

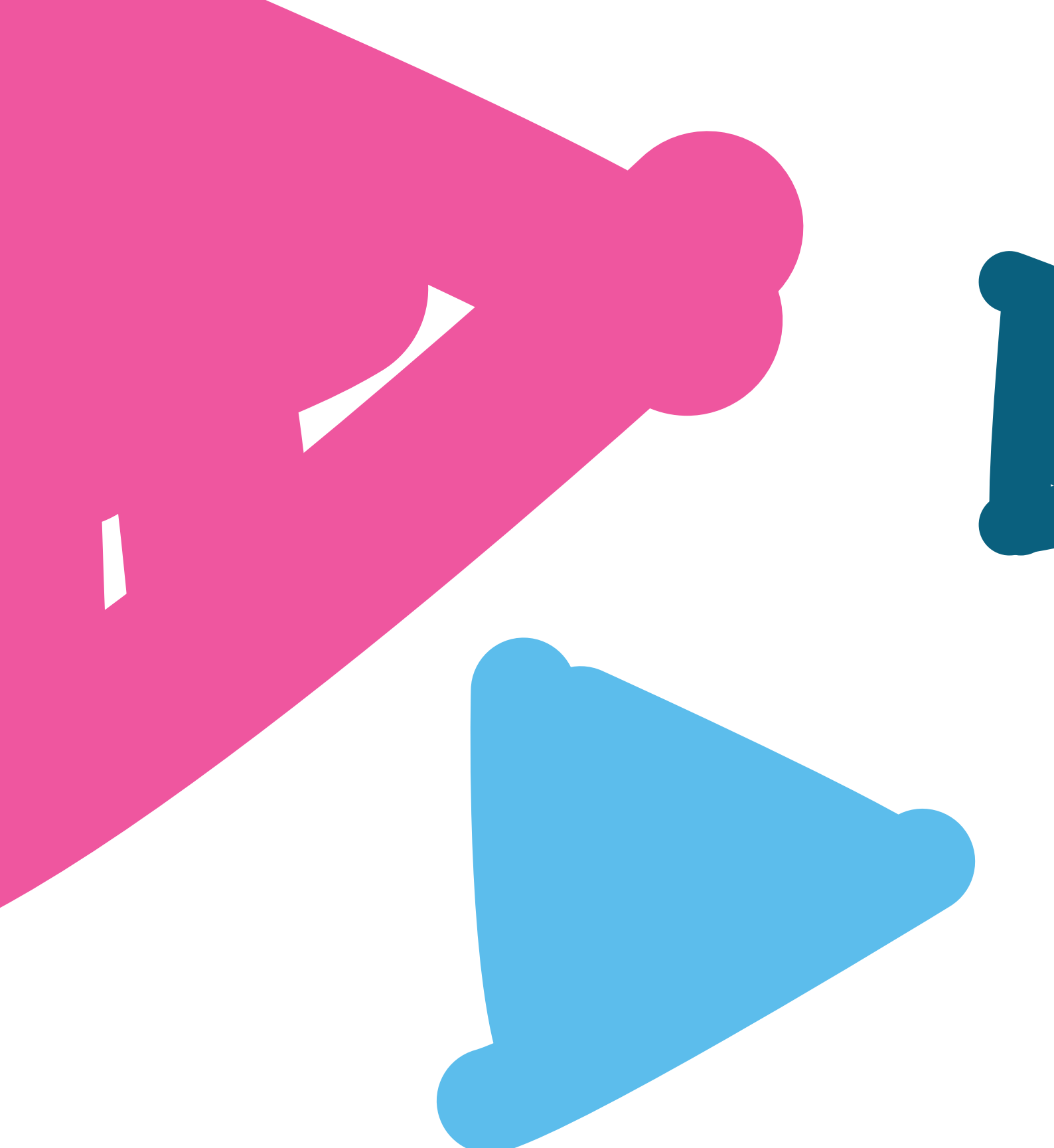


Children's Commissioner for Wales

Beth Nesa? What Next?

The findings



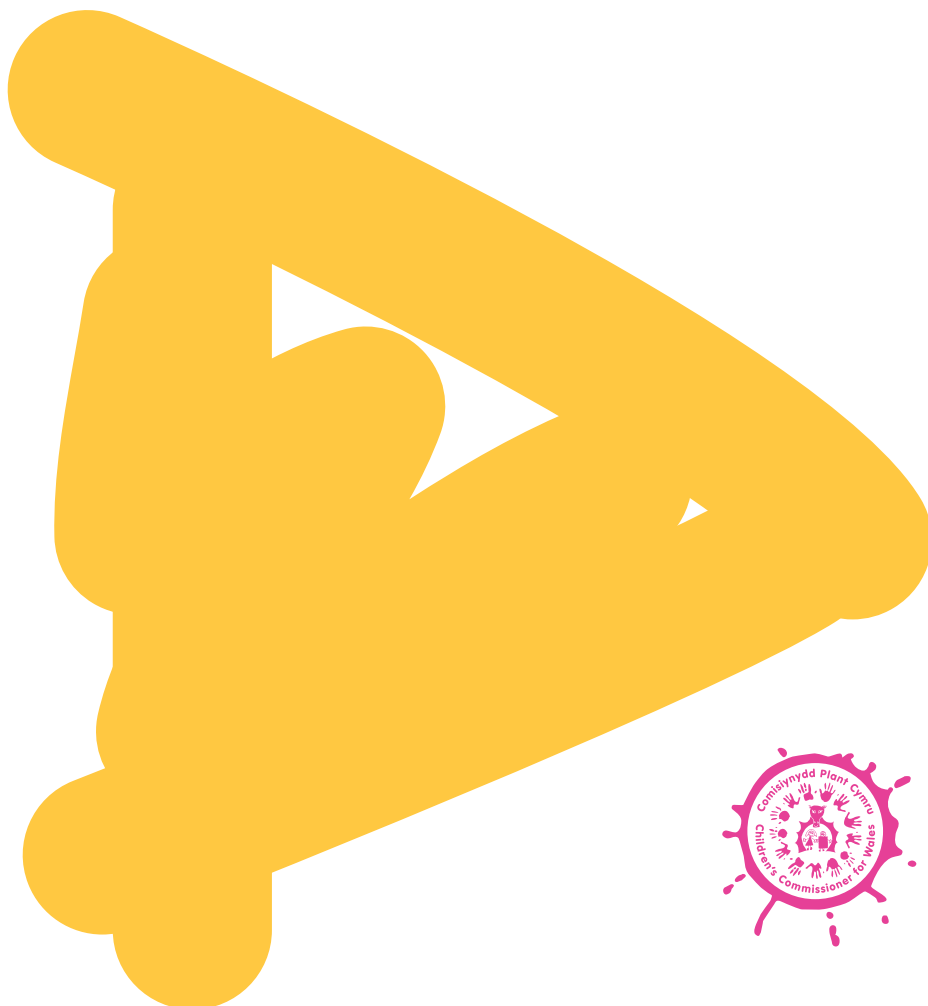


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1. The Children's Commissioner's title
2. Differences between groups of young people



**beth nesa'
what next**

dweud eich dweud
have your say

Foreword

I am delighted to be introducing this report following my Beth Nesa II What Next? (from here on referred to as Beth Nesa?) consultation with children, young people and the adults who care for and about them. It is my role as Children's Commissioner for Wales to be the independent voice of all children and young people in Wales. To be an effective champion I have to know directly from children and young people what they feel I should be speaking out about. I want children and young people to help set my priorities and I want them to hold me to account on the things I promise to do with their ideas. The challenge for us all is to create a country which values children and young people as citizens here and now. To do this they need to be safe, to have access to the things they need to grow up happy and healthy, and to be respected as equals with a contribution to make.

My work is guided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and I will strive to ensure that it is implemented fully in Wales. I work with my team to achieve positive outcomes in the lives of children and young people in Wales and their ability to access their rights. To do this, we work under the four 'Ps' linked to the UNCRC: Provision, Protection, Participation and Promotion.

The legal remit of the Children's Commissioner for Wales extends automatically to young people up to the age of 21 if they have previously been placed under the care of a local authority, and can extend to those young people up to the age of 25 if they are engaged in or have returned to education. The consultation actively sought the views of care leavers through phase one, the 11-18+ and adults surveys.

My team and I:

Keep children's rights at the centre of how we work and work with all public services in Wales to achieve the same goal (Provision)

Assist children and young people to access and receive their rights (Protection)

Include children and young people's expertise in informing and directing our work and work with all public services in Wales to achieve the same goal (Participation)

Make sure that children and young people know that they have an independent champion called the Children's Commissioner for Wales and that they have rights under the UNCRC (Promotion)

I want to be able to reflect the reality of children's lives in Wales. The most meaningful way for my team and I to do this is to meet with and talk to children, young people and those who care about and work for them. That is why the Beth Nesa? consultation has been so thorough and wide ranging, encompassing two phases of engagement. The first phase involved face to face meetings and the second phase produced an extensive and accessible suite of surveys in order to capture the many views we were seeking.

In phase one, my team and I met with over 1000 children and young people and more than 200 adult carers and professionals for structured conversations about their everyday lives and concerns, and views on what I should be prioritising. During this time I had the privilege of listening to children and young people living in a whole host of different circumstances. I spent time with pre-school children in Caerphilly, young carers in Powys, young people living in hostel accommodation in Port Talbot and Anglesey, disabled children and their carers in schools and a hospice, young people being treated within in-patient mental health settings in North and South Wales, Young Farmers, Scouts and Guides and many school and youth councils.

“ If you were Sally Holland,
the Children’s Commissioner,
what would you do to make
children’s lives better in Wales?
To make sure children are
heard and can be happy ”

Junior Youth Forum Member

My primary school Super Ambassadors took part in workshops in North, Mid and South Wales and my Community Ambassadors provided invaluable information about their experiences as young disabled people, Gypsies and Travellers, members of Black and Minority Ethnic Communities and those living in Community First areas of Wales. I listened to care leavers from every local authority in Wales, and hundreds of children attending the Urdd Eisteddfod expressed their views.

The phase two surveys involved more children, young people and adults informing me about their priorities. I am pleased that more than 6000 children took part in this phase as well as nearly 900 adults. I am also pleased to report that I have been able to hear from many children and young people who would not normally be included in surveys of this kind. This includes very young children (758 3-7 year olds) and children and young people who are not in school settings because they are in custody, hospital or have left school.

I am also encouraged to report that the children and young people taking part reflect the Welsh population in terms of age, gender, region and socio-economic circumstances. I can therefore state with some confidence that these results represent the views of children and young people in Wales and should be paid serious attention to!

The results of this consultation will be clearly reflected in my work priorities for the next three years, which I am pleased to publish a summary of alongside this report. The information provided for by children, young people and adults will help me hold Government and other public bodies to account on how they respond to the issues raised. I hope it will also inspire them and all members of society to respond to the priorities and concerns raised by children and young people during the consultation. As the independent Children’s Champion in Wales, I expect children and young people to hold me to account on how I have listened to them and what actions I have taken. I look forward to working with everybody who shares the aspiration for a Wales where all children and young people have an equal chance to be the best that they can be.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all of the children, young people and adults who took part in this consultation and the many organisations who went out of their way to facilitate discussions and promote the survey. My whole team has worked tirelessly on this project and I am grateful for their support and enthusiasm. I would like to acknowledge the significant contribution made by Gwyther Rees from Cardiff University's School of Social Sciences, who led on survey design, analysis and report writing. His expertise in listening to children and young people through surveys and his speed and flexibility of working are enormously appreciated.

