

Annual Report and Accounts 2018-19



**Comisiynydd
Plant Cymru**

Children's
Commissioner
for Wales

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Our year in numbers



Our year in numbers

Here's what 23 members of staff achieved this year:

9857

Engaged with 9857 children and young people across Wales at events, workshops and meetings

11,771

Our education resources on Hwb were viewed 11,771 times

671

Managed 671 cases through our independent Investigations and Advice service

29

Responded to 29 Assembly, Welsh and UK Governments' consultations

700

Directly trained around 700 children and young people to be rights ambassadors in their schools or communities

10,000

Consulted with over 10,000 children and young people to inform our new three-year plan

6

Published 6 reports on topics ranging from learning disabilities to child poverty

100

Commissioner personally met with around 100 groups of children and young people

54

Worked with at least 54 working groups and organisations on a range of children's rights issues

6392

Undertook first-ever education rights survey, securing 391 teacher responses and 6392 responses from children and young people.

640

Secured at least 640 pieces of broadcast and print coverage for the organisation, resulting in over 131 million opportunities to read or hear about our work

Major achievements

Our major achievements between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019

- Carried out a huge consultation exercise with children and adults and published our work programme 2019-22.
- Published reports on transitions to adulthood for young people with learning disabilities, on-line bullying, child poverty and children's rights in schools with new data from young people, parents and professionals. We'll be pushing for change in all these areas.
- Published an authoritative evidence review on the state of children's rights in Wales.
- Won a Gold award from the Chartered Institute for PR for our Tackling Islamophobia work.
- Supported major public bodies to adopt a Children's Rights Approach, including South Wales Police.
- Warmly welcomed the introduction of the Children (Abolition of the Defence of Reasonable Punishment) Bill that will protect children from physical punishment – a Bill the Commissioner has campaigned for since her first day in office.
- Saw Wales's Senedd Ieuenctid / Youth Parliament elected and starting its important work – a body we've called for and supported all along the way.
- Saw the Government make strides towards developing a Whole School Approach to Wellbeing – a key call from the Children's Commissioner.
- The Government accepted the Commissioner's 'three tests' for ensuring that home educated children receive their rights and pledged to introduce new statutory guidance to achieve this.
- Produced quality resources for schools on a range of topics to support rights, including tackling online bullying and setting up inter-generational projects – with excellent take-up by schools.
- Worked in collaboration with special schools to make sure that children of all abilities can learn about their rights.
- Held our first secondary school rights conferences for students and staff.



**We've been world
leaders in promoting
and protecting
children's rights; we
must not stop now.**



Foreword

Eighteen years ago this office was established as a result of the landmark Waterhouse inquiry into child abuse in care homes in north Wales. Its establishment was one of the first pieces of legislation passed by the newly-established Assembly for Wales, which celebrates its 20th anniversary this year.

One of the primary functions of the children's commissioner is to protect and promote children's rights, as outlined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) – the most widely-ratified international human rights treaty, which celebrates its 30th anniversary this year.

A common thread running through these three significant dates is children's voices. Waterhouse came into being because of serious failures to listen to children who were abused. A conclusion from the inquiry was for the need to establish an independent champion for children in Wales, a champion who would listen to and who would speak out on their behalf, a duty which I strive to deliver every day as post holder. Whether it's one conversation with a child and someone who cares for them – which led to us carrying out extensive fieldwork and publishing 'Don't Hold Back' this year about transitions to adulthood for those with learning disabilities – or proactively engaging with thousands of children and young people to help inform my work plan, I know that my work, and therefore the results we achieve, are so much more impactful if driven by the lives of the current generation of children who I'm here to serve.

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National establishments in Wales are also benefiting greatly from listening and placing children's views and children's rights at the heart of decision-making. One of the most significant developments in this arena this year is the establishment of Wales' first-ever youth parliament – Senedd Ieuencid Cymru. The young members' passion, priorities and pride for their country is infectious and I'm looking forward to working with them to hold the Welsh Government to account and to establish a mechanism for these young members to hold me to account as their champion. I'm pleased that, working alongside my team, several major public services are starting to embed a children's right approach, which includes ensuring that the children and young people they serve are listened to and can be held accountable.

We've also seen huge significance placed on the UNCRC by the Welsh Government this year in its ambitious Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Bill – which recognises children as individual rights holders and recognises the importance of safe, family life, free from physical harm. I am honoured to serve as a Children's Commissioner in a country where its Government wants to protect all its citizens and trust the Assembly will pass this significant Bill later this year, and deliver on a call which my predecessors and I have been making for a number of years.

So, a year of significant dates and a year of significant changes for children and young people's rights in Wales. But we must not be complacent. We've been world leaders in promoting and protecting children's rights; we must not stop now. There remain significant children's rights challenges across Wales and until those are addressed, I will continue to use all available levers as Commissioner to improve the lives of the current generation of children and young people.

This report, which covers the period 1 April 2018 until 31 March 2019, includes my urgent calls on the Welsh Government. It's also an opportunity to shine a light on the significant achievements of my small staff team who work tirelessly to drive improvements in children's lives.

Sally Holland
Children's Commissioner for Wales

...a year of
significant
changes for
children and
young people's
rights in Wales.
But we must not
be complacent.

...working tirelessly to promote and safeguard children's rights in Wales towards the aim of every child in Wales having an equal chance to be the best they can be.



How we've delivered on our commitments

Three year plan

Based on the extensive consultation with over **7000** children, young people and adults in 2015, we published a three-year strategic plan in early 2016: [A Plan for All Children and Young People 2016 to 2019](#). Contained within this three-year plan were **six priorities**:

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

Below are details of our major achievements for children and young people in **year 3** of the Commissioner's strategic plan. You can read about our major achievement in **years 1 and 2** of our strategic plan [here](#)

Year 3 (2018/19)

MENTAL HEALTH, WELLBEING AND BULLYING

Special Mission

Mission about online bullying. You can read more about this work on page 17.

Bright Spots

Worked in partnership with Coram Voice and the Welsh Government to fund a pilot programme with 6 local authorities to survey the wellbeing of looked-after children in their respective authorities. Tailored reports for each authority were published this year.

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POVERTY AND SOCIAL INEQUALITIES

'Charter for Change'

this report draws on workshops and conversations with over 550 children and young people across both schools and community settings, ranging in age from 5 to 21 – all who are or have experienced living on a low income; a survey of nearly 300 parents / carers, workshops and conversations with around 20 parents / carers, and workshops and conversations with over 40 professionals working with children and young people in poverty.

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PLAY AND LEISURE

National Play Day

Issued [joint statement](#) with the other UK Children's Commissioners to mark the 31st anniversary of National Play Day on 1 August 2018.

Provided a consultation response which influenced the Welsh Government's decision to introduce, for the first time, a requirement in regulation that fostering services providers must ensure that foster parents support children who are placed with them to engage in play, leisure and other activities under Article 31 of the UNCRC.

SAFETY IN THE COMMUNITY, SCHOOL AND HOME

Chartered Institute of PR

Secured a PRide award for our work on Tackling Islamophobia.

Special Missions:

- Tackling Islamophobia
 - Intergenerational project
- You can read more about this work on page 19.

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RAISING AWARENESS OF THE UNCRC AND ITS ADOPTION ACROSS PUBLIC SERVICES

A children's rights approach

Supported key public bodies in Wales, including South Wales Police and Wrexham's and the Vale of Glamorgan's Public Services Boards to **adopt a children's rights approach**. You can read more about this work from page 28.

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TRANSITIONS TO ADULTHOOD

'Don't Hold Back'

This report brings the experiences and views of 99 young people, 187 parents and carers and 43 professionals on transitions to adulthood for young people with learning disabilities.

Following correspondence The Minister for Children, Older People and Social Care Government has committed for the recommendations to be considered within the delivery of the Improving lives Programme and by the Learning Disability Ministerial Advisory group.

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Year 3 (2018/19)

MENTAL HEALTH, WELLBEING AND BULLYING

A whole-school approach

Following calls from my office, the Assembly's Children's committee and others, Welsh Government established a ministerial task & finish group on a whole-school approach to emotional health and well-being, and announced significant additional funding for this agenda. We expect more details of the framework of implementation of a whole-school approach soon.

POVERTY AND SOCIAL INEQUALITIES

'Charter for Change' (continued)

Shortly following the report's publication the Welsh Government provided additional investment to extend PDG access (school uniform, equipment and sport kit grant), and introduce free sanitary products across schools in Wales. Both of which relate to recommendations in my report.

I have met with the First Minister and the Minister for Housing and Local Government (with responsibility for mitigating child poverty) to discuss the report. Further engagement is now planned in respect of the recommendations and tackling child poverty in the new financial year.

PLAY AND LEISURE

National Play Day (continued)

Engaged with over 1300 children, young people and their families at Conwy's Play Day; their views fed into our 'Beth Nawr' project.

SAFETY IN THE COMMUNITY, SCHOOL AND HOME

'Don't worry, I'm here for you': Children's experiences of cyber-bullying in Wales

A Wales-first: A report outlining the views and ideas of over 400 children and young people and over 150 professionals. This report examines, for the first time, the views of children aged 9 to 18 about the effects of cyberbullying in Wales.

RAISING AWARENESS OF THE UNCRC AND ITS ADOPTION ACROSS PUBLIC SERVICES

Accessible Ambassadors' scheme.

Creation of an Accessible Ambassadors' scheme. You can read more about this work on page 21.

'The Right Way: Education Survey 2018'

organised first-ever nationwide survey to measure how far children and young people in Wales are experiencing the five principles of a children's rights approach in their education.

TRANSITIONS TO ADULTHOOD

'Don't Hold Back': (continued)

I look forward to further details around this, which I understand are likely to be available towards the end of spring 2019.

Welsh Government have identified that the new Additional Learning Needs Code of Practice has the potential to improve multi agency transition arrangements. I have provided a detailed response to the formal consultation which closed 22nd March 2019 and will scrutinise how Government take forward my proposals. The evidence from this report also informed my call for more effective transition arrangements between all paediatric and adult health services. As a result the Welsh Government have committed to consulting on new guidance.

