NEWS RELEASE: Embargoed until 00:01 10 November 2009

Time to roll up your sleeves and get on with it – Children's Commissioner's message to Wales

The current financial climate should not be used as an excuse to backtrack on delivering high quality and consistent services to children and young people across Wales is one of a number of key points highlighted within the Children's Commissioner for Wales' Annual Review to be published today (10 November 2009).

In his second Annual Review, Keith Towler details his frustration around the lack of consistent implementation of Welsh Assembly Government policies and the failings of local authorities to put the best interests of children at the heart of decisions. He says:

"Whilst I acknowledge that times are tough on local authorities, we must make sure the current financial climate isn't used as an excuse to delay the full implementation of national policies. It is now more important than ever that service providers assess thoroughly the impact of their decisions on children and young people, to work smart – whether it's the pooling of resources or making the most of what they've got - so that children across Wales can see, feel real, positive, tangible benefits to their lives.

"Working in partnership to make children's rights a reality is something which I strive to achieve and is something children and families across the country should expect from organisations and authorities. I'm looking forward to playing my part in the year ahead to provide leadership and practical assistance to those who can make a real contribution to children's lives in Wales."

Concerns around the country's most vulnerable children are also highlighted within the Commissioner's review. In particular, the Commissioner details his worries around children's welfare at a time of transition within health structures in Wales. He says:

“The recent reports by CSSIW and Health Inspectorate Wales (HIW) into safeguarding and protection of children in Wales have identified variations and inconsistencies in practice. I was particularly concerned by the findings of the HIW report into the arrangements in the health service in Wales. I now challenge the National Public Health Services in Wales to demonstrate their robustness and effectiveness in working collaboratively to safeguard children.

“Ultimately, protecting our children is everyone’s responsibility but I will be pressing on all agencies to fully implement the existing strategy and encourage government to hold all agencies to account to ensure every child is effectively safeguarded. This is something which must be tackled immediately; no delay, no excuses.”

Keith Towler’s report also covers the main areas of work for his organisation over the last twelve months, which included the publication of a report about child trafficking in Wales and another about disabled children’s access to play. It also includes details about recommendations of previous reports and the team’s efforts in handling increasing number of calls to their advice and support service on issues ranging from special educational needs to sport facilities.

The Commissioner will be appearing in front of the National Assembly for Wales’ Children and Young People Committee on Tuesday, 10 November – they will be scrutinising the Commissioner on the content of his Annual Review 08|09.

A copy of the Annual Review can be downloaded from www.childcomwales.org.uk

Ends

For more information or to arrange an interview with Keith Towler or a Welsh language spokesperson, please contact Sara Young on 01792 765638, 07794 123132 or email sara.young@childcomwales.org.uk

DATGANIAD I'R WASG : O dan embargo tan 00:01 10 Tachwedd 2009

Mae'n bryd torchi'n llewys a bwrw ati – neges y Comisiynydd Plant i Gymru

Ni ddylid defnyddio'r hinsawdd economaidd bresennol yn esgus dros dorri ymrwymiad i ddarparu gwasanaethau cyson, o safon uchel, i blant a phobl ifanc ar draws Cymru. Dyma un o'r pwyntiau allweddol a bwysleisir yn Adolygiad Blynyddol Comisiynydd Plant Cymru a gyhoeddir heddiw (10 Tachwedd 2009).

Yn ei ail Adroddiad Blynyddol, mae Keith Towler yn mynegi ei rwystredigaeth ynglŷn â'r diffyg cysondeb o ran gweithredu polisïau Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru a methiant awdurdodau lleol i sicrhau bod lles plant yn greiddiol i'w penderfyniadau. Dywed:

"Rwy'n deall fod pethau'n anodd i awdurdodau lleol ar hyn o bryd, ond mae'n rhaid sicrhau nad yw'r hinsawdd economaidd bresennol yn cael ei defnyddio'n esgus dros ohirio gweithrediad llawn y polisïau cenedlaethol. Bellach, mae'n bwysicach nag erioed i ddarparwyr gwasanaethau wneud asesiad trylwyr o effaith eu penderfyniadau ar blant a phobl ifanc, a gweithio'n effeithiol - boed hynny drwy gyfuno adnoddau neu gael y gorau o'r hyn sydd ganddynt - er mwyn galluogi plant o bob cwr o Gymru i weld a theimlo gwelliannau real, amlwg a phositif i'w bywydau.

