

WELSH GOVERNMENT INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Title of proposal:	NHS WALES PLANNING FRAMEWORK 2026-2029
Official(s) completing the Integrated Impact Assessment (name(s) and name of team):	Brent Shurn NHS Planning
Department:	HSCEY
Head of Division/SRO (name):	Samia Edmonds Director of Strategic Planning
Cabinet Secretary/Minister responsible:	Jeremy Miles Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care
Start Date:	December 2025

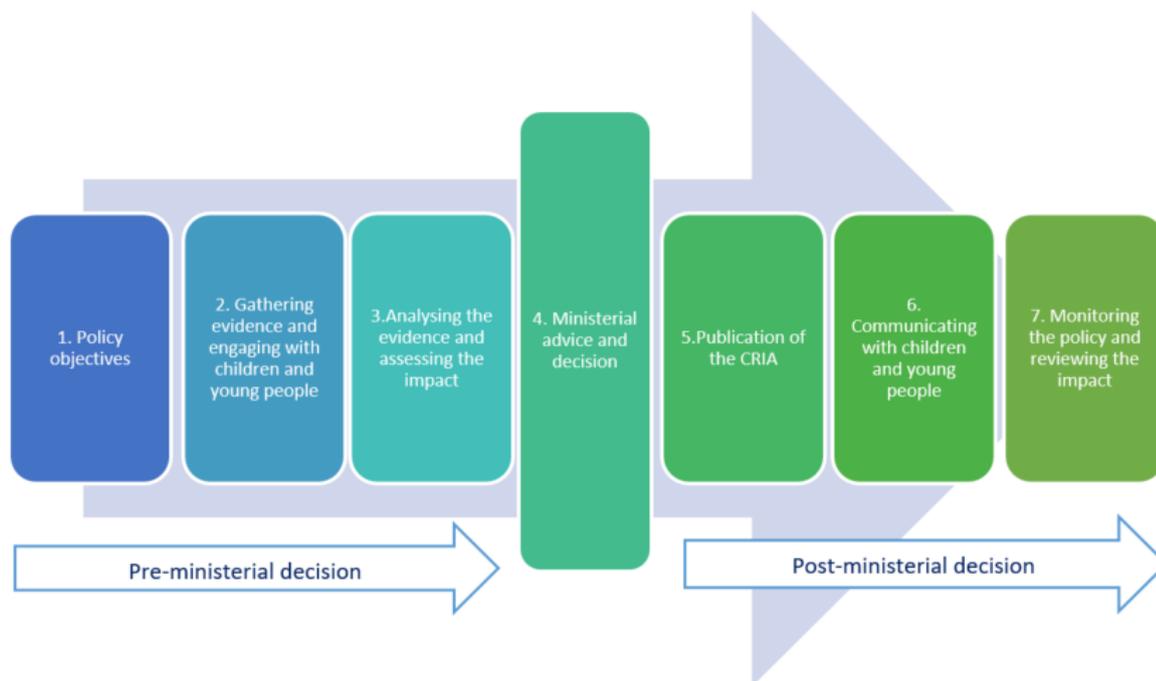
A. CHILDREN’S RIGHTS IMPACT ASSESSMENT

All completed Children’s Rights Impact Assessments must be sent to the CRIA@gov.wales mailbox

The Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011 places a duty on the Welsh Ministers to pay due regard to the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\) and its Optional Protocols](#) when exercising any of their functions.

The CRIA process is the agreed mechanism officials should use to support Ministers to meet this duty and ensure they give balanced consideration to children’s rights in their decision making. A CRIA should be used to inform ministerial advice and **must** be completed prior to a ministerial decision being made. Once a decision has been reached, your CRIA must also be published.

Please note we have an established Children’s Rights Advisory Group (CRAG), comprising the Children’s Commissioner for Wales’s office, UNICEF, the Wales Observatory on Human Rights of Children and Young People, and Children in Wales, who can be used to discuss or test your draft CRIA. Please contact the Children’s Branch CRIA@gov.wales for further information.



