

2016

# Annual report on the progress of the implementation of the Children & Young People's Rights Scheme in Swansea

*October 2015 – September 2016*



City and County of Swansea  
Dinas a Sir Abertawe



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## Foreword

Children and young people has always been a priority for the City & County of Swansea.

The City & County of Swansea is the first local authority in the UK to voluntarily make a public commitment to Children's Rights and create a platform for change to achieve a culture where there is a full appreciation of children's rights, and that we consciously consider them in all of our work so that ultimately it results in better services and lives for children, young people and families in Swansea.

Being the first and only local authority to adopt this approach challenges existing ways of working and we are starting to see a culture change as we further develop our approach and embed our policy into practice.

The Children and Young People's Rights Scheme is an innovative road map to ensure consideration is given to the UNCRC in every decision the council makes. The success so far would not be possible without a partnership approach which includes working with our schools, communities, council services and wider partners to make this happen. We are delighted to be working with a wide group of people with a shared interest and commitment to this agenda.

The report captures the actions and progress that we have seen so far and we are both really pleased and impressed with the feedback received in relation to adopting a rights based approach. Awards are good, but putting child rights at the heart of our business is the right thing to do which is far more important for the future of our children and young people in Swansea.

**Lead Cabinet Member and Lead Director**

*Councillor Christine Richards, Cabinet Member for Services for Children & Young People*

*Chris Sivers, Director of People*

## Introduction

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)<sup>1</sup> is an international convention that sets out rights for all children and young people up to the age of 18. It includes civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights and not only recognises children and young people's basic human rights, but gives additional rights to protect them from harm as one of the most vulnerable groups in society.

In September 2013 a report was presented to full Council<sup>2</sup> to embed the UNCRC within the Council's Policy Framework and to mainstream positive approaches to the rights of children and young people within the policy and functions of the City and County of Swansea. The Council expressed full support. This approach followed that taken by Welsh Government in March 2011, which saw the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011<sup>3</sup> embedded into Welsh domestic Law.

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.

This report is the second 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 2015/16.

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) 1989

<sup>2</sup> Rights of children and young people: Creating a due regard duty and embedding the UNCRC(1989) Council Report

## Objective 1: Engagement and Participation with Children & Young People

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.

Local Authorities have a duty to promote and facilitate the participation of young people. The City and County of Swansea supports children to participate, and recognises the value and importance of listening to what children and young people have to say about decisions that affect them.

The Big Conversation is a project co-ordinated by the Council's Partnership Team which aims to offer inclusive, safe and meaningful opportunities for children and young people to exercise their right to voice. This work is delivered through a variety of mechanisms with a range of partners, to ensure as far as possible, that opportunities are accessible and right for the widest number of children and young people regardless of their race, gender, sex, class maturity or ability.

2016 has seen a continued increase in participation of children and young people in Big Conversation opportunities, 2,253\* children and young people participating in opportunities to have their voices heard.

\*this figure does not include participants of CYP Super Survey

### Engagement increase 2013-2016

Year	2013/14		2014/15		2015/16	
Age	<11	>11	<11	>11	<11	>11
Contact	0	538	75	332	730	1851
Reach	0	372	71	226	645	1608
<b>Total</b>	372 CYP		297 CYP		2253 CYP	

### The Big Conversation Forum

Examples of what type of work this has included are outlined below:

#### The Big Democracy Conversation – October 2015

As a part of Local Democracy Week 2015, to celebrate children's right to have their voice heard in decisions that affect them, the PPC team held a Big Democracy Conversation with Swansea Primary Schools. 46 pupils from primary schools came together to explore what education is what should it look like. This was ahead of known reductions to school budgets and views generated by young people helped to inform the efficient directing of limited resources in the future.

*Outcome of engagement:*

- Pupils prioritised messages which were relayed to key education officers and formed part of the Sustainable Swansea and associated budget decision process. The key messages were:
- School facilities & equipment should be of good quality and fit for purpose. This includes technology.
- The classroom environment should be comfortable, safe and accommodate different learning styles. Children should be able to learn through play, indoors and outdoors.
- Children would find it useful to have better links between the school kitchen and canteen. Cooking lessons would help children to understand where food comes from and what skills you need to cook meals
- The playground is one of the most important parts of the school; this is where children can relax and play safely. Grass and green space is important as is equipment.
- Teachers should know about and understand rights. School should be a place where rights are respected.
- There should be equal treatment and choice for boys and girls in PE
- “The school ethos and the way people treat each other is very important. Schools should be environments where there is acceptance, courage, support, and gratitude for the things we have; where people are kind to each other, where there is discipline, where people are supported to show love, respect, tolerance and helpfulness to each other and where people feel welcome. People should learn about God and Jesus”.
- Achievement should be celebrated, big or small.

These priorities have been shared at SCCASH, Swansea’s Secondary Head teacher group.

### **The Big Budget Conversation – January 2016**

The Big Budget Conversation was the 3rd annual consultation with children and young people. Prior to the session, an exercise was undertaken to assess, from the full list of budget proposals which had been identified as important to children and young people as important and relevant to them (based on previous work) and which of the proposals we had already consulted with children and young people on.

As such, three areas formed the basis of the 2016 consultation:

- Sustainable Swansea – young people were encouraged to think of the council budget as a whole and make decisions about where they might make savings if they were in charge of it.
- Remodelling youth club provision – young people were supported to inform a way forward for effective and efficient youth club provision.
- Education - school and learning has consistently been a priority for children and young people. The session explored what education should look like in a climate where budgets are being reduced but effectiveness should be maximised.

114 children and young people took part.

*Outcome of Engagement:*

- All data formed part of the Corporate Budget Consultation and was submitted to cabinet and full council.

### **The Big Priority Setting Conversation – March 2016**

Using last year's Big Conversation priorities, national priorities for young people, findings from the Beth Nesa' Sally campaign and their own experiences, young people in Swansea worked together to agree themes for Big Conversations in 2016/17.

