



Children's Rights in Swansea

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

September 2017 to August 2018

If you have any queries please contact Katie.spendiff@swansea.gov.uk



Hello

Swansea Council values children and young people and the part they play in our communities.

We are committed to children's rights.

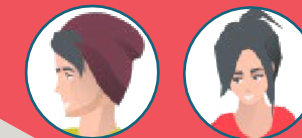
We are creating a culture where children's rights are at the centre of our work. We aim to consider them in everything we do.

This is important. Every Child has rights.

Understanding and respecting Children's Rights 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 is a list of rights for all children and young people aged 0-18 years across the world and includes the things children need to be healthy, safe, able to participate and be the best they can.



The Children and Young People's Rights Scheme in Swansea:

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 what Swansea Council has done this year to put 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

In Wales, Council's have to make sure there are opportunities for children to have a say in decisions which affect their lives

1,521 children and young people had opportunities to have their voices heard. Having them involved has made a real difference to our plans and services.

Some of the outcomes from these include:

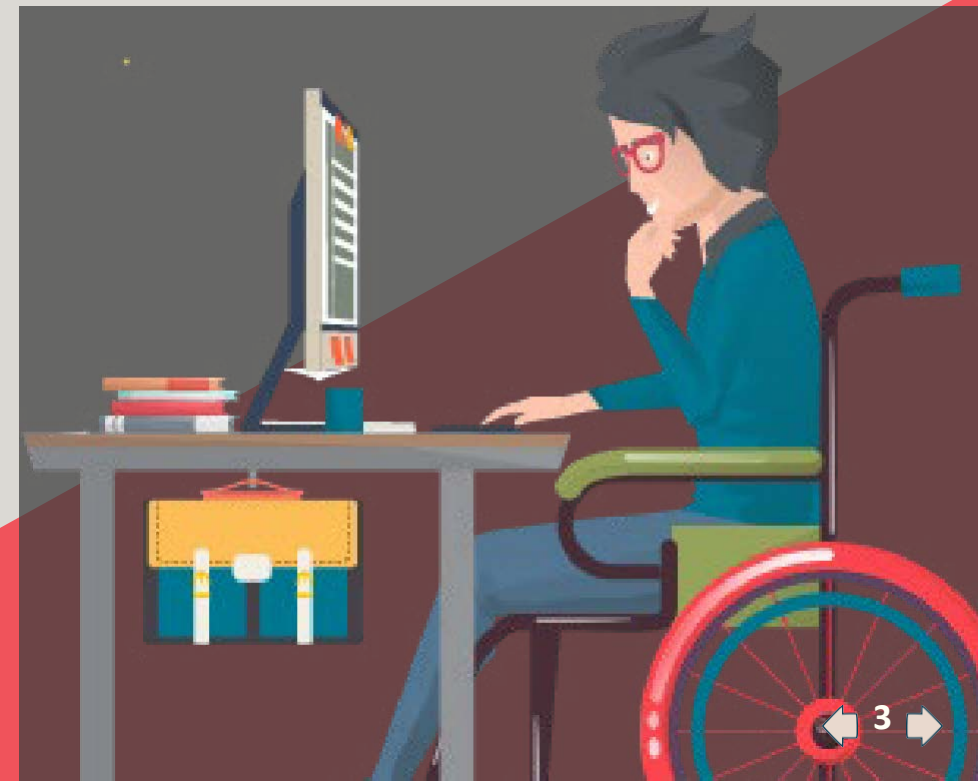
- Working together to develop more Big Conversations for a wider age range of children
- Holding the first ever Big Conversation for children aged 7-10 where 133 children from 33 primary schools came together to talk about Swansea's Wellbeing Plan.
- Young People working with a professional stage school to create, produce and perform a production based on Community Safety messages
- Changing the way in which the High Five Awards are promoted
- Developing plans for services to act on the issues raised by children in Care

How

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

We held different forums, events and projects across Swansea through **Big Conversations** – open, safe and fun ways for children and young people to be heard:

- **Big Conversation Forum** – 539 11-18 year olds explored topics including extremism, gender equality and Swansea Council's Budget.
- **Pupil Voice Forum** – 165 children and young people aged 7-18 took part in the Pupil Voice Forum. Topics included Identity and Equality, The Future of Education in Swansea (Abertawe 2025) and a consultation on services for children whose first language is not English
- **Forums for Children who have experienced care** – 67 children took part in forums to let us know what is important for children in care and those who have been, and have now left.
- **School Visits** – 617 children worked with through visits to schools, to school councils and other school clubs.