How we've delivered on our commitments

Beth Naur? / What Now?

In order to inform the Commissioner's final three year work plan we undertook a large-scale consultation exercise to ensure the voices of children, young people and those that cared about/for them informed the work plan.

Split into three phases, the project sought to gather the views and opinions of children, young people and those who care about / for them from across Wales.

Phase 1 ran between April 2018 and September 2018 and was the qualitative phase of the project. It included face-to-face consultations with the Commissioner and her team at events and meetings across Wales, including with education and health organisations, health boards, patient groups, and child health specialists, academic institutions, community groups, Commissioner's Ambassador groups, non-governmental organisations and children and young people aged 3+ attending the Urdd Eisteddfod.

Phase 2 was completed in October and saw us commission a review of evidence on the human rights of children in Wales and covered the period 2015 to the present day. This [evidence review](#) sought to determine the current picture in terms of the realisation of children's rights in Wales and also sought to establish what data is currently being collected in Wales to enable the effective monitoring of children's rights.

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How we've delivered on our commitments

Phase 3 ran between October and November 2018. We published five bilingual versions of the survey which included the same topics, however the language and items differed:

- Age appropriate workshops for 2-7 year olds
- 7-11 year olds survey with British Sign Language option
- 11-18 year olds with British Sign Language option
- Accessible Widgit symbol version for 7 -18 year olds
- Professionals (people working with or for children and young people in Wales)
- Parents and carers

Over 10,000 children and young people aged 3-18 took part in Phase 3.

- 847 3-7 year olds (in workshops)
- 6902 7-11 year olds
- 2300 11-18 year olds
- 34 young people aged 10-18 used the accessible version
- 647 parents/carers
- 585 professionals

The findings were used to shape our new [three-year plan](#), which was published in March 2019. Included within our new plan is the Commissioner's ambitions for Wales, our purpose, our values and vision and our priorities.

How we've delivered on our commitments

Ambassadors' scheme

We run three free schemes which empower children and young people to become Ambassadors for the Commissioner in their school or community group. These Ambassadors take a lead role in promoting children's rights and the role of the Commissioner. The schemes also enable thousands of children and young people to feed into the work of the office via Special Missions (a systematic way to consult with and be informed by a range of children and young people about issues linked to the thematic work of the office).

Super Ambassadors - We have over 500 primary schools signed up to our scheme and ran three events in October 2018 to train teachers and Super Ambassadors where we worked with 295 children and 143 adults representing 21 local authorities. We also hosted a number of smaller cluster events including in north Powys, Merthyr, Torfaen and the Vale of Glamorgan where we worked with an additional 158 pupils and 53 adults.

"Whilst our ambassadors work on delivering Sally's Special Missions each year they are always keen to reach the school's wide target audience on a daily basis."

"Ebbw Fawr Learning Community has a large Rights team. They are all passionate about promoting young people's rights they are fantastic role models for others in our school and are always keen to deliver assemblies and support form tutors during registration thanks to the excellent training they received from the Children's Commissioner."

Hannah O'Neill, Art Teacher and pupil voice /
Senedd coordinator, Ebbw Fawr Learning Community

"Range of activities, well organised. After coming a number of years I still came away with new ideas! My SEN pupils were provided with significant support from a member of CCfW staff... Pupils very much enjoyed meeting Sally and were very inspired by her. Great resources."

Feedback from a teacher who attended one of our training events

How we've delivered on our commitments

Student Ambassadors - We have over 110 secondary schools signed up to our secondary scheme. This year we held our first Student Conferences at the University of South Wales and Glyndŵr University. We worked with pupils to run peer-led workshops around our Cyberbullying resource and also had input from Agenda Wales who delivered a workshop on gender equality.

Our south Wales event saw 39 schools, including 7 Welsh medium schools and 2 special schools, attend enabling 78 young people and 39 teachers to take part. Our north Wales event was attended by 15 schools including 6 Welsh medium schools and 1 special school, enabling 65 young people and 15 teachers to take part.

Feedback from attendees included:

“Roedd y ffordd o ddysgu yn hawdd a gyflym.”
[“The method of learning was quick and easy”]
“Sawl gweithgaredd gwahanol; pawb yn ran o’r weithgaredd.” [“Lots of different activities; everyone involved in the activity.”]
“The different activities had a large impact on what we can feedback to our school.”

Community Ambassadors - recruited 7 new groups including DEFFO, Carmarthen Youth Council, Caerphilly Rights Group following 10 workshops. All 17 groups were invited to take part in all special missions, which were adapted for community settings.

How we've delivered on our commitments

18/19 Special Missions

TIMINGS	THEME	SUPER AMBASSADORS (PRIMARY)	STUDENT AMBASSADORS (SECONDARY)	OUTPUTS
Spring 2019	<p>Online bullying</p> <p>We ran a project over the summer and spoke with over 400 young people and 150 teachers and youth workers to learn about young people's experiences of online bullying and what solutions work for them.</p> <p>The project work told us that children and young people know what to do when cyberbullying happens (e.g. block and report) but would like safe spaces to discuss their experiences and peer-led strategies in place.</p>	<p>Set up a 'cyber action group' in school.</p> <p>We created an 'action pack' of activities that the group can use and peer lead to help tackle online bullying.</p> <p>The action pack has different activities for Super and Student Ambassadors.</p> <p>There is also an accessible version available for children with additional needs.</p>	<p>Set up a 'cyber action group' in school.</p> <p>We created an 'action pack' of activities that the group can use and peer lead to help tackle online bullying.</p> <p>The action pack has different activities for Super and Student Ambassadors.</p> <p>There is also an accessible version available for children with additional needs.</p>	<p>We know 31 schools took part in the mission and that the action packs were downloaded 253 times in just two months.</p> <p>The data about children and young people's experiences of cyberbullying was used in our response to Welsh Government's consultation on new anti-bullying guidance for schools.</p> <p>Rhyl High School, Ysgol Gyfun Gwyr, Morriston Comprehensive and members of our Young People's Advisory Panel used the action pack to peer-lead activities during our first Student Ambassadors Conference.</p> <p>Pupils from Ysgol Gyfun Gwyr who supported this mission took part in the ENYA project 2019 – "Let's talk young, let's talk about children's rights in the digital environment"</p>

How we've delivered on our commitments

18/19 Special Missions

TIMINGS	THEME	SUPER AMBASSADORS (PRIMARY)	STUDENT AMBASSADORS (SECONDARY)	OUTPUTS
Summer 2018	<p>'The Right Way: Education Survey 2018'</p> <p>We developed an online survey for schools to measure how children experience their rights in school. The questions were based on the principles in the Commissioner's guidance for schools but were differentiated for pupils and teachers. All schools received an individualised report of their answers, we received an anonymous all-Wales report.</p>	<p>Survey – how rights friendly is your school?</p> <p>All children age 7-11 and all teaching staff can take part. Your school will get your own report showing how children get rights in your school.</p> <p>Use this to plan your school targets for next year.</p>	<p>Survey – how rights friendly is your school?</p> <p>A survey for all young people and all teaching staff. Your school will get your own personalised report showing how young people experience rights in your school.</p> <p>Use our planning template to celebrate your strengths and set targets for improvement.</p>	<p>We had 391 teacher responses and 6392 responses from children and young people. You can see the overall results here. This mission will run again in Summer 2019 so that schools can measure their progress.</p> <p>The results have informed our three year work plan.</p> <p>We're also using the results as part of our call to government to make sure a children's rights approach is at the heart of the new curriculum in Wales.</p>

How we've delivered on our commitments

18/19 Special Missions

TIMINGS	THEME	SUPER AMBASSADORS (PRIMARY)	STUDENT AMBASSADORS (SECONDARY)	OUTPUTS
Spring 2018	<p>Intergenerational project</p> <p>We produced a series of videos and a lesson plan with the Older People's Commissioner for Wales showing the benefits of setting up an intergenerational project.</p> <p>Islamophobia project</p> <p>We produced a series of videos, lesson plans and activity resources with Show Racism the Red Card.</p>	Explore setting up an intergenerational project in your community.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Watch the videos of young Welsh Muslims talking about their experiences of Islamophobia and run some of the lessons in school. 2. Use #OurWales on Twitter on St David's Day (the patron saint of Wales) and celebrate diversity across the country. 	<p>Many schools successfully set up a project (see below) where the schools would regularly visit a local care home, or invite older people into their school to take part in activities, for example. Positive benefits for both children and residents were reported.</p> <p>Schools reported a change in pupils' perceptions of Islam. Many people also took part in the Twitter campaign including schools, MPs, AMs and heads of charities</p>



How we've delivered on our commitments

Accessible Ambassador Schemes

This project ensures our Ambassador schemes for schools are accessible to children and young people with additional learning needs so that all children in Wales have equal opportunities to learn about and experience their rights. Through consulting with children, young people and professionals this project we developed a suite of accessible resources so that all children can benefit from the Ambassador schemes and learn about their rights and their Commissioner and their views can help inform our work.

Consultation

We consulted with over 36 education settings, over 50 education professionals and over 150 children and young people with additional learning needs to find out what would help all children best engage with the scheme.

Resource Development

Informed by this consultation we worked in partnership with professionals and young people to co-produce a number of accessible resources: these include easy read symbols posters about children's rights and the Commissioner, films about the Ambassadors schemes made with children and young people in SEN settings, and a teaching and learning guide of 10 lessons about children's rights designed for young people with additional learning needs. We have also developed resources using BSL and a series of 16 illustrations to bring the UNCRC to life for young children and visual learners. Professional learning throughout the year also enabled our staff team to develop knowledge and skills to ensure resources and participatory activities are accessible to all.

