

Press Release.
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Children's Commissioner publishes findings of nationwide research about young carers in Wales

Keith Towler, the Children's Commissioner for Wales, will today (Wednesday, 10 June) launch a report about, and written by, young carers from Wales.

Launched at the Senedd in Cardiff Bay as part of a three-day celebration to mark the achievements of Wales' carers, *Full of Care* is the culmination of ambitious nationwide research undertaken by Powys Carers on behalf of the Children's Commissioner for Wales.

The project team, led by young carers themselves, gathered the views and opinions from nineteen of Wales' 22 young carers projects to identify the main barriers young carers face when it comes to realising their rights set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), including their right to education, to relax and play and to have their views respected.

Key findings include:

- 37% of young carers felt that their opinions were not respected by others
- 52% felt they couldn't cope during the last week
- 73% of those who administered medication had never received any training

Keith Towler commented:

"There are concerns that many young carers, who make up more than two percent of all children in Wales under the age of 16, are not able to enjoy their rights under the UNCRC. I felt that it was essential to give these young people a voice and to work closely with them to build a clearer profile of how they lead their lives.

"This comprehensive research by Powys Young Carers has enabled me to hear the views of over 150 young carers from across the country. It has highlighted a number of hurdles these young people face in exercising their rights and has led me to formulate a series of recommendations for the Welsh Assembly Government and local authorities to improve the situation for young carers throughout Wales. My team will be checking on how these recommendations are taken up over the coming years."

Recommendations from the report include:

- The Welsh Assembly Government should consider the need for a National Young Carers Strategy
- Local authorities should assess young carers' needs and not expect them to do inappropriate tasks.

The report also contains some suggestions from young carers, including developing an ID Card that young people could use to explain their responsibilities in a non-personalised way.

Led by Powys Young Carers Project, the young carers' views were gathered from seven events held across Wales. Dux, Team Leader at Powys Young Carers Project, explains more:

"Having arranged a number of events for carers from across Wales we felt confident to undertake this important research for the Children's Commissioner for Wales.

More...

“We wanted to make the young people feel comfortable and safe at these events and allow them to remain anonymous when answering the questions. We managed to achieve this by using a number of methods to gather information, including the voting pads like those used on shows like ‘Who Wants to be a Millionaire’.

“The end result is a detailed report which the young carers helped to write which gives the Commissioner a clear picture of the lives of young carers in Wales.”

To read and download a copy of the report please visit www.childcomwales.org.uk or www.powyscarersservice.co.uk

Ends

Notes to Editors

1. Young Carers from Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Carmarthen, Conwy, Cynon Valley, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Merthyr, Monmouthshire, Neath Port Talbot, Newport, Pembrokeshire, Powys, Rhondda and Taff, Swansea, Torfaen, Ynys Mon and Wrexham took part in the research.

2. Powys Young Carers is an integral part of Powys Carers Service. Powys Carers Service is an independent organisation providing information advice, advocacy and practical support to carers of all ages in every part of Powys. Working in partnership with both Social Services, the Local Health Board and other voluntary organisations, their aim is to identify carers in the community, to offer them support and to put them in touch with other local agencies and services that may be able to help. www.powyscarers.org.uk

3. To arrange interviews with Keith Towler or with a young carer who took part in the research please contact Lucy Payne on 01792 765636 or 07794 123138

4. *Full of Care* will be launched as part of a three day celebration of Wales’ Carers at the Senedd during National Carers Week 2009. Other events include: Sol Jorgensen Work in Progress 2009. Large scale drawings by artist Sol Jorgensen and examples of a Journal to Banner project produced with South Wales Carers. Exhibited in conjunction with Butetown History and Arts Centre for the rest of June / July and supported by the Gwanwyn Festival. To see more, and the Journals, contact 029 20 256757 or sol.jorgensen@talktalk.net