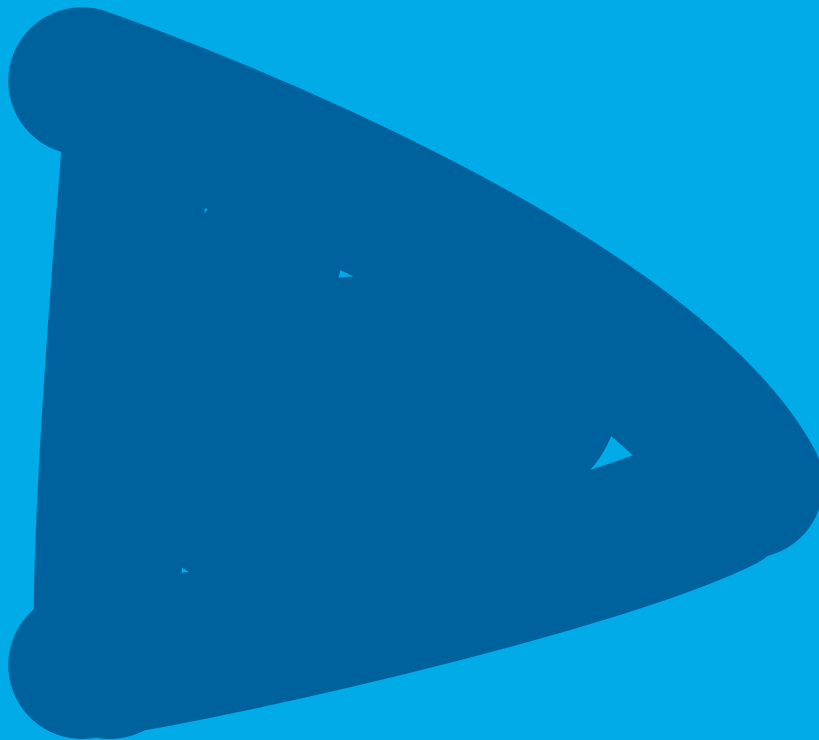


Sally Holland
Children's Commissioner
for Wales



Executive Summary

This summary provides an overview of the outcomes of each phase of the consultation and information about how these outcomes will inform the future work of the Children's Commissioner for Wales. More detailed reports on the findings of various components will be published during 2016.





Phase 1

The first phase of Beth Nesa? was conducted from April to July 2015. It involved a range of forms of consultation with children, young people and adults, including focus groups, questionnaires, creative activities (with children and young people), individual discussions, attendance at meetings and events, and written submissions. In total views were gathered from over 1,000 children and young people and 200 adults.

This stage of the consultation focused on three key themes informed by the UNCRC – provision, protection, and participation – and within each of these themes on three different aspects of children’s lives – family/home, community/local area, and school.

The material gathered through the consultation was analysed jointly by Children’s Commissioner Staff, a group of young people and Cardiff University researchers. These were the main issues identified¹:

Provision

 **If you were Sally Holland, The Children’s Commissioner, what would you do to make children’s lives better in Wales?** 
Make sure that all children are well fed
 Junior Youth Forum Member

Key findings:

- Poverty, inequality and basic needs (both groups)
- Children’s needs for emotional warmth and support (mainly children and young people)
- Parenting, support for parenting and the needs of parents (mainly professionals)
- Educational issues including (for children and young people) the quality of education and educational facilities and (for adults) educational support and issues relating to testing and exam stress
- Access to health care and the promotion of healthy lifestyles, plus (for adults) the health needs of specific groups
- A perceived shortage of mental health service provision
- The importance of play and freedom and of leisure facilities in the local area
- The importance of access to technology and the internet (mainly children and young people)
- The Welsh language, including the need for more support for schools and activities outside school
- Transitions from child to adult services (identified mainly by professionals)

Not all these issues had equal weighting and the topic of mental health provision emerged as particularly prominent.

¹ Many issues (where not otherwise specified in the lists) were identified both by children, young people and by adults, but some differences in emphasis between the two groups were also evident and these are highlighted as appropriate.

Protection

“ I have been at the school for five years and never knew we had an anti-bullying charter. ”
Secondary School Pupil

Key findings:

- Bullying. Children and young people discussed bullying in a range of contexts while adults tended to focus on cyberbullying
- Internet safety including, for adults, the need for information and educational initiatives
- The issue of parents hitting or smacking children
- Family conflict and domestic violence
- Maltreatment and safeguarding issues at home
- Risks and safety issues which children and young people face in the community including (for children) ‘other people’ and being alone
- Risks due to the quality of the local environment and road safety (mainly children and young people)
- Broader environmental hazards – e .g. cliffs, dogs (children and young people)
- Global issues such as wars in the news (children and young people) and extremism (adults)

Participation

“ If I was the Children’s Commissioner, I would make sure all children have their right to have a say in things that affect them. ”
Super Ambassador

Key findings:

Within the family (raised by children):

- being listened to and being given freedom

At school:

- schools councils and accountability (both groups) and whether actions are taken on the basis of children’s views (children and young people)

Within the local area/neighbourhood:

- opportunities to have a say on issues relating to local provision and issues

Within wider society:

- A range of issues were identified including (for children and young people) youth forums, social services, voting and referenda and (for adults) the need for a national participation forum and for political engagement and citizenship
- The importance of advocacy provision for specific groups of children including disabled children (mainly professionals)

Phase 2

Cross-cutting issues

As well as the issues under the three key themes, some cross-cutting issues were identified by both groups of respondents:

Children and young people identified:

- The importance of ‘happiness’
- The need to promote and improve children and young people’s rights

Adults identified:

- Children’s rights – improvement, promotion and implementation
- Budgets, funding and cuts including the implications for individuals and families and also for service provision
- Inequities in service provision within Wales (some referring to a ‘postcode lottery’)

The second phase of Beth Nesa? built on the outcomes of Phase 1. It was conducted from September to November 2015 and gathered (mainly through online questionnaires) the views of well over 6,000 children, young people, parents, professionals and other adults across Wales.

- 758 children aged 3 to 7
- 2,909 children aged 7 to 11
- 2,294 young people age 11 to 18 (plus care leavers up to 25)
- 874 adults

The topics covered in the questionnaires were selected from the outcomes of the Phase 1 consultation work. Similar to Phase 1, the surveys focused on key themes informed by the UNCRC – provision, protection, participation and promotion – collecting information on children’s experiences and adults’ levels of concern. The surveys also gathered the views of all respondents about priorities for action to improve children and young people’s lives. As well as informing the work of the Children’s Commissioner, these surveys provide important and valuable new and, in some cases, unique information from a variety of perspectives for other key stakeholders concerned with children’s lives in Wales.

These were the main issues identified:**Provision**

What do children need?
Cwtches from the family.
What do you need?
A World of happiness. ”
 Child attending Urdd eisteddfod

Key findings:

- There were relatively positive indications about leisure provision in the local area for the 7 to 11 age group with most children of this age feeling there were places for them to go and things to do. However, the picture was less positive for older children and young people and satisfaction with this issue declined from the age of 11 onwards. Satisfaction with this issue was also lower for girls and for young people from less affluent family backgrounds.
- There was a similar pattern for evaluations of school life, which were less positive among older young people and those from poorer backgrounds.
- The views of the youngest age group of children aged 3 to 7 highlighted how much they valued opportunities for play as part of their school life, but at the same time many of them enjoyed school work and learning.
- The survey of children and young people aged 11 and over asked a number of questions about emotional well-being. Most said that they often or almost always felt happy and full of energy. However a substantial minority often or almost always felt worried (29%) and sad (19%).
- Children and young people who felt worried or sad were most likely to talk to a friend or someone at home, but teachers and school counsellors were also important potential sources of support. More than a third said that they would keep problems to themselves and this percentage was higher for older young people and those from less affluent backgrounds.
- Only a little more than a quarter (27%) of children and young people aged 11 plus said that they definitely knew of places in their local area that provided support for those who felt worried or sad about something.
- Within this theme adults were particularly concerned about the availability of mental health and well-being services for children and young people. This was a concern that had already emerged strongly in the first phase of consultation. There were also substantial levels of concern about the other topics covered, in particular the needs of children and families living in poverty.

Protection



I think we should have the right to be safe on the Internet and social media.

Secondary School pupil

- Most children and young people feel safe at school and college. But around 5% of primary school children and 9% of secondary school children and young people disagreed that they felt safe. These small proportions still represent substantial numbers. Children and young people from less affluent backgrounds were less likely than average to feel safe at school.
- Experiences of being hit, socially excluded and called names by other children or young people at school were relatively common experiences, particular for primary school children. These experiences decreased across the secondary school age range. Boys were more likely to have been hit by other young people at school while girls were more likely to have been socially excluded. Young people who had been bullied tended to have lower levels of emotional well-being although this does not mean that there was necessarily a causal link. Bullying and negative behaviours of other children in school or nursery were also highlighted as an issue by children aged 3 to 7.
- The majority of children and young people agreed that they felt safe in their local area but as in schools there was a substantial minority who did not – 13% of primary school children and 19% aged 11 and over. Girls and children and young people from poorer backgrounds were less likely than average to feel safe in their local area.
- Over half (53%) of primary school children sometimes experienced being picked on by other children and young people in their local area, including 12% who said this happened most days. These experiences were less common among the older age group.
- Within this theme, professionals had the highest levels of concern about safeguarding and child protection issues within the home (29% rated this as a major concern), followed by bullying (24%).

Participation

“ I feel listened to at home but not at school. In school they listen to you but don't take you seriously and don't really do anything about it. ”
Young Carer

- Most children aged 3–7 felt that they were listened to by adults in school or nursery.
- Among the older age groups only a minority of children and young people (30% of the primary school age group and 25% of the older age group) said they were often asked their views at school and only around a quarter felt that children's views made a big difference to decisions made at school.
- Children and young people's experiences of participation in decision-making in the local area were less positive with only a minority saying that they had been consulted about decisions or thinking that children's views made a big difference.
- The 11 to 18+ age group were also asked their views about young people's rights and participation in Wales in general. Almost half (45%) of young people thought that adults in general respected their rights, but a lower proportion (31% in both cases) agreed that adults in Wales listened to young people's views or that these views made a difference to what happens in Wales.
- In general, young people's feelings about participation in school, the local area and in Wales in general became less positive with age between 11 and 18.
- Within this theme, professionals were most concerned about participation in national decision-making (21% rated this a major concern) followed by decision-making in the local area (17%).

Promotion

“ If you were Sally, what would you do? Make sure children know about their rights? ”
Primary School Pupil

- Slightly more than half of children and young people aged 7 and over said that they knew about children's rights. Around a third knew their rights under the UNCRC.
- Children of primary school age had had more experiences of learning about rights than older young people. Most children and young people were interested in learning more about children's rights.
- Around a fifth (21%) of professionals rated the levels of children's knowledge of their rights as a major concern and a further 29% rated as '3' on a scale of concern from zero to four, where 0 is of no concerns and four is very concerning.

Priorities

Each group of respondents were asked their views about priorities, based on a set of issues identified through the consultations in the first phase of the Beth Nesa? project. Younger children were presented with shorter lists of issues, bearing in mind their age, ability to understand and also the relevance of issues to their lives. The survey of adults asked views about priorities for the Children's Commissioner. However the three surveys of children and young people asked about priorities for improving children's lives in general as it was not assumed that they would be familiar with the Commissioner's remit and role. This should be borne in mind when comparing children and young people's and adults' views.

