



# **Child Health & Well Being -the Welsh Context**

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A close-up photograph of three children smiling warmly at the camera. On the left is a young boy with dark skin and short hair. In the center is a young girl with dark hair and a purple headband. On the right is a young girl with light skin and dark hair, wearing a red top. The background is a soft, light blue sky.

# Child Health & Well Being Conference

From Early Years to Adolescents

Friday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2009

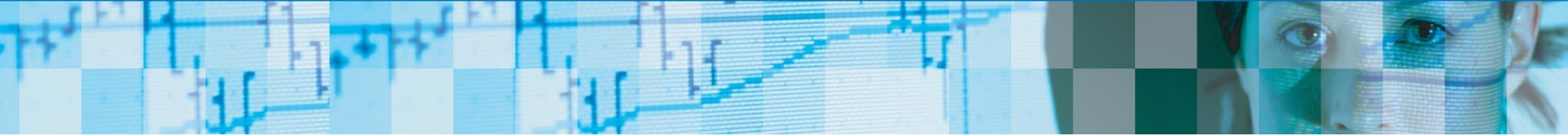
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# Overview

1. Comparative Child Health & Wellbeing
2. Children & the policy context in Wales
3. Distinct features of the approach in Wales



***“ The true measure of a nation’s standing is how well it attends to its children – their health and safety, their material security, their education and socialization, and their sense of being loved, valued, and included in the families and societies into which they are born.”***

UNICEF (2007) Child Poverty in Perspective: An Overview of Child Well Being in rich countries

# **An Overview of Child well-being** **in rich countries**

- UK in the bottom third of the rankings for 5 of the 6 dimensions reviewed
- UK ranked bottom of the 21 countries listed

UNICEF (2007)

# Child Well Being in England, Scotland & Wales Comparisons and variations

- Average Welsh outcomes are the worst under six of the 10 functionings
- Children in Wales have, on average, a lower **physical wellbeing** than those in England & Scotland
- Children in Wales (& Scotland) have more **behavioural problems** and are more likely to be **bullied** than those in England
- **Housing** - Wales has the highest rate of children in accommodation that is in a poor state of repair

Lucas Pedcae, Family & Parenting Institute,(2008)

## **Children's Policy in Wales (1 of 2)**

Devolved responsibility - Almost all public policy explicitly directed towards children & young people since 1998 is made in Wales

- Unambiguous and explicit commitment to a rights based agenda that crosses conventional party political lines
- Determination to provide Wales-relevant solutions to Wales-specific problems
- Partnership working & actively engaging with young people
- Transparency & external scrutiny of the Government's record

## Children's Policy in Wales (2 of 2)

- First independent rights institution to be established in the UK (the Children's Commissioner for Wales)
- Commitment to ensuring continuity & coherence in children's policy making (high profile in Cabinet discussion & structures)
- Continuing confidence in capacity of institutions & instruments of Government to shape lives & communities, including those of children & young people.

Butler, I. (2007) Ch. 8 'Children's Policy in Wales in Williams, C. (Ed) Social Policy for welfare Practice in a Devolved Wales Ed. Venture Press, Birmingham

## Commitment to Children's Rights

‘Over the last ten years [the UNCRC] has helped to establish an internationally accepted framework for the treatment of all children, encouraged a positive and optimistic image of children and young people as active holders of rights and stimulated a greater global commitment to safeguarding those rights. ***The Assembly believes that the Convention should provide a foundation of principle for dealings with children.***’

National Assembly for Wales, 2000, 10  
Children & Young People: A framework for Partnership

# Children & Young People: Rights to Action

(WAG, 2004)

Seven Core Aims:

1. Have a flying start in life
2. Comprehensive range of education and learning opportunities
3. Enjoy the best possible health and are free from abuse, victimisation and exploitation
4. Have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities
5. Are listened to, treated with respect and have their race and cultural identity recognised
6. Have a safe home and a community which supports physical and emotional wellbeing
7. Are not disadvantaged by poverty.

## Representation & Participation

- **Commissioner for Children** - UK's first independent human rights institution specifically for children
- **Funky Dragon**, the Children and Young People's Assembly for Wales

# Funky Dragon – The Children & Young People's Assembly for Wales

Peer led organisation; of young people and by young people  
Its stated aims:

‘...to give 0-25year olds the opportunity to get their voices heard on issues that affect them. The opportunity to participate and be listened to is a fundamental right under the UNCRC. Funky Dragon will try to represent as wide a range as possible and work with decision-makers to achieve change. Funky Dragon's main tasks are to ***make sure that the views of children and young people are heard***, particularly by the Welsh Assembly Government, and to ***support participation in decision-making at national level.***’

Funky Dragon, 2003

## **Children & Young People's Monitor for Wales**

Provides an analysis of children and young people's wellbeing in relation to WAG's seven core aims:

- Provides reliable and up to date information on child well being in Wales, allowing the Assembly Government to monitor and respond to key trends
- Regular reporting will help raise awareness of the issues that need to be tackled
- The UNCRC calls on member countries to regularly publish data on children's well being

2008 Children and Young people's Well-Being Monitor for Wales

In conclusion,

Child Health & Well Being is a high priority in Wales and WAG has a distinct approach to this which has a core value base in line with UNCRC that places the active participation and representation of children and young people at the heart of policy and decision making.

UWIC is involved in a wide range of research relevant to Child Health & Well Being and to the development of Academy Health Wales.

## **Child Health & Well Being at UWIC**

- well being more than the absence of illness
- importance of social and emotional well being
- situated within learning environments, e.g. schools, family, community, etc.
- being cross cutting and multi disciplinary
- child centred/voice of the child
- synergy between research, policy and practice

The UEF project is one example of this approach.