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2011 Children and Young People's Wellbeing Monitor for Wales

Executive Summary



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Executive Summary

Introduction

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This is the second in a series of reports on children and young people's wellbeing in Wales. The first was published in 2008 in response to calls from the UN for governments to publish information that can be used to assess progress and design policies to improve the outcomes for children and young people. The Welsh Government made a commitment to doing this in One Wales with the intention to publish new editions of the Monitor every three years.

The Monitor is important to aiding the Welsh Government and its partners to measure and understand the issues which affect the wellbeing of children and young people and to use this as a basis for policy development and evaluation.

The aim of the Monitor is to report on the wellbeing of children and young people (aged 0-25) using a variety of wellbeing indicators, findings from the wider evidence base and the voices of children and young people themselves.

The Monitor is organised around themes taken from the Welsh Government's Seven Core Aims for children and young people, which are themselves based on the UNCRC (see Box 1). The Seven Core Aims seek to ensure that all children and young people in Wales:

- have a flying start in life;
- have a comprehensive range of education and learning opportunities;
- enjoy the best possible health and are free from abuse, victimisation and exploitation;
- have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities;
- are listened to, treated with respect, and have their race and cultural identity recognised;
- have a safe home and community which supports physical and emotional wellbeing, and;
- are not disadvantaged by poverty.

Box 1: The four general principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

The UNCRC is an international human rights treaty that grants all children and young people (aged under 18), a comprehensive set of human rights. The UK signed the convention on 19 April 1990, ratified it on 16 December 1991 and it came into force in the UK on 15 January 1992.

The four general principles of the UNCRC are:

- non-discrimination;
- the best interests of the child;
- the right to life, survival, and development; and
- respect for the views of the child.

For further information, see <http://www.unicef.org/crc/>

The Monitor's fundamental aims remain unchanged. These are to:

- provide access to reliable and up-to-date information on child wellbeing in Wales, allowing the Welsh Government to monitor and respond to key trends;
- provide an opportunity to track the Welsh Government's cross-cutting child poverty targets within the context of child wellbeing;
- raise awareness of the issues that need to be tackled to secure children and young people's wellbeing; and
- fulfil the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) call on all state parties to publish data on children's wellbeing regularly.

The Monitor is written by joint teams of Welsh Government social researchers, statisticians and economists.

There are many sources of data used throughout the Monitor to populate the indicators. Care has been taken to ensure all sources are robust and legitimate. Indicators are reported at an all-Wales level, and all indicators reported on in the first Monitor are included again including data on the Welsh Government's Child Poverty indicators. In some cases there is no change as no new data have become available.

A New Look Monitor

The 2011 edition of the Monitor contains a number of changes from the previous version. Most notably, it now reports on children and young people aged 0-25 years of age (the 2008 edition only reported to 18) to reflect the Welsh Government's policy focus on this age group and the transition from youth to adulthood.

Also new is the inclusion of information and insights gained from children and young people themselves; their voice has been captured via the commissioned qualitative research the *Voices of Children and Young People in Wales* study (undertaken by Glyndŵr University). This was identified as a gap in the previous edition of the Monitor but recognised as extremely important in terms of guiding our developing knowledge about what counts from the perspective of children and young people themselves. The main findings from this study are reported in this summary and the qualitative material is integrated within the main report of the Monitor; there will also be a separate publication which reports on the findings in more detail.

A more comprehensive review of existing evidence by Cardiff University was also commissioned and the findings have been used to construct the narratives of the chapters.

New indicators and sources of data have been identified and included. In part this is due to the increased age range. And, a stronger focus on wellbeing theories has been included in the introductory chapter in part due to the increasing interest in wellbeing as a guiding concept in government policy making.

Findings from the Welsh Government's work on children and young people's budgeting have also been included.

An important feature of the 2008 Monitor was to identify significant gaps in the evidence. Since 2008, work has been done to address some of these gaps. Elsewhere these gaps remain and require continued work and commitment from the Welsh Government and relevant stakeholders. The 2011 edition of the Monitor also identifies some additional gaps. One notable on-going development consists of work examining how to collect representative survey data from children and young people themselves about their wellbeing and their views on public services.

The most notable difference is that this edition of the Monitor begins to develop a time series of data on key wellbeing indicators. The summary of key findings that follow highlights some of the main trends alongside key findings from the qualitative research with children and young people, all of which is explained in more detail in the main report.

Key Findings

The Demographic Picture of Children and Young People in Wales

In recent years, migration has been the main reason for population growth in Wales. However, Wales has experienced positive natural change (i.e. more births than deaths) since 2005-06 onwards.

