

CAFCASS Cymru's plan for
participation with children
and young people

Your Voice

2016-2019



Gwasanaeth Cyngori a
Chynorthwyo Llys i Blant a Theuluoedd
Children and Family Court
Advisory and Support Service

Mae CAFCASS Cymru yn
rhan o Lywodraeth Cymru

CAFCASS Cymru is part of
the Welsh Government



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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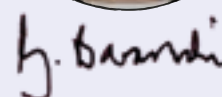
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Foreword



At the heart of our organisation, our role is to support children and young people involved in Family Court proceedings to make sure they have the best outcomes. I am hugely proud of our staff who directly engage and participate with children and young people to work towards solving the problems facing many vulnerable children in Wales.



Gillian Baranski
Chief Executive

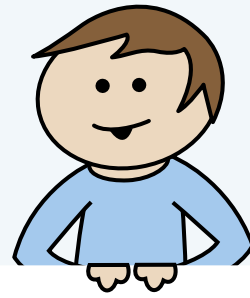
That is why I am so pleased we are launching the Your Voice Participation Plan. This Plan will enable the organisation to build upon the day to day participation our staff have with children and young people, enabling those young people to influence the way they, and future children, receive our services. The Listen and Learn focus area of the programme specifically supports and reflects our approach to improve our service with the aim of making appropriate and important changes to the way we work.

The problems facing vulnerable children in Wales requires a coordinated response between government, our partner organisations and communities. Our desire to continue to build upon the great work we have already achieved in this area is formalised with the “Working Together and Share” philosophy of the programme, influencing best practice regarding the voice of the child within the family justice system.

Over the last few years we have been on a journey of significant change, we are now a more streamlined organisation with an established management team, an updated and clear set of values and priorities for improving our service and performance.

To meet the challenge of achieving our priorities and to continue building on our reputation for providing a high-quality service focused on our service users, we are committed to deliver the “Involve and Inform” area of our Participation Programme, working hard to implement this challenging plan, thereby improving and reinforcing our mission to ensure the best outcomes for children and young people across Wales.

Who we are and what we do



We are CAFCASS Cymru and we are part of the Welsh Government's Health and Social Services Group.



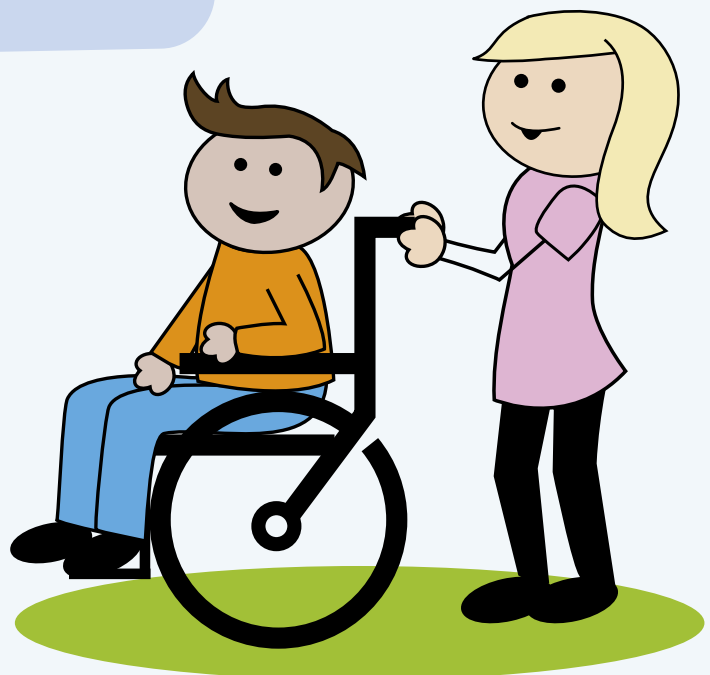
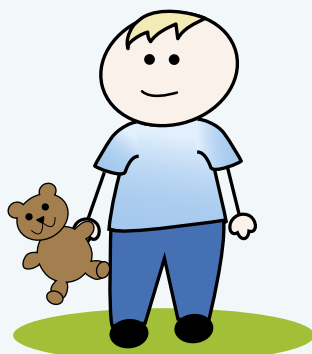
Gwasanaeth Cyngori
a Chynorthwyo Llys
i Blant a Theuluoedd

Children and Family
Court Advisory
and Support Service

Our role is to support children and families involved in Family Court proceedings by advising the Family Court on the course of action we consider to be in the best interests of individual children.

The child's welfare is at the heart of every decision and action we take. We participate and engage with children to learn about their wishes and feelings and we enable their voices to be heard and taken into consideration when advising the courts.