The Corporate Parenting Challenge – a week of activities with children who have experience of being in care.

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

The Council know that good experiences for children and young people to be listened are very important.

This year the Corporate parenting Challenge changed. Time was taken to work with, and build good relationships with children and young people who worked on making information to share with adults who make decisions about their lives. This includes Councilors, managers, social workers, health workers, youth workers and many others.

10 Young people spent 8 weeks planning and taking part in activities and talking about the issues that matter most to Children in Care or have been in care. This year the most important issues agreed:

- Understanding and knowing how Services work
- Promoting children's right to be heard and exploring ways this can be achieved
- Understanding paperwork that is completed about children in care
- Working better together with adults to make decisions as a team

Some of the outcomes include:

- Children have worked together with adults to decide what the best ways of working together are
- A clear plan has been made to make sure adults and children work together in a way that is right for children
- New opportunities for children and young people to have their voices heard have been set up to include:
 - Opportunities for children aged 7-10 years in care
 - Opportunities for young people aged 11-16 years in care
 - Opportunities for young people aged 16-25 years who have left care
- These opportunities will give children, Young people and adults' space and time to work on the things they have said are important.
- Team champions are nominated to promote children's rights to the people they work with.



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

We have supported 149 people to understand the UNCRC, including:

- School Governors training as part of the Annual School Governor Training Programme
- Development sessions with Early Years Professionals on Rights in Early Years and on programmes that help children to be ready for school (Good Start Great Start)
- Sessions with students studying degrees for work with children to understand the UNCRC
- Training people who work with young parents to deliver sessions to them on Children's and Human Rights.
- Development session on UNCRC and restorative practice with student volunteers At Discovery

We have supported schools through the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Award with:

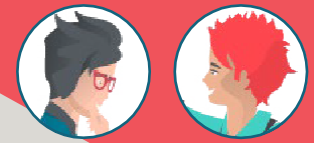
- Full INSET training
- After school workshops and sessions for pupils.

100% of schools are now engaged in the Rights Respecting Schools Award journey. Work will continue to support schools in 2019 (see page 10).

We have worked together to learn about rights by:

- Working with others to make sure children's rights is embedded for **future generations**. This means making sure the voices of children are heard, sharing good practice and making information understandable for people.
- Supporting the **Children and Young People's Partnership Board** to embed the UNCRC when working on children and young people's issues.
- Taking part in a **Children's Rights Summer School**, and working with people from other countries to learn about rights across the World.
- Using **Magic Moments** to understand the importance of memories and stories when having your voice heard.
- Working to create a **child friendly city** where rights are visible and respected across the city.





Whole Council Approach

In Swansea, everyone working for the Council is a member of the team.

We are 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 reporting process
- Scrutiny reporting process

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

- City of Culture plans
- City Centre Redevelopment plans including production of
- Dilly footprints

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
- Our approaches to school readiness in
- Childcare settings
- Healthy and Sustainable Pre-School Scheme
- Play Sufficiency Assessment
- Young People's Service plans
- Child and Family Service's Participation and Children's Rights Plan
- Swansea's Public Service Board's Wellbeing Plan

Children's Rights are celebrated:

- On International Children's Rights Day, children and adults in
- Swansea presented their success to over 100 guests from across Wales





3: Raising awareness

We want everyone to know about children's rights.

Duty

Toraise 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.
- a new Instagram page @dillydragonswansea
- been seen on hidden rocks across Swansea as part of the Dilly Dragon Rocks project launched at National Play Day

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
- Swansea's Best Start Campaign
- Regular posts to the Children's Commissioner's 'Rights Hour' Twitter feed
- Development of Dilly footprints across the City Centre

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

Promoting rights to in schools:

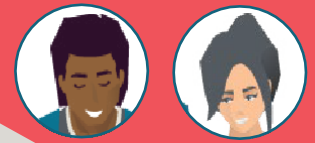
Rights are promoted to Children and families in schools through the Rights Respecting Schools Award.

- 100% of schools are engaged with the Rights Respecting Schools Award
- In 2018/19, teachers and Council Officers will train to be assessors of the award. This will make accreditation free for schools.
- This is an innovative move to make sure schools can be recognised for the excellent rights work they, but at no cost to them.



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 ways for children and young people to question decisions and tell us what they think.