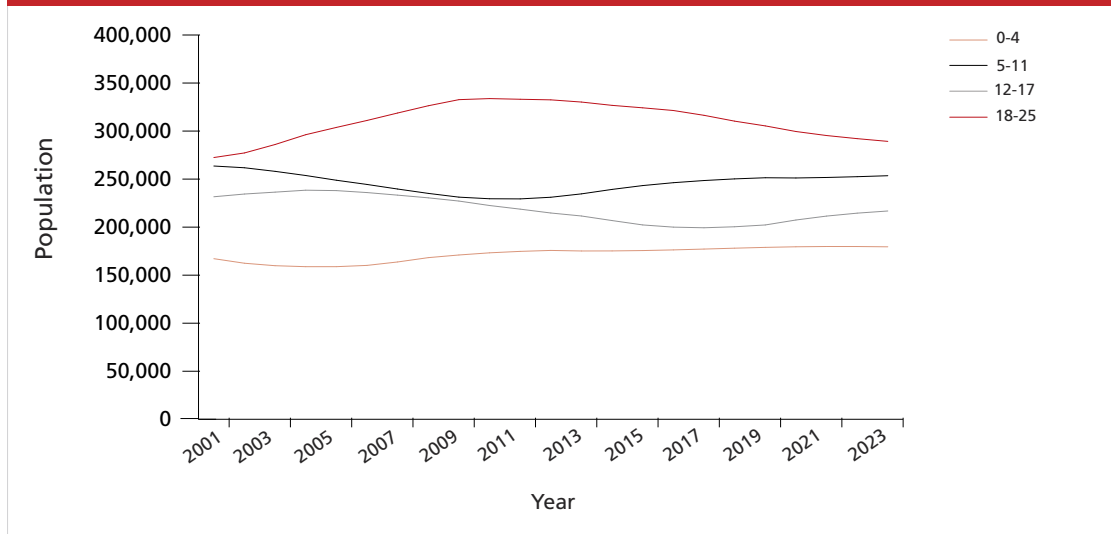
There are approximately 962,000 children and young people in Wales aged 0-25. The number of births continues to rise and, in 2009, 34,900 babies were born in Wales (See Figure 1). This means that the numbers of pupils of statutory school age (5-15) are beginning to rise, although these have been falling recently due to previously lower birth rates.

Due to changes in life expectancy, the proportion of young people aged 0-25 is projected to decrease in relation to the general population by 2.5% to 937,700 by mid-2020.

Other key demographic data relating to children and young people in Wales:

- The number of live births in Wales increased from 32,000 in 2006 to 34,900 in 2009.
- Death rates among 0-19 year olds in Wales continue to fall and, in 2009, there were 291 deaths, which is a rate of 40.8 per 100,000 population.
- As in recent years, the numbers of pupils of statutory school age (5-15 years) in maintained schools, decreased but rose among the under-fives and the 16-19+ years age groups.
- The level of Welsh language ability has not changed since the last edition of the Monitor with 13% of primary and 16% of secondary school children fluent speakers.
- The vast majority of school children aged five and over are white British (91.8%).

Figure 1: Projected population by age group in Wales (mid-2001 to mid-2023)



Source: Mid-year population estimates and 2008-based national projections, Office for National Statistics

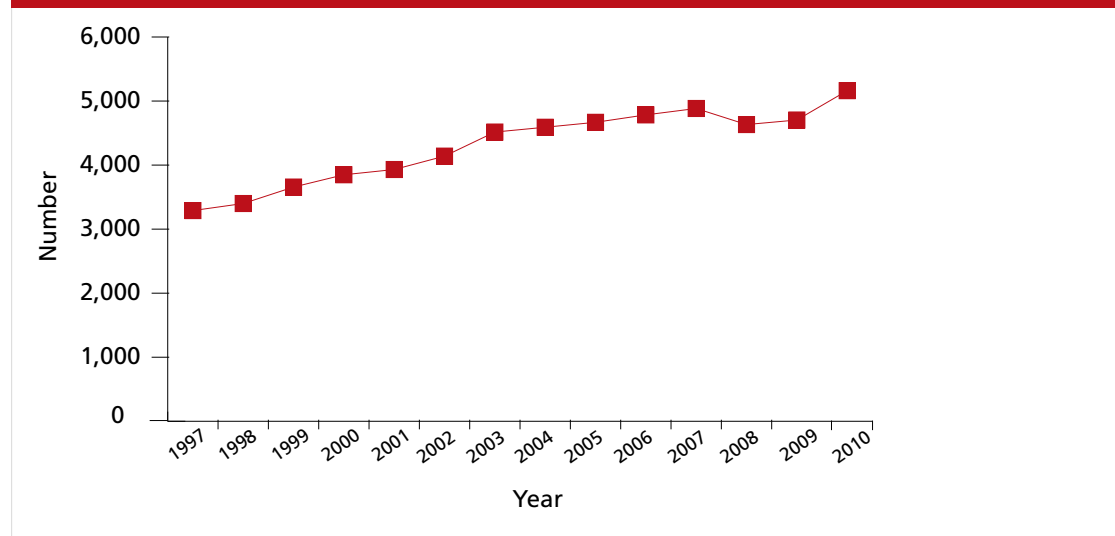
Box 2: Extract from the *Voices of Children and Young People in Wales* study

As children grow older and parents relinquish their control over their environments and choices, they accept more responsibility for their safety, their health and their futures. It was apparent in this study that while young people talked about having responsibility for themselves (and about treating people how they would like to be treated), there was some reticence in accepting responsibility for others. However, those young people who had children of their own, talked about their responsibilities to their children, mostly prioritising these over their own interests. Their concerns for their children appeared largely informed by their own experiences, worries and opportunities available to them as young people.

Specific Groups of Children and Young People

One of the most remarkable findings reported in the Monitor is that the number of looked after children has increased by 44% over the last decade (see Figure 2). It is likely that this rise is related to a number of factors including increased need and/or local authority policies and practices.

Figure 2: Number of looked after children in Wales at 31 March (1997-2010)



Source: Welsh Government

The proportions of pupils in local authority maintained schools, known to be eligible for free school meals has also increased. Between 2009 and 2010 the increase was just over 1% in primary schools and just under 1% in secondary schools.