Our purpose is to safeguard children and ensure their voice is heard within the Family Justice System.



What is participation and what does it mean to us ?

Participation is a way of supporting children and young people to have their views and opinions listened to and taken seriously.

Organisational participation builds on our direct work with individual children in Family Court proceedings. It means as an organisation we are able to give children and young people:

- a voice about the way they receive our services.
- the opportunity to express their views, concerns and suggestions on how the organisation is being run and have them taken seriously.

Our goal is to achieve the best outcomes for the children and young people we come into contact with and enable the voice of the child to be heard in the family justice system. Participation helps make this possible by making sustainable and achievable improvements to the services we provide for children so that they are:

- effective
- appropriate
- better understood and as a result
- better received by children and young people.

The Participation Plan has three focus areas:

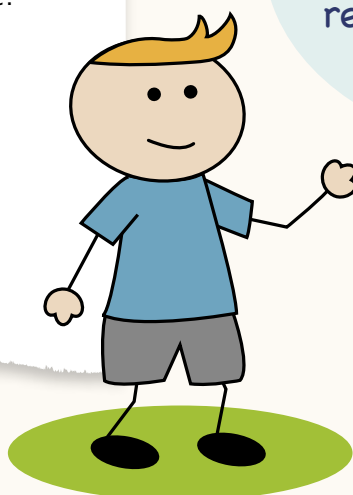
1. Listen and Learn

2. Involve and Inform

3. Work Together and Share.

Done in a meaningful, open, respectful way, involving children and young people throughout, our three focus areas will ensure sustainable and achievable improvements to the service we provide.

"Participation means that it is my right to be involved in making decisions, planning and reviewing an action that might affect me."



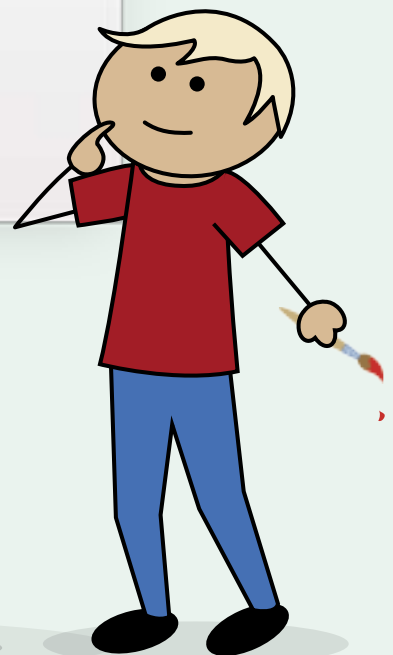
- a young person involved with creating the National Standards for Participation in Wales

How we will participate

We are at the beginning of our journey into participation and we want to make sure this makes a difference. To help us do this we will engage in an evolving three year programme of projects that benefit the children and young people with whom we come into contact.

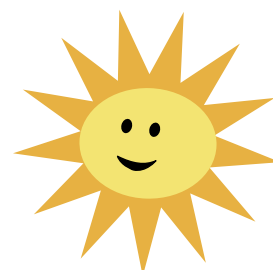
This group of projects will be known as the Participation Programme.

During the Programme different levels of participation will apply to different projects of work, depending on the purpose of the project and the time and resources available.



Participation Standards

Participation and the active involvement of children and young people is an important theme within the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).



Wales is proud to have incorporated the UNCRC into our laws and through different ways of participating we will assist children and young people to access their rights, whilst helping to make lasting changes to enable more children to do the same.

The **seven National Standards for Participation in Wales** will form an important part of all our participation projects. The Standards are:

1. Information
2. It's your choice
3. No Discrimination
4. Respect
5. You get something out of it
6. Feedback
7. Improving how we work

We are fully committed to promoting the UNCRC and enabling children and young people in Wales to access their rights.

To see how we are doing in meeting the Participation Standards, every year we will ask trained young people to assess how they have been met. The results of the assessment combined with input from children and young people, will help shape the future work of the Participation Programme.



Listen and Learn

Children and young people are encouraged and supported to share their views and opinions on our service and can be involved in acting upon those views.

To make sure that the changes we make to our service are centred on the children and young people we help, we must listen to their views and learn from what they tell us. We need to provide different ways of gathering children and young people's views and suggestions, supporting and encouraging them to share their experience of using our service. This will help us learn from what they tell us so we can make improvements.

