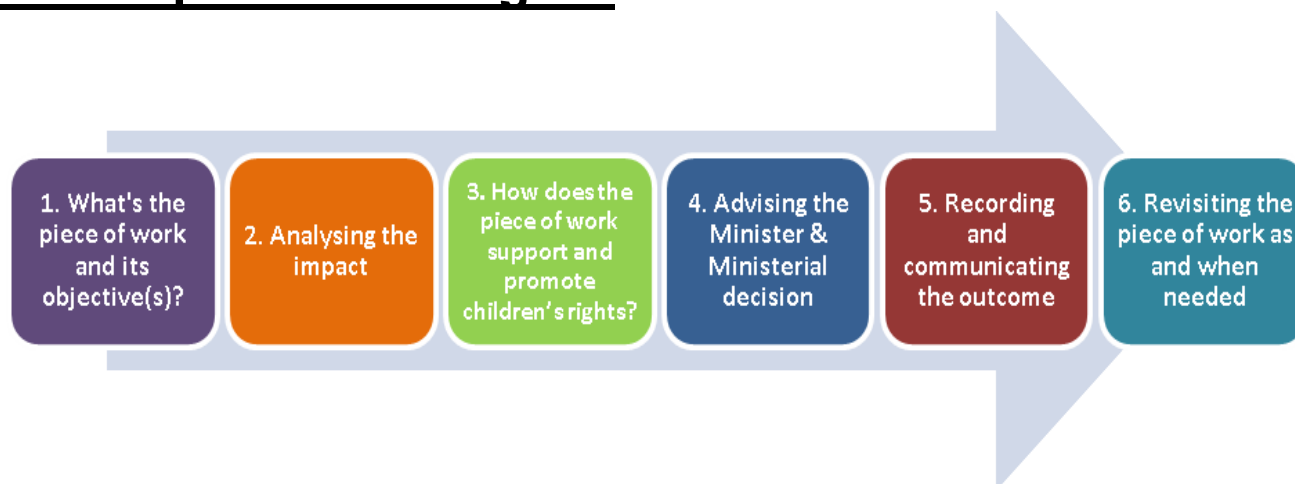




Children's Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA)

Title / Piece of work:	Provision of an all-Wales demand-led energy efficiency and fuel poverty scheme to succeed <i>Warm Homes Nest</i> .
Related SF / LF number (if applicable)	
Name of Official:	Paul Moyle
Department:	Environment & Rural Affairs
Date:	July 2017
Signature:	<i>P Moyle</i>

Six Steps to Due Regard



Step 1. What's the piece of work and its objective(s)?

The Welsh Government has a statutory obligation to eradicate fuel poverty, as far as is reasonably practicable, in all households in Wales by 2018. We have limited powers to tackle low income and energy prices, making the eradication of fuel poverty a real challenge, but we can make a significant difference by improving the energy efficiency of homes in Wales.

Wales has some of the oldest and least thermally-efficient building stock in Europe. The prevalence of older buildings in Wales' stock leaves a considerable legacy of non-energy efficient features. Therefore, it simply takes more energy to keep our homes warm than elsewhere in Europe, and this drives up energy bills. Improving the energy efficiency of homes is the most sustainable way to reduce energy bills in the long term, allowing households to keep warm at a more affordable cost.

Our Fuel Poverty Strategy sets out the actions we will take to reduce the number of households in Wales living in fuel poverty. Key actions include:

- Provision of a demand-led all-Wales fuel poverty scheme targeted at those householders most in need and living in the most energy inefficient homes, complemented by area-based investment.
- Provision of well-coordinated advice and support services to ensure that all householders in Wales can access help to reduce their fuel bills, maximise their income, improve the energy performance of their homes and reduce their risk of becoming fuel poor.

We are currently doing this effectively through our energy efficiency and fuel poverty programme, *Welsh Government Warm Homes*, which includes the demand-led *Nest* and area-based *Arbed* schemes.

As the current *Nest* scheme contract expires in March 2018, we are undertaking a Children's Rights Impact Assessment on a new demand-led energy efficiency and fuel poverty scheme to succeed *Nest* from April 2018. The scheme is designed to provide households in Wales with access to a range of free, impartial advice and support to help them reduce their energy bills and keep warm at a more affordable cost. This support includes a referral for a package of free home energy improvements for certain low

income, vulnerable and energy inefficient households, subject to eligibility criteria. This criteria includes you or someone you live with being on a Means Tested Benefit, the property having an energy efficiency rating of E.F or G and the domestic property being privately owned or privately rented..