The Monitor also reports on a downward trend since 2000/01 in relation to statements of special educational need (SEN). In 2010 14,128 pupils in schools in Wales now having statements compared to 17,400 in 2000/01.

Other key data relating to specific groups of children and young people include:

- There are 150,616 children and young people aged 0-18 years living with a disabled parent.
- There are 933 young carers (aged under 18) known to social services.
- There are around 25,000 children in need.
- In 2009/10, the majority of 16-24 year olds in Wales (94.9%) identified themselves as heterosexual or straight and 2.8% identified themselves as gay, lesbian, bisexual or other. 1.3% didn't respond to the question and a further 1% refused to answer the question.
- There are around 59,000 children and young people in Wales aged 18 and under living in households with at least four dependent children aged 19 and under.

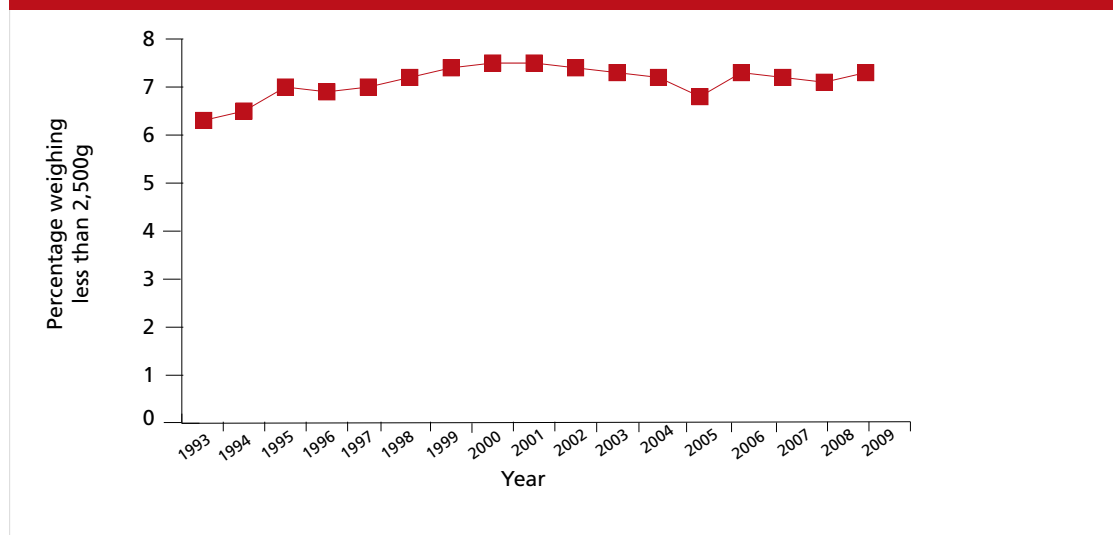
The Early Years

Being healthy at birth and through the early years is one of the most important indicators of the wellbeing of children. Measuring the health of young children can be undertaken in a number of different ways and many of the key indicators reported here incorporate those used by UNICEF, including low birth weight; infant mortality rate and childhood immunisation.

Birth weight is an important determinant for future health and low birth weight (LBW) is associated with adverse outcomes in terms of poor health and education. Babies born weighing less than 2,500g are at risk of deficits in growth, cognitive development, diabetes and heart disease. There is also evidence that very low birth weight babies (those weighing less than or equal to 1,500g) are at an increased risk of learning difficulties later on in life.

The proportion of babies being born with a LBW (less than 2,500g) in Wales has increased over recent years (see Figure 3). Between 1993 and 2000, the proportion rose from 6.3% to 7.5%. Since 2000, the proportion has remained relatively stable, except for a dip in 2005. In 2009, the percentage of babies with a LBW was 7.3%.

Figure 3: Percentage of liveborns weighing less than 2,500 grams, Wales (1993-2009)



Source: Birth Statistics, Office for National Statistics

Other key findings relating to the wellbeing of children in their early years are:

- The infant mortality rate continues to fall and in 2009 was 4.8 per 1,000 births.
- Of children aged 4-7, 73% eat fruit daily and 57% eat vegetables daily.

- For seven-year-olds the highest cognitive scores were for children of graduate mothers and those from families in the top income groups.
- Boys are more likely than girls to have special educational needs and this is particularly pronounced for behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and speech, language and communication difficulties.
- Sixty-eight per cent of seven-year-olds report having 'lots of friends'.
- The uptake rate of two-year-olds being immunised against measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) continues to increase from a low of 80% in 2003-04. During 2009-10, 92% of two-year-olds had been immunised against MMR.
- In 2010 the proportion of pupils achieving at least level two (the expected level) in the Core Subject Indicator (CSI) in the National Curriculum was 81.6%. This was the highest level of achievement recorded over the last ten years.
- Girls out-performed boys in all subjects in the CSI, although recently this gender gap has been decreasing slightly each year.

Access to Education, Training and Learning Opportunities

Wales continues to see gradual improvement in Core Subject Indicator (CSI) performance at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 and in GCSE/Key Stage 4 attainment measures, but international comparisons show Welsh pupils performing less well comparatively.

Most notably, the latest results from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) show Welsh pupils are performing less well in assessments of reading, mathematics and science than previously, and also comparatively less well than their counterparts in the other UK countries, and lower than the OECD average in reading and mathematics (see Table 1).