- Children aged 3–7 were presented with a list of seven priorities from which they could select two. Within this list 'more places to play' was the highest priority – selected by almost half of children – which reflects the importance of play for this age group. Opinions were then split between the next four most common priorities relating to poverty, safety, bullying and emotional well-being, all of which were chosen as one of their two priorities by a little more than a quarter of children.
- Children aged 7 to 11 were given a list of 12 priorities from which they could choose up to five. More than half of children (55%) chose stopping bullying as a priority. The next highest priorities for this age group were helping children and families in poverty (47%) and making local areas safer for children (41%). Priorities did not vary substantially by age, gender or region for this age group.
- Children and young people aged 11 and over were given a slightly longer list of 14 priorities (the additions were improving PSE lessons and support in the transition to adulthood) from which they could select up to five. Again the most common priority (53%) was tackling bullying. Three other issues were selected by more than 40% of young people – protecting children from violence and abuse at home, facilities in the local area and help for children and families in poverty. So there were both similarities and differences in the top priorities of this age group compared to primary school children. Again there was relatively little evidence of differences in priorities amongst different sub-groups of young people on the basis of age, gender, region or affluence.
- Adults were presented with 18 issues and could select up to five. Improving mental health and well-being support was a strong top priority in this survey – being selected by 82% of professionals and 62% of parents. Other priorities tended to vary somewhat between professionals and parents. Professionals chose safeguarding children at home, poverty and parenting support as their next three priorities respectively. Parents on the other hand chose improving local leisure facilities as their second priority, followed by tackling bullying and then poverty. Parents' ranking of priorities appeared to be a little closer to children's and young people's than that of professionals.



Context

Beth Nesa? was designed to gather the views and experiences of children, young people and adults in order to inform the future priorities of the Children's Commissioner for Wales (CCfW), whilst gathering new evidence on the lives of our children and young people.



Background and aims

Over 1000 children and young people and 200 adults took part from every local authority in Wales during phase one, and a report of this phase will be published later in 2016.

The second phase of the project consisted of four surveys. The content of the surveys was primarily determined by the first phase of the project which had gathered views and ideas through a variety of consultative methods from a wide range of children, young people and adults during the spring and summer of 2015. The surveys were aimed at:

- Children aged 3 to 7 (brief survey)
- Children aged 7 to 11 (primary school age group)
- Young people aged 11 to 18¹ (secondary school and post-compulsory education)
- Professionals and other adults

The consultation has been organised around four themes linked to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC):

1. Provision:

Do children have the things they need in Wales to be happy, healthy and safe? What should the CCfW prioritise in terms of influencing improvements in provision for children and young people?

2. Protection:

Are children and young people kept safe? What should the CCfW prioritise in terms of influencing improvements in the protection of children and young people?

3. Participation: Are children and young people given choices and the chance to take part in decisions that affect them? What should the CCfW prioritise in terms of participation?

4. Promotion:

Do children and young people know about their rights? How should the CCfW involve them in her work?

Within these thematic areas the topics that emerged from the first phase were as follows:

Provision

Play and leisure
Personal and Social Education lessons
Emotional well-being and mental health
Poverty and inequality
Transitions to adulthood

Protection

Bullying and harassment
Safe schools
Safe communities
Safeguarding
Family support

Participation

In nursery/ school/college
In the local area
In Wales

Promotion

Learning and knowledge of rights
Involvement of young people in the work of the Commissioner

Table 1: Themes and topics identified for Phase 2 surveys

¹ Including young people up to the age of 25 who have previously been looked after, consistent with the Commissioner's remit.

The aim of the set of surveys in phase 2 was two-fold:

1. To learn more about the perspectives of children, young people and adults in Wales about each of these topics.
2. To gather views on how these topics might be prioritised as part of the CCfW's principal aim to promote and protect the rights and well-being of children and young people.

The surveys

A brief overview of each survey is as follows:

Children aged 3 and above (brief survey)

This survey was designed to be as brief and simple as possible for younger children from the age of three to seven years old. The survey consisted of ten questions covering a small sub-set of the topics that seemed relevant to this age group including play, feeling listened to at nursery, feeling safe, seeking support and a short set of options to prioritise. Some basic demographic data was also gathered. The survey was available online in Welsh and in English as well as in paper format if requested. A circle time activity was designed to capture responses to the same questions in an interactive way and was delivered in a number of preschool settings.

Children aged 7 to 11 (primary school group)

This survey had a more extensive set of questions covering most of the topics listed in Table 1. The exceptions were transitions to adulthood and PSE lessons which did not seem relevant to ask for this age group. Children were asked about their experiences in relation to each topic, and also to prioritise a list of 12 options. Again some demographic information was gathered. The survey was available online and in paper format in Welsh, English, British Sign Language and easy read with symbols version.

Children and young people aged 11 to 18 and over (secondary school and post-compulsory education)

This survey covered all of the identified topics. As well as demographic information some additional questions were included in this version about family economic circumstances. Again, the survey was available online and in paper format in Welsh, English, British Sign Language and an easy read with symbols version.

Professionals and other adults

This survey was aimed primarily at professionals but was also open to parents and other adults. It consisted primarily of two parts – a set of questions about respondents' levels of concern about each of the topics in Table 1 – and then a similar list for respondents to prioritise. There were also some other questions about the needs of specific sub-groups of young people and general views. Information was gathered about respondents' geographical location and also about their type of agency if they were completing the survey as a professional. The survey was available online and in paper format in Welsh, English and British Sign Language.

Outcomes of the surveys

After data cleaning², the total number of responses consisted of almost 6,000 children and young people and over 800 adults as shown in Table 2:

SURVEY	NUMBER OF RESPONSES
Children aged 3 and over	758
Children aged 7 to 11	2,909
Children aged 11 to 18	2,294
Professionals and other adults	874

Table 2: Number of responses to each survey

² To identify and remove cases where the respondent had stopped answering the questionnaire at an early stage or had otherwise left most of it blank.

This report draws together key findings from the four surveys, organised in terms of the themes and topics identified above. The findings presented are based on a comprehensive analysis of each of the surveys. Statistics for children and young people are weighted to make them as representative as possible of the child population, based on known characteristics. All percentages have been rounded to the nearest percentage point and therefore total percentages for some questions may not add up to exactly 100%. Where differences are discussed between sub-groups (e.g. females and males) these were found to be statistically significant using standard statistical tests. Further information about all of these matters and full findings for each of the surveys will be made available in separate reports for each survey, later in 2016 at www.childcomwales.org.uk

The structure of the rest of the report consists of:

- **Four sections presenting findings for each of the themes of protection, provision, participation and promotion;**
- **A section presenting respondents' priorities in each of the surveys;**
- **A final section containing a conclusion and next steps.**

As well as informing the Commissioner's thinking about strategic priorities over the next few years, the findings presented in this report are important new evidence on the lives of children and young people in Wales. Surveys seeking the views of primary school aged children at a national level in Wales are relatively unusual, and surveys including children as young as three years of age even more so. In relation to the older age group of young people aged 11 and over, self-report survey data already exists on some topics – particularly from the series of Health Behaviour of School-aged Children (HBSC) surveys.

However there also significant gaps in current evidence gathered from young people in this age group, as highlighted in the third edition of the Welsh Government's Children and Young People's Wellbeing Monitor published in late 2015³. The surveys described in this report address some of the identified gaps, including children's feelings about their local area and their opportunities to participate in decision-making at a local and a national level. An important aspect of ongoing research into the lives of children and young people is to develop a better understanding of the factors that affect children's wellbeing. It is therefore hoped that the findings will be of value to other organisations concerned with promoting children's rights and well-being in Wales.



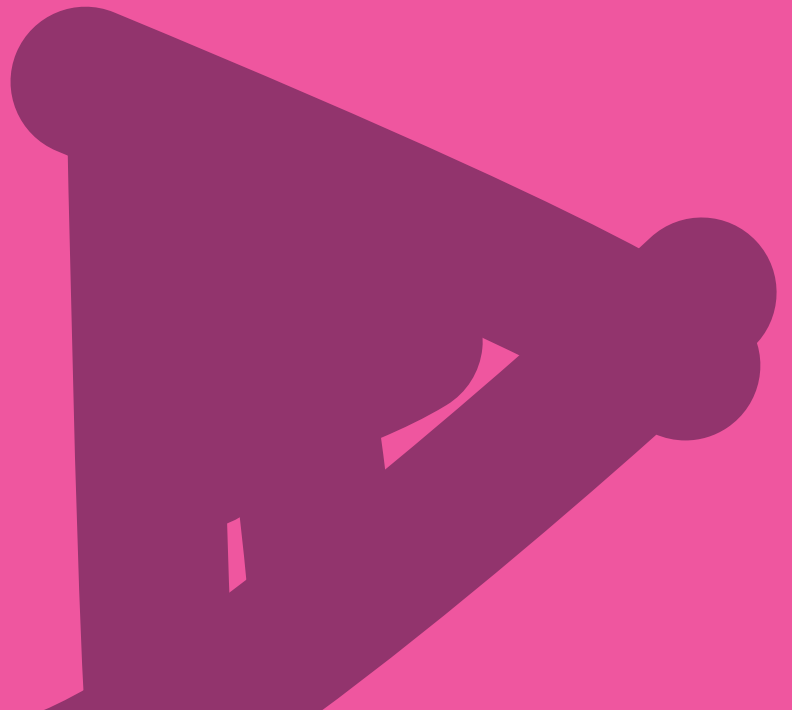
³ Available at: <http://gov.wales/docs/caecd/research/2015/151211-children-young-people-wellbeing-monitor-2015-en.pdf>

Provision

“What could make children’s lives better in Wales?

More love, more people to turn to, more inspiration, more happiness & freedom.”

Super Ambassador



In this section we look at key findings on children’s and young people’s views about:

- **play and leisure provision**
- **school**
- **emotional well-being, mental health and seeking-help**

We also summarise professionals’ responses to questions about their levels of concern with current service provision.

Play and leisure

Children in the youngest age group were asked to pick their three favourite places to play from a list of eight locations. Results are shown in Figure 1. Most children (61%) selected swimming pools as one of their favourite places to play. The next two most selected locations relate to the natural environment.

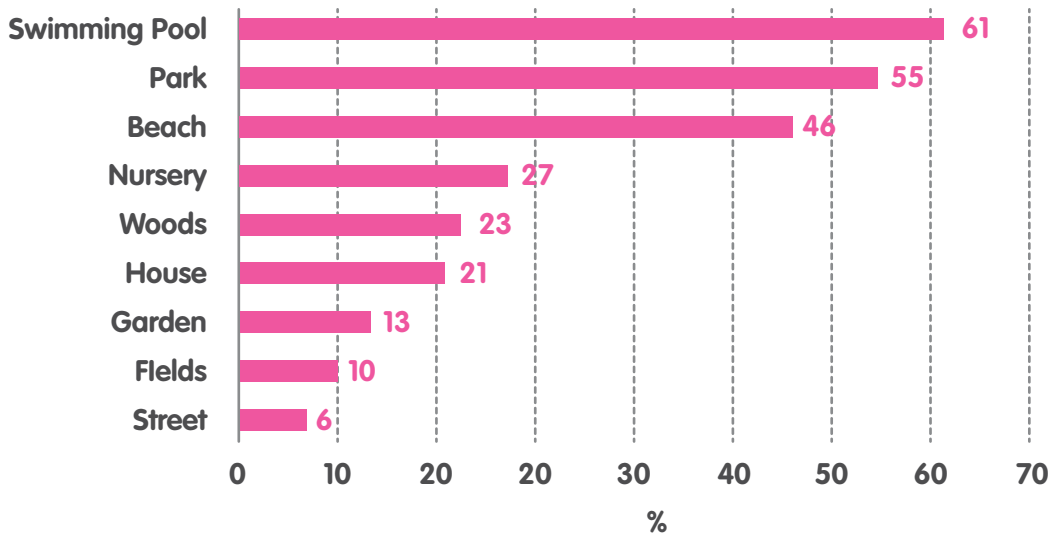


Figure 1: Favourite places to play (age 3-7 survey)

Children aged 7 to 11 were asked three questions about facilities in their local area. The large majority of children in this age group seemed to have positive views about this issue as shown in Figure 2.