To achieve this we will:

- explore ways of supporting and including children and young people to express their views about the services we provide
- review the ways in which children and young people can tell us what they think of the organisation and the services they have received using methods they prefer
- engage with and involve an appropriate number of children and young people during the programme by committing time and resources to running participation events across Wales
- regularly inform children and young people of any changes we make as a result of their involvement and contribution.

And this is how we will do it:

- involve children and young people in reviewing the public areas of our offices
- review and improve the way children and young people are able to tell us what they think about our service
- consider how we can involve children and young people in the recruitment and selection of our staff
- consider how we can involve children and young people in the development of our staff
- involve children and young people in the development of direct assessment work tools to ensure they are suitable
- ask children and young people to review our service against the National Participation Standards for Wales with the aim of increasing the number of conditions we meet each year.

Everyone has a chance to have a say, your opinions are important and we will respect them.

- Standard 4, Respect, National Participation Standards for Wales

We want you to enjoy and benefit from taking part.

- Standard 5, You get something out of it, National Participation Standards for Wales

It's really important that you know what difference you have made and how your ideas have been used.

- Standard 3, No discrimination, National Participation Standards for Wales

Involve and Inform

Children and young people are involved in developing information so that it is specific to their needs.

How we communicate and engage with children and young people is central to the work we do. We need to actively involve children and young people in developing information about our service so that it is specific to their needs and wishes. We will ask children and young people what information they want and how they want to communicate with the organisation.

To achieve this we will:

- add value to our information for children and young people by involving them in developing and updating our communications
- explore the use of new technologies so that we can increase opportunities for children and young people to access information in a way they prefer
- explore how we can involve children and young people in the development of our staff
- create a jargon buster to help children and young people understand the terminology used in the CAFCASS Cymru processes
- explore the possibility of social media as a way of communicating organisational messages.

And this is how we will do it:

- involve children and young people in developing a version of this plan that is easily understood
- update information on our website to make it more relevant and interesting
- develop our website to include new functions so that children and young people can access information quickly, easily and in a way they prefer
- explore the possibility of social media as a way of communicating organisational messages
- promote the UNCRC and assist more children and young people to know their rights
- develop and promote ways in which children and young people can communicate with the decision makers in their case
- record, monitor and share data on the number of children and young people which communicate with the Judiciary during their case.

Information that is easy to understand for everyone.

- Standard 1, Information, National Participation Standards for Wales

You choose if you want to get involved or not.

- Standard 2, Its your choice, National Participation Standards for Wales

Work Together and Share

An Organisation that promotes participation, working together with appropriate organisations to further enable the voice of the child to be heard within the family justice system.

We will actively encourage participation across the organisation by celebrating and promoting examples of good participation. We will continue to work together with partner organisations to exchange information and influence best practice regarding the voice of the child within the family justice system.

To achieve this we will:

- embrace and support a culture of participation within the organisation
- collaborate with other organisations to achieve the best outcomes for children and young people, when changes in the family justice system affect our service
- we will explore how we can best involve children & young people in the induction and training of new staff to promote their learning and development
- we will regularly inform partner organisations of the work we have completed as a result of participation and contribute to the wider participation workers network
- we will link with organisations within the wider family justice system to seek their input on how we do things.

And this is how we will do it:

- involve children and young people in our staff induction training to promote the knowledge of our new staff about participation and the UNCRC
- regularly liaise with Family Justice Young People's Board to strengthen our relationship
- act as the link between Welsh representatives and the Family Justice Young People's Board.
- the CAFCASS Cymru Participation Programme Manager will meet with the Advisor to the Family Justice Network Wales on a quarterly basis
- the Chief Executive for CAFCASS Cymru will continue to be an active member of the Family Justice Board and the Family Justice Network
- we will explore how we can increase the number of ways we promote the UNCRC in the delivery of our services
- we will explore ways in which our senior managers can engage with children and young people's groups on a more regular basis
- we will establish a CAFCASS Cymru Participation Board, whose members will be champions of participation in their area and act as an ambassador with external organisations
- we will regularly share improvements we have made to the way we do things with our Advisory Committee and wider stakeholders.

We want to learn and get better at the way we work with you.

- Standard 7, Improve the way we work, National Participation Standards for Wales

We want everyone to feel welcome and be able to get involved if they want to be.

- Standard 3, No discrimination, National Participation Standards for Wales

Actions, outcomes and measures of success

The following tables summarise how we plan to do the things we have set out in this plan, what we will do and the effect we hope this will have. We will review this strategy each year and ask children and young people to assess how we are doing against our actions, outcomes and measures of success.

Listen and Learn

Our Goal – Children and young people are encouraged and supported to share their views and opinions on our service and can be involved in acting upon those views.