These priorities are:

1. Mental health
2. Anti-bullying
3. Support in transition to adulthood, particularly for vulnerable young people
4. Substance abuse
5. Housing and homelessness
6. Domestic abuse
7. Feeling safe in school
8. A curriculum for life

*Outcome of engagement:*

- These priorities have been fed into and visibly form the basis of the Children and Young People's Partnership Plan for the next three years.

### **The Big Mental Health Conversation – May 2016**

As the number one priority for young people in Swansea, the Big Conversation offered a space to explore the idea of mental health and good emotional wellbeing. Young people from 9 secondary schools worked together to develop holistic definitions of what mental health was to them and spent time considering what the causes of ill mental health can be, how ill mental health can be prevented and who needs to be involved in supporting children and young people with this.

Young people also participated in a mindfulness session where they learned tips to manage stress and anxiety. This was very successful with pupils reporting to have used this technique in school (particularly around exam time) since May.

*Outcome of engagement:*

- Holistic definitions of mental health developed by young people
- Young people requested opportunity to become mindfulness mentors to support others in school with stress and anxiety prevention

- Feedback from the Big Mental Health Conversation is currently being used to review CAMHS services in Swansea and wider ABMU mental health services.

### **Big Anti-Bullying Conversation – July 2016**

Young people from 10 secondary schools spent the day giving thought to bullying, in the context of every child's right to be safe. Young people enjoyed building safe spaces (dens) and thinking about how we might identify people who are bullies/being bullied, how we can keep people safe and what can be done to nurture environments where people are respectful of each other and celebrate diversity.

Outcome of engagement:

- Young people were able to share experiences and initiatives within their schools with others which they report to have found very useful.
- Information about successful programs that tackle anti-bullying in schools has contributed to the Children's Commissioner's wellbeing exchange. This information will form how National anti-bullying directives are governed.
- Feedback from the Big Anti-Bullying Conversation will also inform the Council's understanding of good anti-bullying practice that is taking place and what successful elements of anti-bullying practice looks like. This information will be shared with decision makers and relevant stakeholders.

### **Big Housing Conversation – September 2016**

The Big Housing Conversation was split into two parts.

The first part of the day focussed on homelessness. Young people developed role plays about the reason that might cause young people to become homeless and worked on identifying critical points where early intervention might have prevented this from happening.

The second part of the day focussed on housing and young people worked with the Council's Housing Service to consider topics such as money management, community safety and personal responsibility as a tenant. This session aimed to support young people to think about what life might be like when they are ready to live independently.

*Outcome of engagement:*

- Young people reported to enjoy developing their understanding of causes of homelessness, and thinking about what living independently looks like.
- Young people to form part of the council's young people's housing group.

## **Participation of Looked After Children**

### **Corporate Parenting Challenge**

The Corporate Parenting Challenge is a week of activities designed to get members of the Corporate Parenting Board and senior officers listening directly to the concerns of young people in care.

In August, 17 young people aged between 11 and 17 spent 5 days at Down to Earth, taking part in team building activities, discussing the issues that matter most to them as Looked After young people, and planning workshops to deliver to the Corporate Parents. Young people identified 6 priorities for discussion:

- Being a Looked after Child or young person in school
- Changes at 16+ and 18+
- Respite care
- Obstacles LACYP face
- Relationships with families, carers and social workers
- Information sharing by professionals

The workshops offered an opportunity for corporate parents to gain a real understanding of the issues and challenges young people in care face, and the young people were able to express the impact of policy and practice on their lives.

Councillors also joined young people in an adventurous river walk at Three Cliffs Bay

Outcomes of engagement

- Young People responded overwhelmingly that they felt they had been listened to, that they felt more confident in expressing themselves to adults, and that they had had fun.
- The points raised are being acted upon through a variety of means including a regular participation group which is writing guidelines.
- Councillors are using the knowledge and personal understandings gained to tailor policies to better meet the needs of young people in care.
- The week has forged a strong relationship between Corporate Parenting Board members and the young people they are responsible for, which will be followed up by Corporate Parents attending the young people's forum, and young people speaking at Council meetings.

## **Participation of Learners in Pupil Voice**

### **Pupil Voice Forum**

In March 2016, a County-wide Pupil Voice Forum was established to enable elected pupil representatives from each of our secondary schools to directly engage with the Chief Education Officer and have a voice in decisions that affect them, specifically in relation to education.

Outcome of engagement:

To date the Pupil Voice Forum has established its own priorities to focus and work on in 2016, and has supported the Education department in the development of the Incentivising Attendance Scheme.

### **School Project Work - Ysgol Gyfyn Bryntawe**

The Partnership Team and Bryn Tawe worked together for 12 weeks between October 2015 and February 2016 to promote and raise awareness of Children's Rights and the UNCRC in school, particularly testing Big Conversation tools and techniques as a way of broadening inclusivity and voice in school council decision-making.

This began with the Partnership Team leading sessions on the UNCRC and the Councils commitment to children's rights and facilitating opportunities to test and evaluate philosophical enquiry, and pupils leading session that supported Children's Rights Officers to understand how the Rights Respecting Schools Award is applied at the school and how the school council operated, including perceived strengths and weaknesses.

Outcome of engagement:

- Whilst pupils felt that the representative nature of the school council structure worked best in providing a framework for pupil voice at their school, pupils did evaluate that perhaps rather than having year group council's, it may be more effective to have mixed, rights based groups, e.g. a Health and wellbeing group, an Education and Curriculum group, etc. that would feed in to the Rights Council.
- It was felt that this would most effectively keep children's rights at the heart of the pupil voice work. Pupils were supported to develop a proposal for this and work is ongoing.
- As a part of this work pupils also identified an opportunity to use rights as a way of supporting transition of year 6 pupils into the school. It was recognised that as nearly all schools are becoming Rights Respecting, rights and rights language was a commonality that primary and secondary schools shared.

A rights-based event was planned, facilitated and evaluated by the school council with support from the Partnerships team.

The event hosted 56 primary school pupils, and offered an opportunity for them to foster good relationships with the school, the school council and to learn more about the UNCRC.

The event was a success with primary schools reporting to have repeated rights sessions with other pupils back at school.

### **Participation in Early Years**

Swansea's Healthy City Early Years Strategy sets out how those working with children and families in Swansea plan to support every child to have the best start in life. The Jack's family are a cartoon family that have been created to symbolise this work.

