


Protecting Children's Rights

A Wales report on the UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) 2022



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



 **All children and young people have rights, no matter who they are, where they live or what they believe in.**



These rights are in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Welsh Government is committed to the UNCRC and introduced the [Rights of Children and Young Persons \(Wales\) Measure 2011](#). This means we must:

- think about and respect the UNCRC and Welsh Government Ministers must consider children's rights in everything they do
- promote knowledge and understanding of the UNCRC to everyone in Wales, including children and young people.



Every 5 years we have to report on children's rights to the **Committee on the Rights of the Child**. They look at how we are protecting and promoting your rights.



This Committee is a group of 18 people from all over the world.



They have sent us a **list of issues** they want to know more about.

This report tells you about some interesting things we have put in our response to the UN Committee.



Some of the rights are:

Article 4

The Government should make sure children's rights are respected.

Article 6

Every child has the right to live and to grow up with everything they need.

Article 12

Children and young people have the right to be listened to and taken seriously.

Article 27

Children have the right to housing, food and clothing.

Article 28

Children have the right to an education.

Article 42

Everyone should be told and know about Children's Rights.



A snapshot...

some things we've done since the last report



Protecting you and keeping you safe from harm and abuse.

We changed laws and:

- made **physical punishment**, like smacking, illegal in Wales
- made sure children and young people with **additional learning needs** get the right support and are listened to

We developed new guidance so:

- schools support your **mental health and wellbeing** better

We made funding available to:

- help local authorities and schools support your **wellbeing**



Supporting you through Covid-19 and making sure your rights weren't harmed.

We supported families:

- by giving **free school meals** during school holidays and the pandemic
- through the **Healthy Child Wales Programme**

We made funding available to:

- help children's speech, language and communication development
- support creative projects and **play**
- support more **counselling** and mental health services
- help families on low incomes
- support **food banks**

We supported learners by:

- giving **216,000 computers** and other devices to schools
- giving schools mobile 4G MiFi
- developing [resources](#) about **mental health and wellbeing**



Making sure you're involved and listened to.

We have updated the [Children's Rights Scheme 2021](#). It sets out your right to be listened to by Welsh Ministers and other decision makers

We have also made sure you have opportunities to be heard and:

- **lowered the voting age** so 16-17-year-olds can vote in Welsh elections
- listened to over **120,000 young people** in a Student Health and Wellbeing Survey
- listened to over **43,000 children and young people** on how the pandemic affected their lives
- involved young people in writing our plans to reduce carbon and make Wales **Net Zero** by 2030
- continued to fund organisations like Children in Wales so **young people have more ways to have a say**



The Committee wants to know how we are protecting your rights in everything we do.

Some things we've done

We have:

- a new [Children and Young People's Plan](#) built on children's rights
- a Children's Rights Team that gives advice on children's rights, including to Welsh Ministers
- a Children's Rights Advisory Group (CRAG)
- put funding into making sure children and young people can enjoy their rights
- told people about children's rights and have a [raising awareness plan](#)

We've also been talking with the UK Government to make sure we work together on children's rights.



These articles link to government's actions:

Article 4

The Government should make sure your rights are respected.

Article 42

Everyone should know about the UNCRC.

Article 44

The Government must report on how they protect your rights.



The Committee wants to know what we're doing to protect the 4 principles.

Some things we've done

We have:

- set out plans to deal with poverty and support families
- launched an [Anti-racist Wales Action Plan](#) designed to tackle racism that exists in the laws and regulations of society and organisations
- funded a 24/7 Wales Hate Support Centre to help victims of hate crime
- worked with faith leaders to support understanding and respect
- funded the [Travelling Ahead](#) project to support Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities
- plans to make Wales the most LGBTQ+ friendly nation in Europe
- projects to help pregnant women be healthy and have a safe birth
- made laws so there are advocacy services for children and young people who are being protected, are in care or care leavers
- supported learners with additional learning needs so they can be involved and listened to in decisions that affect their lives

We also protect the 4 principles by making sure that the UNCRC is at the heart of everything we do.



These articles are the 4 principles:

Article 2 All children have these rights.

Article 3 Adults must do what is best for me.

Article 6 I should be supported to live and grow.

Article 12 I have the right to be listened to and taken seriously.