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How we've delivered on our commitments

Outcomes

Children and young people with additional learning needs were able to participate in all three of the Ambassadors Rights Missions, including participation in Beth Nawr and through the easy read version of the peer-action pack on cyber-bullying. Positive feedback was received from all SEN schools attending events and feedback gathered shows that young people in a range of education settings have engaged with and enjoyed new accessible resources. The number of SEN settings participating in the scheme this year has doubled, with 14 SET settings participating by March 2019. Staff training and the prioritisation of accessible resources has generated a sustainable model to enable ongoing development of resources to ensure all children and young people can participate in the Ambassadors scheme. A full evaluation of the Commissioner's Ambassador schemes in 2020 will assess the impact of the scheme for all children and young people, including those with additional learning needs.

How we've delivered on our commitments

Investigations and Advice service

Our Investigation and Advice service is free and confidential. It's there to advise and support children and young people or those who care for them if they feel that a child has been treated unfairly. 671 people contacted us in 2018-19, often raising concern about more than one issue.

What issues were we contacted about?

CAFCASS	14
Education	408 (including SEN 104, Complaints 90, Advice 74, Placement 32, Bullying 24)
Environment	54
Health	58 (Complaints 19, CAMHS 18, Provision of Service 10 Advice 8)
Housing	28 (Advice 13, Placement 6)
Asylum	2
Legal	108 (Advice 101)
Other issues relating to local authority	14
Police	24 (Advice 12)
Social Services	370 (Including Complaints 151, Advice 62, Provision of Service 36, Placement 30, Advocacy 24)

Who made contact with us?

Parent – 386
Member of the public – 33
Extended Family member – 60
Child or young person – 35
Elected member – 6
Other professional – 25
Foster Carer – 38
Advocacy service – 13

Outcomes included:

- A bespoke provision made available providing trauma informed therapeutic intervention for this child and one other.
- Child provided with a statement and in a supportive educational provision.
- Young person with complex behavioural needs moved to a more suitable provision.
- Assisted in the review of a school's behaviour policy.
- Secured ongoing support for young person with life-limiting condition.

How we've delivered on our commitments

Whilst we do everything we can to resolve all of the cases that come to us, there are times where systemic issues or lack of appropriate guidance means we are unable to hold particular agencies to account at that time. Those issues are then taken forward by our policy team to influence broader change. Examples of this would include our ongoing work on health transitions and our 2019/20 project on the role and operation of Regional Partnership Boards.

Feedback from cases:

"The officer was outstanding in their manner and helpfulness. They were positive and their remarks were clearly based on experience and understanding. I am very grateful for their help."

"The work done by the Commissioner's office was first class resulting in a positive outcome for the child."

"I felt that things had reached a standstill until I contacted the Children's Commissioner's office. I am so grateful to have had the support they provided."

A group of diverse people, including men and women of various ethnicities, are gathered around a table in a meeting. They are looking at documents and talking. A speech bubble is overlaid on the image, containing the text. The background is a blurred office setting.

**Our advisory panels
have continued to have
a positive impact on
our work. Here are
their thoughts.**



The views of our advisory panels

Our advisory panels of adults and young people meet three times a year to discuss aspects of our work. They have now become an integral part of our governance structure –supporting, advising and challenging where appropriate. We aim to embody a children’s rights approach in our work with the panel members, ensuring the platform provides a meaningful opportunity for young people to hold us to account on what we promise to deliver.

This year, we undertook an evaluation of the experience with the first cohort of members. Here’s a selection of the feedback, which we’ve used to update the panels’ terms of reference:

- All members believed they were listened to and that their opinions were taken seriously.
- “Sally doing, ‘You Said, We Did’, was good and showed that our opinion made a difference. Sally even took small comments and listened to them.”
- Speaking about working with the adult panel, a young member said: “Through having an older and professional opinion, it opened new doors to our thoughts and opinions.”
- “The meeting (with the adult panel) gave me lots of confidence. Seeing the adults conversing with Sally gave me a boost to give more of my opinion in meetings. I saw them as some sort of example on how to give your opinions in meetings.”

Here’s what the Chair of our adult panel, Margaret Provis, thought:

“It’s been a good year for our panels. We have had the opportunity to advise Sally on key aspects of her work. We have all enjoyed the joint sessions of the panels and I know we all feel we learn so much from each other when we meet together. We look forward to continuing to work together and to work with the Commissioner and her staff.”

The 5 principles of a Children's Rights Approach are Embedding children's rights, Equality and Non-discrimination, Empowerment, Participation and Accountability.



The Right Way and our Right Way

The Right Way is our Children's Rights Approach framework for organisations delivering services to children in Wales.

We have three frameworks: one for [public bodies](#); one for [education settings](#); and one for [Public Service Boards](#), which links children's rights to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

All three frameworks are composed of the same five distinct principles that can help organisations prioritise and promote children's rights in their work, and ultimately to improve the services they deliver for children and young people in Wales.



Sally Holland's visit to the Mencap Children's Centre in Belfast

The 5 Principles

Embedding children's rights **putting children's rights at the core of** **planning and service delivery**

In practice, this could mean making explicit reference to children's rights in a corporate plan, prioritising children's rights training for staff, or developing a strategy that explains how the organisation will take children's rights seriously.

Equality and non-discrimination **ensuring that every child has an equal** **opportunity to be the best they can be**

In practice, this could mean gathering data on how well the organisation provides for different groups of young people and using it to plan improvements, providing information and opportunities that are accessible to all children, and training staff on their duties under the Equality Act.

Empowering children **enhancing children's capabilities as individuals so** **they're better able to take advantage of rights**

In practice, this could mean making sure children have the skills to influence the decisions that affect them, and to tell children about the opportunities they have to have their say or to shape practice.

Participation **– listening to children and taking their** **views meaningfully into account**

It could mean developing a distinct participation strategy that clearly says how the organisation will involve children in its work, and directly involving children in the design and evaluation of service delivery.

Accountability **organisations should be accountable to children** **for decisions and actions that affect their lives**

It could mean providing clear opportunities for young people to challenge decisions, or making sure children know how to make complaints and to hold the organisation to account.

The Right Way and our Right Way

What we've done this year

We've worked with a wide range of organisations this year to help them improve the way they deliver services to children, in line with A Children's Rights Approach.

Public Bodies and other organisations working with children

South Wales Police

We delivered a training session with South Wales Police's Gold command: its senior police leaders. They have committed to embedding a Children's Rights Approach in their work, and plan to develop a children's rights charter for young people, showing them how they'll uphold and promote their human rights. We've also helped them to design their participation strategy, ensuring that the way they engage with children and young people includes the principles of a Children's Rights Approach.

HMP & YOI Parc

We've worked with Parc Prison to help them embed children's rights in their work. In the last year they've made several children's rights-based improvements.

Firstly, all the young people at Parc are taught about their rights and the rights of others. They are encouraged to be aware of their rights, including learning about rights in their induction. Individual rights are on display across the young person's unit and used in conversations with young people and staff.

In terms of their participation, every young person is encouraged to share their views on matters that affect them within every area of the Unit. In this environment, all young people's views are listened to and they have a much stronger input into life in the unit.

Senior staff feel that the relationships between staff and young people have improved and that the young people are engaging more in their education as a result.

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The Right Way and our Right Way

Health Boards

In June 2018 we held our second All Wales Child Health seminar in conjunction with Public Health Wales. It provided an opportunity for Health Boards and Trusts across Wales to come together to discuss children's rights in health settings.

In attendance were Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board, Powys Teaching Health Board and Hywel Dda University Health Board, along with the Wales Ambulance Service Trust, Public Health Wales and the Welsh Health Specialist Services Committee (WHSSC).

Attendees discussed the progress they had made since our first Health Seminar, held the year before, and their plans to continue improving the ways they build children's rights in to their work. Progress included widespread consultations with children, developments of children's rights charters and lists of pledges, action plans for change at board level and audits of staff awareness of rights. We also heard that ABM Youth, ABMU's youth panel, had reported directly to the executive board.

Several health boards and trusts made excellent progress in progressing a children's rights approach in 2018-19, following the seminar, including Cardiff and Vales UHB's new and dynamic youth health board and Aneurin Bevan UHB's adoption of the participation standards for Wales.

Schools

6932 children and young people and 391 teachers took part in our survey to measure to what extent pupils experience their rights in school. The survey's questions were formed around our Children's Rights Approach's five principles. Each school completing the survey received a personalised, anonymised report showing how their pupils' answers compared to the nationwide average

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The Right Way and our Right Way

Schools used their reports to set children's rights targets for the coming year. Next year we'll run the same survey, allowing returning schools to measure their progress, alongside helping new schools to see the insights for the first time.

One of the results' key messages was that young people in secondary school feel they have less of a chance to take part in decisions in their school, compared to children in primary school. As a result, our office will undertake a specific piece of work next year to examine the effectiveness of school councils in secondary schools.

"The Right survey has been a fantastic tool to survey the whole school and to find out what our students and staff know and don't know about their rights. The survey allows our ambassadors to reflect on the year's work and aids their decision making to support them to push forward for the new academic year."

Hannah O'Neill, Art teacher and pupil voice /
Senedd coordinator, Ebbw Fawr Learning Community

"The Right Way Education Survey results demonstrated that the emphasis on pupil voice in our school is having a direct impact upon pupils. They recognise the opportunities they have to not only influence their learning but also to influence the development of our new and growing school. Our work to develop the Curriculum for Wales is also impacting positively upon pupils and this was recognised in the survey. The results were a great way of celebrating the success of our curriculum development and our school journey with children at the centre of what we do."

Catherine Kucia, Head Teacher at Jubilee Park Primary School.

The Right Way and our Right Way

Public Service Boards

This year, along with Wales' Future Generations Commissioner we published an online toolkit and related information hub for Public Service Boards (PSBs) and bodies who are duty-bound by the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act. Its aim is to help PSBs and relevant public bodies to improve their services for children, in line with A Children's Rights Approach, as they change the way they work under the Act. It does this by linking each Children's Rights Approach principle to the Five Ways of Working under the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.

We held two sessions with PSBs this year to consider the toolkit and to help them plan improvements.

Both sessions, with Wrexham PSB and the Vale of Glamorgan's PSB, were attended by senior members of the organisations who make up the PSB, which include the local council, the Health Board, the Fire Service, Natural Resources Wales, the Police, and others. In Wrexham the Youth Senedd jointly ran the session.