In February 2016, 476 pupils from Blaenymaes Primary, Llanrhidian Primary, Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pontybrenin and Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Tirdeunaw worked on developing an identity for the Jacks family. Workshops were facilitated by the Partnerships Team and the

Family Information Service. Each session focussed on rights, considering what early childhood looks like to children, what family might mean, and what being the best you can be looks like.

The work which took place with children aged 5-11years provided space to explore concepts such as gender, equality, family, aspiration and identity and offered a platform to promote the competency of young children in articulating their opinions and validity of what they had to say.

*Outcome of engagement:*

- The work developed by children formed the basis of the identity of the Jacks and is visible throughout the marketing campaign.
- Further work to develop voices and personalities for the characters took place with children who had previously been involved.
- Follow up sessions took place with children who were granted equal weighting in signing off the Jacks, based on whether or not they felt their views had been taken into account in their development by the design team.

## **UK Youth Parliament**

Each year the UK Youth Parliament attends a sitting at the House of Commons to debate issues voted for by young people across the UK. On 11th November 2016, Swansea's Member of Youth Parliament, Jac Scott will participate in this debate.

As a part of this, the 'Make Your Mark' project supports young people from all areas of the UK to vote on issues that are most important to them. Each person can vote for one topic from a list of ten and the five most popular will be debated in the House of Commons.

In September 2016, 1467 young people were supported by pupils who attended the Big Housing Conversation to submit votes. This is a record high in Swansea.

The outcome of the vote in Swansea is as follows:

A curriculum for life	235 votes
First aid education	225 votes
Votes at 16	196 votes
Transport	177 votes
Tackling racism and religious discrimination	173 votes
Mental health	170 votes
NHS Cuts	108 votes
Body image	87 votes
Raising awareness of sexual harassment in school	69 votes
Fund our Youth Services	27 votes

Reports of overall and individual school votes have been submitted to schools.

## CYP Super Survey

The 2016 Super Survey is ongoing at the time of this report's publication, and will close on the 20th October 2016. The figures used, therefore, provide a comparison to date with those gained in 2014 and are likely to change.

To date, the views of 3,128 young people have been gathered through the survey and a parallel shorter 'accessible' imaged based pilot survey. This figure is similar in sample size to the last survey that was run in 2014 (n = 3,160). These have been gained primarily through Secondary Schools, but also through community settings and the Pupil Referral Units.

52% of the young people who have responded to the 2016 Survey are male (n = 1,614) and 48% female (n = 1,496), which differs slightly to 2014, where each equalled 50% of the responses. The majority of respondents are aged 12-14 (73%, n = 2,288), whereas in 2014 most respondents were aged 13-15 (72% n = 2,272).

### UNCRC Links

As part of the Survey young people were asked if they had heard of Children's Rights or the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. 74% of respondents have said that they have heard of Children's Rights. This is a significant increase in the responses given to this question in 2014 (61%) and in 2013 (43%).

### Key Findings

A full report with comparative data will be available once the current survey closes, however some key areas are summarised below;

#### Health and Healthy Lifestyle – General Health

- Young people were asked how they would describe their health. 18% said they were 'Never ill', 65% said they were 'Hardly ever ill', but 17% said they were 'Quite often' or 'Always' ill. 34% said 'Excellent', with a further 54% saying 'Good' and with 12% saying they were 'often' or 'always' ill.
- The young people who said they experienced illness were asked to select possible reasons for their illness from a list, where more than one response could be selected, the most commonly selected reasons were:
  - I don't know (51%)
  - I don't eat enough healthy food (25%)
  - I don't drink enough healthy drinks (19%)
  - I don't do enough exercise (18%).
- In 2014, the amount of negative responses received about the participants' health was 5% lower; however the main reasons given for their sickness were similar.

#### Local Area and Community Safety

- Young people were asked to select from a list all the things that they liked the most about where they lived, where more than one response could be selected, most said that they most liked friends living nearby or friendly neighbours (over 40%), with

over a third of respondents saying because I feel safe, shops that I use are nearby, there are lots of open spaces or it's close to school / college.

- Responses given in the current survey are similar to those given in the previous year's survey.

### **Participation in Sport**

- Young people were asked if they did exercise or sport outside of school, 77% said they did. The young people were asked to select from two lists all the sports or forms of exercise they did outside of school. Young people most commonly said they did walking, football, swimming and fitness.
- A similar proportion of young people responded in 2014, with 76% saying they did participate in exercise or sport outside of school.

### **Involvement**

- Young people were asked three separate questions about whether their views were asked about the things that affected them.
- For 'In school or college' the responses were mixed, with the majority saying that they were asked their views 'Some of the time' (35%), or 'Not often' (32%). The third highest response was 'Not at all' (21%), whilst the lowest response was for 'Most of the time' (12%).
- For 'At home', most responded positively saying that they were asked their views 'Most of the time' (30%), or 'Some of the time' (30%). But 22% said they were 'Not often' asked, and 18% chose 'Not at all'.
- For 'In your community' most responded that they were not asked their views, with 53% choosing 'Not at all', and a further 33% saying 'Not often'. 11% chose 'Some of the time', but only 3% said 'Most of the time'.
- This question was split into three parts in the 2016 Survey. It was felt that in the earlier surveys the question asking to what extent they felt involved in decisions that affected them was too general. In 2014, 14% said they were 'Always' involved in decisions, and a further 35% said 'Most of the time'. However, 33% of the young people said 'Not often' and 18% said they were 'Never' involved.

## **Objective 2: Promoting Knowledge and Understanding of the UNCRC**

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

We are 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 is or can be embedded into service infrastructure.