Table 1: PISA assessment area scores, UK and OECD average (2009)

Assessment area	Wales	OECD average	Scotland	NI	England
Reading	476	493	500	499	495
Mathematics	472	496	499	492	493
Science	496	501	514	511	515

Source: Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)

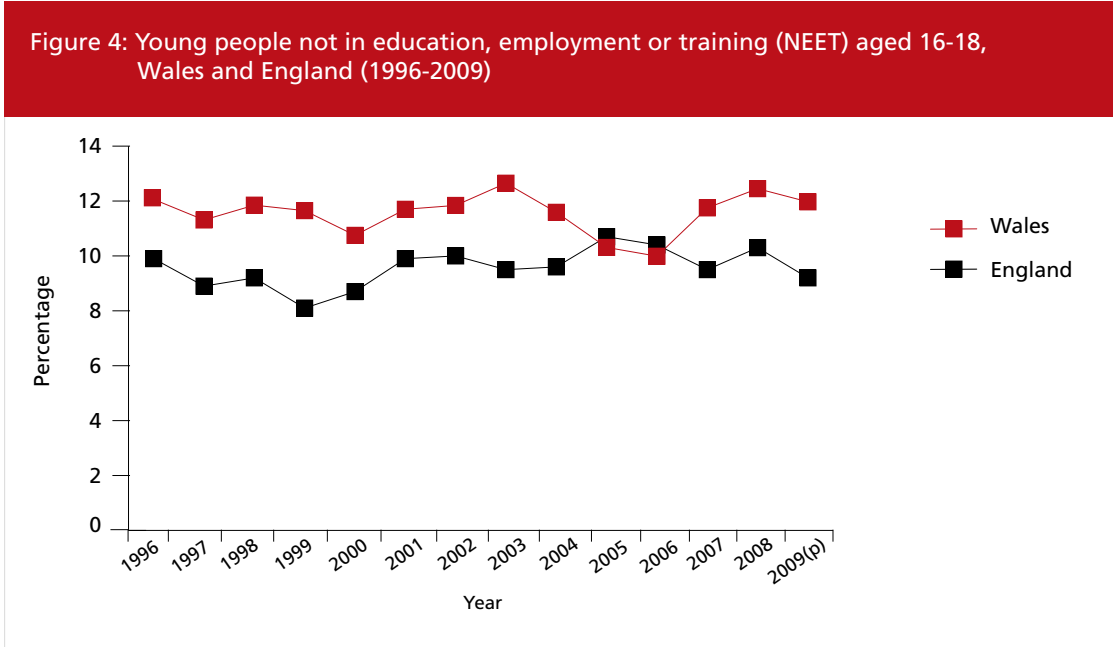
Gender continues to be a defining factor in the educational wellbeing of Welsh children and young people. For instance, girls continue to outperform boys in assessments during compulsory education and beyond. However, PISA assessments, which focus on the application of knowledge, show boys

outperforming girls in two out of the three subjects assessed (i.e. maths and science).

The other most clearly identifiable pattern is that deprivation continues to be correlated with absenteeism and lower attainment rates across much of the spectrum of education for children and young people in Wales.

Other key education findings reported in the Monitor are that:

- The numbers of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) have remained largely at the same level for more than a decade (see Figure 4).
- The number of permanent exclusions in Wales (based on total number of occurrences rather than pupils) has dropped from around 1.0 to 0.5 per 1,000 pupils since the previous Monitor (which reported 2005/06 data).
- The numbers of Welsh domiciled¹ enrolments² to higher education institutions (HEIs) for those aged under 25 has increased over the last nine years from 49,260 in 2000/01 to 54,985 in 2008/09. Females continue to outnumber males by 55.8% to 44.2% in 2008/09.
- Looked after children have considerably lower attainment rates than all pupils.



Source: Welsh Government
p = provisional data

¹ A student is Welsh domiciled if that student's permanent or home address prior to entry to the course is in Wales. It is not necessarily the correspondence address of the student and because length of residence at the permanent address is not captured, does not necessarily represent the country where a student received the majority of their pre-HE learning.

² Enrolments include postgraduate, undergraduate, part-time as well as full-time enrolments.

Box 3: Extract from the *Voices of Children and Young People in Wales* study

Most children and young people enjoyed school, deriving satisfaction variously from aspects of the curriculum, pedagogy, their peers and teachers. One concern about school was its perceived fitness for purpose in a changing world. That is, pupils demonstrated preference for practical subjects and expressed desire to have a greater focus on subjects which would help them 'get on in life'. Learning about money management was highlighted particularly by many young people as very important in the current financial climate.

Stress was an issue for young people especially in relation to the demands of educational achievement and, linked to this, the prospects of securing work. Young people felt under considerable pressure to get good grades, at the same time aware that even these may not secure their future.