"Mae gweithio mewn partneriaeth i sicrhau gwir hawliau i blant yn nod yr wyf yn ymdrechu i'w gyrraedd, ac yn rhywbeth y dylai plant a theuluoedd ledled y wlad ddisgwyl ei gael gan sefydliadau ac awdurdodau. Edrychaf ymlaen at weithio'n ddyfal dros y flwyddyn sydd i ddod i ddarparu arweiniad a chymorth ymarferol i'r rheiny a all wneud gwir gyfraniad i fywydau plant yng Nghymru."

Y mae adolygiad y Comisiynydd hefyd yn tynnu sylw at bryderon ynglŷn â phlant yng Nghymru sy'n agored iawn i niwed. Yn arbennig, mynegir pryderon y Comisiynydd ynglŷn â lles plant yn ystod cyfnod o newidiadau o ran strwythurau iechyd yng Nghymru. Dywed:

"Mae'r adroddiadau diweddar gan AGGCC ac Arolygiaeth Gofal Iechyd Cymru (AGIC) ynglŷn â diogelu ac amddiffyn plant yng Nghymru yn nodi amrywiadau ac anghysonderau o ran ymarfer. Rwy'n pryderu'n arbennig ynglŷn â chanfyddiadau

adroddiad AGIC ynglŷn â threfniadau'r gwasanaeth iechyd yng Nghymru. Rwyf nawr yn herio'r Gwasanaethau Iechyd Cyhoeddus Cenedlaethol yng Nghymru i ddangos eu cadernid a'u heffeithiolrwydd o ran cydweithio i ddiogelu plant.

"Yn y pen draw, cyfrifoldeb pawb yw diogelu ein plant, ond byddaf yn pwyso ar yr holl asiantaethau i weithredu'r strategaeth gyfredol yn llawn, a byddaf yn annog y llywodraeth i ddal pob asiantaeth yn gyfrifol er mwyn sicrhau bod pob plentyn yn cael ei ddiogelu'n effeithiol. Y mae'n rhaid mynd i'r afael â hyn yn syth; dim oedi, dim esgusodion."

Mae adroddiad Keith Towler hefyd yn ymdrin â phrif feysydd gwaith ei fudiad dros y deuddeng mis diwethaf, gan gynnwys cyhoeddi adroddiad ar fasnachu mewn plant yng Nghymru, ac un arall am fynediad i chwarae ar gyfer plant anabl. Ceir hefyd fanylion am argymhellion adroddiadau blaenorol, ac ymdrechion y tîm i ymdrin â nifer cynyddol o alwadau i'w wasanaeth cyngor a chefnogaeth ynglŷn â materion sy'n amrywio o anghenion addysgol arbennig i gyfleusterau chwaraeon.

Bydd y Comisiynydd yn cwrdd â Phwyllgor Plant a Phobl Ifanc Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru ddydd Mawrth, 10 Tachwedd – byddant yn croesholi'r Comisiynydd am gynnwys ei Adroddiad Blynyddol 08|09.

Gellir lawrlwytho copi o'r Adolygiad Blynyddol o www.complantcymru.org.uk

Diwedd

Am ragor o wybodaeth, neu i drefnu cyfweliad gyda Keith Towler neu lefarydd Cymraeg, cysylltwch â Sara Young ar 01792 765638, 07794 123132 neu ebostiwch sara.young@complantcymru.org.uk