



## Children and Young People's Rights Scheme Annual Progress Report 2017

### Summary Report

This report is the third progress report on the due regard duty for embedding the UNCRC into the local authority policy framework and specifically focuses on progress made in the areas outlined in our Action Plan 2016/17.

The Children & Young People's Rights Scheme was launched in November 2014. This sets out the arrangements in place to ensure transparency in the processes that are being followed to demonstrate that we pay 'due regard' to the UNCRC. We do this by;

1. Making such arrangements as is considered suitable to promote and facilitate participation by children in decisions of the authority which might affect them, as required in the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010.
2. Developing knowledge and understanding of the UNCRC through training for all staff and decision makers within the City and County of Swansea, including other statutory and key voluntary partners.
3. Promotion and awareness raising of the UNCRC.
4. Ensuring appropriate and robust mechanisms are in place to receive feedback and complaints in relation to the UNCRC.
5. Ensuring compliance, accountability and impact of the UNCRC due regard duty that is evidenced based.

#### Participation of Children and Young People

- 2016/17 has seen a sustained engagement of children and young people aged 2-18 years. 6,087 participated in opportunities to have their voices heard through the PPC Team. This includes:
  - Big Conversations
  - Pupil Voice Forum
  - Corporate Parenting Challenge and associated LAC forums
  - School project work
  - UK Youth Parliament
  - CYP Super Survey

- Specific consultations, e.g. Childcare Sufficiency Assessment

### **Promoting Knowledge and Understanding of the UNCRC**

Swansea Council is committed to supporting people to understand children's rights. This often involves supporting services to think about how the UNCRC applies in their day to day running and how practically children's rights can be embedded into service infrastructure.

- 141 people have participated in workforce development opportunities to develop their understanding of the UNCRC and how it applies to their work. Examples include:
  - Facilitating training for senior decision makers such as Governors, senior leaders and Councillors
  - Facilitating bespoke training requests such as 'Developing Children's Rights in Early Years settings'
- 98% of schools in Swansea are now engaged in the Rights Respecting Schools Award. This is an increase of 2% in the last 12 months. Over the past year, 26 schools have received individual support from UNICEF. This includes full INSET training, after school workshops and sessions for pupils. A plan for engaging of the remaining schools has been developed.

### **A Partnership Approach to Children's Rights**

The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (the Act) came into force earlier this year and places new requirements upon public bodies to take steps to maximise their contribution to improving long-term wellbeing for Wales. Whilst the Act requires public bodies to work towards a wellbeing needs assessment for the whole population we are also ensuring that collaboration with partners take place to ensure we look specifically at how we can collectively improve the wellbeing of children and young people within our individual corporate plans, wellbeing assessments and PSB wellbeing plans.

Addressing the wellbeing needs of children and young people in Swansea will predominantly be discharged via the Swansea a Children and Young People's Plan which has been developed with a clear vision and aims for children and young people, which is aligned to our work on embedding Children's Rights. A link to the Plan is available at the end of this summary.

### **A whole Council Approach to Children's Rights**

Our ethos in Swansea is that everyone working for the Council is a member of the team committed to developing services to deliver the best outcomes for children and young people. Services for children and young people are at the heart of all our work with Safeguarding being our top corporate priority.

This has transformed the way the council works, developing services which are integrated and joined-up approach and deliver outcomes, which are best for children and young people. The Children and Young People's Rights Scheme has enhanced this, encouraging people to use the UNCRC as an international framework to ensure work with children and young people is centered around their best interests. Good practice examples include:

- Embedding UNCRC Objectives into the Strategic Equality Plan: Each Council department is required to report through the SEP, how they:

- Participated in training on the UNCRC
- Promoted the UNCRC, making explicit links to relevant articles in their work and made use of the Children's Rights logo
- Were compliant with the Equality Impact Assessment, and therefore the Children's Rights Impact Assessment process
- Incorporating Due Regard to the UNCRC into Corporate Briefing and scrutiny reporting templates
- Taking account of Children's Rights when health and safety emergency planning in school (Take Care Project, Trallwn)
- Inclusion of children and young people in City of Culture and City Centre redevelopment bids.
- The introduction of Smoke Free Beaches and Smoke Free School Gates initiatives by trading standards. These projects are based on the premise that every child has the right to be healthy and signage incorporates the Dilly Rights logo.
- Incorporating the views and priorities of Looked After Children and Young People explicitly into the Corporate Parenting Strategy
- Developing approaches in Early Years that recognise, respect and fulfil the rights of our youngest citizens.
- Developing accessible and inclusive information to engage children and young people in decisions that affect them, e.g. Play Sufficiency Assessment
- Further development of embedding a rights based approach in young People's Services.