In the last 12 months 225 people from a variety of areas have accessed bespoke training opportunities

## Training for senior decision makers

Buy-in and leadership at a senior level has undoubtedly underpinned the success Swansea has experienced so far in embedding children's rights in all of its work. As such, senior decision makers have also participated in sessions to consider the practical implementation of the UNCRC in their work. Bespoke UNCRC training sessions have been facilitated with the following:

- **Cabinet members** have been supported to make links between the UNCRC and the Corporate Vision and Priorities, solidifying the embedding of children's rights in our most fundamental and strategic council aims.
- **Scrutiny Councillors** have been supported to link the UNCRC to their scrutiny reporting process. This meant that questioning strategies used by scrutiny were amended so that when work is deemed to have an impact on children, scrutiny members would be equipped to both champion children's rights and scrutinise the extent to which due regard to the UNCRC is being paid.
- **School Governor** UNCRC training has been included in the Governor's training booklet. This training is offered once a term and covers what the UNCRC is, what the local and National commitment to the UNCRC looks like and work that is going on in schools regarding the Rights Respecting Schools Award. This training has been run twice and 34 Governors have accessed this course.

## Embedding in Council Service Infrastructure

Buy-in and interest from a variety of services is continually developing as we progress in ensuring children's rights are embedded throughout services. As such, bespoke sessions to consider the practical implementation of the UNCRC have been facilitated with the following:

### In early years settings

Historically, engagement of children and young people has centred on 11-18 years olds (this is largely due to statutory duties for engagement of this age range). However, the impetus of children rights as a council priority has meant that more thought has needed to be given to how children aged 0-18 years are engaged and how children from birth access their rights and services where practitioners understand rights in early years and the engagement of young children

Over the last 12 months nursery teachers and leaders of 16 early year's settings have taken part in a unique and bespoke opportunity to think about what rights look like for very young children. The course has involved learning about tools to enhance settings including storytelling and Philosophical Play, as well as other practices that have been shown to promote children's language skills and enhance their well-being.

Based on action research, the course, which ends in November, will result in the creation of a good practice guide and exploration of how rights-respecting provision impacts on individual children in childcare settings.

### **In PREVENT (specifically in Early Years)**

Since 2015, all schools and childcare providers must have due regard to the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism, which is defined as ‘vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values such as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and the tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.’

In July 2016, Children’s Rights Officers and PREVENT Officers within the City and County of Swansea supported early years providers, academics and other partners from across Wales to consider the links between children’s rights and the British values. The session supported participants to recognise the fundamental rights based work that early year’s settings do to build resilience and celebrate diversity in young children as well as supporting them in forming a sense of identity and self, which can prevent them from being drawn into radicalisation as they grow.

### **In schools**

In September 2015, 84% of schools in Swansea were working towards becoming Level 1 or Level 2 Rights Respecting schools.

Of these, 26 schools have received individual support from UNICEF in the last 12 months. This includes full INSET training, after school workshops and sessions for pupils.

For the 13 schools that were not engaged in the Rights Respecting Schools Award in September 2015, a training day was held to support them on their journey; this offer was also extended to schools who required additional support to complete their action plans to be ready to work toward achieving their level 1 award. 17 teachers attended and since 7 schools have engaged and have started working on action plans.

In September 2016, 96% of schools were on their Rights Respecting Journey.

### **In Youth Services**

Following engagement of young people in the Big Youth Work Conversation (June 2015), it was felt within Young People’s Services that there was an opportunity to build on this work by developing the knowledge and understanding of Youth Workers on the UNCRC, the Rights Respecting Schools Award model, and the Councils policy commitment to children’s rights.

Work on this has included:

- Level 1, 2 and 3 staff at YPS has undertaken workforce development opportunities to consider the above and the practical application of the UNCRC in their work. (exploring ideas such as how to evidence and record youth work child rights work)
- Youth workers in each club have been nominated to lead on the development of explicit rights based activity in club sessions, e.g. Club charters, embedding a right of the month

approach, making direct links between youth work and articles, developing specific space for conversation and opportunities to discuss decisions being made that affect service users. Referral forms have been adapted to include rights based language and to incorporate young people's voice.

## **Whole Council Approach to embedding 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. Our commitment to children and young people is enshrined in our decision to become the first local authority in the UK to adopt the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) as part of our Policy Framework. This approach 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.

### **UNCRC within the Public Service Board**

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 looks 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.

A joint programme has been established by the Future Generations Commissioner and the Children's Commissioner to assist public bodies in embedding the UNCRC in developing our approach to implementing the Wellbeing of Future generations Wales Act.

In Swansea we have already established a strong partnership approach to this agenda and will continue to work together as the wellbeing plans develop to ensure children's rights is embedded for future generations. This includes recognition of partner's commitments to the UNCRC and supporting others by sharing the Council's learning of embedding children's rights.

An example of this includes recent support to Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (ABMU CAMHS), who have begun to consider embedding a CAPA or Choice and Partnership Approach into their service delivery. The CAPA approach seeks to shift focus from physicians making decisions about people's treatment on their behalf to making decisions with service users.

Making best use of Swansea learning, the CAMHS service have been supported to make clear links between its new use of CAPA and the UNCRC; fundamentally, both place children at the centre of decision making and take account of and respect the views they have to offer about their own care.

## **Children and Young Peoples Partnership Plan**

A new Children and Young People's Plan has been developed for Swansea with a clear vision and aims for children and young people which will be aligned to our work on embedding Children's Rights. The new plan;

- Aligns to the One Swansea Plan and outlines the role of the CYP Board in overseeing the relevant section (B – People Learn Successfully).
- Oversees our statutory requirements as defined in the One Swansea Plan in line with the Shared Purpose: Shared Delivery paper Annex B; Child Participation,
- Captures our strengths – what we are already doing, in order for us to note them and not duplicate but identify gaps where the action needs to take place for add value to what we already do as a partnership.
- Captures our actions/areas for development as a partnership
- Identifies plans/strategies the CYP Board will oversee
- Ensures we are able to evidence what difference a child rights approach has made

The re-established Children & Young People's Partnership Board will reinvigorate the partnership working on children and young people's issues, ensuring that the Council's top priorities around safeguarding, educational attainment and poverty reduction are reflected, along with the commitment to Child Rights ensuring rights based practice is embedded.

## **Strategic Equality Plan**

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) has been integrated into the Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) to raise awareness and place children's rights at the heart of decision making across all directorates of the local authority.