Marketing of the Nest scheme is done through a variety of methods: via the Nest website, radio advertising, community engagement events, direct marketing and collaborative partnerships with a wide variety of organisations to help reach those most in need.

Evidence from a number of social research reports¹, along with lessons learnt from the existing scheme, were used to develop proposals for the new scheme which include revised eligibility criteria to improve targeting and the provision of in-home advice to eligible households. Support will be prioritised to those households most in need (i.e. low income, vulnerable and energy inefficient households).

A consultation on the draft proposals was held between 27 July 2016 and 19 October 2016. Responses to the consultation were published on 23 December 2016.

The consultation included organisations such as Children in Wales and details of the consultation were included in the 'End Child Poverty Network' and 'Children in Wales' e-briefings.

Key aims and objectives for new scheme

The aim of the scheme is to succeed and build upon the existing *Warm Homes Nest* scheme with key objectives to:

- reduce the impact of fuel poverty on households in Wales and, as far as reasonably practicable, eradicate fuel poverty;
- create green jobs and business opportunities for the people of Wales; and
- reduce the greenhouse gas emissions in the domestic sector.

In line with the Fuel Poverty Strategy 2010, support is targeted at those households most in need and living in the most energy inefficient homes.

The key response from Children's stakeholders was that the revised criteria will exclude a significant number of households with children currently negatively affected by fuel poverty.. Evidence shows that there is a negative impact on health outcomes for children of all ages from living in energy inefficient home, where health problems can be aggravated and exacerbated, which will often cause suffering to the child and require more costly health intervention .Additionally the evidence is overwhelming that low income households with a disabled adult and/or a child are at greater risk of fuel poverty than most other household types.

Full responses to the consultation can be found at
<https://beta.gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2018-01/170110-full-responses-en.pdf>

¹ <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/understanding-characteristics-low-income-households-risk-living-cold-homes/?lang=en>, <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/production-estimated-levels-fuel-poverty/?lang=en>, <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/evaluation-nest-energy-efficiency-scheme/?lang=en>.

Step 2. Analysing the impact

The Welsh Government has published a revised Child Poverty Strategy for Wales². This includes a new objective on supporting families living in poverty to increase household income through debt and financial advice, action to address the “poverty premium” (where households pay disproportionately more for goods and services) and action to mitigate the impacts of welfare reform.

The provision of advice and support for households on the lowest incomes and living in the most energy inefficient properties will make an important contribution to delivering this key objective.

The new scheme will also deliver on a number of actions set out in the Fuel Poverty Strategy 2010 and Energy Efficiency Strategy 2016. The Fuel Poverty Strategy in particular sets out actions to improve the energy efficiency of the homes of low income and vulnerable households to help them heat their homes at a more affordable cost and reduce levels of fuel poverty in Wales. This includes households with children.

There are an estimated 1.6 million children in the UK who are living in fuel poverty (ACE, 2013). Children living in certain household types are particularly at risk of living in cold homes, namely single parent households, low income households, households in rural areas, households headed by a black or minority ethnic parent and households headed by a parent with a long term health condition (National Children’s Bureau, 2012). Nest engage with specific young children’s organisations such as Barnardos Flying Start and family centres.

Members of households with children, particularly children aged less than five years, spend an above-average amount of time at home, increasing their exposure to the harmful health effects of living in cold homes. There is evidence that cold indoor temperatures can negatively affect children’s health, well-being and educational attainment. For school-aged children, there can be harmful consequences for educational attainment if school is missed due to cold home related illness (Liddell, 2008). A lack of a warm place to do homework may also cause children to fall behind in their studies (Marmot Review Team, 2011).

Fuel poverty can increase social isolation because of a reluctance to invite friends into a cold damp home. High fuel bills also leave households with less money available for food, other day to day expenses and social activity.

A recent report by Public Health Wales³ found that babies living in fuel poor homes (cold and damp) are more likely (by 30%) to be admitted to hospital or attend primary care. It also found that poor quality housing including issues such as mould, poor warmth and energy efficiency is linked to physical and mental ill health. It impacts the individual, as well as costs to the individual, society and the NHS in terms of associated higher crime, unemployment and treatment costs.

Amongst the 240,000 households in Wales estimated to be on incomes below the low income threshold, 14 per cent included children (aged under 18 years).

² <http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/people/children-and-young-people/child-poverty/?lang=en>

³ <http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/888/news/42095>

Latest modelled fuel poverty levels by the Building Research Establishment (BRE)⁴ estimates that in 2016 there were 261,000 (24%) vulnerable households in fuel poverty. This is based on the Welsh Government's definition of vulnerable household as one with any member aged 60 years or over, with a child/young person under the age of 25 years or with any long-term limiting condition or disabled member.