Children and young people aged 11 and over were asked a question with the same wording but with more response options⁴. Percentages agreeing or strongly agreeing with each statement are also shown in Figure 2. This age group appear⁵ to be much less positive about local facilities with over a third feeling that there was nothing for them to do in their local area.

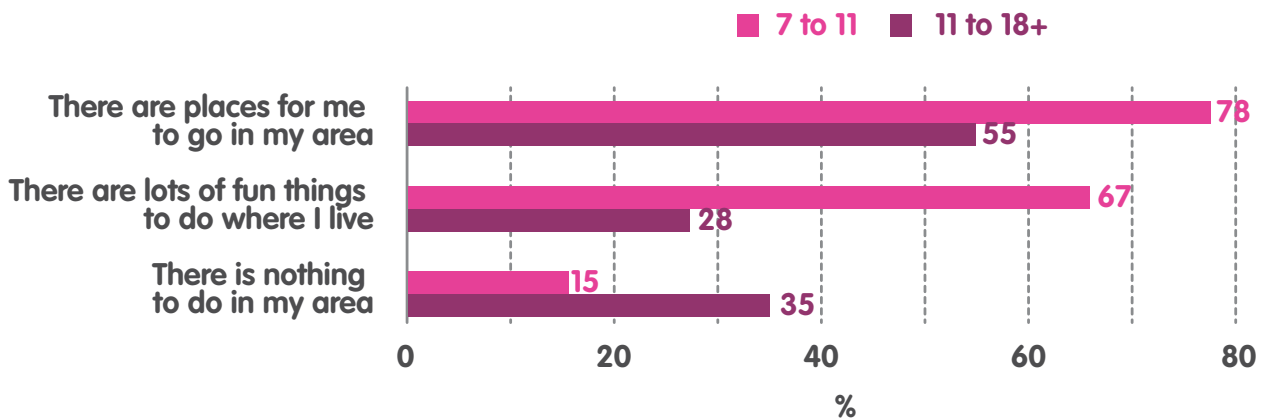


Figure 2: Views on local facilities

⁴ Including options for 'Strongly disagree' and 'Strongly agree'

⁵ The noted difference in question wordings between the two age groups means that the figures are not strictly comparable.

School setting

Children in the youngest age group surveyed were asked two open text questions about what they liked and didn't like about school or nursery. Some of the most common themes in children's responses, in descending order of frequency, are shown in Table 3.

Liked	Didn't like
Play (including break and play times)	The behaviour of other children, including bullying
Friends	Lessons and work
Learning and working in general	Specific subjects / lessons – most commonly writing and maths
Specific subjects / lessons – most commonly creative activities, reading, writing and maths	Being told off by teachers
Teachers	
Food	

Table 3: Common themes in children's responses about what they liked and didn't like about school or nursery

Children and young people in the older two age groups were asked to respond to the statement 'I like going to school'. Over three-quarters (78%) of children in the 7 to 11 survey agreed with this statement and only 8% disagreed. Among the 11 to 18+ group the percentage agreeing or strongly agreeing was 66% and 14% of young people disagreed. This pattern of decreasing enjoyment of school with age is a common finding in surveys of children and young people.

Children and young people in the 11 to 18+ survey were also asked if they enjoyed lessons about personal, social and emotional issues (PSE) in school. Around half of the young people agreed or strongly agreed and around a fifth disagreed or strongly disagreed.

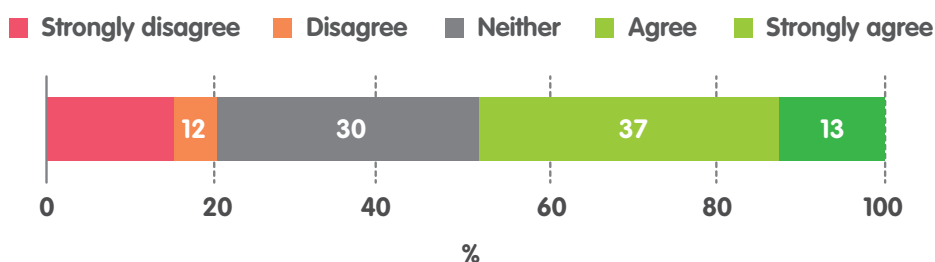


Figure 3: Responses to 'I enjoy lessons about personal, social and emotional issues' (age 11-18+ survey)

Emotional well-being and mental health

Do you have the services/activities you need?
No – mental health services, takes a long time if there even is anything, they don't listen to what the problem is and think tablets can be the answer to everything. They should listen first before just giving you tablets.

Young Person from a housing forum

Children in the youngest age group were asked who helped them when they felt sad or worried. More than half of children chose their mother and the next most common people were their father and then a teacher (Figure 4). If children answered 'someone else' there was an open text question where they could say who they were thinking of. The most commonly mentioned other source of help was friends. Some children also mentioned siblings and extended family.

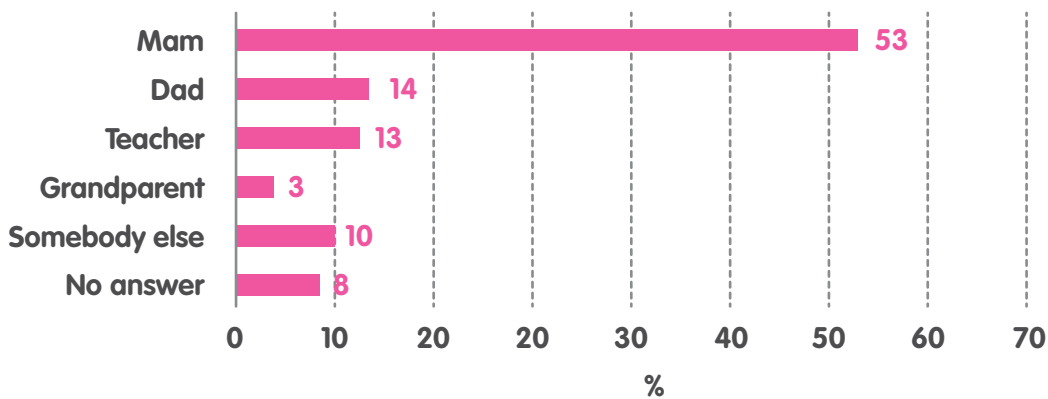


Figure 4: When you feel sad or worried who helps you? (3-7 survey)

Children and young people in the 11 to 18+ survey were asked a series of five questions about how often they had experienced three positive and two negative feelings in the past four weeks (Figure 5).

- The majority of children and young people had experienced the three positive feelings (happy, relaxed and full of energy) often or almost always in the past four weeks.
- In relation to the two negative feelings, almost a fifth (19%) of children and young people said that they had often or almost always felt sad in the last four weeks and over a quarter (29%) said that they had often or almost always felt worried.

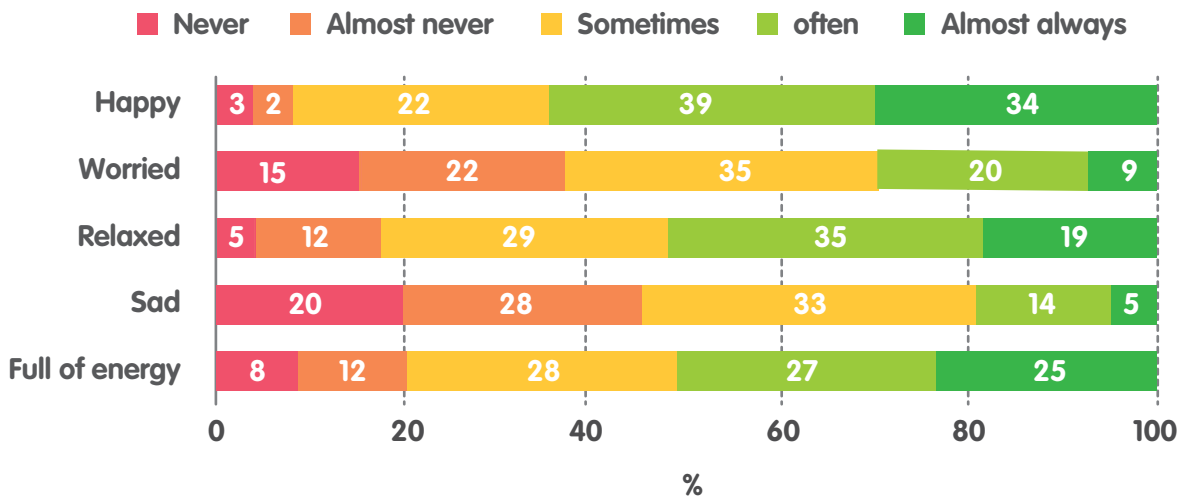


Figure 5: Overview – frequency of positive and negative feelings in the last four weeks (11-18+ survey)

The findings

Children and young people were then asked who they would turn to for help if they were feeling sad or worried, and were presented with a set of options. It was possible to select as many options as were relevant. Almost two in

five children and young people (38%) in this age group said that they would keep the issue to themselves. The most common likely sources of help were friends and someone at home which were both selected by around half of young people (Figure 6).

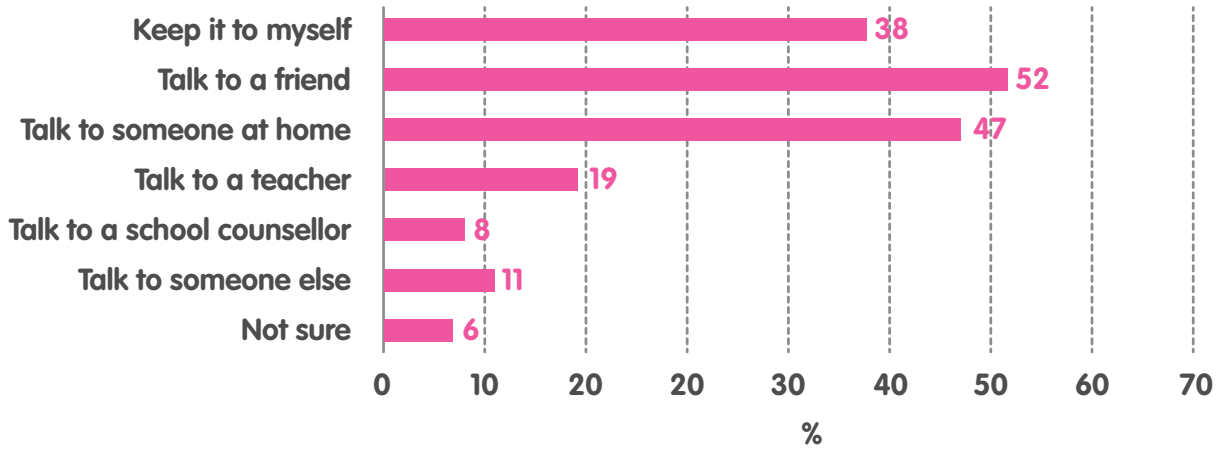


Figure 6: If you felt worried or sad about something and you wanted to talk about it. What would you do? (11-18+ survey)

Imagine if you were Sally, what would you do to make things better for children and young people in Wales?
The way sexual health is taught in schools is always negative e.g. talking about the cost of teenage pregnancy. We hear negative stuff too much. PSE turns into a lesson on teenage pregnancy.
Youth Forum member

Finally on this topic, children and young people were asked if they knew of 'places or services there are in your area that help young people if they are worried or sad about something'. Just over a quarter (27%) of young people said that they did, while 42% said that they did not and the remainder were unsure (Figure 7).

