



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Beyond Recycling

Children's Rights
Impact Assessment

A. CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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

The development and delivery of Beyond Recycling – A Circular Economy Strategy for Wales - will create a cleaner environment, more sustainable communities and a prosperous economy in which the children of Wales live through reducing waste and keeping resources in use for longer.

The outcomes of these policies will lead to benefits for citizens of all ages, by encouraging decision makers to consider the economic, social and environmental impacts of decisions on current and future generations, including young people. Better decision-making alongside managing our natural resources sustainably has the potential to have a positive impact on groups who are most vulnerable, including children. In particular, the strategy will support eco-schools to increase education related to recycling and a circular economy, as well as developing further education and skills opportunities along with future job opportunities.

Young people were extensively engaged as part of the consultation for Beyond Recycling; through both open invitation events and a number of specific events for targeted groups. Children and young people were engaged during the consultation process via two Lleisiau Bach-Little Voices conferences; one in Bangor in February and another in Swansea in March. The Little Voices project supported children (aged under 11) as researchers and advocates to bring about change and to contribute to policy and decision-making on issues that are important to them. Consultation discussion events were also held at colleges and universities to engage with older young people to help them understand the issues and the direction of policy-making and to help us understand the barriers to action some young people faced. These included officials visiting a Further Education College and a Higher Education institution to hold discussions with students. We also produced an Easy Read version of the consultation¹ and distributed it to all eco-schools.

We assessed all the consultation responses to inform the development of our final strategy which is due to be published in early 2021. The consultation found that young people should be engaged throughout decision making, particularly through their schools, which is what the goals under the headline action '**we will provide the tools to enable community action**' will aim to do. We will engage young people, through eco-Schools, so they can actively learn and be part of resource efficiency action through the education sector and beyond. In excess of 90% of our schools are designated eco-schools and some have demonstrated entrepreneurial skills in connecting with local businesses and growing their own food. We want to harness the passion and enthusiasm of young people through our eco-schools programme and other initiatives to effect change.

¹ <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2019-12/easy-read-circular-economy-strategy.pdf>

Following engagement during the consultation, we have continued to discuss the strategy development with young people and met with the Welsh Youth Parliament and Youth Cymru following the publication of the consultation summary.

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

Officials have considered how this proposed policy impacts on the United Nations Convention on Rights of a Child (UNCRC) and concluded that no negative impact is predicted on the Rights of the Child.

Welsh Government officials have considered the intended and unintended consequences of the proposals on the rights of the child. The Articles that could apply are Article 6, Article 12, Article 13, Article 17, Article 24, Article 27 and Article 32. The remainder of the Articles have been assessed as not applicable.

Article 6 – All children have the right to life. Governments should ensure that children survive and develop healthily.

With respect to **Article 6** this policy ensures children's development includes improving their understanding and of resource efficiency. We will look to provide opportunities to develop skills in eco-design which will provide skills for future employment and follows principles outlined in our Green Recovery.

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.

With respect to **Article 12** the Welsh Government provided opportunities for children to express views on how the development of *this strategy* would affect them by providing Easy Read versions of the full consultation and holding events specifically aimed at children.

Article 13 – Children have the right to get and share information as long as the information is not damaging to them or others.

Article 17 – Children have the right to reliable information from the mass media. Television and radio and newspapers should provide information that children can understand, and should not promote materials that could harm children.

With respect to **Article 13 & 17** children were provided with Easy Read versions of the consultation and we will produce a young person's version of the final strategy. Children are already informed of the broader principles of sustainable waste management (ie. reduce, re-use, recycle) within the national curriculum and through the work in eco-schools. It is not considered necessary or appropriate to inform children of the legislation in place to help achieve those outcomes.

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

With respect to **Article 24**, the overall benefits of the policy proposal will be to improve the overall environment in Wales, which will give greater effect to **Article 24** relating to a clean environment so that children and young people will stay healthy. For example:

- The Welsh Government has recently launched ‘Be Mighty, Recycle’² campaign aimed at helping everyone become more aware of the wide range of materials that can be recycled in Wales – from egg shells to shampoo bottles. The ambition is not just to increase recycling for its own sake, but to make sure that we can use the valuable material collected. Our food waste is turned into renewable energy that powers homes and businesses and our recycling can be turned into new products.
- A World Health Organization report³ shows that the transition to a circular economy provides a major opportunity to yield substantial health benefits, such as direct benefits to health care systems and indirect benefits from reducing negative environmental impacts.

Article 27 – Children have the right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet physical and mental needs. The Government should help families who cannot afford to provide this.

With respect to **Article 27** the overall benefits of the policy proposal will enable an increased standard of living for children in Wales.

- Through focusing on the prevention of food waste and promoting the redistribution of surplus edible food via organisations such as FareShare Cymru and Neighbourly we will ensure children from more disadvantaged backgrounds have access to nutritious food.
- Love Food Hate Waste⁴ (LFHW) provides families with advice and recipes to better manage their food shopping and prevent food waste which save families money. LFHW were involved in the development of resources for Nutrition Skills for life⁵, helping families make the most of the food that they can buy.
- Investment in regeneration of towns and skills development will support local economies and create job opportunities closer to home.

Wider than Wales - We have considered the intended and unintended consequences, at a global level, of proposals included in Beyond Recycling. As well as the above Articles, we have considered **Article 32**.

Article 32 –The Government should protect children from work that is dangerous or might harm health or education.

Article 32 relates to children overseas and not children within Wales. With respect to **Article 32** the overall benefits of the policy proposal will be to ensure that Wales is self-sufficient in managing its waste, significantly reducing the waste exported to overseas. We have made a commitment to take full responsibility for our problem waste – not exporting it to be a

² <https://walesrecycles.org.uk/be-mighty-recycle>

³ https://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/374917/Circular-Economy_EN_WHO_web_august-2018.pdf?ua=1

⁴ <https://lovefoodhatewaste.com/why-save-food>

⁵ <https://www.publichealthnetwork.cymru/en/shared-practice-directory/nutrition-skills-for-life/>

problem elsewhere. This will stop Wales contributing to children working in unsafe and less regulated waste management facilities in other countries. The reduction, re-use and recycling of Critical Raw Materials is specifically highlighted in *the strategy*; this will minimise potential harm to children due to direct and indirect social and environmental impacts of their mining and processing.