Last year, all service areas were required to set three UNCRC objectives that focussed on training and development of knowledge and understanding of the UNCRC within each service area, promotion and awareness raising of the UNCRC, making explicit links to relevant articles and use of the Children's Rights logo for Swansea, and compliance with the EIA process

## **Building on the UNCRC objectives**

### **Transport**

Formal consultation on the City and County of Swansea Strategic Equality Plan, including UNCRC objectives took place between September and November 2015.

Feedback from children, young people and older generations particularly focussed on transport, making it apparent that travelling around Swansea on public transport is not always a pleasant, safe, comfortable or equitable experience for people.

It is recognised that equitable access to transport is often central in enabling people, particularly those who are vulnerable to access a wide range of their rights, e.g. access to healthcare and education.

Work is taking place to formalise mechanisms for people to be listened to and affect the delivery of transport services they receive. These include:

- The establishment of a local transport forum in Swansea
- Promoting knowledge and understanding of Transport Options in Swansea, along with existing schemes and initiative to explore, share and expand on provision, in order to improve confidence, safety and pleasure in getting around the City & County of Swansea.
- Identifying opportunities for improved communication between the public and transport providers in Swansea, e.g. regular input into the First Cymru customer panel, and a future presentation to the regional transport forum, based on the feedback and information gathered locally
- Identifying opportunities for joint working, to share good practice and ultimately improve services, e.g. working with bus companies to develop a sub-agreement within the over-arching service agreement with bus companies – based on equality and customer service issues

### **Gender Stereotyping**

Similarly to transport, feedback from the consultation on the Strategic Equality Plan showed that gender stereotyping and gender equality was an issue, particularly in relation to inequitable choice and access to provision for boys and girls.

A Gender Stereotyping Task and Finish Group has been established to:

- Explore good practice in relation to gender stereotyping within the City and County of Swansea;
- Develop a set of key considerations in relation to gender stereotyping;
- Improve knowledge and understanding of the impact of gender stereotyping, and;
- Identify opportunities for joint working, to share good practice and ultimately improve services.

### **Strategic Equality Plans in Schools**

Schools face the same obligations as the local authority in terms of meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty for Wales, such as setting clear equality objectives. Building on the integration of the UNCRC objectives Officers from Education, Access to Services and Children's Rights are currently working on a refreshed SEP template, specifically to assist schools in Swansea.

Based on learning within the local authority and since embedding corporate children's rights objectives within the authority wide Strategic Equality Plan, it seemed right to present a refreshed draft to schools that may support and evidence further embedding of children's rights.

### **Corporate Parenting Strategy**

The City and County of Swansea Corporate Parenting Strategy centres on developing positive outcomes for vulnerable children and young people. The Strategy is underpinned by the guiding principles of the UNCRC, outlining objectives that ensure children and young people who are looked after are able to access provision in an equitable way to others, have opportunity to thrive and develop and seeks to ensure that adults who making decisions about them act in their best interests.

The full participation, involvement and contribution of children and young people looked after and leaving care is very much at the heart of the Corporate Parenting Strategy. Specific objectives relating to supporting children and young people who are looked after to be listened to and inform service delivery have been developed. These are:

- Commission an effective Children's Rights advocacy service
- Ensure looked after children are routinely informed of their right to be supported by children's rights
- Support the Children in Care Council to ensure communication and participation remains a priority
- Develop a new website for looked after children
- Develop a web based pre-Review tool
- Seek regular feedback on placements through quality placement monitoring and Care Exit interviews
- Ensure looked after children are involved in all recruitment to key posts, including senior manager posts
- Ensure Elected Members and officers engage in training to raise awareness of our Corporate Parenting responsibility

### **Child Friendly Cities**

Partners across the Council, including Planning and Regeneration Officers, Play Officers & Children's Rights Officers have been working together to engage children, young people and their families in the early stages of the City Centre Redevelopment, of which Castle Gardens is the first phase.

As a rights-respecting authority and in support of a 'Child Friendly Cities' approach, Officers have been working with the public to gather information that will help to create an interesting city centre that people of all ages and abilities can invest and engage in, i.e. spaces that are safe, accessible, fit for purpose and spaces that people want to spend time in.

## Early Years Strategy

Swansea's Healthy City Early Years Strategy sets out how those working with children and families in Swansea plan to support every child to have the best start in life. The strategy prioritises investment and early intervention in the early years of a child's life (-9 months to 5 years) seeking to break the cycle of disadvantage of vulnerable young children and their families by changing children's life chances so that they are better able to make a positive contribution to society and be the best that they can be.

The strategy sets out clear objectives that support families in readiness for birth, and further, in enabling them to support their children to thrive and develop in readiness for nursery and school and ultimately to enjoy their rights.

The Early Years Strategy promotes 7 Best Start messages to children, parents and families. These messages promote every child's rights to play, to be healthy, to feel safe, to join groups and make friends, to be with the family if that is best for them and to learn and thrive and develop to be the best that they can be.

## Rights Respecting Schools

A Rights Respecting school puts children's rights at the heart of its school ethos as well as throughout its planning, policy, and practice.

In May 2013 the City and County of Swansea signed an agreement with UNICEF UK to deliver the Rights Respecting Schools Award. The target set by the Council and UNICEF UK is to ensure that all schools become Rights Respecting by 2017.

Significant progress has been made in the last academic year in engaging and supporting schools through their Rights Respecting Schools Journey:

	% of schools	
	September 2015	July 2016
Registered Commitment	84%	94%
Achieved Level 1	33%	42%
Achieved Level 2	16%	17%

The on-going partnership between the City and County of Swansea and UNICEF UK remains unique and ground-breaking. This model and the progress achieved by Swansea's schools to become rights based learning communities are recognised widely as impressive and successful. As well as a continued increase in the engagement of schools to become Rights Respecting, there have been numerous, wider achievements in 2016:

- Penyrheol Secondary School became the third secondary school in Wales to achieve their RRS Level 1 Award

- Uptake and engagement of Welsh medium schools has increased significantly; every Welsh medium school in Swansea is now engaged with UNICEF UK and following the recruitment of a Welsh medium assessor, Level 1 awards in Welsh medium are expected to increase rapidly in 2016/17
- 9 schools have been supported by UNICEF to host Internet Safety Matters workshops for staff, parents and children. This is an exceptionally high number compared to all local authorities across the UK. UNICEF's Internet Safety Matters project have been developed with BT to enable children and young people to become confident digital citizens, whilst helping their parents and teachers to keep them safe online.
- 13 schools have taken part in UNICEF's OutRight campaign. OutRight empowers children and young people in Rights Respecting Schools to play a role in the realisation of their rights and to speak out in support of all children's rights.
- Gwrysoydd Primary School and Terrace Road Primary School have joined UNICEF UK's Schools Network. The Schools Network supports pupils to become active citizens and speak out in support of children's rights around the world. As members pupils extend their opportunity to be heard by being involved in signing petitions, writing to local newspapers and speaking with local AMs.