For further advice and guidance on the CRIA process, please consult the [Children’s Rights Manual for Staff](#) or contact the Children’s Branch CRIA@gov.wales

1. Policy objectives

This planning framework is informed by priorities and policies which are published and agreed by the Welsh Government and as such does not impact any more or less than the existing stance already taken.

This assessment considers the impact of issuing this year's planning framework which provides guidance to NHS local health boards and trusts regarding priorities and approach for their development of their Integrated Medium-Term Plans (IMTP's). It is a statutory requirement for the Cabinet Secretary to provide these directions.

This planning framework supports consistency of approach from local health boards throughout Wales And identifies priority areas.

The key strategic priority areas for this planning framework continue to support wider system services for patient care and treatment and are consistent with previous priorities. For this 2026-2029 framework they are:

- Timely Access to Care
- Population Health and Prevention
- Community by Design
- Mental Health Access
- Women's Health
- Quality and Safety

NHS organisations (as part of their population health assessment) must consider and recognise that ongoing pressures on the NHS do have a disproportionate impact on children and young people, as well as exacerbating health inequalities. This planning framework gives attention to the quality and levels of services to ensure that reducing inequalities is vital in ensuring children, and other sections of the communities in Wales, are not disadvantaged in accessing care and treatment.

The planning framework sets out a number of specific requirements for children's services, including for example vaccinations, healthy weight, access to mental health services and improving the quality of maternity and neonatal services.

This Children's Rights Impact Assessment refers to the policies and programmes that inform and underpin this planning framework.

2. Gathering evidence and engaging with children and young People

Welsh Government regularly engages with children and young people in the development of the policies that influence them.

Our programme for transforming and modernising planned care and reducing waiting lists in Wales re-emphasises the need for health and social care organisations to consider the needs of children and young people as they build back better the services that they will

need. [Transforming and modernising planned care in Wales and reducing the waiting lists](#)

The [All-Age Mental Health and-Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2035](#) includes a strong focus on children and young people, ensuring their rights and needs are embedded in mental health policy. For children and young people:

- Mental health services must be inclusive and age-appropriate, covering early years through adolescence.
- The strategy is grounded in the UNCRC rights, including:
 - Article 6: Right to grow up healthy.
 - Article 12: Right to be heard.
 - Article 24: Right to good-quality healthcare.

This planning framework is influenced strongly by the Duty of Candour. In developing and deciding to implement this new statutory requirement research with and about children and young people was considered, for example

- In his public inquiry report into children’s heart surgery at the Bristol Royal Infirmary, Kennedy, I (2001) stated “We consider the need for a culture of openness and honesty within the hospital as a whole, and we argue for a duty of candour towards patients when things go wrong or concerns are raised.”

¹ Kennedy, I. *The Bristol Royal infirmary inquiry. Learning from Bristol - The Report of the Public Inquiry into children’s heart surgery at the Bristol Royal Infirmary 1984-1995* [Internet]. Crown; 2001. Available from: [Bristol inquiry into children's heart surgery 1984-1995](#)

- An independent investigation commissioned by the First Minister of Wales into the circumstances of the death of ten-year-old Robert Powell*, made a number of recommendations relating to candour under the theme of “*better communication and involvement with patients and their families*” when things go wrong. The charity, Action against Medical Accidents (AvMA) used the Robbie Powell case to campaign for a statutory organisational duty of candour in the UK, “Robbies Law”**

*Jones, N. THE ROBERT POWELL INVESTIGATION - A REPORT TO THE WELSH MINISTERS [Internet]. 2012. Available from: [The Robert Powell Report](#)

**Walsh, P. (2020) The Duty of Candour – where are we now? [The Introduction of the Duty of Candour](#) Professional Standards Authority for Health & Social Care, Insights into Regulation, Blog, 30 Jan 2020

In developing the Duty of Candour a small focus group was held with four young people supported by Children in Wales. From this the guidance for children and young people is now being considered further by Children in Wales.