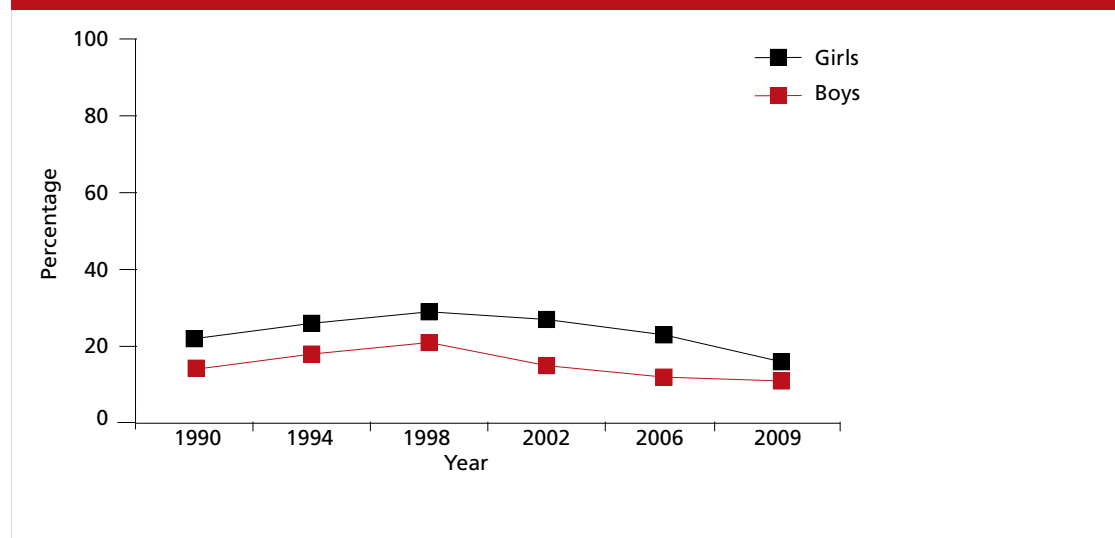
Health, Freedom from Abuse and Exploitation

Clearly, the physical, mental and emotional health of children and young people is central to an analysis of their wellbeing. Equally, lifestyle factors, such as alcohol consumption and obesity, are known to have a potentially deleterious impact on current and future health. And, many lifestyle indicators are socially patterned, with adverse behaviours more likely among those from the least affluent backgrounds.

Focusing on such information alone could be said to follow a deficits model of public health, focusing on those problems that policies need to tackle. While this deficits model is important, it should ideally be complemented by addressing assets, those factors that develop resilience and promote positive health and wellbeing, such as participating in leisure activities, enjoying a positive school environment and ease of communication with family and friends - aspects of wellbeing reported in other chapters of the Monitor.

One of the most significant findings reported in the Monitor is that smoking among 15-year-olds has continued to decline since its peak in the late 1990s among both sexes, although it is more prevalent amongst girls than boys (see Figure 5). This trend can be seen across the UK and is repeated for 13-year-olds.

Figure 5: Weekly smoking among 15-year-olds, Wales (1990-2009)



Source: Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study

Also declining is the proportion of 15-year-olds drinking weekly which has fallen in recent years, such that in 2009/10 approaching two in five boys (36%) and one in three girls (30%) reported drinking this often. This compares with 58% of boys and 54% of girls in 2001/02.

Other key findings in relation to the health related wellbeing of children and young people in Wales are that:

- The dental health of 11 and 12-year-olds has improved over recent years.
- A considerable minority of adolescents are sexually active at age 15 or younger these figures have remained stable in recent years, while rates of chlamydia have risen among 15 to 24-year-olds. Rates of teenage pregnancy have remained stable in recent years.
- The rate of hospital admissions for self-harm in Wales have increased in recent years and are lower for boys than for girls, particularly among 15 to 17-year-olds.
- There is evidence that the suicide rate for 15 to 24-year-olds has declined in recent years, particularly among males, although the trend must be interpreted with some caution given the, thankfully, small number of suicides each year.
- Adolescent girls tend to rate their health less well than boys, while life satisfaction declines with age for girls but remains stable for boys.
- A considerable minority of children, adolescents and young adults are classified as overweight or obese.
- Fewer than one in three adolescents report eating fruit or vegetables daily, while less than half of older girls report eating breakfast daily.

Box 4: Extract from the *Voices of Children and Young People in Wales* study

Children and young people were aware of the relationship between their own behaviours and health (and thus accepted some responsibility for their own health). Irrespective of age, children and young people, distinguished between healthy and unhealthy diet, although most admitted a preference for unhealthy food. Some young people compensated for unhealthy dietary behaviours by taking exercise. Very few children and young people said they currently, or had ever, smoked and smoking was generally perceived as very unhealthy and no longer 'cool'. Most young children reported that they did not like, or engage in, alcohol consumption although this was considered the norm among older (including under-age) young people, a few of whom acknowledged binge drinking.

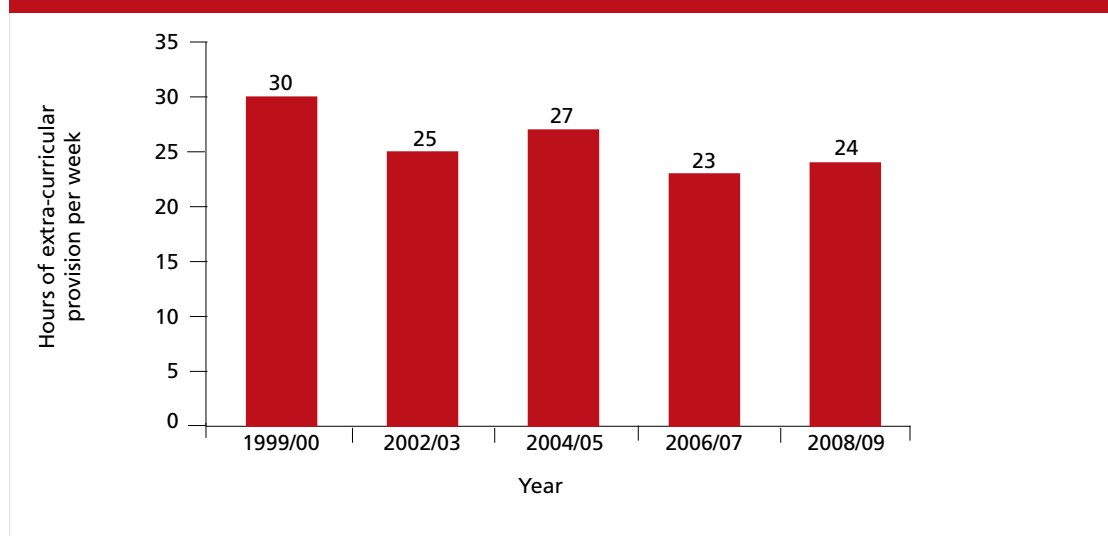
Access to Play, Leisure, Sport and Culture