General awareness raising work

In September 2018 we hosted a workshop for international professionals on A Children's Rights Approach at Swansea University's Observatory for Children and Young People.

We have also been working with EAS, the education consortium for Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen. Working with pioneer well-being schools from the area, we developed a training resource for them to cascade in their cluster.

We've also influenced the Information Commissioner's Office's work on its Age Appropriate Design Code, ensuring a children's rights approach was central to its development.

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The Right Way and our Right Way

Our Right Way

Here's how we adopt the principles of 'The Right Way' in practice:

1. **Embedding children's rights:** the UNCRC underpins all our work and we continue to influence other public bodies in Wales to adopt a similar approach. Our policy and influencing work ensures that laws, policies and practice across all levels of Government in Wales protect children's rights.
2. **Equality and non-discrimination:** Our Investigations and Advice service plays a critical role in delivering this principle by helping individual children and their families who feel they've got nowhere else to go with their issues. Through key projects – all of which are expected to be planned with a full equalities impact assessment - we strive to tackle equality and discrimination issues head-on to ensure every child in Wales has an equal chance to be the best that they can be.
3. **Empowering children:** Our communications work is focused on increasing awareness of children's rights and the role of the Commissioner, so that children themselves have access to information which enables them to understand and exercise their rights.
4. **Participation:** Every member of our staff team has a responsibility to engage with children and young people in all four corners of Wales. As a team we engage with children almost every day of the week. We aim to make sure all our work with children and young people is inclusive and accessible. Children's views and opinions inform all our projects and we've listened to over 10000 children and young people's views to us to help shape this three-year plan.
5. **Accountability:** Investing in a children's rights approach enables us to have a real focus on the particular needs of children and ensures we create a platform where children and young people can hold us to account on what we promised to deliver. Our advisory panels of young people provide strategic support to the Commissioner and the team and plans are afoot to ensure the Commissioner becomes accountable to the democratically-elected Senedd Ieuencid (Youth Parliament) for Wales.

My approach ...has always been to respond to the Welsh Government as a critical friend - to challenge robustly where necessary but to welcome and acknowledge positive developments.



Our Report Card

The landscape

The major consultation we held this year with over 10,000 children and young people and the review of evidence which preceded that work highlights to us the plethora of issues affecting children and young people's lives. My challenge always is to determine where best to focus my small staff team's efforts. Our programme of work is clearly determined by the views of those children and young people who we've consulted with but there are times where I need to speak out and challenge in other areas. This year, this has seen us challenge Welsh Government's decisions in relation to budget priorities and the apparent lack of cross-governmental approach to protecting children's rights in budget decision-making. Concerns have also been raised with me about the standard of child rights impact assessments – the very tool devised to ensure Welsh Government policies protect children's rights.

Our Report Card

Despite the limitations of my legal remit, I've also worked on non-devolved issues including how young people in Cardiff were having to wait an unnecessarily long time for face-to-face asylum claim interviews and that they were only being offered appointments in Croydon. I intervened by writing to the Home Office on their behalf, which resulted in the UK Government agreeing to host appointments in Cardiff. Time has also been spent working with my UK counterparts to challenge the UK Government's damaging austerity measures.

My approach as Commissioner has always been to respond to the Welsh Government as a critical friend - to challenge robustly where necessary but to welcome and acknowledge positive developments. I've warmly welcomed the Government's ambitions in relation to ensuring children have equal protection from physical punishment and exemptions from council tax liabilities for care leavers across Wales but there remain areas of great concern. Government has not made the progress expected in relation to some of last year's annual report recommendations, including in relation to provision of BSL in schools and the childcare offer, although there has been some ongoing discussion with officials. Although I don't make new recommendations in these areas within this year's report, my team will continue to follow up these policy issues and to press for changes to support and uphold children's rights. The quarterly updates published on my website will continue to show actions I've taken and progress against these areas. These are discussed regularly with Welsh Government officials, Ministers and members of the Children, Young People and Education Committee of the National Assembly for Wales, in order to maintain momentum and create tangible changes to benefit children.

Despite Brexit dominating the majority of headlines this year, behind that Brexit noise remains some significant challenges for children's rights which I want to use this report to highlight. This report card illuminates those challenges, the steps I've taken with my team to influence change and my expectations of Government.

Family Environment and Alternative Care

RESIDENTIAL CARE FOR CHILDREN WITH THE MOST COMPLEX NEEDS

The key issues

In last year's annual report, I highlighted the need for commissioning of specialist accommodation for the small number of children with complex mental health, behavioural and social needs as there is insufficient provision for them currently. These children often have mental health needs, but do not meet the specific diagnostic criteria for care in one of Wales's two in-patient mental health facilities for children. Often, the only option for care is outside of Wales, in England or Scotland, in very expensive private facilities, far from the child's home, making it difficult for them to maintain contact with families, friends and communities. There is currently no low secure mental health in-patient provision in Wales.

How we've influenced

During the year I have revisited the North Wales Adolescent Service in-patient unit in Abergele and Ty Llidiard in-patient unit in Bridgend, along with Hillside Secure Children's Centre, and met and written to the Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee (WHSSC), which commissions both in-patient units, and the Chair of the Children and Young People's Committee on the need to establish this provision. I have also met with several heads of children's services in several local authorities, CEOs and Chairs of the Health Boards. I have raised the matter in meetings with Vaughan Gething, the Health Minister and Julie Morgan, the Deputy Minister.

In November 2017, I gave evidence to the Public Accounts Committee's inquiry into care experienced children. Their 2018 report echoed my concerns in this area, recommending that the Welsh Government need to inform and deliver a national strategy for commissioning and managing the full spectrum of placements for children in care.

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Family Environment and Alternative Care

My team and I have been active members of the Government's Task and Finish Group on Residential Care, the Ministerial Advisory Group for Improving Outcomes for Children and both the Programme Board and the Expert Reference Group of the Together for Children and Young People Programme (T4CYP).

I will continue to bring together health and social care managers to explore how services can jointly commission this important type of provision. I will also be meeting with senior Welsh Government officials across health and social care to find a way forward, having previously brought officials together to have these discussions in October 2018.

Progress and recommendations

There have been a number of positive steps forward in commissioning practices, such as the work taking place in South East Wales to bring children back to local authority-owned homes in the area. However, these homes do not provide for the children at the highest end of the continuum of needs.

The Welsh Government's Transformation Fund and Integrated Care Fund make available financial resource which may be used for the purposes of creating this provision. These are of course welcome, but these funding streams do not give Wales-wide coverage, and the funds are not currently ring-fenced for this purpose.

It is very concerning that the two CAMHS in-patient units in Wales are both unable to accommodate children and young people whose behaviour is deemed too 'high risk'. In addition to this issue, Welsh children are no longer cared for at the Regis Healthcare facility as it has been deemed unsafe. I am glad that these children are no longer in unsafe placements, but the situation does mean a further reduction in availability of suitable placements.

Family Environment and Alternative Care

Recommendations:

Welsh Government should ensure new ring-fenced funding specifically for the purposes of jointly commissioned mental health and social care residential provision for the small number of children and young people with the most complex needs in Wales.

Welsh Government should also act to ensure that the existing mental health in-patient units in Wales make changes necessary to extend the range of young people who can be safely cared for there.

Welsh Government should take action to develop secure mental health provision in Wales for the very small number of children who require this care.

Investigations and Advice case work

The following case study demonstrates the situation where young people with complex behavioural needs do not 'fit' into existing services, and can be placed in inappropriate settings.

Child C, aged 16, contacted our Investigation and Advice service from a hospital where they had been detained under section 2 of the Mental Health Act. Child C had not been diagnosed with a mental health disorder.

Child C was placed on an adult ward at the hospital and was supervised by two agency staff from a mental health unit where Child C had been placed previously. Child C was unable to return to the unit as staff there claimed they were unable to manage the young person's behaviour.

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Family Environment and Alternative Care

After being placed on an adult ward for many weeks, Child C was eventually moved to a safer ward after our intervention. However, there continued to be concerns about the suitability of the adult ward. Such was our concern, we shared Child C's situation with Government Ministers to illustrate our concerns about the lack of current provision for children and young people with complex behavioural needs.

Both inpatient units involved in this case have told us that they have examples of several similar cases.

Children and young people's views

Quotes from young people in a residential mental health unit:

"There should be accommodation for children / adolescents who can't go home"

"I went to hospital 3 times but I was still discharged with no follow up each time"

"Not everyone is the same! People's treatment plans should be made for each individual because some people need different types of care. Everyone should get a say, including me"

"To make sure ALL staff want to work in mental health with young adolescents and are not just in it for the money or the job. Making treatment individualised. That staff listen more to young people's views and give them a chance to prove themselves. More education in schools for mental health. Being allowed to make own decisions in treatment when above 16 years old"

Family Environment and Alternative Care

LEAVING CARE

The key issues

In 2016 I published a report, '[The Right Care](#)', about the experiences of young people living in residential care. One of the four recommendations, all of which were accepted in full by the First Minister, was to extend the 'When I'm Ready' scheme to all children in care and not just those in foster care placements. This would ensure that all children and young people had access to support to help them transition from care to independent living.

In 2017 I published my report '[Hidden Ambitions](#)', which further reiterated the need to support care leavers up to the age of 25, regardless of whether they are in education or training. The report also called for an exemption from Council Tax payments for Care Leavers, who live independently much earlier than most other young people and usually do not have family to help if they are in financial difficulties.

Young people leaving care face many obstacles including heightened risk of homelessness and poverty, but with the right support, can go on to lead successful and fulfilled lives.

How we've influenced

Since completing visits to all 22 local authorities in 2017 and following up on progress in 2018, we have continued to monitor progress through our casework, attendance at external working groups, including the Leaving Care Forum, the Residential Care Task & Finish group and the Ministerial Advisory Group for Improving Outcomes for Children.

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Family Environment and Alternative Care

We continue to work with the Welsh Government to ensure that this remains a priority, using our presence on the Task and Finish Group for Residential Care to ensure that extending support remains a key focus within the action plan. My team have also met separately with Welsh Government officials outside that group, to urge progress against the important matters contained in the action plan.