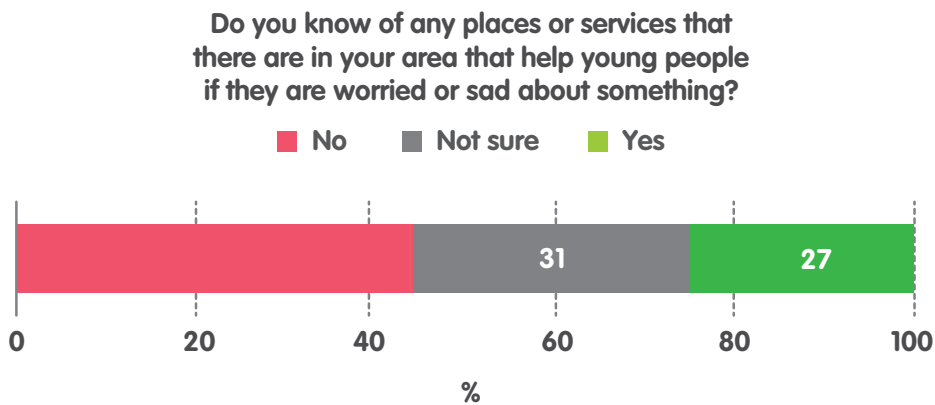


Figure 7: Knowledge of services that provide support for emotional issues (11-18+ survey)

Professionals levels of concern about various aspects of provision

“More partnership working is needed between Children and Adult’s services. 18 is just a number in the young people’s life, their needs remain the same.”
Senior Transition Worker

In the adults’ survey, respondents were asked to rank their level of concern about the provision of various services to children and young people in Wales. These services were selected because they were frequently raised during phase 1 of the consultation. Responses were on a five-point scale where zero indicated ‘No concern at all’ and four indicated ‘A major concern’. Figure 8 shows the responses only for professionals completing the survey.

The availability of mental health and well-being services was the topic that caused the most concern among professionals with around two-thirds rating this as a major concern. This matches the strong emphasis on this issue during the phase one consultations. The next highest level of concern was about children and families in poverty which was a major concern for almost half (47%) of the professionals.

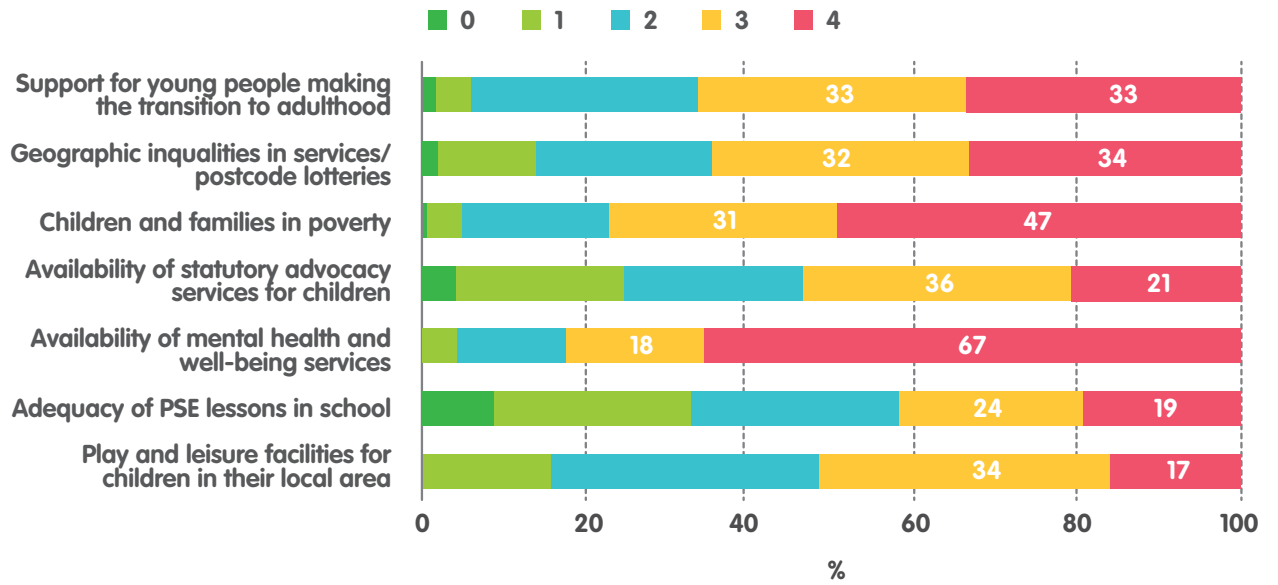


Figure 8: Levels of concern about various aspects of provision (professionals only)

Protection

“Children are not to
be hit for any reason.”

Secondary School pupil



At school

Children and young people from the age of seven upwards were asked whether they felt safe at school or college:

- 84% of primary school children agreed that they felt safe at school and only one in 20 (5%) disagreed.
- In comparison, 76% of children and young people aged 11 and over agreed that they felt safe at school and 9% disagreed.

Children and young people were also asked three questions relating to experiences in the last month at school of being:

- hit by other children or young people
- left out by other children or young people
- called nasty names or made fun of

The word ‘bullying’ was not specifically mentioned in the question but will be used here for brevity. The percentages who had experienced each behaviour at least once in the past month are shown in Figure 9.

It can be seen that all three of these experiences were more common in the primary school age group than the older age group. This was particularly true of being hit by other young people which was more than twice as common in the younger age group than the older age group.

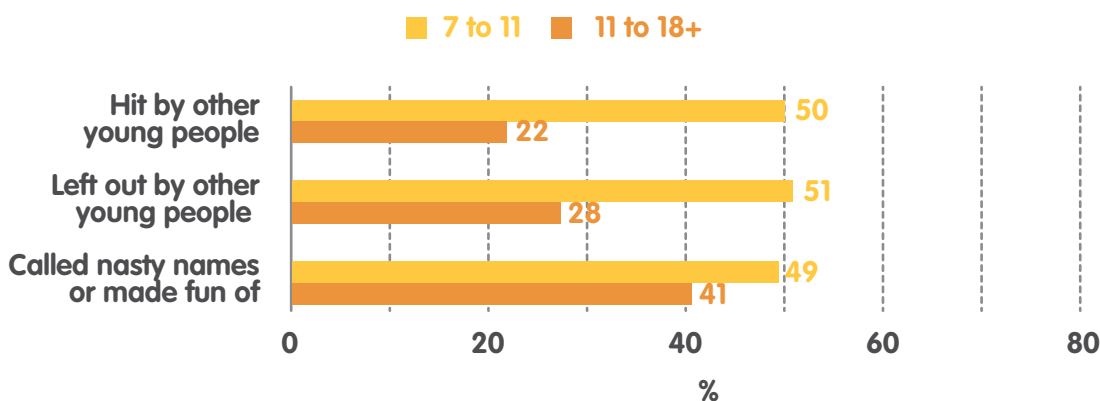


Figure 9: Experiences of bullying in the last month at school.

In common with other research on children's well-being there was a significant association between children's recent experiences of being bullied and their emotional well-being. For example, among children and young people aged 11 to 18+:

- 26% of those who had been hit by other of children and young people at school in the last month said they often or almost always felt sad, compared to 16% who had not.
- 28% of those who had been left out by other children and young people in class often or almost always felt sad compared to 13% of those who had not.
- 27% of those who had been called nasty names or made fun of, often or almost always felt sad compared to 12% of those who had not.

However it is not possible to say from these associations whether there is a causal link between bullying and emotional well-being as this would require more detailed research.

In the local area

Over three-fifths (61%) of primary school aged children agreed that they felt safe in their local area and 13% disagreed. A slightly smaller proportion (57%) of children and young people aged 11 and over agreed with this statement while a slightly larger proportion (19%) disagreed.

Children and young people were also asked about experiences of other children hurting them or picking on them in their local area. Just over half (53%) of children aged 7 to 11 said that this had happened to them at least once, including 12% who said that it happened most days. A lower proportion of children and young people aged 11 and over (34%) said that they had these experiences and only around one in 20 (5%) said that they experienced being hurt or picked on most days. While the proportions of children and young people in the two age groups saying that they were regularly hurt or picked on are relatively small, if these statistics were replicated for all children and young people in Wales this would still add up to a substantial number of children.

Professionals' levels of concern about various aspects of protection

“ **Helping young people to be safe and responsible digital citizens** ”
Social Worker

As with 'provision', respondents in the adults' survey were asked to rank their level of concern about several different issues relating to the 'protection' theme.

Figure 8 shows the responses only for professionals completing the survey. Levels of concern were highest here for issues of safeguarding or child protection of children at home, which was ranked as a '3' or a '4' by 60% of professionals. Bullying was the issue with the second highest levels of concern.

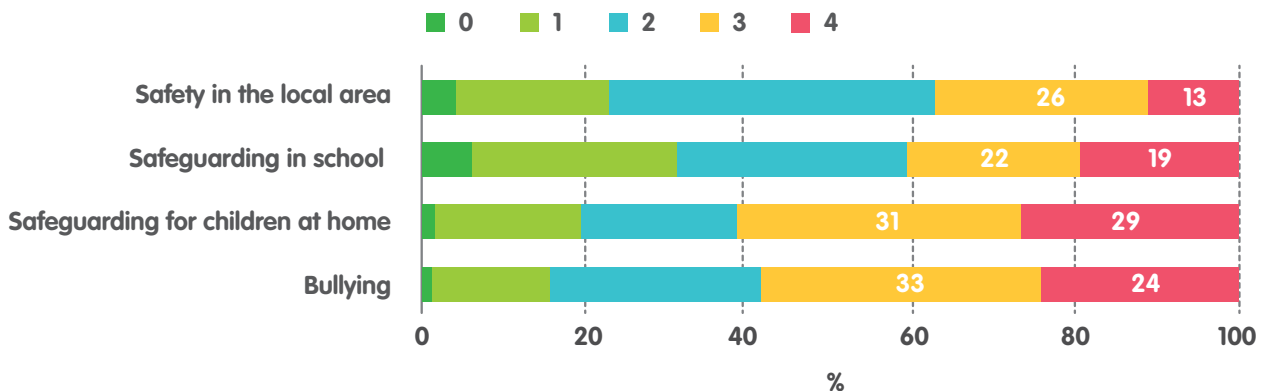


Figure 10: Levels of concern about various aspects of protection (professionals only)

Participation

“If I was Sally Holland I would...
Make sure that children know
how to be heard and feel
confident in school.”

Secondary School pupil



In nursery/school/college

The youngest age group of children surveyed were asked a question about whether adults listened to them in school or nursery. Responses are shown in Figure 11. Over three-quarters of children answered 'yes' to this question and a further 14% answered 'sometimes'. Around one in 25 children said that adults didn't listen to them.

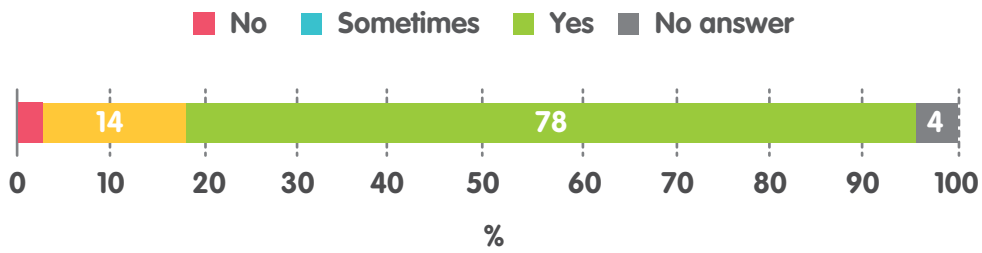


Figure 11: Do adults listen to you in school or nursery?
(3-7 survey)

The findings

Children and young people in the older two age groups were asked the same set of three questions about being asked their views at school. Results for the two groups are summarised in Figure 12.