Children and young people's participation in play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities can have an important role to play in improving other aspects of wellbeing such as health in the case of physical activity. It can also contribute more generally in relation to helping improve motivation and in the development of a range of skills that help children and young people's learning, development of self-identity and engagement with others. As with other areas of wellbeing, gender and socioeconomic status provide the main differences.

Monitoring such aspects of children and young people's lives can help to gauge some of the broader ways in which they are growing-up. For instance, it is worth highlighting that the proportions of young people spending four or more evenings per week with friends has declined between 2005/06 and 2009/10 in all ages. The age pattern differs between boys and girls.

Boys are more likely to meet the recommended physical activity guidelines than girls, for both genders this declines with age so that by the age of 15 a fifth of boys and around one in ten girls report this level of activity. On a related point, there is a gradual trend for fewer hours of teacher time being spent on extra-curricular physical education activities (see Figure 6). However the proportion of pupils taking part in club sport has increased gradually during the past 10 years. A slightly higher proportion of pupils aged 7-11 participated in regular club sport than secondary school aged children (11-16).

Figure 6: Hours of teacher time provided for extra-curricular PE, ages 11-16 (1999-2009)



Source: Sports Wales PE Provision Survey

Arts attendance and participation have both on the whole increased in the last two years for seven to 18-year-olds with more girls than boys attending/participating and more children and young people from higher socioeconomic groups attending/participating.

Other key findings relating to access to play, leisure, sport and culture are:

- The number of free public swims for those aged 16 and under in Wales fell from 808,000 in 2004/05 to 569,000 in 2009/10 a drop of 29.6%. The downward trend was consistent apart from a small rise in 2008/09. Part of the decrease may be due to an increased focus on structured activity and skill development within the Free Swimming Scheme. The number of free structured swimming activities rose almost four-fold between 2004/05 and 2009/10 from 24,000 to 94,000.
- The proportion of young people watching TV for at least two hours each weekday evening decreased between 2005/06 and 2009/10. On the other hand, the proportions of young people using a computer for playing games and other purposes increased.
- Over three quarters of pupils aged 11-16 take part in extra-curricular sport and physical recreation.

Box 5: Extract from the *Voices of Children and Young People in Wales* study

Young children were attached to the areas where they lived, mostly for the people that they knew (friends and family) and for their access to contexts (including gardens, the street and parks) where they could play. Older children and teenagers' assessment of where they lived also focused upon access to friends but, those in rural areas, were often critical about the perceived absence of suitable entertainment for young people.

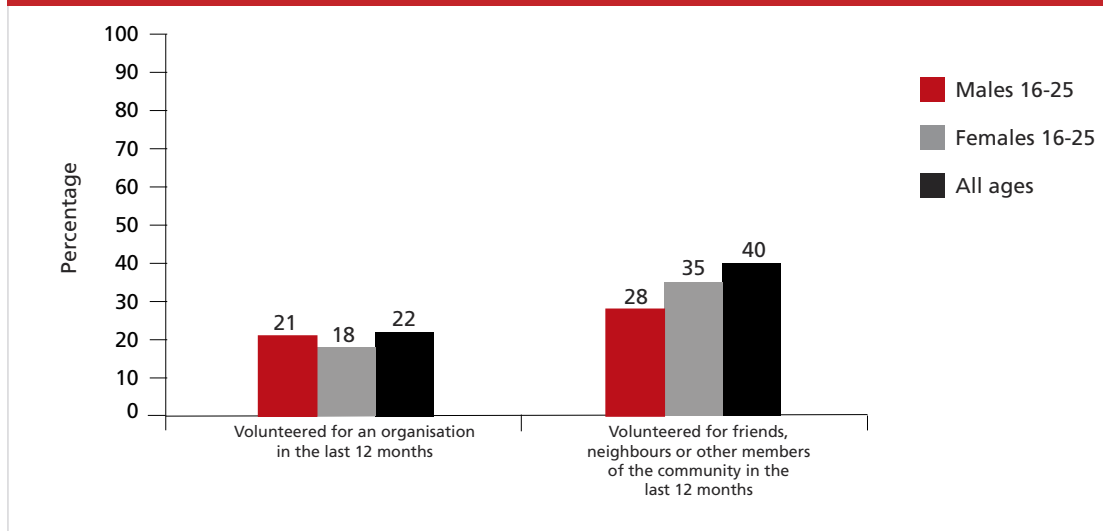
Children and Young People are Listened to, Treated with Respect and have their Race and Cultural Identity Recognised

The main focus of this Core Aim 5 is enabling children and young people to participate in decisions that affect them. A key assumption is that this can help to shift the 'balance of power' in relationships between children and young people and adults, such as between school staff and pupils, or between children and parents or more broadly about inclusion within an institution or community. Participation provides opportunities to change attitudes, develop new skills and develop relationships which are more equal.

