contains information on parent support groups, benefits, new sports and activity clubs for children, as well as local services.

There are encouraging signs that the focus of Children First on those at greatest disadvantage is having an effect. The latest statistics show that:

- fewer children are leaving care without at least a basic GCSE qualification;
- almost every young person leaving care at 16 receives a suitable plan for their continuing care; and,
- more child protection cases are being reviewed.

Children First is being continued as a specific grant scheme beyond the original deadline of March 2004.

Integrated Assessment

Agencies and practitioners need to pool their knowledge of the circumstances of individual children, understand the needs of individual children and identify interventions that are most likely to be effective. For example, work on the Children's National Service Framework has begun to look at the needs of disabled children, in response to the views of parents and carers about the services they require. A common approach, across disciplines and agencies, to the core

processes of assessment, care planning, intervention and review of children's cases would help achieve this by reducing the duplication and delay that can arise when different organisations and professions overlap but do not join up.

This approach would encourage the development of a common language for describing and understanding children's needs. It would also require better use to be made of information available from research, inspection and audit to improve understanding of the needs of individual children and to identify the most effective ways of meeting the child's needs.

The Integrated Children's System (ICS) has been developed to support multidisciplinary and inter-agency working with children in need and their families. Social services departments take the lead in this, working with partner agencies including health, education and the independent sector. The ICS builds on the Looking After Children (LAC) system and Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families which are already in use in local authorities. It places the child's needs at the centre of the process and takes full account of parents, family and environmental circumstances and how these impact on the child's welfare and development. It provides a basis for developing a common language across disciplines to describe what is happening to the child.

The system is designed to capture the information practitioners need to support their work with children and their families and provides a basis for authorities and practitioners to deliver the Assembly's objectives for children in need, as set out on the previous page.

Information Sharing

Children and families require services from a range of agencies and professionals, who need to be able to work together and share information appropriately to ensure the provision of services is both well-timed and effective in meeting needs.

Guidance has been developed for Children's and Young People's Partnerships to help them develop protocols to ensure good practice in sharing information for the benefit of children and young people. This also helps them develop specific arrangements for "keeping in touch" with young people between 16-18 who are not in education employment or training.

Working Together to Safeguard Children (National Assembly for Wales, September 2000) says that safeguarding children's welfare "requires professionals and others to share information: about a child's health and development and exposure to possible harm. Often, it is only when information from a number of sources has been shared and is then put together that it becomes clear that a child is at risk of or is suffering harm."

The Data Protection Act 1998, Human Rights Act 1998 and Freedom of Information Act 2000 govern information sharing between agencies and professionals. The complexity of this framework has contributed to professional uncertainty, misunderstanding and variations in practice that inhibit rather than promote information sharing between them. The UK Government has indicated its intention to seek the **removal of barriers to information sharing** and the Assembly Government supports this.

It is clear that all organisations need to develop a common approach towards information control in order to help their staff to understand their responsibilities and manage gathering, storing and sharing of information. Electronic systems can speed up the flow and exchange of information but there must be effective controls to govern practice of managers and practitioners.

We recognise the need to remove the barriers to effective information sharing and work is already under way to develop an Information and Communication Technology strategy for social care (*Informing Social Care*) to match developments in the NHS (*Informing Healthcare*). The strategy will make sure that social care professionals and managers have the information they need to provide care and that clients, carers and the public have the information necessary to make decisions about their own care and to influence the shape of social care services generally. A key objective of the strategy is to make sure there are effective electronic social care records for every client in Wales that can be shared, when it is appropriate to do so.

We will also consider further reforms to enable wider information sharing between different agencies and to ensure that children's welfare is safeguarded. We aim to ensure that forthcoming legislation in this area will give the Assembly the powers necessary to achieve this.

Safeguarding Children

Report of the Victoria Climbié Inquiry

In January 2003, Lord Laming published his report on the death of Victoria Climbié. While the events happened in London, many of the recommendations have application to policy and practice here. The Assembly Government therefore responded in September 2003 to the recommendations concerning our devolved responsibility for social and health services in Wales.

Of the 73 recommendations covered in the response, the majority has been identified as established good practice. On 26 March 2003 the Minister for Health and Social Services wrote to all local authorities, health authorities, NHS trusts and local health boards in Wales, drawing their attention to these recommendations. In addition, all authorities have completed a self-assessment using an electronic tool provided by the Chief Inspector of Social Services. The

results are being analysed and are being followed up with each authority by the Social Services Inspectorate for Wales as part of a more broadly based child protection project. It will involve all authorities and include consideration of how authorities and area child protection committees are developing policies, procedures, protocols and services in response to guidance we have issued.

In November 2003, the Commission for Health Audit and Improvement (CHAI) began an audit of child protection arrangements in the National Health Service in Wales. The Welsh Assembly Government commissioned the audit as part of its response to the Carlile and Laming Reports. The audit examines awareness of their child protection responsibilities, and whether proper systems and procedures are in place to safeguard children and young people. CHAI will report its findings during the early part of 2004. CHAI is also developing a self-assessment tool to help managers and front line staff to measure their standards of practice against national guidance, which will be available in the spring of 2004.

Protection of Children in a Multi-racial and Multi-cultural Society

A Black and Minority Ethnic Child Protection Group has been established to advise how child protection policy and practice can be improved to meet the needs of a multi-racial and multi-cultural society. The Group also looks at the effects of culture, racial harassment, racial discrimination, institutional racism and the need for respect and equality for all individuals. It includes representatives from a wide range of minority ethnic organisations and is expected to report during the first half of 2004.

Child Prostitution

We recognise that child prostitution must be addressed. In May 2000 guidance on *Safeguarding Children Involved in Prostitution* was issued, requiring area child protection committees to enquire into the extent of child prostitution, and provide resources for those dealing with the problem. Children vulnerable to sexual exploitation are identified as a specific group in the Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (SSIW) Development Programme for 2003-2005 and the Inspectorate will work with each local authority in Wales as they implement *Safeguarding Children* guidance.

