



Children's Rights in Swansea

Report on implementing the Children & Young People's Rights Scheme in Swansea.

August 2016 to July 2017



Hello

Swansea City and County value children and young people and the part they play in our communities.

We are committed to children's rights.

We're creating a culture where children's rights are at the centre of our work. We aim to consider them in everything we do.

This is important.

It gives us better services and better results in the lives of children, young people and families.

Children's rights

The UNCRC is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. It's a list of rights for all children and young people. Rights to be safe, play, have an education, be healthy, and be happy. It includes civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights.



The Children and Young People's Rights Scheme

This scheme was launched in November 2014. We were the first county to voluntarily make it part of our work. The Scheme means we pay 'due regard' to the UNCRC when making decisions.

We do this by:

- encouraging participation so children and young people have a say in decisions
- sharing knowledge and understanding of the UNCRC
- having systems for feedback and complaints
- gathering evidence of how following the UNCRC changes decisions and improves lives.

This is a report on how we're putting the Children & Young People's Rights Scheme into action.





1: Engagement and participation

We recognise the value and importance of listening to what children and young people have to say.

Duty

To create as many opportunities as possible for children to have a say in decisions which affect their lives.

6,087 children and young people had opportunities to have their voices heard.

Having them involved has made a real difference to our plans and services.

How

Working together – We can't do this on our own. We work with schools, communities, services and other partners too.

We held different forums, events and projects across Swansea including:

Big Conversations – an open, safe and fun way for children and young people to be heard. **2399** children and young people took part.

Big Conversation Forum – groups of 11-18 year olds explored topics like homelessness, healthy relationships, 'Sustainable Swansea' and our budget. They also developed their decision-making skills. **370** young people took part.

Some of the outcomes from these include:

- Swansea Council's Housing Service started a young people's advisory group.
- The proposal to increase school meals was changed to meet the needs of children and families better.





The Corporate Parenting Challenge – this is a week of activities with children who are looked after. It's an opportunity for board members and senior officers to listen to young people in care.

Corporate Parent – as a council we have the same responsibility to care for the children we look after as a parent.

17 young people spent five days taking part in activities and talking about the issues that matter most to them. This year they were:

- being in school
- transitions and changes they face at 16+ and 18+
- respite care
- the obstacles they face
- relationships with families, carers and social workers
- information sharing by professionals.

Some of the outcomes include:

- young people worked with professionals to write a guide for schools on how to work with looked after children. It includes advice on lesson planning, sharing information, dealing with bullying and other issues.
- a short film to share their views, opinions and concerns about respite care.

Looked after Forums – 64 children and young people took part.

We've made more opportunities for children and young people to participate including:

- **the 123 Forum for 7-10 year olds**
- **the Shout Out Group for 11-17 year olds**
- **activities with Voices from Care**
- **a new 16+ and Care Leavers Forum.**



The Pupil Voice Forums – gives pupils a say in decisions that affect education.

The County-wide Pupil Voice Forum

– each secondary school has an elected representative. The forum engages with the Chief Education Officer and pupils have a voice in decisions about:

- mindfulness in schools
- what helps pupils
- Welsh language
- bullying
- budget and finance.

School project work – supporting schools to improve their understanding of children’s rights. We’ve held:

- bespoke forum sessions for pupils to help them understand their rights
- activities to help staff understand the UNCRC
- training for the Rights Respecting Schools Award.

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment – looks at the childcare available in 2017. It’s important to know what children using childcare think. The Family Information Service and Life Stages Team held a consultation.

67 children got involved aged 2 to 11.

Children took part in activities and shared their views in age appropriate ways. They talked about:

- the good and bad of childcare
- what they’d like more of
- what they’d like less of
- how they’d improve things.

Some of the outcomes are:

- Children successfully took part, were listened to and told us they wanted more outdoor play.
- Outdoor play is now a large part of the actions and a priority of the Family Information Service and others delivering childcare.

UK Youth Parliament – attends the House of Commons to debate issues voted for by young people across the UK.

In July, a new member of the UK Youth Parliament for Swansea was elected. Each secondary school was invited to nominate candidates. **523** pupils voted in an alternative vote system. A new member of the Youth Parliament and Deputy Member were elected.