### **Children's Rights Network**

The Children's Rights Network is a multi-agency group of over 80 organisations whose aims is to champion children's rights in or to promote and raise awareness to officers, partners and members of the public. The network shares learning and resources, in order to further embed Children's Rights within practise, throughout the authority area and support the development and implementation of the Children and Young People's Rights Scheme in Swansea.

Formally, the Participation Network, this sub-group of the Children and Young People's Partnership Board, has been redeveloped and re - launched in 2015 to reflect the changing nature of our approach to children and young people, i.e. recognising participation as a right in a broader framework. The Network supports communication between diverse ranges of partners and contributes to enhancing a whole council approach to embedding children's rights.

### **Smoke-free beach trial in Swansea**

Swansea Council launched a smoke-free beach trial at Caswell Bay in April 2016. Visitors to the beach are being asked to observe a voluntary ban on smoking at the popular beauty spot.

The aims of the voluntary ban on smoking at the beach was to help provide cleaner, healthier places for people including children and to reduce pollution on beaches caused by cigarette ends. Colleagues from Trading Standards worked in partnership with the Children's Rights Team to ensure that the associated Children's Rights articles were

promoted within the campaign and “Dilly” the corporate children’s rights logo present on beach signage, to promote that children’s right to grow up and be healthy was being upheld.

The council has already created more than 70 smoke-free play areas across the city in a bid to protect young children from second-hand smoke and plan to extend the initiative to smoke free school gates by the end of 2016.

### **Healthy and Sustainable Pre-School Scheme**

The Healthy & Sustainable Preschool Scheme is now situated within the Council’s Early Intervention and Prevention Service and aims to encourage healthy habits with children of pre-school age. 38 childcare settings across Swansea, hosting up to 1,384 children, are signed up to and work through the scheme, made up of seven health based topics, which are underpinned by a child’s right to access nutritious food, clean water and a healthy and safe environment.

The scheme has provided opportunity to introduce child led concepts and opportunities to settings which includes:

- Joint work between the City and County of Swansea and Dieticians at ABMU to promote a healthy diet in each of the childcare settings, recognising that in some cases they may be the main food provider in the preschool years of a child’s life. The scheme encourages the participation of children in healthy habits with a view to the promotion and continuation of these throughout life, and is not solely focused on the policies of the setting. Recently settings have been invited to participate in ‘Cooking with Children’ sessions. Resources are provided that enable providers to cook with children, offering an opportunity for them to engage in knife skills, and cookery skills from the age of 2. This is about providing a safe environment for children to experience perceived risky activity and provide opportunity for them to learn and to develop an interest and skills in healthy habits, such as cooking.
- Programs such as Busy Feet and Jabadao have been introduced to settings to promote physical activity and movement. Jabadao, in particular, has a child led focus which places babies and children as the lead in their own movement and play and recognises physical expression as a form of voice in pre-verbal children. The Jabadao philosophy recognises babies as competent in making decisions about their movement and offers a safe space for them to move freely and without constraint, recognising that it is often the environment and adult factors that place limits on the opportunities for children to move and express themselves physically.

### **Objective 3: Promotion and awareness raising of the UNCRC**

Progress of the development of a campaign plan to more broadly promote and raise awareness of Children’s Rights across the City and County of Swansea is ongoing and we continue to look for opportunities to promote with partners and make explicit links.

In alignment with the Rights Respecting Schools Award approach, work has been done with children and young people to develop a County-wide rights mascot, known as Dilly the Dragon. Dilly acts as a brand and symbolises the Council's commitment to the UNCRC; the Dilly brand underpins the promotion campaign for children's rights in Swansea, examples of this includes:

- A Dilly the Dragon flag flies during planned periods from the Civic Centre Building;
- Any young person engaging in the Big Conversation or any adult engaging in UNCRC workforce development receives a Dilly pin-badge, with a view to promote and act as a champion for children's rights in the community.
- A #DillyDragon #DdraigDilly has been linked to the Corporate Facebook and Twitter sites; this means that any information promoted using this hash tag reaches the wider public as well as our targeted audiences.
- Dilly the Dragon is included on all Big Conversation and affiliated promotional material;
- Work is being developed to include Dilly within the CCOS Corporate Branding Policy. This has already started to manifest in other areas, i.e. Dilly is included on 'Playful Schools' plaques and signage, and on the newly developed 'Smoke Free Beach' signage displayed across Swansea Bay and forms part of the emerging 'Smoke Free School Gates' campaign.