Around 30% of children in the 7 to 11 age group said that they were quite or very often asked their views at school, and the figure was slightly lower for the 11 to 18+ age group. Excluding

those children and young people who said that they had never been asked their views, less than half in both age groups said that they usually heard the outcome of being asked their views. The percentage was higher in the younger age group. Similarly, only a minority of children thought that children's views made a big difference at school, and again the younger age group were a little more positive about this issue.

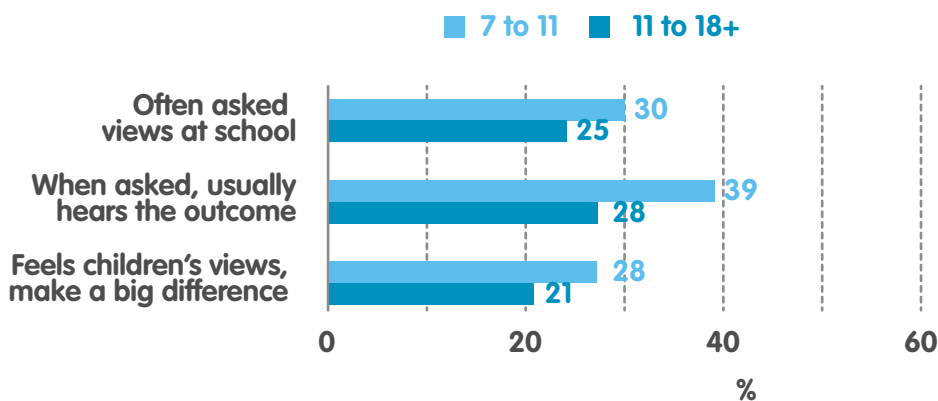


Figure 12: Views on participation at school

In the local area

Children and young people in the two older age groups were asked a similar set of questions about participation in decision-making in their local area. Results are shown in Figure 13.

Compared to being asked their views at school, the percentages were all lower here, and there was again a marked difference in the views of the two age groups, with children aged 7 to 11 responding more positively than young people aged 11 to 18+.

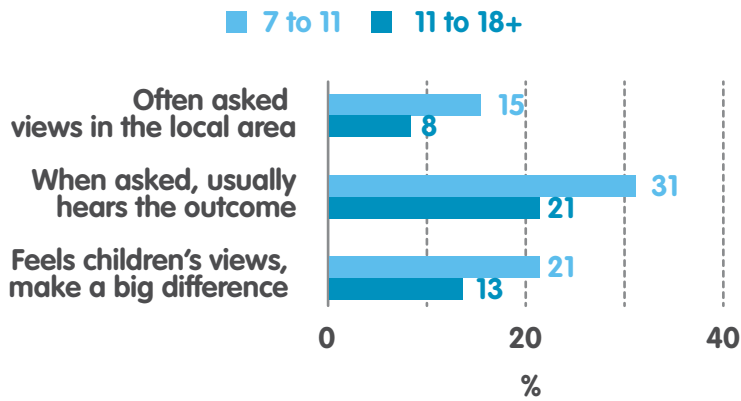


Figure 13: Views on participation in the local area

Nationally

The 11 to 18+ age group were also asked their views about rights and participation in Wales as a whole.

— Around 45% of children and young people agreed that adults in general respect children’s rights; around a third (34%) neither agreed nor disagreed; and one in five young people (21%) disagreed.

— Children and young people were a little less positive about whether adults listen to young people’s views with 31% agreeing and 29% disagreeing.

— Just over 30% of children and young people agreed that young people’s views make a difference to what happens in Wales, while a slightly higher percentage (34%) disagreed.

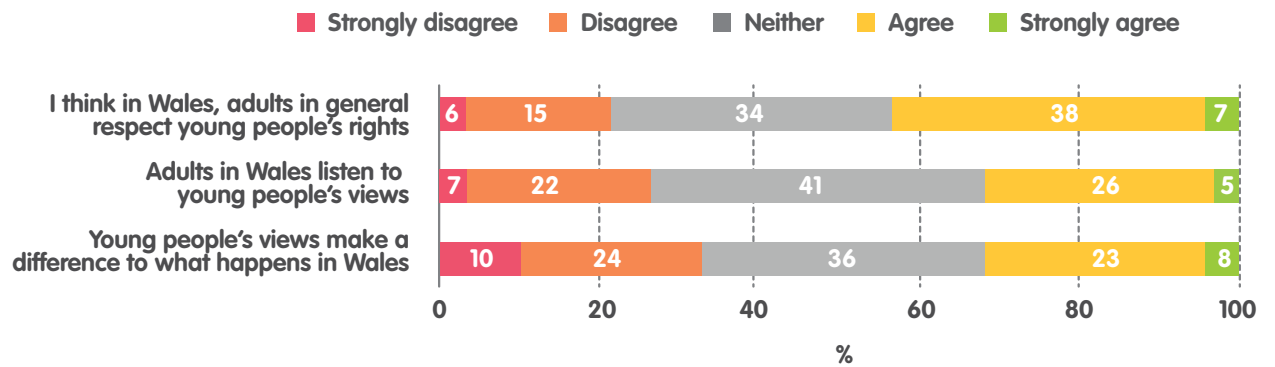


Figure 14: Overview – views on rights and participation in Wales

Professionals' levels of concern about participation issues

“Children and young people need a national platform to replace Funky Dragon but young people from their communities need to build up confidence in local forums (schools and locality based) before being able to take part in local authority forums and then national.”
Youth Worker

As with the other themes, adults were asked about their levels of concern about various aspects of children’s participation in decision-making. The highest levels of concern related to participation in national decision-making (with over a fifth saying that this was a major concern for them). Of the remaining three aspects of participation, professionals had higher degrees of concern about children’s participation in decision-making in their local area than at home or at school.

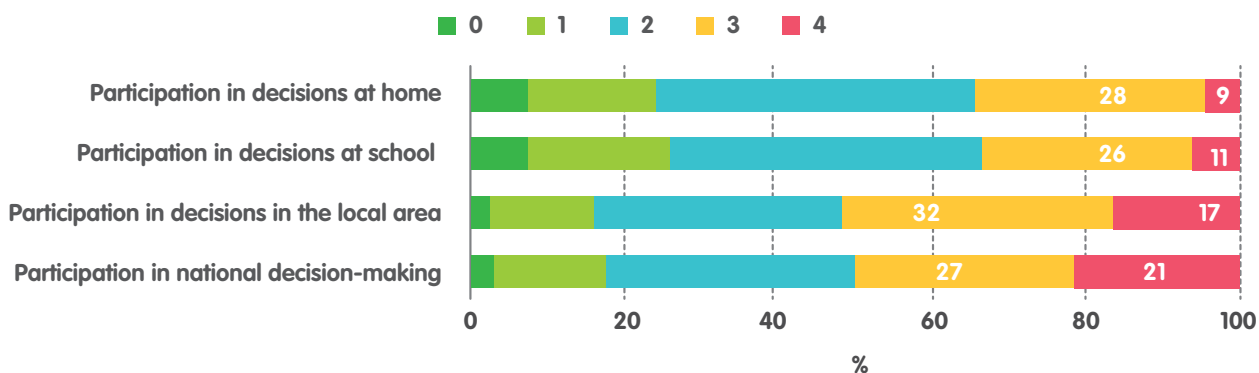


Figure 15: Levels of concern about various aspects of participation (professionals only)

Promotion

“If I was Sally Holland
I would... Inform adults
of children’s rights.”

Primary School Pupil



Children and young people’s learning and knowledge about their rights

Children and young people in the 7 to 11 and 11 to 18+ surveys were asked the same four questions about children’s rights.

First they were asked two questions about their knowledge of children’s rights in general and of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Just over half of children and young people said that they knew about children’s rights, but only around a third knew what rights children have under the UNCRC. Knowledge of these issues was slightly higher among the younger age group than the older one.

Second, they were asked about learning about children’s rights at school and college. Over 60% of children in the 7 to 11 age group said that they had learned about children’s rights. On the other hand only around two-fifths (39%) of young people aged 11 plus said they had learnt about children’s rights at school or college, a lower proportion than the 50% who said that they knew about children’s rights, suggesting that they had picked up this knowledge from other sources. Over half of children and young people in both age groups were interested in learning more about children’s rights.

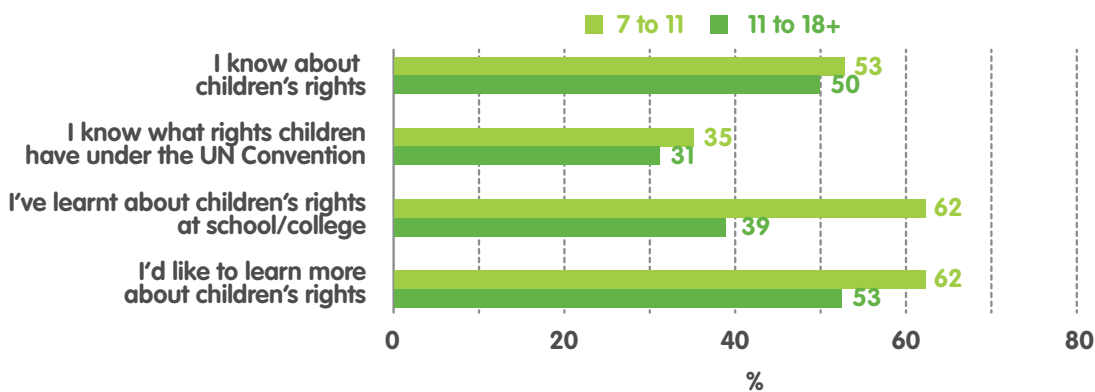


Figure 16: Children’s rights

Professionals' level of concern about children's knowledge of their rights

Ensure all schools embrace UNCRC
Teacher

Around a fifth of professionals rated children's knowledge of their rights as a major concern and exactly half rated their concern at either a '3' or a '4'.

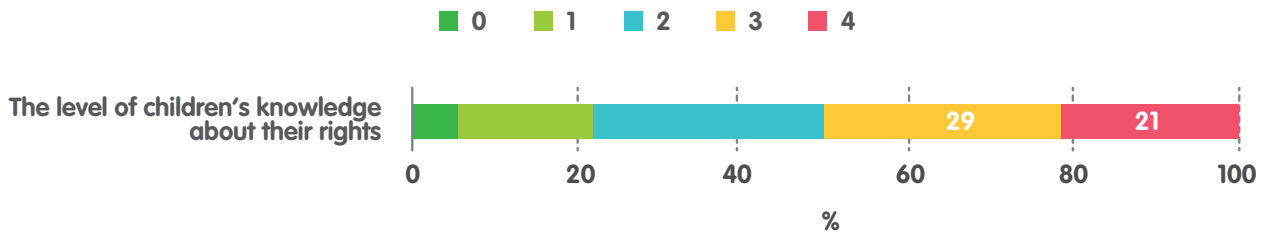


Figure 17: Children's rights



Priorities

“ I aspire to a Wales where all children and young people have an equal chance to be the best that they can be. ”

Sally Holland, Children’s Commissioner for Wales



Priorities

One of the main aims of the surveys was to gather perspectives from children, young people and adults about how they would prioritise the key topics covered in the survey. These topics were selected because they were frequently raised during phase 1 of the consultation. Each survey included a prioritisation question, which was modified to suit the target group of respondents.