Other examples of consultation include a consultation exercise carried out with children and young people regarding ophthalmology provision [Integrated Impact Assessment](#)

Furthermore wider policy such as [Creating a stronger, fairer, greener Wales - Impact Assessment](#) spent time taking into account feedback from children, in this case including young people in their target engagement for developing the policy.

For advice on participatory work with children and young people, please contact the Children's Branch. We have an established relationship with Children in Wales, who may be able to help you work with children and young people through their Young Wales programme.

3. Analysing the evidence and assessing the impact

This planning framework should have a positive impact on children through improving their health and addressing inequalities. Furthermore, some of the identified priorities also prioritise children, including

The “Programme for transforming and modernising planned care and reducing waiting lists in Wales” (Welsh Government April 2022) [Transforming and modernising planned care in Wales and reducing the waiting lists](#) identifies that for:

- cancer and other urgent priorities diagnosis for children should be prioritised.
- dental treatment children who are in higher risk groups, such as those from lower socio-economic backgrounds should be prioritised
- mental health for children and young people there is recognition that the pandemic has disproportionately affected children’s health and well-being.
- Delays in outpatient appointments, diagnostic tests and surgery are of greater significance in young children

Similarly with the All-Age Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025–2035 which includes a strong focus on children and young people, ensuring their rights and needs are embedded in mental health policy

Health and social care organisations are expected to engage and work closely with their service users to achieve the best possible health and well-being outcomes for children and young people.

The focus on primary care includes specific requirements regarding a positive impact for children such as:

- The new GMS contract includes a requirement for GP contractors to be responsible for child health surveillance [General medical services contracts Wales regulations-2023- Integrated Impact Assessment](#)

- The reform of ophthalmic services is intended to accelerate access to clinical care which will be a positive impact for children and those under 16 (including those in care) are eligible for an NHS sight test and a voucher for the supply, repair, and replacement of an optical appliance. [Report of ophthalmic services - Integrated Impact Assessment](#)

The **Community by Design** transformation programme is a key element of the NHS Wales Planning Framework which aims to strengthen the delivery of care closer to home through stronger primary and community services. It promotes integrated, patient-centred models that reduce reliance on acute hospitals, improving timely access to diagnostics and treatment, and supporting prevention and improving well-being. By fostering collaboration between health, social care, and third-sector partners, Community by Design seeks to create sustainable, equitable care systems tailored to local needs, ensuring better outcomes and experiences for people across Wales. A Programme Board has been established to drive this agenda forward.

The Duty of Quality impacts positively on children through the Citizen Voice Body providing complaints advice and assistance to those children and young people who do not currently have a statutory right to an advocate under the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014. [Health and social care quality and engagement Wales bill- Impact Assessment](#)

A Healthier Wales [A healthier Wales: long term plan for health and social care](#) provides the context for this planning framework and the foundations for the NHS Integrated Medium Term Plans.

A Healthier Wales is the long-term plan for Health and Social Care to ensure safe and effective healthcare services. Under the Social Services and Wellbeing Act, all health and social services providers are required to undertake population assessments and publish area plans setting out how they meet the needs of particular priority groups – one of which are children and young people. [A Healthier Wales children's rights- Impact Assessment](#)

NHS bodies understand the importance for NHS organisations to follow the new Social Partnership and Public Procurement Act. This will have a positive impact on Children in a number of ways.

- For children aged 16-18 in work the bill will support fair work to relive poverty which in turn is a key driver for good health
- By reducing inequality and poverty this will reduce the number of children living in poverty and improve their health outcomes
- There is a wider impact in terms of procurement where the act defines socially responsible due diligence duties which includes focussing on the risks of child labour in supply chains.

Article 1: Everyone under 18 years of age has all the rights in this Convention.

Article 2: The Convention applies to everyone whatever their race, religion, abilities, whatever they think or say and whatever type of family they come from.

Article 3: All organisations concerned with children should work towards what is best for each child.