The key findings reported in the Monitor are:

- Thirty-one per cent of 16 to 25-year-olds in Wales had volunteered to help friends, neighbours or other members of the community in the past year and 20% had volunteered for an organisation. This was a higher proportion on average than the 20% of 16 to 24-year-olds who responded to a similar question from the 2008 Living in Wales survey. (see Figure 7)
- 2009/10 HBSC study data showed that 60% of boys and girls aged 15 in Wales said their classmates were kind and helpful. As with the previous survey, girls were more likely than boys to report that their classmates were kind and helpful.
- Just over a fifth of young people aged 18-24 voted in the 2007 National Assembly for Wales elections.
- A significantly lower proportion of young people reported voting compared to the population as a whole.
- Estyn found that the extent to which children and young people are able to participate in decisions about their education is improving but still varies across Wales and between education sectors.
- Ninety-two per cent of 14 to 25-year-olds in England and Wales felt that there were significant gaps in the services provided for them.
- Young people in Wales aged 16-29 were significantly more likely to be a victim of discrimination, harassment or victimisation than residents over 40.

Figure 7: Percentage of respondents who volunteered for an organisation, friends, neighbours or other members of the community in the last 12 months, Wales (2010)



Source: National Survey for Wales Pilot

Box 6: Extract from the *Voices of Children and Young People in Wales* study

Young people and children, irrespective of age, perceived relationships with others as one of the most important aspects of their wellbeing. For the most part, relationships were prioritised by children and young people over material possessions. Younger children focused primarily on the importance in their lives of their parents/guardians, while older children looked to their relationships with their peers, teachers and other significant others, as well as their families.

Children and young people highlighted the importance of treating others with respect, and in the same way as they wished to be treated themselves. They appeared for the most part to be tolerant of, and indeed value, difference. Hence, they accepted and welcomed opportunities to mix with others, with different experiences, backgrounds and cultures. In this sense young people appeared generally accepting and inclusive of others.

A sense of identity was highlighted as very important by many young people and children. Many participants in the study said that they were proud to be Welsh, and that this engendered a sense of belonging. Equally those young people who perceived themselves as English (often being born in England and having little exposure to the Welsh language in the areas where they lived) claimed an English identity. Importantly having a strong sense of identity was not perceived as threatening towards, or by, others with alternative allegiances. For those living on the borders, identity was less well

clear cut and some young people struggled to locate themselves. Despite the perceived importance placed on identity and belonging, for the most part young people distanced themselves from extremist patriotic attitudes and behaviours.

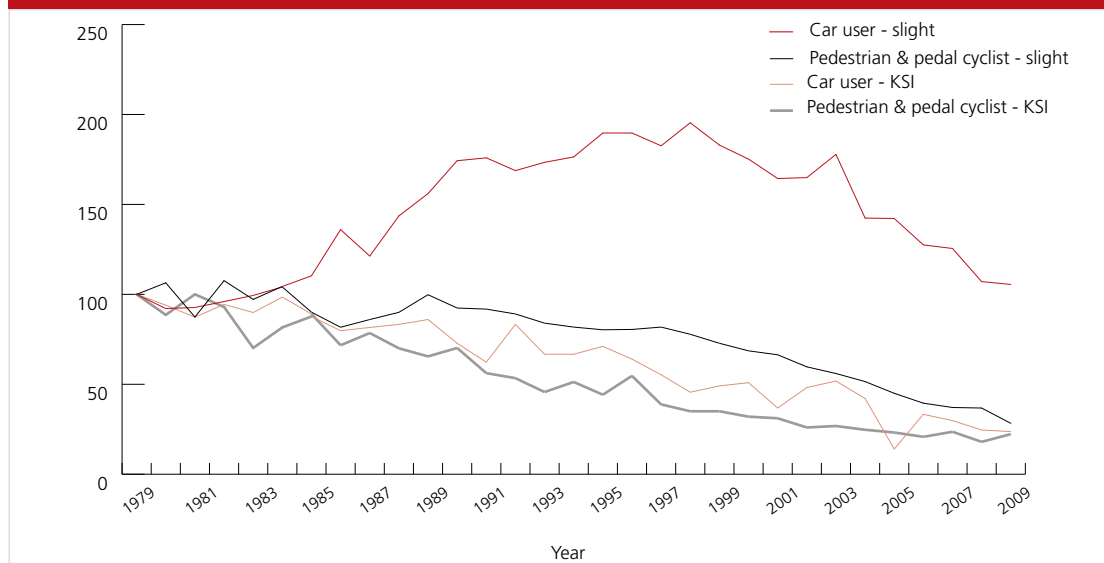
Most young people highlighted the importance of champions in their lives, who were adults (including parents and teachers) who would listen to them. For the most part young people said that adults filtered out what they felt were non-important issues raised by children and young people, and in some cases the ability of adults to grasp what was important to those from the younger generation, was queried. Generally children said that outside those known to them, adults (and the media) as a whole were not respectful towards children and young people.

