



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION

Winter protection plan 2020 to 2021: children's rights impact assessment

An assessment of how the Winter Protection Plan 2020 to 2021 will affect children's rights.

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Contents

[Describe and explain the impact of the proposal on children and young people](#)

[Explain how the proposal is likely to impact on children's rights](#)

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

The Winter Protection Plan (WPP) is Welsh Government's overarching plan that will set out the broad context and direction of travel for health and social care until March 2021. It sets out the requirements of stakeholders, about the range of actions and contingencies that are expected to be put in place across the health and care system, and with wider partners, to manage the public health emergency and provide services over the coming challenging winter period. It provides assurance to the public that we are working together across the country to keep Wales safe.

Various research activity (including children's surveys) has been undertaken and will continue to be undertaken across Wales and UK to understand the impact of COVID-19 on children and young people and on children's health and care services. The results from these studies will inform the principles and approaches that are adopted by the Welsh Government as we continue to learn and understand the way in which COVID-19 works.

It is currently acknowledged that younger children are less at risk from COVID-19. This is depicted through a lower risk of younger children catching the disease, as well as a lower risk of them developing serious symptoms as a result of contracting COVID-19. As a result general consensus is that children as far less risk of spreading the disease than was first thought to be the case. The WPP addresses the whole population and therefore children are included in the

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requirements, albeit not specially referenced.

Research by the University of Oxford indicates that the impact of the pandemic on children and young people's mental health and well-being could be significant. Parents and carers of children aged 4-10 years are reporting an increase in their child's emotional difficulties – feeling unhappy and worried and experiencing physical symptoms associated with worry*, whilst 39% of children and young people aged 11-18 years who responded to the Children's Commissioner for Wales survey 'Coronavirus and Me'*** reported that they have been worried most or some of the time during the pandemic.

Operating essential services over winter 2020/21 is important for children of all ages. The WPP acknowledges the need for essential services to be maintained and states the need for:

- Services to be designed around the individual and around groups of people, based on their unique needs and what matters to them, as well as quality and safety outcomes;
- People only going to a general hospital when it is essential, with hospital services

designed to reduce the time spent in hospital;

- A shift in resources to the community that enable hospital-based care (when needed) to be accessed more quickly); and
- Using technology to support high quality services.

This will include services for children and young people as well as adults.

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

By developing the WPP it is intended to have a positive impact on a number of

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the UNCRC articles, in particular:

Article 6: The right to life and to grow up to be healthy

Article 19: The right not to be harmed and to be looked after and kept safe

Article 20: The right to be looked after properly if the child can't live with his/her own family

Article 23: The right to special care and support if the child has a disability so he/she can lead a full and independent life

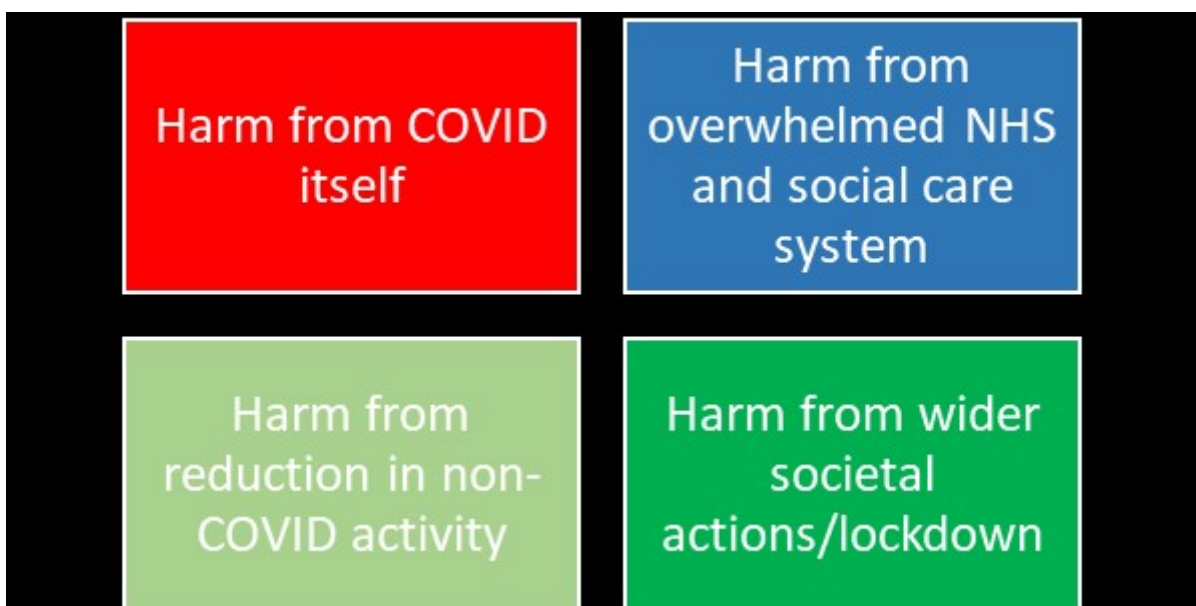
Article 24: The right to good food, water and to see a doctor if ill

Article 25: The right of a child who is not living with their family to be checked on to make sure they are safe

Article 39: The right to get special help if being abused

Part of the function for the WPP is to provide assurance to the public that we are working together across the country to keep Wales safe, this includes children and young people.

The WPP acknowledges the four levels of harms:



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The WPP reinforces the need to maintain essential services during winter 2020/21 and beyond. For children and young people in particular this is vital to ensure they are able to access the support and treatment they need, whether for their physical or mental wellbeing.

Due to the introduction of a number of digital solutions to address children and young people's support needs (for example, the young person's mental health toolkit and an information hub for care experienced young children), there will be a need to support those who are digitally excluded, be it just for the COVID-19 outbreak or more widely in society.

There will be a need to ensure that children, young people, their families and carers have access to and the skills needed to use digital services. Consequently, in the initial stages, some children and young people, who are either live in poverty or in rural areas that do not have access to broadband, may be negatively impacted in regards to accessing information.

The WPP sets out a range of areas that NHS organisations and their social care partners need to be cognisant of in their planning for winter. While there is not a specific section for children, there is an expectation that partner organisations plan and deliver appropriate services for children and young people in accordance with their statutory duties.

The WPP acknowledges the importance of keeping everyone well informed, through a variety of means (including press conferences, use of television, radio, newspapers and social media) about how COVID-19 is tracking and spreading throughout Wales this winter. This will include children friendly media outlets and support which is managed through schools and educational establishments (e.g. nurseries and further education).

About this document

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