Children aged 3 and over

Children in the youngest age group were presented with a sub-set of identified priorities to be explored in this phase of the project that seemed to be relevant to their age. Children could pick two from a list of seven options. The results shown in Figure 18 highlight the importance of play for this age group, with 'more places to play' being the top priority. The next four items were selected by relatively similar proportions of children.

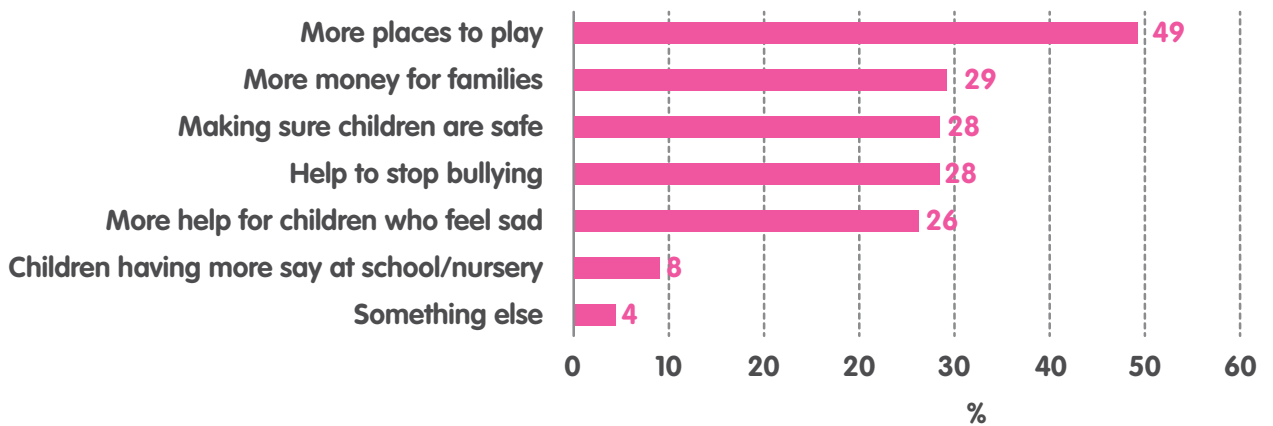


Figure 18: What can Sally do to make children's lives better? (2 choices) (3-7 survey)

Children aged 7 to 11

Children in this age group were asked about a longer list of 12 priorities from which they could make up to five selections. The results are shown in Figure 19. The top priority, chosen by over half of the children, was to stop bullying and the next highest priorities related to help for children and families living in poverty and local area safety.

There was relatively little difference in the priorities selected by children in this age group according to their gender, age and the region of Wales that they lived in, suggesting a fairly common set of priorities within this age group across these different sub-groups.

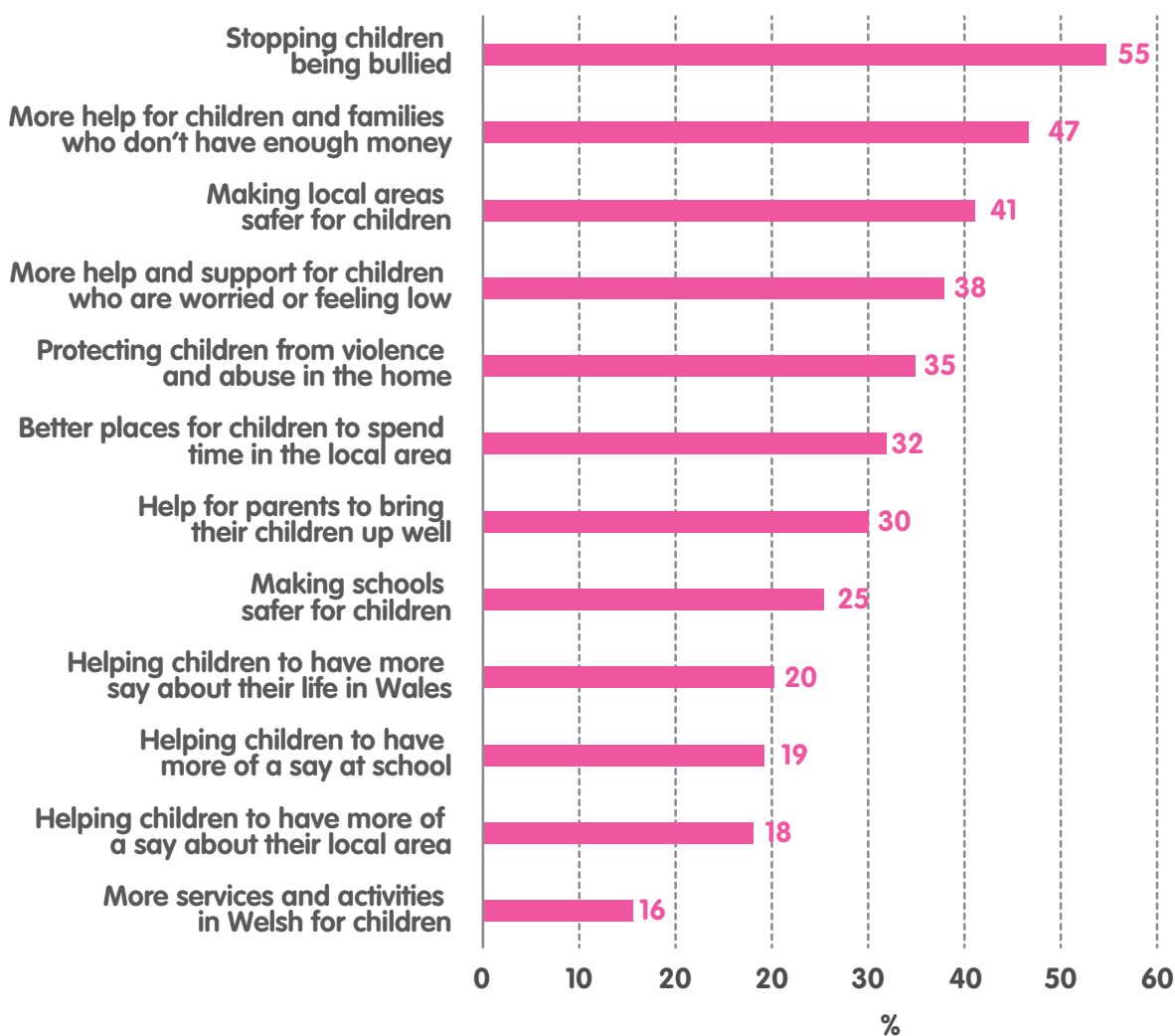


Figure 19: Priorities to make things better for children in Wales (7-11 survey)

Children and young people aged 11 to 18

Children and young people aged 11 to 18+ were asked a similar list but with two additional items relating to PSE lessons and to support for young people when they leave school or college. The top priority for this age group was also stopping

bullying. The next two highest priorities differed from those for the 7 to 11 age group and related to protection from violence and abuse at home (ranked fifth by the younger age group) and more leisure facilities in the local area (ranked sixth by the younger age group).

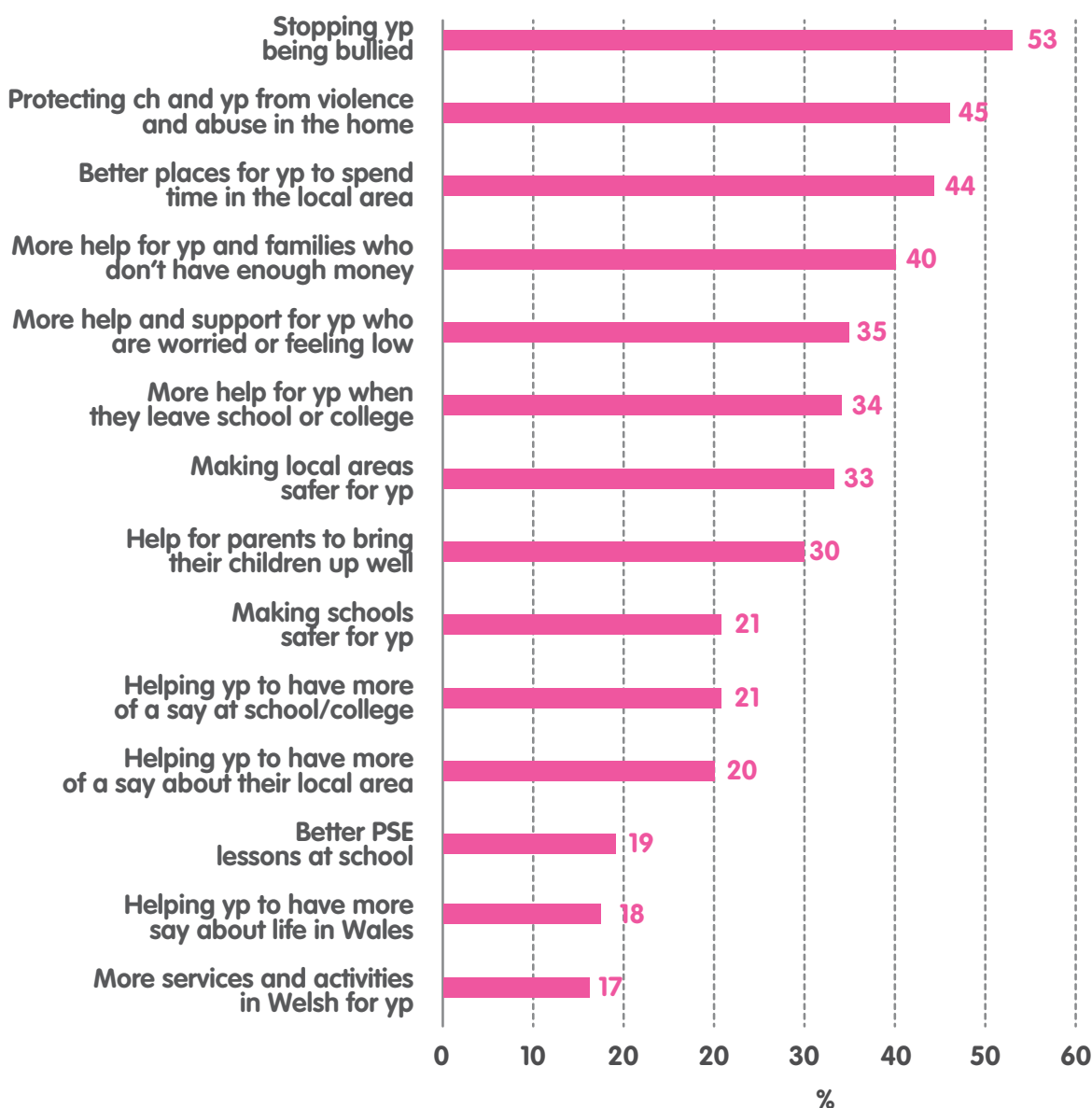


Figure 20: Young people's priorities to make things better for young people in Wales (11-18+ survey)

Professionals and other adults

Professionals and other adults were presented with a similar set of priorities, with different wordings for each item and several additional items referring to advocacy services, geographical inequalities, participation at home and promoting knowledge about children's rights. The results are shown in Figure 21 separately for professionals and parents. Note that the question in this survey related to priorities for the Children's Commissioner rather than priorities to improve children's and young people's lives in general and this means that the results are not strictly comparable with those presented for children. Also it should be noted that we do not know how representative the

samples of professionals and parents were. Adults placed a top priority on better mental health and well-being support services and this priority was particularly strong among professionals.

Below this there was some divergence of views:

- Among professionals the next two priorities were improving protection for children at home and help for children and families in poverty.
- Among parents the second and third priorities were better play and leisure facilities for children and tackling bullying.