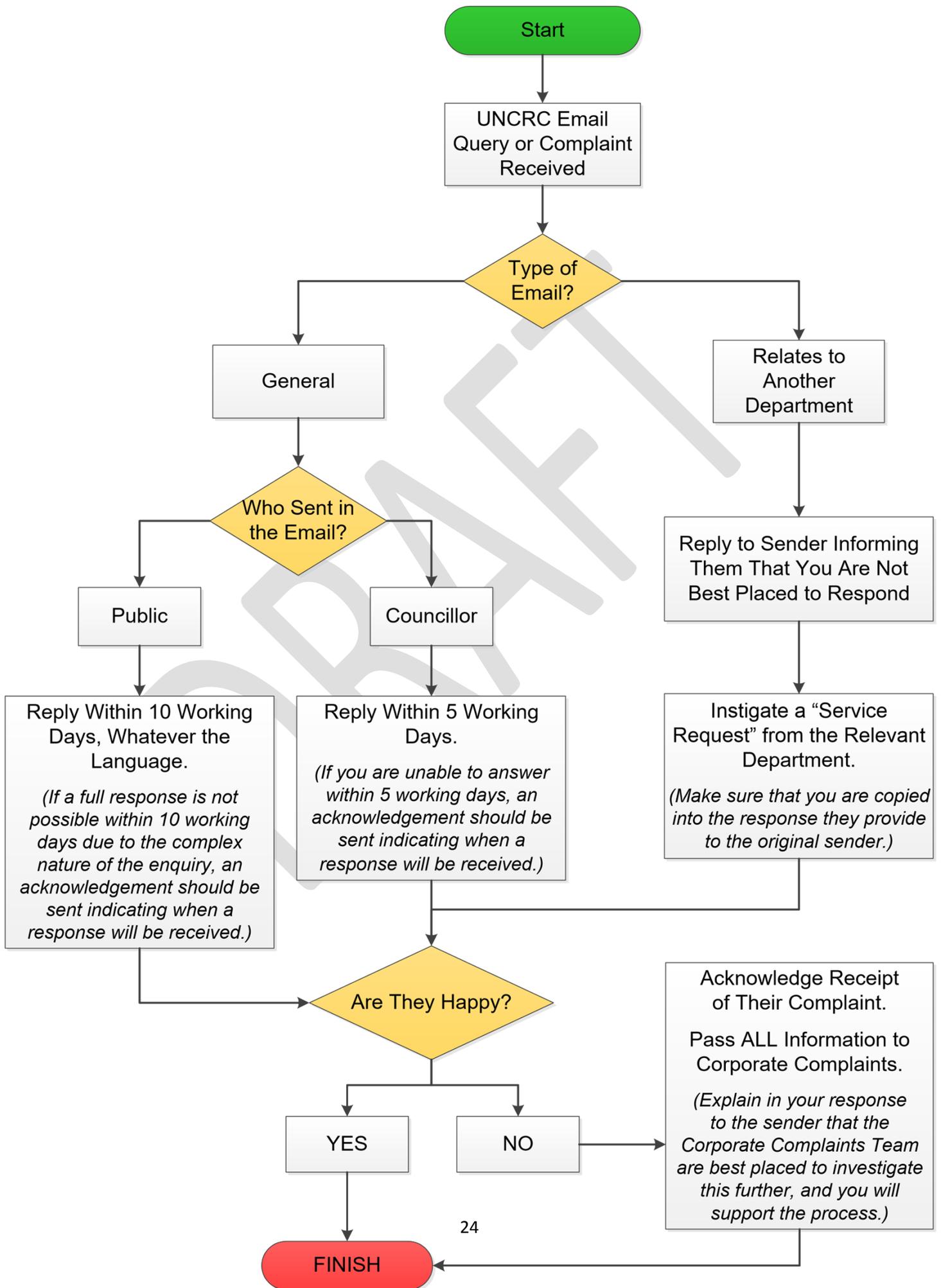
## **Objective 4: Ensuring appropriate and robust mechanisms are in place to receive feedback and complaints in relation to the UNCRC.**

### **Improving How We Work**

The council is committed to making sure that our policies and functions have a positive effect on the children and young people in Swansea. Whilst as a Council we are confident that good foundations have been set to ensure due regard is paid to children's rights, it is important to acknowledge that as an evolving process, there is always room to improve and develop.

It is important to listen to those affected by council decisions and to receive feedback about when decisions have or have not worked well for children and young people. A UNCRC mailbox, [UNCRC@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:UNCRC@swansea.gov.uk), has been set up for anyone who has a query or would like to offer feedback about the Children and Young People's Rights Scheme or children's rights more generally.

In addition to this, a clear and open process has been developed for any person who may require further support with their query or feedback to ensure that any issues can be addressed and that the Council can be the best it can be and that services operate in a way that is effective, efficient and result in the best outcomes for children, young people and their families. A detailed process map, including escalation to complaints is outlined below.



## **Objective 5: Ensuring compliance, accountability and impact of the UNCRC due regard duty that is evidenced based.**

### **The Children’s Rights Impact Assessment process**

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.

The table below outlines the number of full Equality Impact Assessment reports completed and of those, the number of reports with a direct impact on children and young people from October 2015 – September 2016

<b>Number of full EIA reports required as a result of screening forms received</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Number of full EIA reports that had a direct impact on Children and Young People</b>	<b>29</b>

Children’s Rights Impact Assessments have been submitted from across the directorates of the City & County of Swansea and examples received have had both a direct or indirect impact on children and young people.

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.

### **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.

1. Children and young people have improved respect for themselves and for others.
2. Children and young people are more engaged in their learning.
3. Education achievement is enhanced.
4. Children and young people develop positive relationships and behaviour, including finding their peers “kind and helpful”.
5. Children and young people demonstrate positive attitudes towards diversity in society and overcoming prejudices.
6. There are reduced numbers of exclusions and less bullying.
7. Increasing percentages of pupils like school.

8. Children and young people feel empowered to respect the rights of others locally, nationally and globally, and to uphold their own rights.

## Looking Ahead to 2017

The Children and Young People's Rights Scheme Action Plan has been reviewed and extended to focus on the following areas in 2016/17:

### Extended engagement of children and young people

#### **An offer for children aged 0-5 years**

As the Council's due regard extends to children aged 0-18 years, it has become important in the last two years to consider the engagement of very young children in decisions that affect them.

While the last two years has focussed on a great deal of workforce development in this area, work is now set to continue and progress to developing ways in which we can engage children in their early years, promoting their able nature and supporting them to express themselves and be heard.

Extensive work has been done in Early Intervention Services and across the Healthy City Partnership to develop Best Start Messages that promote a child's right to be the best that they can be in their first 1000 days. The 7 best start messages are rights based and will form the basis of children's rights work in early years in the Council moving forward.

**Children Can Do** - Although in its infancy, work is developing to support young children to take part in events that celebrate all of the things children can do and offer opportunities for children to express themselves and be heard. Events will be hosted in partnership between the Partnerships Team and the Prevention and Early Intervention Service. This work will build on the storytelling, philosophical play and rights work that have been developed in Swansea.