Whilst the research shows that the estimated number of vulnerable households in fuel poverty has reduced since estimated 2012 levels of 328,000 (31%), around 24 per cent of vulnerable households in Wales are estimated to be in fuel poverty in 2016. This supports the case for continued action on fuel poverty, with support prioritised to low income households who are most at risk from living in cold homes.

The BRE research highlights the positive impact of home energy efficiency improvements on levels of fuel poverty. This indicates that an all-Wales scheme supporting low income households with such provisions, alongside a comprehensive package of advice and other support, continues to be a highly effective way to further reduce levels of fuel poverty.

Investing in housing improvements through a demand-led scheme provides a cost-effective way of preventing ill-health and reducing health inequalities, both physical and mental). It could lead to less time off school or work, increased use of the home for study and leisure, and improved relationships between household members.

Also, reducing time off school; reducing educational attainment gap; increasing household income; possibly reducing crime.

In April 2017, we published the findings of research on the health impacts of the current *Warm Homes Nest* scheme. The research shows the Nest scheme is having a clear positive impact on the health of recipients with a reduction in the use of the NHS by those receiving energy efficiency measures through the scheme.

Building on these findings, it was expected the new Nest scheme would see eligibility for free home energy improvement measures extended to low income households where an occupant suffers from a respiratory or circulatory health condition. However the health conditions pilot was subsequently extended to 31/3/19 to allow more robust evidence to be gathered on the most effective health professional referral route and to test the process across seasonal health pressures.

Relevant means tested benefits capturing households with children include Child Tax Credit, Job Seekers Allowance and Children Benefit AND Income Support.

Eligible households who self refer to the Nest scheme or who are signposted to Nest by other partner referral organisations will receive a whole house assessment by a qualified Nest energy assessor to determine a suitable package of home energy improvement measures.

There is a specific recommendation in relation to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's specific review in 2016 which states:

71. The Committee draws the attention of the State party to target 1.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals, on poverty reduction, and urges the State party to:

⁴ <http://gov.wales/docs/caecd/research/2016/160711-production-estimated-levels-fuel-poverty-wales-2012-2016-en.pdf>

- (a) Set up clear accountability mechanisms for the eradication of child poverty, including by re-establishing concrete targets with a set time frame and measurable indicators, and continue regular monitoring and reporting on child poverty reduction in all parts of the State party;
- (b) Ensure clear focus on the child in the State party's poverty reduction strategies and action plans, including in the new "Life Chances Strategy", and support the production and implementation of child poverty reduction strategies in the devolved administrations;
- (c) Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the cumulative impact of the full range of social security and tax credit reforms introduced between 2010 and 2016 on children, including children with disabilities and children belonging to ethnic minority groups;
- (d) Where necessary, revise the mentioned reforms in order to fully respect the right of the child to have his or her best interests taken as a primary consideration, taking into account the different impacts of the reform on different groups of children, particularly those in vulnerable situations;
- (e) Strictly implement the legal prohibition of prolonged placement of children in temporary accommodation by public authorities in England, Wales and Scotland, and enact similar legislation in Northern Ireland;
- (f) Take necessary measures to reduce homelessness and to progressively guarantee all children stable access to adequate housing that provides physical safety, adequate space, protection against the threats to health and structural hazards, including cold, damp, heat and pollution, and accessibility for children with disabilities;

Step 3. How does your piece of work support and promote children's rights?

The new Nest scheme is designed to improve the energy efficiency of privately owned or privately rented fuel poor households in Wales, allowing households to keep warm at a more affordable cost.

As discussed at step 2, the scheme supports and promotes children's rights through both the provision of advice to households and through the provision of a package of free energy improvement measures thus reducing energy costs and maximising income. This not only ensures a warm and safe place to live but also frees up money to spend in other areas such as food, day to day expenses and social activities. Improving the energy efficiency of households also supports children's rights through preventing ill-health and reducing health inequalities. It could lead to less time off school, increased use of the home for study and leisure, and improved relationships between household members.

The scheme supports children's rights through the following articles:

Article 6: All the children have the right of life. Government should ensure that children survive and develop healthily.

Evidence suggests that colder temperatures at home can affect the health and education

of children and young people. This scheme seeks to ensure that children live in warm homes, improving health and providing a quiet, warm space to study and enjoy leisure time.

Articles 12 & 13 – having a voice / providing info??

Article 24: Children have the right to good quality health care and to clean water, nutritious food and a clean environment so that they stay healthy. Rich countries should help poor countries achieve this.

The proposed scheme includes the provision of advice on saving energy and water as well as providing free home energy improvements. This reduces energy and water costs enabling households to keep warm at a more affordable cost. This should maximise household income, allowing spending in other areas such as nutritious food.