The Assembly Government recognises that there is also a need to address the underlying causes of children being drawn into prostitution such as experience of abuse and substance misuse. We are working through our other programmes that deal with these wider social issues to minimise the danger of children and young people being drawn into sexual exploitation.

Area Child Protection Committees

Area Child Protection Committees have performed a very useful role. Among other activity in Wales they have produced a set of all-Wales child protection procedures. However, they have not been equally effective in all areas. They can suffer from a relatively low priority in the eyes of some partners, leading to lack of funding, insufficient senior management commitment and limited influence on strategic decisions. The Assembly Government therefore intends to build on and enhance the work of **ACPC's** by placing them on a **statutory basis**, in line with the recommendation of Lord Laming in the Victoria Climbié Inquiry. This will be complemented by **a duty on local authorities, health services, the police and other relevant local bodies to have regard to safeguarding children, promoting their wellbeing and working together through local partnership arrangements.**

The Health of Children and Young People

National Service Framework for Children (NSF)

Ensuring that children and young people do not suffer from abuse or neglect has to be a core element of all our services for them. But we want to do much more than that; we want to promote positive health and well being for them.

The National Service Framework sets out standards to improve the quality of services that children and young people receive from the National Health Service and social services across Wales. This will reduce the variations in provision that currently occur. Standards will apply to services for all children and young people from before they are born until they are 18, though special consideration is being given to services for 18's and over where extra help is needed because of disability or special needs.

The standards are being developed across social services and health with links to education, the voluntary sector and others including parents/carers, children and young people. They are divided into 7 parts:

- Children and Young People Suffering from Acute and Chronic Illness or Injury;
- Improving Health and Well Being for all Children and Young People;
- Disabled Children and Young People;
- Maternity;
- Children and Young People in Special Circumstances;
- Mental Health and Psychological Well Being of Children and Young People; and
- Medicines.

Consultation on the draft standards is planned for June 2004. They will be finished for publication in January 2005. We have sought the views of children and young people through a number of organisations that work with them and through parents and carers. These views were published in October 2003, and will be used to make sure that the standards effectively meet the needs of children and their families.

Health and Well Being for Children and Young People Action Plan

Within the context of the Health and Well Being for Children and Young People Action Plan, we are pursuing issues such as extending the Welsh Network of Healthy School Scheme. We shall continue a range of smoking prevention initiatives such as the annual Smokefree Class Competition and link healthy schools with the work of PE and School Sport Development Centres. The action plan has been made available on the healthwales.org.uk website.

Water coolers are being installed in schools in Communities First areas. The initiative is organised jointly with Welsh Water. The benefits of drinking water on brain function are well documented, and it is hoped to encourage more schools to allow 'water on desks'. Nutritional standards for school meals have been set out for schools and local authorities in regulations and guidance and include encouraging pupils to eat healthy foods. In addition, proposals to provide all primary school children in Wales with free breakfasts are currently being developed. (See Page 31).

Exercise

We are encouraging people in Wales to become more physically active and healthier. In addition, PE and School Sport Action has set ambitious targets to improve the opportunities provided for young people. In every local authority area, with funding in partnership with the Sports Council for Wales, schools and local partners are working together to enhance the range and quality of PE and school sport. This initiative has been developed in partnership with the New Opportunities Fund, which is providing £48m to improve facilities for sport in schools. It also complements the Healthy and Active Lifestyles Framework for Action aim to increase activity levels amongst children and young people.

Under the **PE and School Sport Action Plan**, Caerphilly Development Centre use secondary school specialists to improve the range of activities for primary school pupils and support the move from primary to secondary school in a number of ways. Trained supervisors promote lunchtime playground games and activities and wider use by schools of leisure centres and local clubs to widen opportunities for pupils. Activities are also targeted to encourage greater involvement of girls aged 13-16.

Through its **PE and School Sport Initiative**, the National Opportunities Fund (NOF) has recently agreed support for a range of projects brought forward by local authorities. These include upgrading playgrounds, building floodlit all-weather games areas and improvements to outdoor adventure facilities such as climbing walls. Though these facilities are aimed primarily at improving opportunities for PE and School Sport, they have been developed in consultation with local partners and will also be made available for wider community use.

The aim of improving health is also supported by initiatives such as *Climbing Higher, the Sports and Active Recreation Strategy*, which aims to increase the ways in which we can become more physically active in our daily lives.

Nutrition

The Welsh Assembly Government recognises that a good diet is important to children's health, and to their school performance. *Food and Well Being*, the national nutrition strategy for Wales, was launched in February 2003. It identifies children and young people as a priority group for action. The Assembly's Food and Fitness Health Promotion Grant Scheme provides financial support for community projects that encourage more active lifestyles and healthier eating and is targeted particularly at infants, children and young people and those living in disadvantaged communities.

The Cabinet Sub-Committee on Children and Young People is considering further ways to improve exercise and nutrition for children and young people.

Over 600 schools in Wales are now part of local healthy school schemes. Of the 22 local schemes in place, 18 have now been accredited as part of the Assembly's Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes. Schools in the scheme decide for themselves the important issues to address. For many nutrition is a priority, and more than 300 fruit tuck shops have been set up so far. Tuck shops are often run by pupils and aim to recover their costs.

Comments include:

"Running the school fruit tuck shop was fun"

"I like spending my money"

"Our five year-olds can now subtract 15p from 20p"

"Having a reliable pupil to take charge takes the pressure off me"

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

When the Assembly Government came into office we recognised that mental health services for children and young people had been neglected for a very long time. Mental health services remain largely hidden from public view, coming to political and media attention only at a time of crisis. We have now developed a ten-year strategy, *Everybody's Business* that will take action with the backup of our CAMHS implementation group. The NSF for children (page 37) includes a module on CAMHS and the details are scheduled for public consultation next year.