#### **An offer for children of Primary School Age, 5-11 years**

To date, the Pupil Voice Forum (PVF) has been made up of secondary school and sixth form pupil. This academic year will see the introduction of Year 6 pupils for the first time. Pupil representatives of each school cluster will attend on a rota basis. This is to ensure that every primary school has the opportunity to attend a PVF and that no individual school or cluster misses out on the opportunity to have their voices heard.

The decision to include primary school age pupils was made following careful consideration. Initial proposals involved creating a separate Pupil Voice Forum for Primary Schools but it was felt that the collaborative approach of working with older pupils to achieve common goals would increase and strengthen the participation of younger pupils.

#### **An offer for children of Secondary School Age, 11-18 years**

The **Big Conversation** is becoming a well-established and ever growing opportunity for young people. Numbers of participants increase year on year and qualitative evaluation from young people and professionals is very positive and identifies need for the mechanisms within the Big Conversation to continue. The Big Conversation and all its encompassed mechanisms will continue to be the offer to young people aged 11-18 years in Swansea.

However, it has been recognised that community services, including third sector are widely underrepresented throughout. Extensive work will be done with partners of the Children and Young People's Partnership including youth services and Third Sector partners in the next 12 months to broaden the engagement of young people outside of school as well as continuing to develop our well-established relationships with schools.

### **School Council Audit**

All schools are required to ensure that school councils form a part of their pupil voice offer. However, the quality assurance and recording of school council mechanisms is the responsibility of the Local Authority. Currently there is no central record of the individual Pupil Voice Mechanisms that are in place across Primary Schools, Secondary Schools, Special Schools, Pupil Referral Units and Alternative Education Providers. Understandably, each school will use whichever mechanism suits them best, with some schools reviewing their current practices and tailoring them to include a more robust, rights-based approach.

Currently, each school is being surveyed using qualitative data to establish what processes are in place and the effectiveness of each process.

### **An offer for children who are looked after**

Since the movement of the Children's Rights and Participation Worker (LAC) has been seated within the Corporate Children's Rights Team, the following priorities have been established in this area of work:

- Establish a clear forum offer for children aged 7-25 years
- Balance participation to include under-represented groups, i.e. young men, young people in residential care, young people living out of county, especially those too far to attend for day sessions and care leavers
- Ensure consistent recording of attendance, issues raised, action points and outcomes. Follow up of issues raised by young people through communication with service managers and the Corporate Parenting Board
- Develop an offer of one to one support work for cases where young people wish to receive individual support to address policy (rather than their individual treatment, thereby not duplicating advocacy work).

A clear offer has been made to children and young people and the following work will be developed in 2016/17:

## **7-11 years**

The 123 Forum is a forum for LAC aged 7-11 years. The group is run in partnership with Foster Swansea and the County Play Team and will meet 6 times a year during school holidays.

Currently all the members of the group are fostered with Foster Swansea carers. The membership of the group will be widened to invite young people in this age group who are fostered with other agencies.

Work in the next year will focus on emotional intelligence, and the emotional aspects of being a child in care.

## **11-17 year olds**

The forum for 11-17 years olds meets weekly in term-time. It is well established with a small but strong core group, who recognise that they need more members.

In 2016/17, group members will focus on recruitment and participate in a recruitment drive, visiting LACYP in schools. Currently the group is all girls, so an effort will be made to recruit more boys.

The annual plan of work for this group roots from discussions held at the Corporate Parenting Challenge 2016; this includes writing good practice guidelines for schools and for respite carers, input into policy about how information about young people is shared between professionals, and preparation for an art exhibition about experiences of being in care.

## **16+ care leavers**

The Participation of young people who are no longer in the care system but are classified as care leavers has been identified as a need and a gap. Work is taking place in partnership with BAYS and the Child and Family 16+ Team to create a bi-monthly forum for care leavers. It is proposed to offer holiday sessions which combine participation that particularly focuses on this group's needs, with fun activities.

Care leavers are also supported to take part in the Voices from Care regional group.

## **LACYP in Residential Care**

Young people in residential care do not currently participate in the forum structure for LACYP as it is often difficult to get to session and it has been identified that they often have different issues to young people who are fostered. Work will take place on identifying an appropriate format for an online forum

## Rights Respecting Secondary Schools

The Rights Respecting Schools Award presents itself differently in every school; this is part of its successful nature in celebrating and building on the individuality and potential of each child. Each establishment has its own approach to how children's rights permeate practice and how the ethos of rights is shared within the school community. Noticeably however, is the different approach required to embed children's rights in a Primary School to a Secondary School; this can be due to a range of factors including age, maturity, and school structure. It is recognised that historically the framework has most commonly been applied in Primary School settings, and as Swansea is at the forefront of progressing the work into Secondary Schools, it is fair to assume that some thought and additional support is required to do this.

This is not to say that there is not already a wealth of excellent rights respecting practice taking place in secondary schools in Swansea; it is important to acknowledge the first Welsh, and English medium Secondary Schools to achieve a Level 1 Award in Wales are in Swansea, as is the first Secondary School that achieved a Level 2 Award. There is also a higher proportion of Secondary Schools engaged in the Rights Respecting Schools Award than anywhere else in Swansea.

To support Secondary Schools in Swansea to most effectively embed children's rights, an Officer from an already Rights Respecting Secondary School has been seconded into the Council's Children's Rights Team. This Officer's role will be to support UNICEF to work with Secondary Schools, advising and developing approaches that are more suitable to and effective for young people aged 11-18 years.

## Accountability and 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.

Planned work will take place to:

- Map all monitoring processes in place to understanding the impact of embedding a Child Rights approach on children and young people in Swansea
- Further understand the impact of the rights respecting schools approach
- Research about the effect of Authority –Wide rights based practice building on the Rights Respecting Schools study (2010) identifying indicators of rights based practice e.g. enhanced partnership working, increased respect of diversity, increased engagement in decision making processes.

Following this a clear plan will be developed assessing where impact is measured well, areas where impact needs to be more robustly measured and communicated and actions required to ensure that a full impact assessment of the embedding of children's rights .