Progress and recommendation

I am very pleased that the Government has consulted on its intentions to exempt all Care Leavers up to the age of 25 from Council Tax, and that these changes take effect from April 2019. Around half of local authorities had already taken that step since the publication of my 2018 [‘Hidden Ambitions’](#) follow up report.

Funding for the St. David’s Fund has continued, and been doubled this year to include support for youth homelessness, and hundreds of young people received support for items such as tools and uniforms for work and driving lessons.

However, despite the Welsh Government accepting our recommendation in full on the need to extend support through Personal Advisors to all care leavers up to the age of 25, and providing funding to local authorities for this purpose, the lack of a change in law to secure this commitment means that this entitlement could be vulnerable to changing funding and priorities in the future.

There has been little tangible progress on the extension of ‘When I’m Ready’ to young people leaving residential care, despite this being one of the original reasons for establishing the Task and Finish Group on Residential Care.

In March 2019 I wrote to the Director of Social Services to highlight my frustration at the lack of progress in securing these entitlements.

Family Environment and Alternative Care

Recommendations:

Welsh Government should amend legislation and guidance for the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 to secure all care leavers entitlement to a Personal Advisor up to the age of 25.

Welsh Government should make more definitive progress on extending the entitlements of the 'When I'm Ready' scheme to provide an equivalent level of support for young people leaving residential care. This should be secured on a statutory basis.

Investigations and Advice case work

The following highlights the range of issues brought to us from young people, parents / carers and professionals in relation to young people leaving care. We provided advice to all callers and, where appropriate, intervened to support the resolution of the issue.

- Grandparent made contact concerned about the lack of support for the young person in their care to find suitable accommodation. They believed that social services were not taking on board the young person's mental health issues and their capacity to look after themselves. Such was the grandfather's concern about the situation they had planned to make themselves 'homeless' from the flat they were sharing, forcing the local authority to evict the young person and find them suitable alternative accommodation.

Family Environment and Alternative Care

- A young person who had left care made contact stating they had not received any support moving into independent living, had no money and that their Personal Assistant and Social Worker were not returning their calls.
- Another young person who had left care made contact concerned about the lack of appropriate financial support from social services. They weren't in receipt of their winter clothing allowance nor had they been offered an independent advocate.
- A young person who had left care and was now studying at University made contact for advice about a guarantor for privately rented accommodation. They intended to share a house with other students and had approached their personal advisor for support but no useful advice had been shared.
- A young person who had left care, who had been in receipt of funding for a 2-year HND course had been advised they would have to self-fund their first year at University. Information was provided to them about the St David's Day fund.
- A young person who had left care and had additional needs made contact; they had been in an 'out of county' foster placement for 15 years. They were no longer being supported by social services and were caught in a dispute between two local authorities about who was responsible for providing them with support.

Family Environment and Alternative Care

Children and young people's views

Quotes from Voices Care leavers event, summer 2018

"Just because I am 18 I still need supporting"

"I feel overwhelmed and isolated in independent living accommodation and don't have the skills on how to cook or keep healthy or register with a dentist for example?"

"Have a residential home for people who are over 18, instead of being removed from residential home after turning 18"

"make the "When I am ready" scheme clear to everyone – social workers, PA, residential managers, young people"

"Bring about more equality between young people in foster care and residential care"

Family Environment and Alternative Care

REMOVING THE ELEMENT OF PROFIT FROM CHILDREN'S CARE SERVICES

Key Issues

Many of the children's residential care homes in Wales operate within the private sector and around a third of Welsh children in foster care are placed with independent agencies. During my discussions with young people, some have been acutely aware of the financial costs of their placements, and were uncomfortable with there being an element of "profit making" in their need for care and support. The lack of suitable placements available in Wales often means that Local Authorities commission independent and private placements, with no guarantee that profits will be reinvested into services to improve outcomes for children and young people and a lack of transparency as to how funds are spent in relation to therapeutic and care services.

How we've influenced

In 2017, I made recommendations to the Welsh Government to work with Local Authorities to better involve children and young people in the design and delivery of their services to increase the range of not-for-profit care. The National Assembly's Public Accounts Committee 2018 report on looked after children repeated the message from my annual report recommendation in 2017 in regard to establishing the levels of profit within care and ensuring that children in local authority care are "seen as citizens not clients". The Committee also called for Welsh Government to inform and deliver a national strategy for commissioning and managing the full spectrum of placements for children in care.

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Family Environment and Alternative Care

Progress and recommendation

Care Inspectorate Wales is soon to publish its thematic review of Children's Homes in Wales, which will provide welcome information on the number of local authority-owned homes and private homes in Wales. My office has been represented in an advisory capacity in this work, which takes a clear focus on promoting and extending children's realisation of their rights within these settings. Whilst it is important not to disrupt the sector with sudden policy changes, the Welsh Government must begin to develop alternative models of care to greater increase the number of not-for-profit care services.

Recommendation:

Welsh Government must commit to taking concrete actions within the next year towards reducing and ultimately ending profit making in children's care services, without detriment to children and young people's current care arrangements.

Children and young people's views

Quotes from Voices from Care event, August 2018

"The postcode lottery of different counties is terrible, some people get good services in one place and little or no services in other areas"

Protection from Exploitation and Violence

SEXUAL ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION – SEXUAL ASSAULT REFERRAL CENTRES (SARCS)

The key issues

In my last annual report 2017/2018 I called on Welsh Government to ensure that Sexual Assault Referral Centre provision for each health board area had 24/7 access to a rota of suitably trained paediatricians and forensic medical examiners, so that no child has to wait for many hours or even days for an examination, and that sufficient counselling and recovery services for victims are available throughout Wales.

This call followed concerns raised by senior representatives, who attend my regular Child Sexual Exploitation round table, about the staffing and funding arrangements for sexual assault referral centres across Wales with the exception of north Wales. Anonymised case examples were shared with us where children had to wait late into the night for services they needed and that counselling services were at risk of closure due to funds not being transferred from the relevant Local Health Boards.

How we've influenced

Tabling this matter for discussion at my Child Sexual Exploitation roundtable meeting this year has provided a forum to discuss issues and progress in this area. My office has engaged with the SARC Project programme lead and secured regular updates for the roundtable enabling all members to be kept informed of its work, something which was previously unavailable.

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Protection from Exploitation and Violence

In July 2018 I met with the Chief Executive of New Pathways and some of their members of staff. New Pathways provide counselling services for children and adults at almost all Sexual Assault Referral Centres in Wales and this meeting provided an opportunity to hear more about their work and the children and young people they help support.

I have continued my engagement with NHS Chief Executive, Andrew Goodall and Albert Heaney Director of Social Services in respect of this matter. In spring 2018 I raised concerns around the need to secure a formal interim arrangement for children living in the south, mid and West Wales in respect of in-hours paediatric provision, whilst continuing the momentum to develop a medium/long term model.

During my meeting with the Minister for Health and Social Services in March 2019 I raised the importance of both the continuation and coordination of Government's work in this area.

Progress

The formation of the SARC Project Board and appointment of a programme lead, led by Cardiff and the Vale Health Board, has resulted in progress on this issue. The reports provided and engagement with the lead suggest better multi agency working.

Work to secure formal interim arrangements for children in south, mid and west Wales has been taken forward and I am aware that improved arrangements for some children have been secured ready for implementation from the 1st April 2019. I would of course like to have seen this in place earlier in this period however the availability of suitably qualified professionals is not an aspect that can be addressed overnight. However this will not address inequity of provision between north wales in respect of children over the age of 14 and this along with aspects related to a long term model will remain a focus in 2019/2020.

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Protection from Exploitation and Violence

In November 2018 the Former First Minister announced an expert lead review in respect of sexual violence services and refuges and I am aware of work taking place in respect of All Wales Traumatic Stress Quality Improvement Initiative. I welcome these developments whilst waiting for further details about the scope of this work in terms of children and young people. I will also be working in 2019/2020 to ensure that this and other Welsh Government work is sufficiently joined up avoiding duplication and resulting in the best outcomes for children.

Next steps

Despite progress in this area I will continue to actively scrutinise the Welsh Government's actions in respect of the recommendation I made last year, particularly in respect of sufficient counselling and recovery services for children in Wales who have been victims of sexual abuse.

Education, Citizenship and Cultural Activities

Elective Home Education

The key issues

In my last three annual reports I have called on Welsh Government to make significant policy changes to ensure that children educated at home are not invisible and that they receive all of their human rights: this includes their right to education, their right to participate in decisions about their lives and their right to be safe.

My calls have been informed by the CASCADE research commissioned by the National Independent Safeguarding Board, which found that home educated children have poorer access to universal services in comparison to children educated at school. I have been urging Welsh Government to introduce new measures as current policy and practice is leaving some children at risk of missing their human right to education and in rare cases a lack of safeguards has left children's safety at risk.

Welsh Government accepted my 2016-17 annual report recommendation in principle and announced in January 2018 that new measures to identify children and to enable cross-sector information sharing would be implemented under the legislative framework of the Children Act 2004. At the time of my 2018-19 annual report, I was frustrated by the lack of progress in taking forward these measures and I recommended that Welsh Government brought their updated policy forward to consultation with the aims of meeting the following three tests in full:

- **First, that all children in Wales can be accounted for and that none slip under the radar of universal services and society in general;**
- **Second, that every child receives a suitable education and their other human rights including health, care and safety;**
- **Third, that this cannot be achieved without enabling every child the opportunity to be seen and their views, including their views about their education, and experiences listened to.**

Education, Citizenship and Cultural Activities

This recommendation was accepted by Welsh Government in their written response to my last annual report, an acceptance that was also confirmed to me in person by the then First Minister.

How we've influenced

Due to concerns at a lack of pace and progress, over the 2018-19 period I made Government aware that I was considering using my legal powers to review the development of this policy area, retaining the option to review at any point should I have concerns that Government are not exercising their functions to ensure appropriate policy aims will be met.