As the title suggests, mental health services are not the responsibility of the health services alone. Development of the social services aspects of child and adolescent mental health services is one of the priorities in the Children First programme for local authorities (page 32).



AIM 4: ACCESS TO PLAY, LEISURE, SPORTING AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES



Based on United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Articles 15,20,29,31



At all ages, children and young people want places to go to enjoy one another's company. They need to be able to choose their own activities. Play should be free from inappropriate danger – but at the same time, children want to take increasing risks. We need to increase the types of place where children can play while continuing to safeguard their safety. We are tackling this at national, local and community levels.

National Level

At **national level**, we have:

- published our **Play Policy** in October 2002. It is possibly the only national play policy in the world. We are very grateful to Play Wales for their involvement in its creation. An Implementation Group has been set up, including people from the fields of play, childcare, sport and child psychology. It will make recommendations to the Assembly Government by February 2004 on the implementation of the Play Policy. These will be used to decide how any New Opportunities Fund money can be used to increase play provision.
- launched in February 2002 our policy on culture, **Creative Future: Cymru Greadigol**, sets out ways of increasing opportunities for cultural experiences for young people through music, drama, dance, arts, design, technology and sport as well as core academic and vocational subjects. The strategy aims to build on existing good work, for example by the Arts Council and the major National Artistic Companies. The National Museum encourages schools to visit and also takes its exhibits into schools.
- launched **Climbing Higher**, the Assembly Government's Strategy for Sport, which aims to encourage people in Wales to become more physically active and healthier. We believe that the physical development of children and young people is as important as development of literacy and numeracy skills.

- organised a national **free swimming** scheme for children and young people, to encourage greater involvement in swimming and sport in general. It aims to increase use of sport and recreation facilities by children and young people, particularly among girls and young women. It is hoped that the scheme will eventually lead to increases in club membership and improved performances in competitions. This first year is being evaluated to find out how the scheme can be improved in 2004, but early findings show it has led to large rise in participation and that the greatest gains have been in the most deprived communities.
- funded a **personalised travel plan** pilot project that looks at the needs of young people (16-19 year olds) going to college, leisure and social facilities. Following the launch of *A Walking and Cycling Strategy for Wales* we are examining ways of encouraging more young people to walk, or cycle.
- In addition, we are committed to **extend to 16-18 year olds reduced and free bus travel** that is already available to older and disabled people. Consultation with service providers is planned for 2004.
- We also plan to extend **20mph zones and safer routes to school** to make local roads safer for children, encourage exercise and reduce damage to the environment.

Also at the national level, we are developing directions for the **Young People's Fund**, operated by the New Opportunities Fund, which will allow funding to be allocated for work with children and young people in the 0-25 year age group. The exact topic areas for funding will be consulted upon by NOF but it is likely that any funding will target those from the disadvantaged areas that are priorities for Cymorth and Communities First funding. Framework, Children and Young People's Partnerships will be a key mechanism for any decisions at local level. Wales' share of this funding is likely to be around £13 million.

Local Level

At **local level**, improving opportunities for play, leisure and culture is a key part of the planning undertaken by Children's and Young People's Partnerships. It is also a specific element of the Cymorth funding scheme. As part of *Extending Entitlement* each Young People's Partnership is asked to develop a network of support, services and opportunities for young people from 11-25. This is a positive approach designed to ensure that young people can get support and guidance when they need it. It will also provide a range of activities and experiences that will help them grow into well-rounded and fulfilled individuals, having "something to do" ranging from a shelter (see also **Youth Shelters**, page 43 and **Communities First** page 49) to hang out in, to gold award Duke of Edinburgh expeditions.

This planning and funding supports provision at the **community level**. Good links have been established between Healthy Schools and the PE and School Sport Development Centres being established every local authority area to improve the range and quality of PE and school sport for all young people. The Assembly Government has made finance available over 3 years to support this as set out in the PE and School Sport Action Plan for Wales.

We continue to support the provision of cultural, sports and leisure activities through the **medium of Welsh**, both through specific programmes as well as through our support for the Urdd. Additional funding over the next few years will allow the Urdd to employ additional youth workers and increase the range of cultural, sports and leisure activities for children across the whole of Wales.

Integrated Centres

The Assembly Government is working with the New Opportunities Fund and local partnerships to develop at least one integrated centre in each local authority area. These centres will bring together as a minimum open access play, early years education, community training and childcare, together with other family support services such as parent and toddler groups.

Centres are not stand-alone buildings but act as the heart of a network of children's services. This could include, for example, parent and toddler groups, playgroups, childminders, out of school clubs, open access play provision, and other leisure activities for young people, families and communities. Other activities could include parenting support and a base for health visitors. The incorporation within the network of open access adventure play for the whole age range from primary school age to teenagers is the unique Welsh element of the centres. This reflects the importance placed on play by the Assembly Government and builds on the evidence of successful projects in Wales such as the Venture on Caia Park in Wrexham.

Integrated centres represent an opportunity both for co-operation between the voluntary and statutory sectors and for multi-disciplinary team working between different professions.

Youth shelters

Creating adventure play facilities is closely linked to the provision of safe meeting places in local communities - "places to go" - which Funky Dragon has raised as a priority in its meetings with Ministers. As a result, funding was awarded under the Communities First programme to provide leisure and recreation equipment to the most deprived areas across Wales. Activities included the repair or provision of outdoor play equipment and building skateboard and bike parks and youth shelters. Part of this funding has supported the establishment of 38 youth shelters across Wales.