Reporting on... your rights and freedoms



All children have rights and freedoms that belong to them from birth. Every child has these rights. They don't have to do anything to get them. This includes your freedom of expression, religion, to join groups and get together with other people.

 **The Committee wants to know how we are protecting your rights and freedoms.**

Some things we've done

We have:

- developed the [New Curriculum](#) that promotes the UNCRC and supports learners to stay safe
- invested in technology and super-fast broadband in schools
- made sure children, young people and families have advice, information and guidance to support them to keep safe online — ['Keeping Safe Online'](#) and ['In the Know'](#)



 **These articles link to your rights and freedoms:**

Article 7

I have a right to a name and to belong to a country.

Article 8

I have a right to an identity, nationality and family relationships.

Article 13

I have the right to find out and share information.

Article 14

I have the right to have my own thoughts and beliefs and to choose my religion with my parents' guidance.

Article 15

I have the right to meet with friends and to join groups.

Article 16

I have the right to keep some things private.

Article 17

I have the right to get information in lots of ways, so long as it's safe.



Reporting on...

keeping children safe from violence and harm



All children should be safe no matter where they are. They should never face violence or harm.

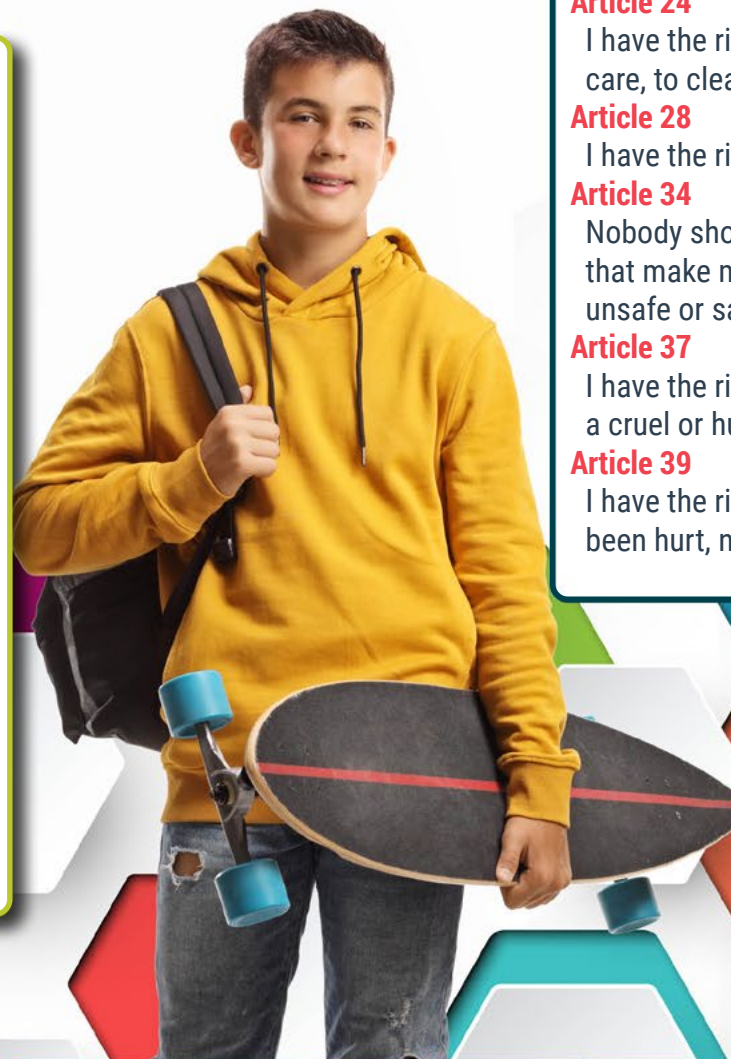


The Committee wants to know what we're doing to keep children safe.

Some things we've done

We have:

- developed [guidance](#) so children and young people aren't restricted by being held down or isolated unless it's to keep them or others safe
- changed the law and made [physical punishment, like smacking, illegal](#)
- helped parents with positive parenting advice through the '[Parenting. Give it Time](#)' campaign
- made sure care experienced children and care leavers get the right support so that they don't come into contact with the police
- made sure people who work in services know how to spot a child at risk of abuse or harm and how to keep them safe
- funded a Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) children and young people's roadshow and children and young people awareness courses
- introduced training under the VAWDASV National Training Framework from September 2022 on the effects of domestic abuse on children and young people
- worked with the UK Government to stop harmful practices like forced marriage



These articles link to keeping children safe:

Article 19

I have the right to be protected from being hurt or badly treated.