Physiological factors which contribute to children's greater susceptibility to the harmful effects of cold homes include a lesser ability to deal with thermal stress as compared with adults, making children living in cold homes more prone to respiratory health problems, such as asthma and bronchitis (Marmot Review Team, 2011) (Climate Just, 2014). According to Public Health Wales, babies living in fuel poor homes (cold and damp) are more likely (by 30%) to be admitted to hospital or attend primary care. By improving the energy efficiency of households, this should improve the health of children and reduce hospital and primary care admissions. More fuel efficient, warmer homes will have a positive impact on such health conditions.

This reduced demand for energy also leads to reduced carbon emissions resulting in a cleaner environment in the long term.

Article 26 (Social security): Children – either through their guardians or directly – have the right to help from the government if they are poor or 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.

Extended time spent living in a cold home has been shown to influence mental health as well as physical health (National Energy Action, 2013b). The pre-existence of mental health problems is a risk factor that makes a certain group of people more vulnerable to the stresses of cold homes.

The new scheme is designed to target support at households most in need i.e. low income, vulnerable households. The measures installed improve the standard of living which evidence shows has a direct impact on their physical and mental health. The energy efficiency improvements are free of charge to the end user and funded through the WG programme.

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.

There is evidence that cold indoor temperatures can negatively affect children's health, well-being and educational attainment. For older children there are also significant social implications of cold homes. Educationally, the increased incidence of asthma and other disease will cause more days to be missed from school, which over extended periods of time can have significant impact upon attainment. In New Zealand it was shown that 15 per

cent less days were missed from school once energy efficiency improvements had been made to housing (Liddell, 2008). A common strategy to deal with cold housing is to heat just one or two rooms in the home; however, the result of this is crowding in the heated rooms. The lack of quiet and warm places to study and complete homework for children in cold homes are therefore also pertinent issues (Marmot Review Team, 2011).

By improving the energy efficiency of households and enabling them to keep warm at an affordable cost, this could lead to less time off school or work, increased use of the home for study and leisure, and improved relationships between household members.

Article 31: All children have the right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of activities.

By improving the energy efficiency of homes, households will be able to keep their properties warm, thereby providing a warm and safe place to relax and play and to invite friends over for social activities. This is beneficial to well-being and good physical and mental health.

Step 4. Advising the Minister and Ministerial decision

Officials have fully considered the UNCRC and have undertaken a Children's Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) and Equality Impact Assessment. The CRIA has concluded that the scheme will have a positive impact on children's rights, contributing to a number of articles under the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Officials are therefore recommending that the Minister continues investing in a demand-led energy efficiency and fuel poverty scheme as proposed.

Step 5. Recording and communicating the outcome

All paper work in relation to the development of the demand-led fuel poverty scheme, including relevant research used to develop proposals, is stored on the relevant ishare file.

The consultation on proposals for a new demand-led scheme was published on 27 July 2016 and a summary of responses and response to consultation was published on 23 December 2016. A targeted stakeholder workshop was also held during the consultation period, on 5 October 2016. Key discussion points were noted and are included in the summary of responses published in December.

Step 6. Revisiting the piece of work as and when needed

The new scheme will be reviewed regularly with the successful Scheme Manager against targets set out in the contract. This will include an annual report of the scheme's achievements and performance against KPI's.


We will revisit the CRIA annually at the same time to monitor success.

Budgets

As a result of completing the CRIA, has there been any impact on budgets? It is important that where any changes are made to spending plans, including where additional allocations have been made, that this has been assessed and evidenced as part of the CRIA process.	No
Please give any details:	

Monitoring & Review

Do we need to monitor / review the proposal?	A year after publication.
If applicable: set the review date	NA



**See next page for a
Summary List of the
UNCRC articles**

THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

www.uncrcletsgetitright.co.uk

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is an international agreement that protects the human rights of the children under the age of 18. On 16 December 1991, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland formally agreed to make sure that every child in the UK has all the rights as listed in the convention. The Welsh Government has shown its commitment to the convention by adopting it as the basis for policy making for children in Wales.

Altogether there are 54 articles in the convention. Articles 43-54 are about how adults and governments should work together to make sure all children are entitled to their rights. The information contained here is about articles 1-42 which set out how children should be treated.



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

www.cymru.gov.uk

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 in 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 stay.

Article 42

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

For further information on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child please visit: The Welsh Government's UNCRC Website: www.uncrcletsgetitright.co.uk/

Cic - The National Information and Advice Service for Young People
www.ciconline.co.uk/news/