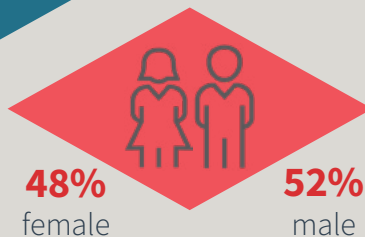


CYP Super Survey

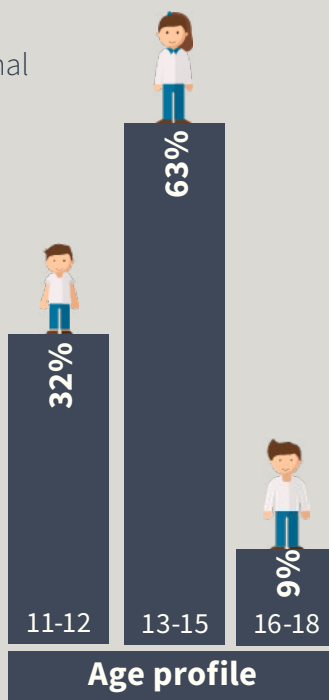
3,688 young people took part in the survey. (14% more than in 2014.)

The survey asked about:

- involvement in decisions
- health and healthy lifestyles
- emotional and mental well-being
- cigarettes, alcohol and drugs
- sexual health
- domestic abuse
- young carers
- education
- school.

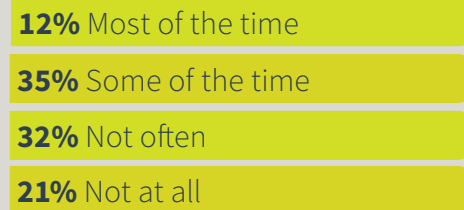


Pupils and staff at Ysgol Pen Y Bryn made parts of the survey more accessible for pupils with additional learning needs.

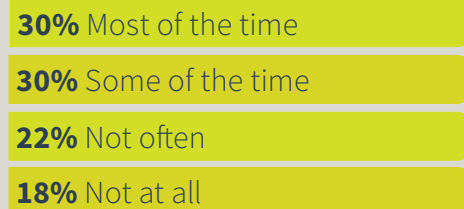


Involvement:

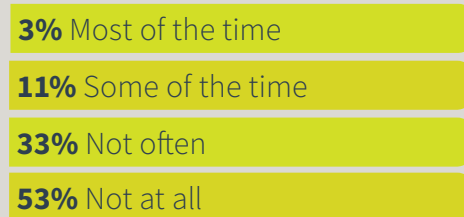
In school or college, they say they're asked for their views



At home they say they're asked for their views



In their community, they say they're asked for their views

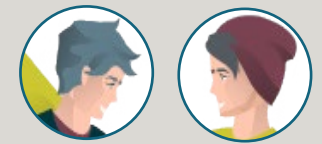


You can read the survey results here ([link](#))

UNCRC
76% has heard of Children's Rights.

Compared to
61% in 2014
43% in 2013

2: Promoting knowledge and understanding



We are committed to supporting people to understand children's rights. We want services to think about the UNCRC in their day to day work.

Duty

To develop knowledge and understanding of the UNCRC through training for staff and decision makers.

How

Training

We've been offering and delivering training opportunities. **141** took part.

Decision makers training sessions with:

- 31 Councillors following the election process
- 23 school Governors as part of the Annual School Governor Training Programme.

Bespoke training events including:

- a regional 1-day UNCRC session for childcare settings
- workshops for Wales Pre-School Providers Association to explore children's rights in Early Years
- sessions in children's rights for children with parents in prison
- sessions in children's rights of young parents.

Training in schools including:

- full INSET training
- after school workshops and sessions for pupils.

Working together

We've worked with partners to make sure children's rights is embedded for future generations. This includes making sure the voices of children are heard and sharing good practice.

The Children & Young People's Partnership Board

This board supports partnership working on children and young people's issues. It works to embed the UNCRC. It's supported by the Future Generations Commissioner and the Children's Commissioner.

Children's Rights Network

This is a group of over 80 organisations. The network shares learning, good practice and resources. Their aim is to champion children's rights.





Whole Council Approach

In Swansea, everyone working for the Council is a member of the team. We're committed to the best outcomes for children and young people, delivering the best services and keeping them safe. Following the children's rights scheme has changed how we work.

We have one shared approach to making sure the UNCRC is part of all our plans and policies. This includes thinking about how any decisions may affect children and young people's lives.