Article 4: Governments should make these rights available to children.

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

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.

Article 23: Children who have any kind of disability should have special care and support so that they can lead full and independent lives.

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

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

Article 39: Children who have been neglected or abused should receive special help to restore their self-respect.

UNCRC Articles or Optional Protocol	Enhances (X)	Challenges (X)	Explanation
Articles 1,2,3,4	X		This planning framework is influenced by policies and guidance to ensure everyone under the age of 18 is positively supported by organisations responsible for their healthcare
Article 6 - All children have the right of life. Governments should ensure that children survive and develop healthily.	X		This planning framework specifically supports this article through ensuring NHS organisations are directed to plan services appropriately informed through A Healthier Wales and children have been prioritised specifically in consideration of waiting times through the 3P's policy and the All age mental health strategy is providing appropriate support for children and young people. Through the social partnership and procurement act there is a wider

UNCRC Articles or Optional Protocol	Enhances (X)	Challenges (X)	Explanation
			influence to reduce the risks of child labour and poverty.
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.	X		Through the Duty of Candour children have a right to be informed when mistakes have been made in their healthcare and participate in the process of discovering this information and raising concerns
Article 23 - Children who have any kind of disability should have special care and support so that they can lead full and independent lives.	X		This planning framework is influenced by the social model of disability and NHS organisations will be expected to consider this in treating children with disabilities
Article 24 - Children have the right to good quality health care and to clean water, nutritious food and a clean environment so that they will stay healthy. Rich countries should help poorer	X		This planning framework provides directions for NHS organisations and the policies influencing the framework are the foundations for the provision of good quality healthcare. Wales is supporting poorer countries in this through the social partnership and procurement act.

UNCRC Articles or Optional Protocol	Enhances (X)	Challenges (X)	Explanation
countries achieve this.			
<p>Article 27 - Children have a right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and mental needs. The Government should help families who cannot afford to provide this.</p> <p>Article 39 - Children who have been neglected or abused should receive special help to restore their self-respect.</p>	X		Mental Health is one of the priorities for this planning framework and the all age mental health strategy is supporting the health and wellbeing of all children and young people.

- Consider whether any EU Citizens Rights (as referenced in the Equality Impact Assessment) relate to young people up to the age of 18.

For further information of the [UNCRC](#) and its [Optional Protocols](#), please visit the [Children's Rights Intranet Page](#).

4. Ministerial advice and decision

5. The Ministerial advice is that this planning framework applies to all, regardless of age. NHS organisations will need to consider the impact of this planning framework on

different groups of children and young people, as they develop their IMTPs. **Publication of the CRIA**

6.

- *Following the ministerial decision, the CRIA should be published on the Welsh Government website.*
- *Send sections 1 and 8 of your IIA and the CRIA (Annex A) to your departmental web manager for publishing.*
- **All** completed CRIAs must also be sent to the CRIA@gov.wales mailbox.

For further information and support on this process, please visit the [Children's Rights Intranet Page](#) which contains a range of resources.

7. Communicating with Children and Young People

- If you have sought children and young people's views on your proposal, how will you inform them of the outcome?

The planning framework does not develop policy in its own right. It is a collection of existing policies brought together to ensure that NHS Organisations have a succinct set of directions and information from the Cabinet Secretary to assist them in honing their IMTPs (plans).

As such, the engagement and discussion with children and young people will have taken place when the existing policies were established.

8. Monitoring and Review

- Please outline what monitoring and review mechanism you will put in place to review this CRIA.

The planning framework does not develop policy in its own right. It is a collection of existing policies brought together to ensure that NHS Organisations have a succinct set of directions and information from the Cabinet Secretary to assist them in honing their IMTPs (plans). Any review and monitoring would be the responsibility of the policy lead in order to adjust and amend the existing policy once in operation.

- Following this review, are there any revisions required to the policy or its implementation?

It will be for policy leads of specific policies to review and decide if any revisions are required to either the policy, or its implementation.