### **Ensuring Compliance, Accountability and Impact of the UNCRC**

#### **Children's Rights Impact Assessment**

The Children's Rights Impact Assessment process was embedded within the Equality Impact Assessment process in November 2014, when the Children and Young people's Rights Scheme was formally launched.

Embedding the Children's Rights Impact Assessment within the Equality Impact Assessment provides a platform for services, who may not do so as a matter of course, to be supported to consider how their service or policy decisions affect children and young people (considering age as a protected characteristic), and to be supported to engage with those service users to ensure decisions are made in their best interests and that they are effective in meeting their needs.

17 full EIA reports were completed that had a direct impact on children and young people in this reporting period.

#### **Rights Respecting Schools Impact Assessment process**

Our work to put the UNCRC at the heart of our school's culture and ethos has made the following impact to improve wellbeing and to develop every child's talents and abilities to their fullest potential.

Each school that undergoes a Rights Respecting Schools Award are asked to identify the degree of impact that this work has had against each of the following criteria.

- Children and young people have improved respect for themselves and for others.

- Children and young people are more engaged in their learning.
- Education achievement is enhanced.
- Children and young people develop positive relationships and behaviour, including finding their peers “kind and helpful”.
- Children and young people demonstrate positive attitudes towards diversity in society and overcoming prejudices.
- There are reduced numbers of exclusions and less bullying.
- Increasing percentages of pupils like school.
- Children and young people feel empowered to respect the rights of others locally, nationally and globally, and to uphold their own rights.

### Looking Ahead

In three years, Swansea Council has made significant headway in developing a culture that recognises, respects and works toward fulfilling Children’s Rights.

Swansea has cemented itself as an Authority that works together to achieve the best outcomes for children and young people, by working with them, listening to what they have to say, and supporting them to reach their potential; but there is more to do.

### Broadening Our Approach

In 2017/18, we will:

- Provide bespoke workforce development to departments across the Council so we can further evidence a whole Council approach
- Ensure the embedded process of promoting Dilly is defined and implemented across the Council
- Promote and facilitate the development of accessible, clear information that is easy for people to understand in order to make informed decisions.

### Extending Our Offer

Engagement with children has continued to grow in the last 12 months, though little progress has been made to extend the offer of opportunity to children aged under 10 years in a consistent way. There are pockets of good practice in engaging very young children, in extending the age range of children who are looked after and offering a pupil voice opportunity to year 6 pupils, though there is a gap in engagement of primary school children aged 3-10 years.

In 2017/18 we will;

- Explore ways to offer consistent opportunities to children of Primary School age 3 – 10 years
- Seek to further develop relationships with Primary Schools
- Extend the Corporate Parenting Challenge to include children and young people aged 7-21 years.
- Increase engagement of young people not in school in Big Conversations sessions.
- Make specific plans to increase the engagement of children and young people who are home educated.

### **Being More Visible**

It is important that officers, councillors, children, young people, families and others are able to easily find information about how to access their rights, participate or receive information about how the Council has paid due regard to the UNCRC. We must also get better at how we share and promote the breadth of rights work that takes place in Swansea.

In 2017/18 we will;

- Establish and promote Swansea Council's Children's Rights work through Social Media
- Ensure the Council's web pages are up to date, relevant and accessible.

### **Assessing Impact**

Demonstrating the impact of the Council's due regard to the UNCRC is the next step and challenge for the City and County of Swansea.

In 2017/18 we will;

- Map all monitoring processes in place to understand the impact of embedding a Child Rights approach on children and young people in Swansea. This includes undertaking an authority wide self-assessment for embedding children's rights in the Wellbeing Plan, assessing the impact of Swansea's CRIA and monitoring the use of and impact of the Council's process to hold themselves to account in terms of paying due regard.
- Further understand the impact of the rights respecting schools approach and continue to work with schools to ensure the rights respecting work continues after the contract with UNICEF ends.
- Investigate the extent to which data collected from children and young people influences change, e.g. understanding how Super Survey, Big Conversation (and associated forums) and consultation data is acted upon and fed back.

**Link to Swansea Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Plan -**

<https://democracy.swansea.gov.uk/documents/s32123/15.2%20-%20Appendix%201%20-%20Children%20and%20Young%20People%20Strategic%20Partnership%20Plan%20Nov%202016.pdf>