Childcare

The Assembly Government is determined to boost childcare provision. Formal childcare offers children a good quality play experience, at the same time as their parents are able to take part in work or training. Childcare provision is crucial to wider Assembly Government policies such as equality of opportunity, tackling poverty and economic inactivity, and supporting the Welsh Language. We are setting up a new task group chaired by the Deputy Minister for Economic Development and Transport, Dr Brian Gibbons AM, to make sure we are taking every measure possible to support childcare. We are taking new action with local partnerships to maximise access to European funds for childcare. These initiatives build on our Childcare Action Plan announced in 2002, which included the commissioning with the WDA of new research into the economic development aspects of childcare.

The Cymorth fund supports childcare by assisting with the development of new provision and providing sustainability grants to existing providers, whether nurseries, playgroups, out of school clubs or childminders. The fund also supports a Children's Information Service in each area to make sure that parents can easily find out about childcare that is available locally. In April 2002 we introduced new regulations and minimum standards to improve the quality and safety of childcare in Wales, and we will start a review of these in 2004.

Childminder Start-up Grants The Cymorth grant works together with support from the Welsh Development Agency to encourage new childminder businesses. Anyone wishing to become a childminder receives free training, together with free advice and support to negotiate the registration process. They are also provided with a free pack of sample documentation and equipment from the National Childminding Association. Local partnerships may add to this package for new childminders in disadvantaged areas or for childminders wishing to cater for children with special needs. 232 new childminder businesses started with the help of this package between April 2002 and November 2003.

The number of out of school childcare clubs has been growing over recent years, with support from the New Opportunities Fund (NOF). 22,000 new out of school childcare places have been created with NOF in Wales since 1999. Clubs provide children with play opportunities, run by trained professional staff, and reassure parents in work or training that their children are being looked after in a safe environment at the beginning or end of the school day. The Assembly Government funds Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs to develop clubs. Following the end of funding from the New Opportunities Fund, Cymorth funding has been expanded to pay for further growth. Priority is given to disadvantaged areas that also feature in the Communities First programme.

The enhanced powers available to school governing bodies to provide services for the community now enable them to provide childcare as well as opportunities for play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities.



**AIM 5: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
ARE TREATED WITH RESPECT AND
HAVE THEIR RACE AND CULTURAL
IDENTITY RECOGNISED**



Based on United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Articles 2,7,8,12-17 and 20



Implementation of this core aim is fundamental to the Assembly Government's approach to children and young people. It has therefore been dealt with in detail in the opening section of this paper – see paragraphs on participation on page 2 and respect on page 4.



AIM 6: A SAFE HOME AND COMMUNITY THAT SUPPORTS PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING



Based on United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Articles 19,20,25,27, 32-35, 37 and 40



Children and young people know that they live in a world where there is crime, racial and sexual harassment and bullying. Some are victims, some perpetrators and others both. They would like help in dealing effectively with the pressures this causes, including having trusted adults to turn to for advice and support. Safety is also important. At the same time as children and young people need to learn to cope with appropriate degrees of risk, they should have a warm and secure home in which to live and

a locality free from unacceptable dangers.

Preventing Homelessness

Homelessness can affect all kinds of people, but some young people are particularly at risk. Our National Homelessness Strategy sets out how we intend to tackle homelessness. It includes provisions specifically for young people covering many areas, including health, disability, substance misuse, offending and social services.

Young people leaving home often need support and new skills to make a successful move to independent living. All Young People's Partnerships will be asked to investigate the housing and support needs of young people in their area and work with local housing services to meet them.

Care leavers are particularly vulnerable and the strategy aims to improve joint working between housing and social services in local authorities. Local authorities must keep in touch with care leavers up to age 21, or up to age 25 for those who are in education or training. They must appoint someone called a Personal Adviser who will keep in touch, co-ordinate support and develop a Pathway Plan with the young person. The Plan must include accommodation arrangements.

We have included care leavers, 16 and 17 year olds and those aged 18 –20 at risk of sexual or financial exploitation as priority groups for whom local authorities must provide housing. We aim to stop use of bed and breakfast accommodation for families and young people. For young people who want to use private sector accommodation, bond schemes are funded to give landlords assurance that their bonds will be honoured. We have funded *Housemate*, a learning pack for young people about housing and homelessness for use in schools and youth clubs.

Youth Offending

The draft All Wales Youth Offending Strategy provides national arrangements for preventing offending and re-offending among children and young people, building on a central set of principles. The final document will issue in 2004.

The most effective way to prevent youth offending and to secure the welfare of children and young people in Wales is to stop them entering the youth justice system in the first place. To achieve this the Assembly Government believes that there must be a far greater emphasis on prevention activities. Good practice in Wales must be built upon. For example, in 2003 more than 3,000 young people took part in **Splash Cymru** schemes across Wales. These schemes provide school holiday activities that are proving to be effective in preventing young people engaging in offending behaviour.

Young offenders have the same entitlements as all other young people in Wales, although they may need more help to obtain appropriate training, education and wider experiences and we are working to increase these opportunities. They also require provision of opportunities to meet their needs and help them live full and constructive lives following a period of punishment.

Drugs - Substance Misuse

The Welsh Substance Misuse Strategy was launched in May 2000. One of its priorities is to help children, young people (and adults) keep away from drugs and drink alcohol sensibly, as part of a healthy lifestyle. It aims to make sure that all children and young people can take part in education programmes within schools. The Substance Misuse Circular 17/02 *Substance Misuse Children and Young People* was issued in June 2002 to every school and youth service in Wales. It provides best practice guidance on developing policies and programmes for substance misuse education and recommends that children and young people should be involved when programmes are planned.

In April 2003, local responsibility for substance misuse was transferred to the 22 Community Safety Partnerships in Wales. Each Partnership is currently writing a strategy and action plan for its area based on local needs, including children and young people.