Safe Home and Community

It has long been recognised how important it is to protect children and young adults from the physical and psychological harm that can be caused by other people - for example through crime or bullying - or by their immediate environments - for example through accidents or poor housing. The Monitor reports on how younger people in Wales are faring in respect of safety and security. The key findings reported are:

- Around 20% of children aged between 10-15 in GB reported being victims of crime in 2009.
- The numbers of children killed or seriously injured has declined since 1979, reflecting changes in children's behaviour towards the road environment and, for car occupants, trends towards safer cars (see Figure 8). Some recent data, however, shows that the numbers of pedestrian and cyclists killed or seriously injured have levelled out from 2006 onwards and so they currently comprise an increasing proportion of child casualties.
- Recent trends in young drivers' involvement in accidents suggest that the rates are falling more slowly than for older drivers. Comparing the period 1994-98 with 2004-08, the number of young drivers involved in accidents has fallen by 10%, but the number of older drivers involved in accidents has fallen by 17%.
- In 2008 around 74,000 children and young people aged 0-24 were living in overcrowded conditions.
- Being the victim of bullying tends to decrease with age with around 6% of 15-year-olds reporting being bullied frequently in 2009/10.

Figure 8: Trends - child casualties (aged 0-15) by type of road user, index 1979=100 (1979-2009)



Source: Welsh Government
KSI = Killed or seriously injured

Box 7: Extract from the *Voices of Children and Young People in Wales* study

Feeling safe and secure was important for children and young people, irrespective of age. Younger children, particularly, drew on adult fears (such as the 'stranger in the paper'), and looked to parents to protect them. Young people became more aware of the contexts of safety and age as they grew older, for example, when out alone at night and in different areas of the city. Whereas parents controlled the environment of young children (for example, where they play and access to the Internet), as they aged, young people learnt to take responsibility for their own safety. Young people with children of their own, valued safe environments and close community contexts for their children, although in rural areas the downside of these was perceived as everyone knowing their business.

All participants were aware of bullying issues, and many had been directly affected. Young people talked about the misery and isolation caused by abusive behaviours towards them by others, particularly at school. While adults were described as trying to address bullying, they were perceived as sometimes unable to grasp the seriousness of the problem. Partly this was because the phenomenon was perceived as more serious contemporaneously than it had been when adults were children. Bullying was described as having serious implications for young people's outcomes (including psychological wellbeing as well as educational outcomes).

Poverty

Poverty can affect all aspects of a child's life. These effects range from economic and material disadvantage, through to social constraint and exclusion. In addition, there are personal issues associated with stigma such as shame, sadness and the fear of being different. These effects are often more hidden.

In particular, evidence shows that children and young people growing up in poverty are vulnerable in a number of different ways. They are more at risk of poor educational attainment, are more likely to have poorer health outcomes, and have lower skills and aspirations. They are also more likely to be low paid, unemployed and welfare dependent in adulthood.

Key findings from the Monitor show trends over time of the levels of child poverty in Wales and the extent to which children and families in Wales are living in severe and persistent poverty. For instance, nearly one in three (32%) children in Wales - around 200,000 - now live in poverty, according to a relative income measure (see Table 2). This is one percentage point higher than that for the UK. Ten years ago, child poverty was three percentage points higher than the UK figure. In the past ten years, child poverty in Wales has fallen by four percentage points whereas for the UK the figure has fallen by two percentage points.

Table 2: Percentage of children living in households below 60% of median income (After Housing Costs), UK country comparisons (1997-2009)

	97-98 to 99-00	98-99 to 00-01	99-00 to 01-02	00-01 to 02-03	01-02 to 03-04	02-03 to 04-05	03-04 to 05-06	04-05 to 06-07	05-06 to 07-08	06-07 to 08-09
Wales	36	35	34	34	32	31	28	29	32	32
UK	33	33	31	30	30	29	29	30	30	31
Scotland	31	32	32	30	28	26	25	25	24	25
N Ireland		30	29	28	28	27	27	26	26	26

Source: Department for Work and Pensions

Other key findings relating to child poverty in the Monitor are that:

- In the period 1998/99 to 2000/01 the percentage of children living in absolute poverty was 34%. This decreased to 20% in the period of 2002/03 to 2004/05 and has now begun to increase in recent years, increasing to 21% in the period of 2006/07 to 2008/09.
- From the end of the 1990s, there was a steady reduction in the proportion of children living in workless households in Wales - and by 2006, 16.9% of children were living in workless households. In more recent years, this figure has increased - and by 2009, just under a fifth (19.9%) of children were living in workless households.

- Although being in employment reduces the risk of living in poverty, recent estimates suggest that more than half of all children living in poverty are now in households where at least one person is working. Although most of these are either self-employed or working part-time.
- There were 50,200 people aged 16-24 unemployed in Wales in the 12 months ending June 2010. This is an unemployment rate of 21.7%, compared to the UK rate of 19.5%. Between the year to June 2009 and the year to June 2010, the youth unemployment rate in Wales increased by 3.2 percentage points - which is the fifth largest increase of the English regions and devolved administrations. Wales had the third highest youth unemployment rate of the 12 regions and devolved administrations for 16 to 24 year-olds. In the same age range, the increase in the unemployment rate was larger for men than for women.
- The most recent Annual Population Survey data for Wales shows that 25% of children in Wales lived in lone parent families in 2009, compared to the UK figure of 23%.
- The number of lone parents in employment in Wales has been steadily increasing. In 2004/06, 54.5% of lone parents were in employment. This figure increased to 55.7% by 2007/09.

Box 8: Extract from the *Voices of Children and Young People in Wales* study

While children and young people readily identified preferred occupations, older children were uncertain about whether these would be realised because of the economic crisis and competition for jobs. Young people were thoughtful about money and had an eye on the future. University fees were described by some young people as acting as a deterrent to the taking up of university places because of the prospects of large debts with no guarantee of employment following graduation.