Since then my office and I have been assessing the development of statutory guidance to ascertain whether it is able to meet my three tests. This has been through our presence on the Elective Home Education stakeholder group; through a number of meetings between myself, my officers and senior government officials; and through an ongoing review of sections of the guidance as they have been developed.

I have also discussed this policy area directly with the then Cabinet Secretary for Education in October 2018 and the First Minister in November 2018, and was assured that the policy aim was in alignment with my calls.

I have also sought the views of others throughout this period: this includes engagement with the Association of Directors of Social Services, the Association of Directors of Education and engagement with home educating families and home educated children and young people.

Education, Citizenship and Cultural Activities

Progress and recommendation

Over the year, Government has been responsive to my ongoing involvement in development of this policy area, with public consultation on the guidance due in late spring. Government officials have also engaged with other stakeholders, including home educating families and local authorities.

Although I have been frustrated by the time it is taking for Government to issue guidance for consultation, I have been reassured that Government is consulting widely to ensure that the information sharing approach and guidance are practicable and will enable local authorities to see children and to identify children missing education.

I will continue to scrutinise the policy against the three tests laid out in my 2017-18 recommendation, and I retain the option to formally review the Government's actions in this area if the guidance published for consultation in 2019 indicates Government is not exercising its function to ensure these policy aims will be met.

Recommendation

Welsh Government must implement statutory guidance giving effect to my three tests in full in 2020, to ensure children's rights are being respected wherever they are educated.

Education, Citizenship and Cultural Activities

Children and young people's views

"Better help. Access for Home Educators to do practical things at colleges."

"If you are home schooled and you don't go to a group like this then you aren't seen and it's a worry."

"You said that children have a right to privacy... by monitoring them it feels like they are doing something wrong".

"Careers advice – no access for Home Education young people"

Education, Citizenship and Cultural Activities

THE UNCRC IN THE CURRICULUM FOR WALES

The key issues

Some schools in Wales have led excellent work embedding the human rights of children into decision making and ensuring that all children and young people understand and experience their rights, as guaranteed by the UNCRC. But this is not the experience of every child. Many education professionals and schools do not link their work to the rights of children and many children and young people leave school without knowing or understanding their human rights.

Children's human rights are not an optional add on or a nice extra. They should be fundamental in the everyday experience of children and young people, and should be integral to the new curriculum for Wales.

The new curriculum offers an exciting opportunity for Government to make new and relevant commitments embedded in children's rights. This will help ensure Government meet their international obligations to protect and promote children's rights and the long-term needs of children and young people. Every child in Wales has a right to know and experience their rights.

How we've influenced

In addition to attending the Independent Advisory Group and the Strategic Stakeholder Group to curriculum reform, my office has engaged regularly with senior officials in Welsh Government and the leads of the Health and Wellbeing and Humanities Areas of Learning and Experience.

Through updating my position paper on curriculum reform in January 2019, I shared the key benefits to children of a human rights education and showed how children's human rights mapped across the Four Purposes and the developing six Areas of Learning and Experience. My office had extensive engagement with pioneer schools through my Ambassadors scheme for schools and my programme of school visits, and this has continued to inform me around how the new curriculum has been

Education, Citizenship and Cultural Activities

developing and influencing children and young people's experience of education. This qualitative information has been contextualised by the results of my first Right Way Education Survey of 6392 children and young people and 391 professionals, which showed a need to improve all five principles of a children's rights approach in education across Wales.

In March 2019 I submitted a full and comprehensive response to the consultation on the Curriculum and Assessment White Paper illustrating how children's human rights can be strengthened throughout the curriculum and I reiterated this in my responses to Government's consultation on the Additional Learning Needs Code and the Relationships and Sexuality Guidance. This developed several of the themes included in my consultation response to the Children, Young People and Education Committee into their scrutiny of the implementation of Successful Futures and the process of curriculum reform.

Progress

The Government published the Curriculum and Assessment White Paper for consultation in January 2019. There was much in the legislative proposals that I welcomed but children's rights were absent from the legislative framework that will bring in the new curriculum.

Although children's rights were included in the latest draft of supporting documentation (progression steps) seen by my office, these supporting documents may be subject to change through time.

Children's human rights include the right to receive an education that helps them achieve their potential and to grow up with everything they need to be healthy and safe. Children need to learn about their rights so that they are able to take them up and speak up when they are treated unfairly, and to respect other people's human rights, now and in the future. Children should also be learning in an environment that respects their rights: this means they feel safe, are included in decision making and do not face discrimination.

The only way to ensure this is to include it in law.

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Recommendation

To ensure an enduring commitment to the human rights of children the Welsh Government should introduce a duty upon all relevant bodies to pay due regard to the UNCRC in the delivery of the curriculum. This duty should be placed on the face of the Curriculum and Assessment bill.

Investigations and Advice Case Work

Education-related issues raised with our independent Investigations and Advice Service ranged from making appropriate provision for a pupil, ensuring that the disruptive behaviour of another pupil did not impact upon the education of the rest of the class, refusal of school staff to teach a pupil, access to drinking water during the school day, failure to provide appropriate provision for a disabled child, failure to provide school dinner for children whose parents do not pay on time and child who did not feel safe in school. Here's a more in-depth look at some of the issues:

Education Support for a 5 year old displaying challenging behaviour

Parent called as their 5 year old child was being taught in isolation with an adult for support and no interaction with their peer group. This followed temporary exclusions from school for difficult and challenging behaviour. The local authority was struggling to find appropriate provision to meet child's complex needs. The child was eventually given a Statement of Special Educational Needs but the local authority did not have access to appropriate specialist provision for children so young within county and discussed bespoke provision with the parents. Our intervention led to bespoke provision being made available providing trauma-informed intervention for the child and another pupil.

Education, Citizenship and Cultural Activities

Education Placement

An Assembly Member referred to us the case of a child with additional learning needs. This child was not in education, not receiving appropriate support, did not have statement of special educational needs, and the local authority were allegedly refusing to acknowledge their needs.

Over a period of two years, we supported the parent to challenge the local authority to ensure that the child had appropriate educational provision in place. This included visiting the child and attending a multi-agency meeting within the local authority and resulted in the child being provided with a statement and provision in a supportive educational setting.

School Behaviour Policy

A parent made contact as they were extremely concerned about the adverse effect a recently-introduced school behaviour policy was having on their children.

We discussed the case with the head-teacher and about the forthcoming review of the policy. We agreed to support the school via our participation team to share best practice and a suitable framework for the review process.

Children and young people's views

76% of teachers taking our Right Way Education survey would like more training in children's rights.

Just 42% of young people responding to our Right Way Education survey in secondary schools feel that they have a chance to take part in decisions in their school.

Only 26% of secondary aged respondents to our Right Way Education survey said that all young people felt welcome in their school.

34% of children and young people taking the survey had heard of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Education, Citizenship and Cultural Activities

"We all respect each others rights thats what makes us a brilliant school"

"We should all have a chance to take part and our school listens to our opinions"

"We need help to understand our rights"

"If you are naughty you miss your play and that takes away your right to relax and play"

"It is okay to be different and all children should feel welcome to our school no matter what"

"We have our rights the teachers do lessons about rights and this school altogether is amazing"

"Children are happy because of rights"

"We need lessons to understand our rights"

"Mae hawliau plant yn fawr yn ein hysgol ni ac rydym yn parchu nhw llawer"

Education, Citizenship and Cultural Activities

BULLYING

The key issues

Bullying remains a key priority for children and young people, as shown through my nationwide Beth Nawr consultation (published March 2019) in which bullying emerged as the second highest concern for 7-11 year olds. 7-11 year olds also selected bullying as their top priority for my own work, reflecting the priorities chosen by children in my 2015 Beth Nesa' consultation. To a lesser degree, bullying was also a concern of 11-18 year olds in this year's Beth Nawr consultation.

My 2017 '[Sam's Story](#)' report into bullying was informed by over 2000 children and young people. The key messages shared by young people informed the 18 recommendations I made in this report and also my recommendations about anti-bullying approaches in my last two Annual Reports, both of which were accepted by Welsh Government.

How we've influenced

My office met with the consultant drafting the Respecting Others guidance and toolkit to share with them the key messages from children and young people shared through both my Sam Story report and my 2019 report, '[Don't Worry, I'm Here for You: Children and Young People's Experiences of Cyberbullying in Wales](#)'.

I responded in full to the consultation on the draft Respecting Others guidance outlining how this could link to several other developments including the Self Evaluation for Improvement Framework under development by Estyn and the OECD and the work of the Task and Finish group on a Whole-School Approach to Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health. My office has also met with Estyn, the Task and Finish group and Welsh Government officials to ensure that this message is reiterated.

Education, Citizenship and Cultural Activities

Progress

The draft Respecting Others guidance published for consultation met all but one of the recommendations aimed specifically for this guidance in my Sam's Story report. However, I do not think the status of the guidance is sufficient for it to have a real impact on children and young people's experiences.

This is in part because it has been developed separately from other key education policy and practices in Wales. But it is also because the new Respecting Others guidance will be advisory in status, and there is no clear indication that this draft will be any more effective than the previous version.

Given the widespread and serious impact of bullying this isn't a strong enough response from Government. It is unfair to children that recording incidents remains entirely optional for schools due to the advisory status of the Respecting Others guidance and the lack of obvious linkages with statutory mechanisms.

There must be a stronger approach taken across Wales to better safeguard children and young people and recording incidents should be part of this. Effective use of recording means that far better preventative and responsive work can develop at a school level and this means that fewer young people will bully, fewer will experience bullying, and responses to bullying will be more effective.

Education, Citizenship and Cultural Activities

Recommendation

Welsh Government should ensure that schools' self-evaluation incorporates a record of all incidences and types of reported bullying. Schools should be expected to use this information to plan, monitor and evaluate their preventative and responsive anti-bullying work, in line with the approach described in the re-drafted Respecting Others, and the impact of this should be assessed as part of school inspection.