Safe Routes for Schools

Since the Safe Routes to School initiative was launched in 1999 over £11 million has been provided to local authorities to take schemes forward. Currently 68 projects, covering approximately 228 schools, have been funded. Successful bids have to demonstrate good practice by schools and officials regularly meet staff and pupils in schools and road safety officers to discuss the work. Child Pedestrian Training Co-ordinators are being funded in each authority to set up and run practical child pedestrian training schemes. Initially this is being funded for a 3-year period. Children across Wales are now learning road safety skills at the roadside instead of in the classroom. Consultants are currently evaluating the scheme.

A key safety factor of the Ystradgynlais Safe Routes to School scheme was the upgrade of an existing corrugated metal underpass beneath the busy A4067. Using Assembly funding a project was established to design and paint the underpass using an Artist in Residence who worked with young people from two schools, Gurnos Primary and Maes y Dderwen High, and the Acorn project at Ystradgynlais Youth Centre. Their work has been recognised with a UK National Best Safety Improvement for Pedestrians Award from the sustainable transport charity Sustrans.

A Road Safety Strategy was launched in January 2003 to improve safety generally. Part of the Strategy deals with children and a sub-group of the Wales Road Safety Forum has been established to look at children's road safety issues. These include causes of child casualties, road safety needs of children in different age groups and how to encourage greater walking and cycling activity by children. Children and young people are involved in assessing examples of good (and not so good) practice in the scheme to help improve road safety.

The Assembly Government launched its Walking and Cycling Strategy for Wales in December 2003, aimed at increasing pedestrian and cycle use, making provision for walkers and cyclists accessible and promoting walking and cycling as viable forms of transport

Both the Road Safety and Walking and Cycling Strategies emphasise the links between transport and improving health.



AIM 7: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE NOT DISADVANTAGED BY POVERTY



Based on United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Articles 6,26,27,28

The Assembly Government believes that no child should be disadvantaged because of poverty. We have set up a **Child Poverty Task Group**, which includes a wide range of representatives of the NHS, voluntary sector, local government and children's organisations. The Group will make recommendations on a child poverty strategy to ensure that policies and programmes are making the best possible contribution to tackling the problem. In its work, it will take account of the need to work alongside the UK Government in areas such as taxation and child poverty, which lie outside the functions of the Assembly Government. It will also make recommendations on measures that can be used to demonstrate progress in dealing with child poverty. The Task Group is due to report in March 2004, and we shall produce a child poverty strategy based on its work.

In the meantime, many Assembly programmes have an impact on child poverty. Two in particular are aimed directly at it – Communities First and Cymorth.

Communities First

The Communities First programme aims to reduce poverty and improve the lives of people in the most disadvantaged areas in Wales. Each of the 142 Communities First areas has already set up, or is in process of setting up, a Partnership. These are made up of community groups and local people, statutory organisations such as health and local authorities, voluntary organisations and businesses, and decide the community's priorities for improving their areas. These priorities are set out in Community Action Plans.

Each of the Communities First Action Plans will make sure that improvements are made for children and young people, and offer them the opportunity to influence the services that affect them locally. Each Action Plan should focus on helping young people to find work and encouraging them to develop skills and take part in further education. Health advice should be provided for young people in an acceptable way and each community should have a forum in which the views of all people, including the young, are listened to and acted upon.

Children and young people should have plenty of opportunities to get fully involved in local Communities First Partnership activities across Wales. This may include planning and providing services for local communities and, as part of the process, learning to be active citizens. Plans for development of further activities and experiences are part of Young People's Partnership planning in each local authority. A practical guide on the involving children and young people is being prepared.

Under preparatory work and capacity building, Communities First has funded 39 full and part-time youth workers across Wales.

A Young People's "Community of Interest" in Pembrokeshire has been set up to raise economic activity and increase the employability of disadvantaged young people. The work will be county wide, while focussing particularly on Neyland West, Haverfordwest Garth and Milford Haven.

An example of where capacity building funding was given was the "Wheels Project" in Llandudno. Here, the Communities First co-ordinator has organised a bicycle repair group in response to a suggestion from a member of the community. He brought together those interested, including the community police officer, and workshops are now held every fortnight. Young people are taught to repair their own bikes or work in those donated, there is the opportunity to be rewarded with a bike for good behaviour. The bikes are also available to local people for health reasons or to improve employment opportunities. The project is also a way to develop better relationships between the community, the police and voluntary organisations.

The Prince's Trust – Cymru has been awarded a grant of almost £1m under Communities First for the period 2002-06 for its U-FIRST initiative. Ten Communities First areas throughout Wales have been selected and affiliated to the regional offices of the organisation. This initiative has enabled for a young person to be appointed for each of the ten communities involved: directly recruited from the community of which they have had experience and which they are to serve. Each is following a course to help their personal and academic development while being supported by the Prince's Trust to improve the lives of young people in the area.

Cymorth – the Children and Youth Support Fund

Cymorth - the Children and Youth Support Fund has provided funding of almost £40 million for the financial year 2003-4 to improve the life chances of children and young people from disadvantaged areas. Projects supported by Cymorth fall under six themes:

- family support, such as teaching parenting skills;
- health improvement - for example, 'drop-in' health advice service, healthy school scheme;
- play and leisure, including playgroups and holiday and mobile play schemes;
- empowerment, participation and active citizenship – this can cover the costs of local children and youth forums as well as other activities;
- training, personal support and information, such as 'drop-in' youth information services or support for young people not attending education/training; and,
- developing childcare provision, including childminder start up grants and finance for out of school clubs.

Activities funded by Cymorth cover the following areas:

- focus on disadvantaged neighbourhoods, and particularly Communities First areas;
- partnership working;
- user involvement;
- adding value to mainstream services;
- early preventative intervention;
- delivery from integrated centres and networks;
- inclusion; and,
- evidence-based practice.

A report on achievements so far will be published for wide circulation in 2004.