Article 24

I have the right to good quality health care, to clean water and good food.

Article 28

I have the right to an education.

Article 34

Nobody should touch me in ways that make me feel uncomfortable, unsafe or sad.

Article 37

I have the right not to be punished in a cruel or hurtful way.

Article 39

I have the right to get help if I have been hurt, neglected or badly treated.

Reporting on... family and other care



Every child has the right to a family and to be cared for. If it's not safe and a child can't stay with their family, we must make sure they have the best care possible.

 **The Committee wants to know how we support families and children.**

Some things we've done

We have:

- made sure families get support quickly
- introduced laws that make local authorities, as far as possible, provide care experienced children with placements that meet their needs and take steps to make sure they're involved in planning them
- worked to increase the number of foster carers
- funded extra support for young people leaving care so they have the opportunity to have a Personal Adviser
- launched the ['When I am Ready'](#) scheme so young people can stay with their foster carer after 18
- launched the [Basic income](#) pilot for care leavers to support them as they make the transition to adult life



 **These articles link to family and other care:**

Article 5

The Government should respect the right of your family to help you know about your rights.

Article 9

I have a right to live with a family who cares for me.

Article 10

I have the right to see my family if they live in another country.

Article 11

I have the right not to be taken out of the country illegally.

Article 18

I have the right to be brought up by both parents if possible.

Article 20

I have the right to special protection and help if I can't live with my own family.

Article 21

I have the right to have the best care if I am adopted.

Article 25

If I am not living with my family, people should keep checking I am safe and happy.

Article 27

I have the right to have a proper house, food and clothing.

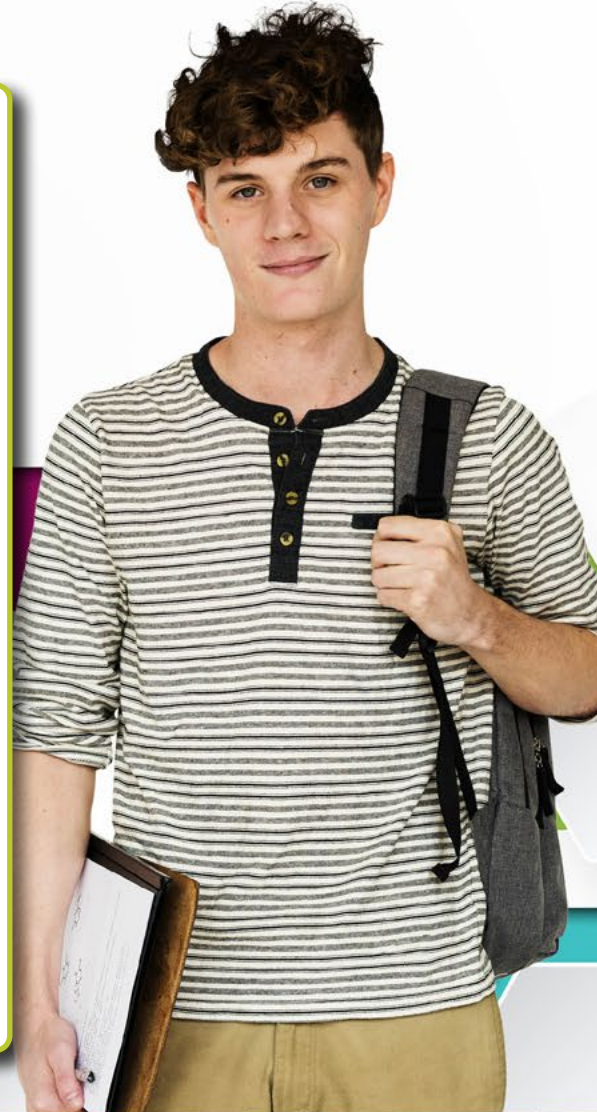
 The Committee wants to know what we're doing to make sure all children are healthy and well.