Actions

- We will investigate modern and innovative ways of supporting children and young people to tell us what they think of our service recording their suggestions on the ways in which we can improve.
- We will develop a way in which we can involve children and young people in the assessment of our public environments and appropriate staff developments.
- We will engage with and involve an appropriate number of children and young people during the programme by committing time and resources to running participation events across Wales.
- We will regularly inform children and young people of any changes we make as a result of their involvement and contribution.
- We will involve children in young people and the development of direct assessment work tools to ensure they are suitable.
- We will ask children and young people to review our participation against the National Participation Standards for Wales.

Outcomes and measures of success

by

- | | |
|--|------------|
| • Complete a review of the ways in which children and young people can tell us what they think of our service. | Dec 2016 |
| • Increase the number of young people that tell us what they think of our service. | April 2017 |
| • Increase the number of children and young people that have been involved with our improvements. | Jan 2017 |
| • Create a process whereby children and young people are involved in the recruitment and selection of our staff. | Dec 2017 |

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of occurrences where children and young people involved in the recruitment and selection of our staff. 	April 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a programme of work involving children and young people in the development of our staff. 	Dec 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of times where children and young people are involved in the development of our staff. 	Dec 2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a process through which children and young people review the public areas of our offices. 	Oct 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of child and young person lead reviews of the public areas of our offices. 	Oct 2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have at least one group of young people assess our direct work tools. 	March 2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a review of the number of conditions met within the National Participation Standards. 	Sept 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of conditions met within the National Participation Standards assessment each year. 	Sept 2016 & 2018

Involve and Inform

Our Goal – Children and young people are involved in developing information so that it is specific to their needs.

Actions

- We will add value to our information for children and young people by involving them in developing and updating our communications.
- We will explore the use of new technologies so that we can increase opportunities for children and young people to access information in a way they prefer.
- We will explore how we can involve children and young people in the development of our staff.
- We will, in collaboration with young people, review and modernise the children's information packs to ensure that children and young people have the information they want in the way they prefer.
- We will create a jargon buster to help children and young people understand the terminology used in the CAFCASS Cymru processes.
- We will explore the possibility of social media as a way of communicating organisational messages.

Outcomes and measures of success	by
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a version of this plan that is easily understood by children and young people. 	April 2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a way that children and young people can communicate with the decision makers in their case. 	Sept 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a way to record, monitor and share data on the number of children and young people which communicate with the Judiciary during their case. 	April 2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a review of and made appropriate changes to, our children's information pack resulting in an: 	Sept 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the percentage of children and young people that think our children's information pack is relevant and useful. 	Dec 2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop our website to increase the number of functions so that children and young people can access information quickly and make it more relevant and engaging for children and young people. 	Aug 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a jargon buster for children and young people. 	Aug 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a programme of work to promote the UNCRC to assist more children and young people to know their rights. 	Sept 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the number of children and young people we come into contact with, are aware of the UNCRC and know their rights. 	Sept 2017

Work Together and Share

Our Goal – be an Organisation that promotes participation, working together with appropriate organisations to further enable the voice of the child to be heard within the family justice system.

Actions

- We will regularly inform partner organisations of the work we have completed as a result of participation and contribute to the wider participation workers network.
- We actively encourage participation across the organisation by celebrating and promoting examples of good participation.
- We will explore how we can best involve children & young people in the induction of new staff to promote their learning and development in the areas of participation and the UNCRC.

- We will link with organisations within the wider Family Justice System to seek their input on how we do things.
- We will create a jargon buster to help children and young people understand the terminology used in the CAFCASS Cymru processes.
- We will explore the possibility of social media as a way of communicating organisational messages.

Outcomes and measures of success	by
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a CAFCASS Cymru Participation board, the members of which will be champions of participation in their area and act as an ambassador with external organisations. 	Jan 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a CAFCASS Cymru single point of contact for the Family Justice Young People's Board. 	Jan 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of times that CAFCASS Cymru meets with the Family Justice Young People's Board. 	April 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist in filling seats on the Family Justice Young People's Board, reserved specifically for Welsh young people. 	June 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish regular meetings between the CAFCASS Cymru Participation Programme Manager and the Advisor to the Family Justice Network. 	June 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chief Executive for CAFCASS Cymru continues to be an active member of the Family Justice Board and the Family Justice Network. 	Dec 2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a process through which our senior managers regularly engage with children and young people's groups. 	Sept 2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of times that members of our senior management team meet with children and young people's groups. 	Sept 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Participation programme features as a standard agenda item for our Advisory Committee and area team meetings. 	Aug 2016

Notes

Notes