PART 4: SETTING PRIORITIES AND EVALUATION

Introduction

This chapter sets out for consultation a draft national approach to developing policy, improving services for children and young people, and evaluating the difference made to their lives so that achievements can be demonstrated.

Background

The opening chapter of this paper set out the Assembly Government's commitment to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and our seven Core Aims for children and young people. They are our commitments in principle. But we also need to develop a method of measuring the impact of the Framework planning process, and of helping local partners to work to the same objectives as each other and the Assembly Government. This chapter therefore proposes a structure of objectives, targets and indicators. We should be very interested in hearing your views on what we have set out.

We aim to describe the differences we want to make to the lives of children and young people. We shall evaluate how we are doing through a variety of methods including the collection of statistical data, research into the effects on the lives of individuals and groups and the assessment of particular services and programmes. We do not wish to set local priorities. But we do want to make sure that those who set them use the same language and are working towards the same overall goals.

Statistics currently collected are set out in *A Statistical Focus on Children in Wales*: www.wales.gov.uk/keypubstatisticsforwalesheadline/content/compendia/2002/hdw20020614-e.htm. This chapter reviews data collection and recommends changes that need to be made to support effective analysis of the impact of current policy priorities and objectives.

Developing the Programme Tool

The following sections propose a tool to help strengthen programme design, implementation and evaluation. It provides a way of linking policies and objectives for children and young people that underpin Framework Partnerships, fitting with the UN Convention and Seven Core Aims. It also provides a basis for an evaluation strategy to determine the Frameworks' effectiveness and a way for partnerships and the Assembly to work together. It should help us to:

- organise our thinking and co-ordinate actions across sectors and services;
- relate activities and investment to expected results;
- identify areas where evaluation or research is needed;
- set performance indicators; and
- identify overlaps and inconsistencies across policy, evaluation and research areas.

We propose that those producing plans under the Framework should follow these steps:

Step 1: Set out the Core Aims

The Core Aims provide a common framework for planning for children and young people throughout Wales. Almost all activities will contribute something to more than one Core Aim. The cross-cutting nature of children's needs is one of the main reasons we have developed the Framework planning process. However, for the purposes of planning, it is necessary to decide which Core Aim is the **main** one an activity relates to.

Step 2: Define the outcome to be achieved by the plan

This is **why** we carry out the activity and summarises the impact it will have. It may describe how the lives of children and young people will be changed as a result.

Step 3: Define the Objectively Verifiable Indicator (OVI)

The basic principle of the indicators is that "if you can measure it, you can manage it". Indicators demonstrate results. As performance measures, they describe how to recognise achievement of objectives. There is no cause and effect relationship but they define in measurable detail the performance levels required by objectives in the left-hand column.

Indicators may be quantified and timed and then become targets. There should be as few indicators as possible – only those required to clarify what must be accomplished to satisfy the objective stated.

Step 4: Define the Means of Verification (MOV)

The Means of Verification (MOV) describe the sources of information that will demonstrate what has been accomplished - sources of information to demonstrate what has happened. This will help to design the evaluation process and strategy, for example if a survey or research programme may be needed, or new measures are required.

Figures 1-7 set out proposals for each of the seven core aims. This offers, for the first time, a basis for a structured approach to planning with common objectives and indicators for all

services for children and young people across the whole of Wales. This will be an important step and, before incorporating the proposal in guidance, we would wish to know your views. Please send your responses by **Friday 7 May 2004** to:

David Middleton
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Welsh Assembly Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff CF10 3 NQ

Or email david.middleton@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Please note that responses may be published, along with the name of the sender.

Core Aim 1: A Flying Start in Life.

Outcomes	Indicators	Means of Verification
<p>Children (0-3) to be able to develop to their maximum potential in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Health and physical development ▪ Learning and intellectual development ▪ Social and emotional development 	<p>Infant mortality rate and causes</p> <p>Numbers of mothers breastfeeding at 6 weeks and 4 months</p> <p>Numbers of infants with low birth weight</p> <p>Immunisation and vaccination status</p> <p>Screening tests for particular conditions.</p> <p>Patients consulting GP's 0-4, 5-15, 16-17, by condition</p> <p>Average number of decayed, missing or filled teeth at 5, 12 and 14 years.</p> <p>Developmental checks for pre-school entrants at 2 years including language and play development</p> <p>Developmental checks for pre-school entrants at 2 years including social development</p> <p>Families reached by parenting support programmes and perceptions of success</p> <p>Measures of access to and take-up of safe play and social activities</p> <p>Day care services for children: full daycare childminders and playgroups</p> <p>Numbers of children in Welsh medium daycare</p>	<p>Office for National Statistics</p> <p>National Community Child Health Database</p> <p>GP Morbidity Database</p> <p>British Association for Study of Community Dentistry</p> <p>National Community Child Health Database</p> <p>National Community Child Health Database</p> <p>Cymorth progress reports</p> <p>Cymorth progress reports</p> <p>Cymorth progress reports CSIW</p> <p>Data provided to Welsh Language Board by Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin</p>

Core Aim 2: A Comprehensive Range of Education Training and Learning Opportunities

Outcomes	Indicators	Means of Verification
<p>Children and young people are motivated and able to develop and acquire necessary educational and training skills, including a sound foundation for learning</p>	<p>Proportion of children who enjoy school</p> <p>Attendance figures</p> <p>Numbers of primary age pupils in classes below 30</p> <p>Numbers of young people achieving level 2 (intermediate) or level 3 (advanced) qualifications by the age of 25</p> <p>Numbers of young people 16-18 not in Employment, Education or Training</p> <p>% of 15 year olds leaving full time education without qualifications</p> <p>Numbers of 16-18 year olds without qualifications</p>	<p>Health Behaviour of School-aged Child Study</p> <p>Schools Census</p> <p>September Class Size Count</p> <p>NafW data collection</p> <p>National Statistics Labour Force Survey</p> <p>National Statistics Labour Force Survey</p>
<p>All children and young people motivated and able to develop and acquire necessary personal and social skills</p>	<p>Indicators of support and opportunities available</p>	<p>Young People Partnership Audits</p> <p>Extending Entitlement Evaluation</p>
<p>Children and young people able to receive education in the medium of Welsh</p>	<p>Percentage of pupils in Welsh-medium teaching at primary and secondary levels</p> <p>Welsh teaching in secondary schools years 7 to 11</p> <p>Medium of delivery and assessment for enrolments of 16-18 year olds in Further Education in Wales</p>	<p>School Census</p> <p>School Census</p> <p>ELWa Individualised Student Records</p>