Investigations and Advice case work

Bullying in education settings was an issue in 53 cases brought to the attention of our Investigation and Advice service this year. Bullying cases came from across the school age range and ranged from general and personal teasing to physical and sexual assaults. Cases of self-harming as a result of the bullying were also reported. We were able to provide advice and support to them all.

Education, Citizenship and Cultural Activities

Children and young people's views

"Keep a record of the bullying."

* "Go to people that have been bullied, are being bullied to talk about it so you don't have to go through it alone."

"Teachers shouldn't shout at the bully they should educate them to do better."

"Lots of encouragement from the school, they are here if your parents are not"

"Have teachers/people who are trained to help children if they are in a bullying situation – so have people to support them even after the bullying has been sorted out – just someone to talk to."

Education, Citizenship and Cultural Activities

ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS

The key issues

In previous annual reports and separate consultation responses, I have made a series of recommendations for Welsh Government to introduce new legislation and a robust Code to deliver on a commitment to the rights of children and young people with additional learning needs, calling for the necessity of a cross-sector approach between health and education.

I am pleased to report that the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 passed with due regard to the UNCRC and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) on the face of the Bill.

The draft Code and Regulations were published in December 2018 for consultation. The draft Code contained a powerful explanation of the importance of meaningful participation, underpinned by the participatory rights of children and young people. The Code also showed a clear reflection of the due regard duty in the planning of additional learning provision at a local level.

Under the Act health bodies have statutory duties, and the Educational Tribunal will also now have powers over health bodies, including the ability to request evidence and reports for appeals.

How we've influenced

My office has continued our long-term commitment to this policy area by submitting a full consultation response to the draft Code and Regulations. My office also attended the Children, Young People and Education Committee's scrutiny session of the draft Code as expert stakeholders and have also engaged widely with the SEN sector over the last year: presenting a workshop session about a children's rights approach at the All Wales Special School Headteachers' Conference and undertaking a series of visits to special educational needs (SEN) schools to develop our relationships with professionals, children and young people in the sector.

Education, Citizenship and Cultural Activities

Progress

Welsh Government have made clear progress in this area: my policy recommendations relating to health bodies, the Education Tribunal and due regard duties to human rights instruments have been implemented in legislation and are in the process of being implemented into policy.

My response to the consultation on the Code highlighted that despite some strengths there are still significant areas in which the Code must be improved to ensure it fully meets the rights of children and young people. Key areas in which I have called for improvements include: mainstreaming the due regard duty into the everyday experiences of children and young people; a need for further assessment of the resource impact and a wider funding review; and greater emphasis on a needs-led approach.

I am also greatly concerned that there are insufficient requirements to integrate decisions about transport into planning for individuals. This is important as currently young people are not always provided with safe, accessible transport to access their education, and Government have issued public assurances that this will be resolved under the 2018 Act.

Recommendation

The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 applies to young people up to the age of 25. Welsh Government must ensure that there is a statutory duty that requires all children and young people covered by the Act to be provided with safe transport to their place of education.

Welsh Government should therefore reconsider their response to my 2015/16 annual report recommendation to review the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 and associated statutory provision and guidance.

Education, Citizenship and Cultural Activities

Investigations and Advice case work

We've had several cases in recent years illustrating the profound effect of insufficient transport for individuals. Here's one:

A parent of a child diagnosed with a number of complex health needs, including severe autism, severe learning difficulties and some unseen physical issues which resulted in them having sensory issues, made contact about school transport. They wanted advice on how to request a change in transport to school, from a minibus to a taxi and they felt the child's needs would be better met by such provision. The child currently travelled on a bus with peers to a special school. Parents were having difficulty getting their child on the bus in the mornings and the bus driver and escort, due to time-pressures, were unable to wait as long as it took for the child to cooperate with the parents. We advised the parent on the best route to request a change of transport provision from the local authority.

Children and young people's views

"It's important to get our say and say what we want in school"
Young Person, SEN School

"giving our kids a voice for themselves where a lot of people have actually been doing that for them, outside agencies and parents, because of their disabilities. I think...actually empowering them to have their own say, to have their own individual needs and their rights and express that."
Teacher, SEN School

It's important that pupils know about their rights and what they're entitled to"
Teacher, SEN School

Adequate Standard of Living

POVERTY

The key issues

As at March 2018, 28% of children in Wales were living in child poverty with the number forecast to rise considerably. Whilst the predicted rise and current position is considerably affected by the welfare system, a matter which my powers do not extend, there are mechanisms which are within the Welsh Government's scope to help address this issue.

The focus of my work over this period was to gather the direct experiences and views of children, young people and families who live in poverty or what they think it might be like to live in poverty in Wales, with a view to effecting practical changes that would improve the situation.

Through our conversations with over 550 children and young people, over 300 parents and carers, and over 40 professionals, we found that the multiple costs associated with school, the costs of food both in and out of school, and the lack of opportunities within communities mean that many children are missing out on some of their most basic children's rights.

Prior to the commencement of this project, the Welsh Government had made a number of decisions that on the one hand provided extra support to low income families, while at the same time reducing support in other areas. Examples of this would be the decision to withdraw the school uniform grant while introducing support in respect of sanitary products in schools. Although the school uniform decision was overturned, this further highlighted the lack of a consistent, cross Government approach to child poverty.

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Adequate Standard of Living

How we've influenced

Taking forward a specific child poverty project of this nature and scale was intended to give children a sensitive opportunity to talk about this issue and give a clear signal to the Welsh Government, public bodies and anyone living in Wales that child poverty is one of the most significant issues facing children's rights in Wales.

Stakeholders from public and voluntary sector welcomed this work shining a spotlight on this issue and looking at tangible short to medium term actions which could make a real difference to children living in poverty.

During this period, I also spoke out about the Welsh Government's decision to end the School Uniform Grant in April 2018. In June 2018 the Welsh Government announced a new scheme, PDG Access, which can be used for purchasing school uniform, equipment, sports kit and kit for activities outside school.

My office has engaged with Welsh Government officers/officials during this period to keep an open dialogue about their working including sanitary products and PDG Access grant (formally School Uniform grant).

I also provided a formal consultation response to the Welsh Government's proposed changes to the eligibility criteria for free school meals and provided written and oral evidence to the All Party UK Children's Future Food Inquiry.

My work in this period culminated in March 2019 with the publication of my report: [A Charter for Change: Protecting Welsh Children from the Impact of Poverty](#). It makes a series of recommendations to Welsh Government and local authorities, as well as producing resources for schools. These recommendations included Welsh Government establishing a Child Poverty Delivery Plan to deliver practicable actions to make changes to the lives of children and young people living in poverty. I have met with the Minister for Housing and Local Government to share the report and have an initial discussion in respect of the recommendations. I have also discussed the report with the First Minister, who welcomed the approach in making practical suggestions that could benefit children and families in Wales in the here and now.

Adequate Standard of Living

Progress

The progress related to child poverty in this period and going forward will remain challenging to assess in the absence of a delivery plan to hold the Government to account on their actions.

Following concerns raised by myself and others about the loss of the School Uniform Grant I was pleased that the PDG access grant was introduced. I welcome that the Welsh Government announced the extension of its PDG Access Scheme and free sanitary products for Schools and further Education Institutions in Wales following publication of my Charter for Change report.

However, in other areas during this period that Government, in my view, has missed an opportunity to help address child poverty including the changes through the new eligibility criteria for free school meals and the childcare offer which will remain only available to 3 and 4 year olds of working parents.

The publication of Charter for Change come at the end of this period. Therefore 2019/2020 will be a significant year in which myself and my office will meet with Ministers and other stakeholders to drive forward the recommendations and this agenda.

My Office will also be taking forward a second phase of this work to help make a practical contribution to this issue by encouraging schools and local authorities to work with children to set up reuse uniform recycling schemes and consider the cost of the school day.

Adequate Standard of Living

Recommendation

Welsh Government need to take account of the recommendations of the Charter for Change report, and publish a delivery plan setting out in detail how departments across Government will take practical steps to mitigate and tackle the impact of child poverty.

Children and young people's views

All I could afford was one sandwich OR a fruit and drink – never a meal

Carrots cost a £1 and you can get a big bag of crisps for 50p, I know which one I'd prefer"

"Sometimes, when I was younger, I used to sit in the bath when I was on my period because I had no pads

"I would feel extremely sad as other people would be able to do things I can't; moreover, I'd feel envious of others as they can afford things easily"

Adequate Standard of Living

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

The key issues

Mental health and well-being continues to be a key priority for children and young people in Wales, their parents and carers, and professionals. This was reflected in my survey of over 10,000 children and young people in Wales and the adults who care for them, *Beth Nawr 2019*, where support for mental health and well-being was a top priority for 11-18 year olds and professionals, and joint priority for 7-11 year olds, alongside bullying and safety.

The provision for children with the most serious mental health issues and who need the most support has lessened, not improved, with restrictions being placed on children with the most serious behavioural problems often having nowhere to go that will care for them. Meanwhile, for those experiencing 'lower level' emotional, behavioural or mental distress, often there is very little support available.

The Children, Young People and Education Committee's *Mind over Matter* Report, published last year, pointed to several key areas where improvement is desperately needed. This includes support for children and young people in schools, improvement to services for the most unwell children, and more support for the 'Missing Middle'; those experiencing behavioural emotional or mental distress who do not reach the threshold for specialist mental health services, but who do not receive the support they need.

How we've influenced

In July 2018, following the Welsh Government's response to the committee's *Mind Over Matter* report, I published a position paper which was circulated to all Assembly Members, which set out why I felt the Welsh Government's response represented a missed opportunity for a step-change in our approach to children and young people's mental health.

Adequate Standard of Living

I sit on the External Reference Group for the Together for Children and Young People programme (T4CYP), and my office sits on the Programme Board. We have also contributed to meetings of T4CYP's work streams, as well as being involved in the planning for the Early Help and Enhanced Support event in June 2019.

I sit on the Task and Finish Joint Ministerial Advisory Group on a whole-school approach to mental health and well-being, and my office sits on the Stakeholder Reference Group for this body.

