



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION

Digital strategy for Wales: children's rights impact assessment

Summary

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1. Describe and explain the impact of the proposal on children and young people

The Strategy will not have a direct impact on children and young people. However, it will coordinate and provide a framework for other activities which are expected to have a positive impact on children and young people, including building digital skills and confidence, improving connectivity and in turn supporting blended learning approaches, and encouraging a culture of innovation that attracts new talent and investment to Wales.

The actions and projects which will flow from the Strategy will have varying impacts on children and young people, and these will be assessed separately. The Strategy itself has been developed with feedback from the public, including children and young people. Children and young people commented that digital (home learning, social media, apps) were essential to their lives. They said that internet connections were really important and understood that some children did not have good enough connectivity speeds or could not afford them. They also recognised that not every child had their own device and highlighted that digital skills gained in education needed to keep pace with the skills required for the future workforce. They noted that some teachers struggled with technology and expressed concern that not all schools offered the IT qualifications they wanted at GCSE or A level. Children and young people wanted to continue to be involved in the development of the strategy and the actions that would come out of it.

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2. Explain how the proposal is likely to impact on children's rights

Although the strategy will not have a direct impact on children's rights, it does support the protection of, and their access to, their rights in a number of ways. The following UNCRC articles are considered relevant to this proposal:

Article 16 – Right to privacy: The improvement of digital skills and confidence in using digital services supports children's rights to privacy. Ensuring children and young people understand how the information about themselves they put online or create through using digital services is key to helping them make informed, ethical choices about how much they put online, and how to deal problems if they occur.

Article 17 – Right to access information via the media: The media is increasingly moving away from traditional channels into the digital space; ensuring that all children have reliable connections to the internet, the skills and confidence to safely go online, and an understanding of the benefits and limitations of online media are key to them being able to access information from the media.

Article 23 – Children with disabilities accessing services and engage with their wider communities: Ensuring that all new digital services meet stringent accessibility services will ensure that children who are disabled will be able to access digital services independently wherever possible. Reliable connections, and ensuring all children have appropriate skills and confidence to go online will also support disabled children to engage with their communities, including online or digital communities.

Article 24 – Right to the best possible health, and health care: Providing user-centred digital public services, including health services, will help ensure that all children are able to access those services and that they meet their needs.

Article 28 – Right to an education: The pandemic has shown how important digital skills in general are for children's education. Ensuring children they have the right skills to access digital educational resources, have reliable connections to use them, and the confidence to do so all support their right to an education

Article 31 – Right to leisure, play and culture: Digital provides many opportunities for leisure, play and culture; from online gaming to virtual tours of cultural sites and collections. Ensuring children have the ability, skills and confidence to go online safely is essential to protect their rights to access leisure, play and culture in the digital age.

Articles 34 and 36 – protection from sexual and other forms of exploitation: Developing good digital skills, confidence and online safety awareness will help protect children from all forms of exploitation. Providing robust digital services that children can use to seek help and advice, if they feel uncomfortable or threatened, is also key.

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