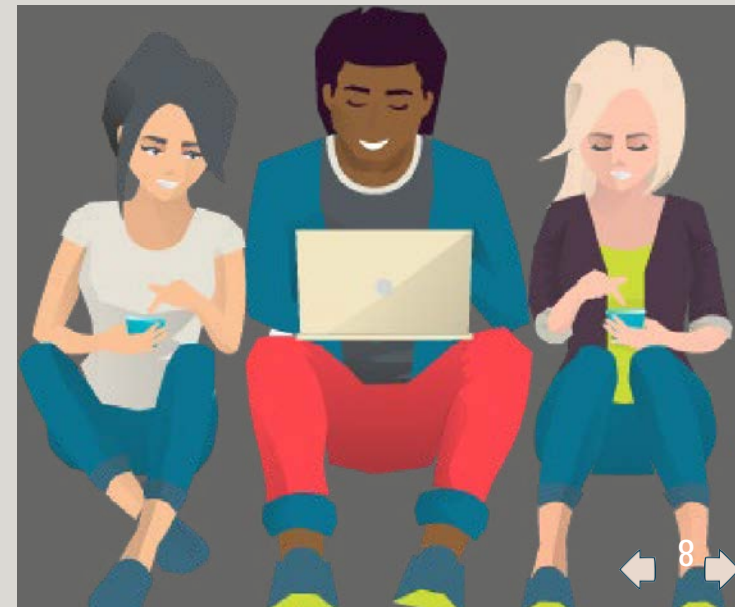
As well as through the Big Conversation, we have an email address where anyone can question decisions, ask for advice and tell us what they think.

It is UNCRC@swansea.gov.uk

If you feel your rights are not being met

If people feel their rights are not being met and wish to make a complaint, Swansea Council has a complaints process that sets out the steps we go through to listen to issues and deal with them.

This can be found at <https://www.swansea.gov.uk/article/7326/Corporate-complaints-procedure>



5: Collecting evidence



It can be difficult to measure the outcomes of children’s rights in our work. However, we have feedback from schools, children and young people and partners that it does.

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 affect the rights of children.

We have received assessments from many departments in Swansea. So direct or indirect impact on children and young people. Evidence show assessments help avoid barriers, tackle poverty, address inequality and

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:

- 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 2019.

We work hard to make sure children's rights are respected but there is always more to do.

This table shows what we said we would do this year, what we have done, and what we need to do next.

What did we need to do?

Broaden Our Approach

- Work with departments to offer training that helps them understand the UNCRC and the council's commitment
- Decide how Dilly should be used across the Council to promote children's rights

Extending Our Offer

- Explore ways to make the Big Conversation available to:
 - Children aged 7-10 years
 - Young people who are not in school
- Extend the Corporate Parenting Challenge to include children and young people aged 7-21 years

Being More Visible

- Make sure Swansea's work on Children's Rights is promoted on social media
- Make sure the council's web pages on children's rights are up to date and relevant for the people that need to look at them

Assessing Impact

- Understanding the difference children's rights approaches make for children in Swansea including the Rights Respecting Schools Award and the Children's Rights Impact Assessment

What have we done?

Broadening our Approach

- 149 people have received training on UNCRC. Many more have received advice and support. This is difficult to measure.
- Dilly is promoted ad-hocly but a process needs to be formalised.

Extending Our Offer

- Plans have been made to extend the Big Conversation to younger children and older people. Dates and themes have been set.
- Opportunities for people aged 7-21 years who experience care have been developed through a Participation Strategy

Being More Visible

- #dillydragonswansea now exists on Instagram
- Work is being done to think about how Dilly can promote human rights for all people living, working and learning in Swansea.
- UNCRC web pages are being updated

Assessing Impact

- Work has been done to map good rights work that takes places across organisations in Swansea
- Teachers and Officers will be trained to provide free RRSA to schools
- Impact of children's rights work needs to be explored

What do we need to do now?

Broadening Our Approach

- We need to think about what training we offer and who delivers this
- We need to think about how departments report their rights work strategically
- We need to decide how Dilly is promoted across the Council

Extending Our Offer

- We need to test the new Big Conversation Offer and work with others to make sure it is successful
- We need to make sure what children say is heard and can affect change
- We need to test new plans for children who experience care and make sure they work

Being More Visible

- We need to make ourselves even more visible on social media and through the press
- A brand for human rights need to be developed.
- We need to find out if the Council's website is where children look for rights information

Assessing Impact

- We need to test our new Rights Respecting Schools approach and make sure it works and is sustainable.
- We need to evaluate how well the Children's Right Scheme works
- We need to promote how children and their families can let us know if they feel their rights are not being met.