Some things we've done

We have:

- outlined how we will tackle child poverty in Wales
- plans to reduce health inequalities – [A Healthier Wales](#)
- committed to giving Baby Bundles full of products and information to families with new babies
- set out plans for a [Smoke-Free Wales](#)
- set out plans for [Period Dignity](#) in Wales
- launched the [Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales](#) plan
- provided free school meals to children in low-income families
- supported free breakfast clubs in Primary Schools
- given young children free school milk
- strengthened the support given to mental health community services for children and young people
- set out plans to reduce pollution and make Wales a healthier place to live
- made it easier for people to receive the financial support they are entitled to

We are also asking the UK Government to re-think some of their decisions about benefits so we can help to keep families out of poverty.



 These articles link to health and welfare:

Article 6

I should be supported to live and grow.

Article 18

I have the right to be brought up by both parents if possible.

Article 24

I have the right to good quality health care, to clean water and good food.

Article 26

My family should get the money they need to help bring me up.

Article 27

I have the right to have a proper house, food and clothing.

Article 33

I should be protected from dangerous drugs (including any effects of a parent's drug use).



Reporting on... education and other activities



The Committee wants to know what we're doing to make sure all children are getting an education and can take part in activities.

Some things we've done



We have:

- helped learners in low-income families to achieve their best at school
- helped families cover the cost of school uniforms and equipment
- made funding available to help schools support learners with Additional Learning Needs
- made funding available to help schools to support children who are looked after
- developed guidance to reduce the number of learners excluded from schools
- worked to help schools support children and young people who experience abuse, neglect or other adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)
- developed guidance to stop bullying in schools – '[Rights, respect, equality](#)'
- made sure the [new curriculum](#) for Wales includes learning about the UNCRC



These articles link to education and other activities:

Article 28

I have the right to an education.

Article 29

I have the right to an education which develops my personality, respect for others' rights and the environment.

Article 30

I have a right to speak my own language and to follow my family's way of life.

Article 31

I have a right to relax and play.

Sometimes children need extra support to get their rights. That includes asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant children.

 **The Committee wants to know what we are doing to make sure all children have their rights.**

Some things we've done

We have:

- a [plan](#) with actions to make Wales a Nation of Sanctuary for anyone who comes to restart and resettle in Wales
- made sure people who seek sanctuary here get [support and advice](#) about their rights from services including children and unaccompanied asylum seeker children
- welcomed Afghans and Ukrainians as they flee their countries to escape war, offering support with their resettlement
- made sure people can get support in the language of their choice
- worked with our partners to make sure children and young people in the youth justice system are safe, have the support they need and have their rights

The UK Government is responsible for decisions about immigration and asylum seekers. We regularly talk and work with them to make sure everyone placed in Wales has the best support and can settle into community life here.



 **These articles link to special protection:**

Article 22

If I am a refugee, I have the same rights as children born in that country.

Article 30

I have a right to speak my own language and to follow my family's way of life.

Article 32

I should not be made to do dangerous work.

Article 33

I should be protected from dangerous drugs (including a parent's drug use).

Article 35

I should not be abducted (taken away), sold or trafficked.

Article 36

I have the right to be kept safe from things that could harm my development.

Article 37

I have the right not to be punished in a cruel or hurtful way.

Article 39

I have the right to get help if I have been hurt, neglected or badly treated.

Article 40

I have the right to get legal help and to be treated fairly if I have been accused of breaking the law.



Since the UNCRC was written, the world has changed. There are more risks online, risks of trafficking, child prostitution and child pornography. The Committee is concerned about this.



The Committee wants to know how we're dealing with these risks.

Some things we've done

We have:

- laws to protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse
- guidance for people who work in services on how to spot a child at risk of harm or abuse and on how to keep them safe
- developed a National Action Plan on how to prevent child sexual abuse and on how to keep children safe and support children who are abused in this way
- made sure victims of sexual exploitation or slavery get the support they need to recover
- listened to the experiences of children and young people so we can learn from them
- brought organisations together to tackle modern slavery and support survivors
- worked with the Home Office and Barnardo's on providing trafficked children with practical, psychological and emotional support
- contributed to research on how organisations can best support trafficked children



Thanks for reading this

You can read the full report here:
gov.wales/childrens-rights