Outcomes	Indicators	Means of Verification
<p>Improved educational outcomes for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Black and Minority Ethnic pupils particularly those for whom English is a second language, including Travellers ▪ pupils with Special Educational Needs ▪ pupils who are looked after 	<p>Attainment 7,11, 14, GCSE A level: Numbers of young people achieving level 2 (intermediate) or level 3 (advanced) qualifications by the age of 25 Numbers of young people 16-18 not in Employment, Education or Training</p> <p>Progression in performance of pupils with SEN</p> <p>Proportion of children looked after:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ excluded from school; ▪ leaving school with at least one GCSE/ GVNQ 	<p>Pupil level annual School Census – central pupil level database – will allow data to be analysed by ethnicity.</p> <p>Local Authorities SEN Benchmarking Club</p> <p>Children First programme monitoring data. Pupil level annual School Census data</p>

Core Aim 3: The Best Possible Health, Free from Abuse, Victimisation and Exploitation

Outcomes	Indicators	Means of Verification
Improved quality and equity of health and social care services for all children and young people	Childhood mortality rate - population under 18 Children in need proportions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Registering with Dentist ▪ Registering with GP ▪ Take-up of immunisations ▪ Births to under-16's 	Office of National Statistics (ONS) registration Children First programme monitoring data
Improved treatment and prevention outcomes for children and young people who are or may become mentally ill	CAMHS measures Prevalence of clinical adolescent depression/anxiety	Mental Health Morbidity Survey
Improved child protection outcomes	Proportion of looked after children:with recent health checks; leaving care registered with a GP; in touch with approved contact at 19 years; homeless at 19 yr.; Number of cases of same child suffering significant harm more than once.	Children First programme monitoring data.
Quality of practice meeting needs of BME communities		Monitoring arrangements will be considered by the Task Group on Child Protection in BME communities.

Outcomes

Healthy options are available to children and young people, and they choose them in respect of:

- smoking cessation
- diet
- exercise
- sexual health behaviour

Indicators

Data on lifestyles of 11-16 year olds.

Numbers involved in initiatives, e.g. Smokebugs, Smokefree Class, Adolescent smoking cessation

Numbers involved in initiatives, e.g. number of fruit tuck shops, water coolers, healthy breakfasts in schools. Results of projects funded from the Food and Fitness grant scheme

Links made between local healthy school schemes and PE and school sport co-ordinators

Number of schools using The Class Moves!

Number of primary schools with health promoting playgrounds

Measures of participation in activity

Awareness of STI campaign

Incidence of STI

Conceptions by age of mother (under-16 and under-18) and outcome maternity or termination

Means of Verification

Health Behaviour of School-aged Children (HBSC) study

Database; half-yearly progress reports

Welsh National Health Service Study half-yearly reports

Annual reports and external evaluation

Welsh National Health Service Study half-yearly reports

Sport and Active Recreation Strategy

Commissioned research

Public Health Laboratory Service data

Office for National Statistics

Core Aim 4: Play, Leisure, Sporting and Cultural Activities

Outcomes	Indicators	Means of Verification
Increased levels of and access to provision.	Measures of participation in curricular and extra-curricular activities of primary and secondary school pupils Time spent watching TV, playing computer games at ages 11, 13 and 15.	Biennial Participation Updates by the Sports Council for Wales Health Behaviour in School-aged Children Survey
To improve the social well-being and personal development of children and young people across Wales.	Numbers achieving access to open access play; holiday schemes; un-staffed provision. Percentage of disabled children using inclusive play/leisure services	Cymorth programme reports; local play strategies Children First programme monitoring data
Increased opportunities for involvement of young people in a range of activities in their language of choice	Levels of involvement in play, leisure, sports and cultural activities through the medium of Welsh and other languages	laith Pawb measures of projects aimed at increasing opportunities: Provision of activities in other languages.
Improved access to provision through increase in transport provision and improved affordability	Increased availability of transport	Transport Framework for Wales
Increased access to and opportunities for participation in cultural experiences	Attendance in arts activity targeted at school pupils and young people	Arts Council of Wales Annual Survey of Revenue Funded Organisations

Core Aim 5: Treated with respect and have race and cultural identity recognised

Outcomes	Indicators	Means of Verification
<p>Organisations and adults take the opinions and views of all children and young people into account when decisions are made that affect them.</p>	<p>Children report changes – increased participation and respect in the way they are treated by decision-makers</p> <p>Organisations can give examples of effective participation.</p> <p>Forums' satisfaction that they influence decision-making</p> <p>Greater attention is given to children and youth issues and perspectives at all levels</p> <p>Social Services Children's Plan specify consultation process for service users and carers</p>	<p>Millennium Cohort Study to include citizenship/participation measures</p> <p>Views of children and young people gathered through Monitoring and Evaluation. Cymorth programme reports</p> <p>Forums write annual reports</p> <p>Changes in media reporting.</p> <p>Planning - audit of relevant organisation annual reports, Framework Partnerships' annual reports</p> <p>Children First programme monitoring data</p>
<p>Children and Young People are empowered and progress to active citizenship.</p>	<p>Children and young people can give examples of effective participation and their influence on decision making</p> <p>Levels of participation in elections</p>	<p>Reports from local Forums and School councils</p> <p>Planning - audit of relevant organisation annual reports. Statements made in all relevant documents</p> <p>National Statistics Office social trends (for UK)</p>
<p>Improved advocacy service to be available to children and young people in Wales</p>	<p>Numbers contacting or referred to advocacy services</p> <p>Authorities make arrangements for independent to provide independent visitors where needed</p>	<p>Returns from advocacy services</p> <p>Children First programme monitoring data</p>