Children's rights are part of our corporate plans including our:

- Strategic Equality Plan
- Democratic Services Reporting
- Health & Safety Emergency Planning.

Children's rights are part of our development and place plans including:

- City of Culture plans
- City Centre Redevelopment plans.

Children's rights are part of our plans for education, people and well-being including:

- Strategic Equality plans in schools
- School Council Audit
- Corporate Parenting Strategy
- The Early Years Strategy
- Healthy and Sustainable Pre-School Scheme
- Play Sufficiency Assessment
- Young People's Service plans.



3: Raising awareness

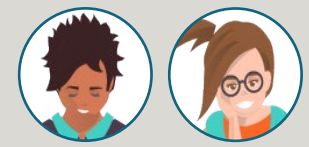
We want everyone to know about children’s rights.

Duty

To raise awareness of the UNCRC to everyone including children and young people.

How

We worked with children and young people to develop a county-wide rights mascot. They decided on Dilly the Dragon.



Dilly Dragon

Dilly works hard and has:

- a flag that flies during planned periods from the Civic Centre Building
- #DillyDragon #DdraigDilly linked to the Corporate Facebook and Twitter
- promotional materials like pens, headphones, water bottles, posters and badges.

Partners have linked pieces of work and the UNCRC to Dilly’s work. This includes promoting Dilly on:

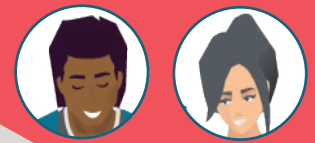
- ‘Playful Schools’ plaques and signage
- ‘Smoke Free Beach’ and ‘Smoke Free School Gates’ signage
- the Best Start Campaign
- regular posts to the Children’s Commissioner’s ‘Rights Hour’ Twitter feed

Dilly the Dragon’s work will continue in the next year.



4: Improving how we work

We are committed to listening and improving the way we work.



Duty

To have a system that can receive feedback and complaints.

How

We have lots of ways for children and young people to question decisions and tell us what they think.

There's a UNCRC mailbox

UNCRC@swansea.gov.uk

There's a clear set out complaints procedure.

We have a clear and open process. It sets out the steps we go through to listen to issues and deal with them.

This has been in place for 12 months.

No complaints have been received.



5: Collecting evidence



Measuring outcomes of children’s rights can be difficult. However, we’ve collected feedback from children, young people, schools and partners that children’s rights are making a positive difference.

Duty

To make sure we follow the UNCRC, are accountable, and have evidence of the difference it makes.

How

The Children’s Rights Impact Assessment

This process helps decision makers look at how their policies and actions will impact on the rights of children.

We’ve received assessments from many departments in Swansea. Some have had a direct or indirect impact on children and young people. Evidence shows that these assessments help avoid barriers, tackle poverty, address inequality and more.

Rights Respecting Schools Impact Assessment process

As part of the award schools are asked to identify the impact that respecting rights has on pupils lives. This gives us evidence on how children’s rights work:

- improves achievement
- builds positive relationships and behaviour
- develops positive attitudes towards diversity
- challenges prejudice
- reduces bullying
- gives pupils confidence to respect rights.



Next steps

looking ahead to 2017–2018.

Over the last three years we've worked together to achieve the best outcomes for children and young people. We've listened to what they have to say, and supported reaching their potential.

But there's more to do.

We want to broaden our approach.

We will:

- provide bespoke workforce development to departments so we have whole council approach
- make sure the way we promote Dilly is defined and implemented.

We want to extend our offer.

We will:

- explore ways to offer opportunities to children of Primary School ages 3-10 years
- extend the Corporate Parenting Challenge to include 7-21 year olds
- increase engagement of young people not in school so they take part in the Big Conversations sessions.

We want to be more visible.

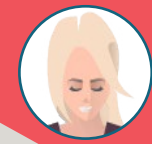
We will:

- establish and promote our children's rights work through social media
- make sure our web pages are up-to-date, relevant and accessible.

We want to assess the impact of the Council's due regard to the UNCRC.

We will:

- look at all our monitoring processes to understand the impact of child rights
- do an authority wide self-assessment for embedding children's rights
- look at and understand the impact of the rights respecting schools approach
- make sure the rights respecting work continues after the contract with UNICEF ends.



Thanks for reading this

If you want more information contact:
katie.spendiff@swansea.gov.uk