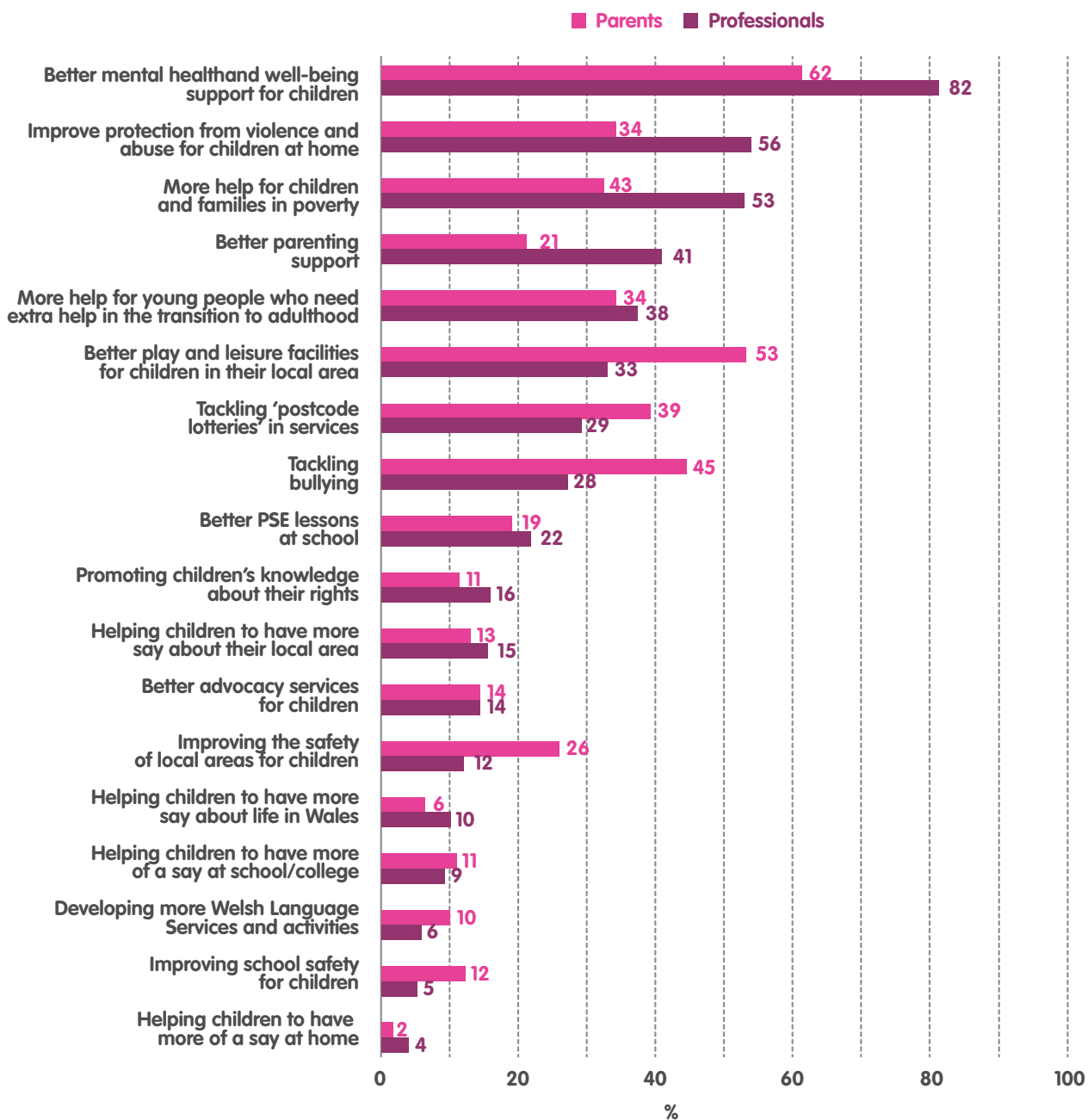


Figure 21: Priorities of professionals and other adults for the Children's Commissioner

Conclusion

As Children's Commissioner for Wales, the Beth Nesa? consultation has been an important milestone for me and my team. It is the biggest and most comprehensive consultation ever carried out by the office of the Children's Commissioner for Wales and has been unusual, due to the age range and inclusion of children and young people not in school. Large-scale surveys of this type rarely include children and young people in custody, in hospital and in homeless accommodation as well as those in school.

Many of the answers to the questions asked bring new information to Wales. For example, while children and young people are often asked about their behaviours, such as how much they smoke or drink alcohol and how much exercise they take, they are more rarely asked about their feelings of safety, their participation in school and locality, and their feelings about their local community. The detailed reports for each age group, to be published during the course of 2016, will be useful resources for all interested in the views and experiences of children and young people, whilst providing a source of evidence for me and my team as I embark on my 2016-19 strategic plan.

The results of this consultation can be seen clearly in 'A plan for all children and young people: 2016-19' which is published alongside this report. My priorities are:

- Mental health, wellbeing and tackling bullying
- Poverty and social inequalities
- Play and leisure
- Safety (in the community, school and at home)
- Raising awareness of the UNCRC and promoting its adoption across public services
- Transitions to adulthood for all young people requiring continuing support and care

Importantly, the widespread involvement in this work demonstrates that children and young people have important views when given the opportunity to take part. At the moment in Wales we have a National Survey that provides information about the views of adults and some young people but those under 16 aren't included. If we wish to be a citizen-centred country then we need to value all children and young people's input as citizens too.

From the findings of Beth Nesa? there are some clear messages about many children feeling positive about their local area, safe and listened to in school and knowing their rights. However, children, young people and adults have provided some really strong messages about what needs to change for children and young people in Wales. We need a comprehensive and systematic overhaul of how we provide for children's emotional and mental health. This cannot be separated from one of the main findings telling us that children and young people still experience and worry about bullying in their everyday experiences. Indeed, there was a significant association between reported emotional wellbeing and experiences of bullying in this survey.

Younger children have asked me to prioritise play. There are also calls for action from all groups on facilities in local areas, feeling safe at home, school and in the community and helping children living in poverty. I am concerned that children and young people from less affluent backgrounds were less likely to feel safe and happy, to have someone to talk to and to have things to do in their local area than their more affluent peers.

True to my role as the champion for children and young people in Wales, I will work on and influence their issues in a number of ways. By continuing to listen to the views and experiences of children and young people, I will ensure that their voices are heard and acted upon by all politicians and professionals who can make improvements to children and young people's lives. I will influence policy and laws being

developed, to ensure that children's rights are upheld. I will monitor policies and legislation as they are put in place and ensure that throughout Wales, children and young people get the provision and protection they are entitled to, enjoying their right to participate in schools and communities on a local and national level. Finally, I will promote children's rights so that all children and young people are aware that they have them, and public services put them at the heart of what they do.

Although as a result of this consultation I won't be changing my title, as there was no consensus from children and young people that the title should include 'young people' (see Appendix 1), I can confirm that I will be developing how my office works. Children and young people will have a clear route to influencing my work through an advisory panel that I am setting up, and I will hold myself accountable to them, and to the wider population of children and young people in Wales. I will ensure that I act on the messages all children and young people have given me through this consultation. I will also keep on listening to the thousands of children and young people I continue to meet as part of my daily work, asking their advice on what should happen next. A strong society values and includes all of its citizens. My challenge to Welsh Government, local government and all public services is that they listen to children and young people in the same way, valuing their contribution as citizens. Wales will be stronger as a result.

Appendix 1

What do you think the Children's Commissioner should be called?

	7 TO 11	11 TO 18
The Children's Commissioner for Wales	35.6%	26.5%
Add the words 'young people' into the title/ name	9.7%	28.4%
Something else	7.6%	11.9%
Not sure	26.1%	23.1%
Not answered	20.9%	10.1%
Total	100%	100%

Appendix 2: Differences between sub-groups of young people

In the survey of young people aged 11 to 18+ statistical comparisons were made between different sub-groups of young people according to gender, age group and family affluence for 30 key indicators discussed in the previous sections. The results are summarised in Table 4. The table highlights differences that were found to be statistically significant. Blank cells indicate no significant difference. It should be borne in mind that the survey is not a representative sample (although it has been weighted so that it reflects the gender, age and regional composition of the population) and so these findings should be regarded as tentative.

Gender

- Boys were more satisfied than girls with several aspects of the local area – facilities, feeling safe and being asked their views.
- Boys were also more likely to think that adults in Wales respect children's rights.
- In terms of bullying at school, boys were more likely than girls to be hit by other young people while girls were more likely than boys to have been left out by other young people.
- Boys had higher emotional well-being than girls on four out of five indicators.

Age group

- As young people get older there is a decline in agreement and positive evaluations of the large majority of the topics covered in the survey.
- There was a decline in experiences of all three forms of bullying behaviour with age, but on the other hand feelings of safety in the local area decreased with age.

- Older young people tended to have lower levels of emotional well-being. They felt that they knew more about local services that might provide emotional support, but were more likely to keep issues to themselves rather than seek help from others.
- The older age groups also felt that they knew more about the UN Convention, although the 11 to 13 age group had learned more about children's rights in general at school.

Family affluence

Children and young people living in more affluent families tended to have more positive evaluations across a number of key topics:

- They were more likely to agree that local facilities were good.
- They were more likely to like going to school.
- They had higher emotional well-being on all five indicators and were less likely to say that they would keep emotional problems to themselves.
- They felt safer in school and their local area and were less likely to be the subject of name-calling at school and of victimisation by other young people in the local area.
- They were more likely to think that adults in the local area and in Wales in general listened to their views and more likely to think that adults in Wales respected children's rights.

The findings

PROVISION	GENDER	AGE GROUP	AFFLUENCE
Help-seeking: Keep it to myself		Increases	Decreases
Help-seeking: Knowledge of services		Increases	
Local area: Fun things to do (agree)	Boys>Girls	Decreases	Increases
Local area: Nothing to do (disagree)	Boys>Girls	Decreases	Increases
Local area: Places to go (agree)	Boys>Girls	Decreases	Increases
School: Enjoy PSE		Decreases	
School: Like going		Decreases	Increases
PROTECTION	GENDER	AGE GROUP	AFFLUENCE
Bullied at school: Hit	Boys>Girls	Decreases	
Bullied at school: Left out	Girls>Boys	Decreases	
Bullied at school: Name-calling		Decreases	Decreases
Local area: Feel safe	Boys>Girls	Decreases	Increases
Local area: Road safety			
Local area: Victimization			Decreases
School: Feel safe			Increases
PARTICIPATION	GENDER	AGE GROUP	AFFLUENCE
Local area: Adults listen		Decreases	Increases
Local area: Asked views	Boys>Girls		
Local area: Views make a difference			
School: Asked views		Decreases	
School: Teachers listen		Decreases	
School: Views make a difference		Decreases	
Wales: Adults listen		Decreases	Increases
Wales: Adults respect child rights	Boys>Girls	Decreases	Increases
Wales: Views make a difference		Decreases	
PROMOTION	GENDER	AGE GROUP	AFFLUENCE
Rights: Know about UNCRC rights		Increases	
Rights: Knowledge			
Rights: Learned at school		Decreases	
WELL-BEING	GENDER	AGE GROUP	AFFLUENCE
Emotional well-being: Full of energy	Boys>Girls	Decreases	Increases
Emotional well-being: Happy		Decreases	Increases
Emotional well-being: Relaxed	Boys>Girls	Decreases	Increases
Emotional well-being: Sad	Girls>Boys	Decreases	Increases
Emotional well-being: Worried	Girls>Boys	Decreases	Increases

Table 4: Comparisons for key indicators by sub-group: Survey of young people aged 11 to 18+. Where there are blanks there was no significant difference between groups.



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