Core Aim 6: A Safe Home and Community

Outcomes	Indicators	Means of Verification
<p>To reduce incidence of crime, racial and sexual harassment and bullying, and provide support to victims.</p>	<p>Deaths of children from selected causes,</p> <p>Children living in households free from violence.</p> <p>Data on children as offenders and as victims of crime</p>	<p>Office for National Statistics</p> <p>British Crime Survey Crime and Criminal Justice Unit, Home Office</p>
<p>To increase availability of warm and safe homes and safe communities for children and young people.</p>	<p>Child and young people (0-15) pedestrian casualties</p> <p>Numbers of households:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ with dependent children in temporary accommodation; ▪ with dependent children statutorily homeless; <p>Elements included in plans and in measures – safety standards for use of landfill sites for example</p>	<p>STATS19 Police Data on Pedestrian Injuries All-Wales Injury Surveillance System (in development)</p> <p>Statutory Homelessness statistical return WHO12</p> <p>Analysis of plans/planning applications</p>

Core Aim 7: Children and Young People not disadvantaged by Poverty

Outcomes	Indicators	Means of Verification
To reduce the numbers of children and young people living in poverty	Recommendations to be made by Child Poverty Strategy Task Group	

THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

This version, taken from a leaflet produced by Save the Children, CEWC-CYMRU and UNICEF, is used with permission.

Article 1:

Everyone under 18 years of age has all the rights in this Convention.

Article 2:

The Convention applies to everyone whatever their race, religion, abilities, whatever they think or say and whatever type of family they come from.

Article 3:

All organisations concerned with children should work towards what is best for each child.

Article 4:

Governments should make these rights available to children.

Article 5:

Governments should respect the rights and responsibilities of families to direct and guide their children so that, as they grow, they learn to use their rights properly.

Article 6:

All children have the right of life. Governments should ensure that children survive and develop healthily.

Article 7:

All children have the right to a legally registered name, the right to a nationality and the right to know and, as far as possible, to be cared for by their parents.

Article 8:

Governments should respect children's right to a name, a nationality and family ties.

Article 9:

Children should not be separated from their parents unless it is for their own good, for example if a parent is mistreating or neglecting a child. Children whose parents have separated have the right to stay in contact with both parents, unless this might hurt the child.

Article 10:

Families who live in different countries should be allowed to move between those countries so that parents and children can stay in contact or get back together as a family.

Article 11:

Governments should take steps to stop children being taken out of their own country illegally.

Article 12:

Children have the right to say what they think should happen, when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account.

Article 13:

Children have the right to get and to share information as long as the information is not damaging to them or to others.

Article 14:

Children have the right to think and believe what they want and to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Parents should guide their children on these matters.

Article 15:

Children have the right to meet together and to join groups and organisations, as long as this does not stop other people from enjoying their rights.

Article 16:

Children have a right to privacy. The law should protect them from attacks against their way of life, their good name, their families and their homes.

Article 17:

Children have the right to reliable information from the mass media. Television, radio and newspapers should provide information that children can understand, and should not promote materials that could harm children.

Article 18:

Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their children, and should always consider what is best for each child. Governments should help parents by providing services to support them, especially if both parents work.

Article 19:

Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for, and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.

Article 20:

Children who cannot be looked after by their own family must be looked after properly, by people who respect their religion, culture and language.

Article 21:

When children are adopted the first concern must be what is best for them. The same rules should apply whether the children are adopted in the country where they were born or taken to live in another country.

Article 22:

Children who come into a country as refugees should have the same rights as children born in that country.

Article 23:

Children who have any kind of disability should have special care and support so that they can lead full and independent lives.

Article 24:

Children have the right to good quality health care and to clean water, nutritious food and a clean environment so that they will stay healthy. Rich countries should help poorer countries achieve this.

Article 25:

Children who are looked after by their local authority rather than their parents should have their situation reviewed regularly.

Article 26:

The Government should provide extra money for the children of families in need.

Article 27:

Children have a right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and mental needs. The Government should help families who cannot afford to provide this.

Article 28:

Children have a right to an education. Discipline in schools should respect children's human dignity. Primary education should be free. Wealthy countries should help poorer countries achieve this.

Article 29:

Education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full. It should encourage children to respect their parents, and their own and other cultures.

Article 30:

Children have a right to learn and use the language and customs of their families, whether these are shared by the majority of people in the country or not.

Article 31:

All children have a right to relax and play, and to join a wide range of activities.

Article 32:

The Government should protect children from work that is dangerous or might harm their health or their education.

Article 33:

The Government should provide ways of protecting children from dangerous drugs.

Article 34:

The Government should protect children from sexual abuse.

Article 35:

The Government should make sure that children are not abducted or sold.

Article 36:

Children should be protected from any activities that could harm their development.

Article 37:

Children who break the law should not be treated cruelly. They should not be put in prison with adults and should be able to keep in contact with their families.

Article 38:

Governments should not allow children under 15 to join the army. Children in war zones should receive special protection.

Article 39:

Children who have been neglected or abused should receive special help to restore their self-respect.

Article 40

Children who are accused of breaking the law should receive legal help. Prison sentences for children should only be used for the most serious offences.

Article 41:

If the laws of a particular country protect children better than the articles of the Convention, then those laws should apply.

Article 42:

The Government should make the Convention known to all parents and children.