My office has attended and contributed to several conferences and workshops on the theme of a 'whole-school approach', and early help and enhanced support for the 'missing middle', as well as meeting with stakeholders in Welsh Government, the NHS, the third sector, and other public sector bodies.

I have visited the inpatient units in North and South Wales, as well as the community CAMHS services in North and South Wales. I have also visited various schools which provide examples of whole-school approach work, through in-house initiatives, or through external interventions including the CAMHS In-Reach pilot programme.

Progress

In response to the committee's report, Mind over Matter, the Welsh Government has established a Task and Finish Joint Ministerial Advisory Group on a whole-school approach to mental health and well-being, on which I sit.

The Together for Children and Young People Programme (T4CYP) was established in 2015 with the task of improving children and young people's mental health services in Wales. The Programme is due to end in October 2019.

T4CYP has made some good progress in improving measures such as waiting times in some areas. While the Programme is working hard to make improvements, it is concerning to me that there is not much evidence of improvements 'on the ground'.

Adequate Standard of Living

Recommendation

I recommend that the Welsh Government works as a matter of urgency to establish continuation arrangements for the important work currently being delivered through the Together for Children and Young People Programme.

Investigations and Advice case work

Child B had taken an overdose which resulted in the young person being admitted to hospital. Since being discharged from hospital no support had been offered to Child B, although the family were told that the young person would be able to access support in the community. Upon discharge from hospital, no information was shared about what the family should do should the young person's symptoms return ahead of any CAMHS appointment.

The family called the local CAMHS service and were told their child was on the waiting list for an appointment with CAMHS but they were unable to provide a date. The child's school were aware of the situation, but there was also a waiting list for their counsellor. Social services told the family that it is CAMHS' responsibility to support Child B and as a result they did not offer any support.

Child B told their family that the thoughts that resulted in the overdose had returned and the family were extremely concerned as they were unable to get any support for their child. An Investigation and Advice Officer called the hospital to find out about further support / appointments with CAMHS and ensured that an appointment with a community psychiatric nurse was made; details of which were shared with the family.

Adequate Standard of Living

Children and young people's views

"Children should not have to reach crisis point to get help!"

"Children should be educated on rights so they know if something is going on in their life is wrong and they then feel safe to speak up before it gets to crisis point!"

Children should be able to access safe spaces, where they will be able to talk and feel safe."

"There should be training for teachers in schools. Young people in distress should know who they can go to, who they can trust"

Adequate standard of living

HEALTH TRANSITIONS

The key issues

My 2018 report [Don't Hold Back: Transitions to Adulthood for Children and Young People with Learning Disabilities](#) revealed that there were difficulties and deficiencies in planning transitions into adulthood across all services which are involved in young people's care. In terms of Health, young people and their families told us that services were often disjointed, that the age of transition varied between services, and the process and policies for transitions varied between services and health boards. They also told us that, for some, decisions on transitions were delayed or made late in the day as child and adult services could not come to an agreement on which service is responsible.

This meant that young people were often left confused by the process, and that they felt they weren't able to properly participate, making them feel disempowered.

I am concerned to hear that some 16 and 17 year olds accessing services for the first time, including emergency departments, can face a situation where they are deemed to fit neither the paediatric nor the adult services on offer and therefore decisions on their care are either delayed, not agreed at all, or they are referred inappropriately to adult services. There should be agreed care pathways for this age group.

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Adequate standard of living

How we've influenced

Working with the Royal Colleges of Health in Wales, and the Welsh Government, my team has organised a series of meetings to discuss the issues and, importantly, to explore good practice and potential solutions.

I have raised this issue with the Minister for Health and Social Services, and senior management in the NHS.

I will also be leading a session to discuss this issue at my upcoming Child health Seminar in July, and will be hosting a further meeting with Royal Colleges in July.

Progress

The Welsh Government is due to consult on new guidance on transitions from child to adult services in health settings in the Autumn, which we are told will then be distributed to Health Boards as a Ministerial Circular.

There are also plans to establish a Project Board, which includes representatives of every health board. This is a welcome development which I will pay close attention to and report on further in next year's annual report.

Adequate standard of living

Recommendation

Welsh Government should ensure that health boards have effective guidance that will lead to children and young people having access to coherent multi-agency pathways for transition to adult services. Children and young people should be directly involved in the creation of their care plans.

This guidance should also ensure that 16 and 17 year olds accessing health services for the first time, including emergency care, have a clear pathway to age-appropriate care.

Investigations and Advice case work

Child A was just turning 18 when their foster carer contacted our office. They had a life-limiting condition, and had been in the same foster placement for a significant number of years. The lead social services team was also the child's disability team.

The plan was for this young person to remain with the foster carers who would become Shared Lives carers. The foster carers de-registered as foster carers to allow for them to be assessed as Shared Lives carers to enable the young person to remain in their care. The assessment did not take place and this young person was now in a placement with unregistered carers.

As an added complication, the young person had significant health needs and the two Local Health Boards involved were now disputing who has the responsibility for the health needs of this young person as they are now an adult.

During the course of contact we ensured the issues of placement and ongoing support were resolved.

Adequate standard of living

Children and young people's views

"Get people like teachers, social workers, health specialists to work better together"

"Young people should be at the centre of all support services and there should be no barriers in place to prevent young people from receiving the support that they need and deserve"

"Listening to young people is the most important thing to remember"

"Services NEED to communicate with each other - it should be mandatory"

"There needs to be better links with housing and social services to help finding supported accommodation, for example. I have been on the unit longer than I should because no accommodation has been organised"

"Fix the gaps – if you are aged 17 and in education you are refused by child and adult services"

"Transitioning into adulthood is still a struggle – better preparation – make it less daunting"

Adequate standard of living

HEALTH ADVOCACY

The key issues

I have raised the importance of advocacy support for children and young people for many years and in previous annual reports. Advocacy in social care settings has progressed to the stage of an agreed National Approach to commissioning and provision, although this did take a number of years to achieve. I remain concerned that there is no clear picture of the provision of advocacy in health settings for children and young people in Wales.

We know that different health boards have commissioned different advocacy services, and I am concerned that there is no consistency of services across Wales. I believe that there should be an active offer of advocacy, properly advertised, for any child or young person who needs it.

I am also concerned that Welsh Government and others can sometimes conflate advocacy and complaints. While helping children and young people to make complaints is an important part of advocacy, advocacy is a more holistic function giving voice to children and young people to ensure they are able to participate when there are discussions of decisions which affect them. This can be particularly important in healthcare settings, where young people aged below 16 may have the capacity to make their own decisions in relation to their care and treatment. Advocacy support could make the key difference to them being able to express such a view or to participate fully in those discussions.

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Adequate standard of living

How we've influenced

I have raised this issue with the Health Minister in writing and during meetings, and my team has discussed this with Welsh Government health officials on several occasions in the past year.

I will also be holding a session on this topic at my upcoming Child Health Seminar in July 2019, in order to hear from Health Boards about their advocacy arrangements, and to discuss how we can work towards a more equitable system.

Progress

The Welsh Government wrote to all Health Boards in Wales in March 2019, asking them to outline their process for children and young people who wish to make a complaint. While the letter did mention advocacy, it was concentrated on complaints. However, the responses from Health Boards were generally helpful in establishing more of an idea of the picture across Wales. The responses revealed a very mixed landscape however, with some Boards considering making advocacy available to any child or young person who requests it, and advertising it, and some Boards only providing advocacy to mental health in-patient units as is statutory under the Mental Health Measure.

Despite this action from the Welsh Government, I have been generally disappointed at the lack of progress in this area and the lack of recognition of the broader role and value of advocacy in all matters rather than simply as part of a complaints process.

Adequate standard of living

Recommendation

Welsh Government should establish national standards for health-related advocacy for all children and young people who require it and monitor health boards' progress towards commissioning sufficient advocacy, and their promotion of it.

Children and young people's views

"Listening to young people is the most important thing to remember"

"Advocate for young people to not be silenced"

"Make sure that young people know their rights"



CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS



In February 2016, we set out the following goals for children's rights in Wales. In the autumn of 2019 we will be publishing an evaluation looking at the extent of progress our work and that of Welsh Government and other public services has made towards delivering the following improvements for children:

- Children and young people will have access to the mental health services they need in a timely manner. There will be stronger programmes for promoting emotional health and wellbeing in place in our health and social services, schools and young services
- Children's contemporary experiences of bullying will be better understood and more schools will prevent and tackle bullying effectively
- There will be better access to play, culture and leisure activities by children who are most likely to miss out on these, particularly those living in poverty and disabled children
- Care leavers will have better access to safe and secure housing options and an active offer of a job, education or training place
- All young people requiring continuing health and social support will have improved transitions to adult services
- Children will have the same legal protection as adults from physical assault
- Children and young people will be better involved in public services, including my own organisation.

Our extensive consultation work has fed in to the development of a new [three-year plan](#) which will come into effect from 1 April 2019. In 2019/20 we will be working on projects in the following areas:

- Analysing the effectiveness of Regional Partnership Boards
- Further implementation of 'The Right Way'
- Analysing the effectiveness of school councils
- Creation of a foundation phase children's rights scheme
- Publication about children's rights for parents
- A mid-term report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child
- Supporting young people to represent Wales at the European Network of Young Advisers
- Publish new rights-based challenge for Scouts and Guides
- Evaluate our last three-year plan

Summary of recommendations

In response to the issues reported in this annual report, I draw together here the recommendations to the Welsh Government. Our assessment on Welsh Government's progress against last year's recommendations are available on our website [here](#). We update this assessment on a quarterly basis, ahead of the Commissioner's Meeting with the Deputy Minister for Children.

POLICY AREA

RECOMMENDATION

Family Environment And Alternative Care

Residential care for children with the most complex needs

Welsh Government should ensure new ring-fenced funding specifically for the purposes of jointly commissioned mental health and social care residential provision for the small number of children and young people with the most complex needs in Wales.

Welsh Government should also act to ensure that the existing mental health in-patient units in Wales make changes necessary to extend the range of young people who can be safely cared for there.

Welsh Government should take action to develop secure mental health provision in Wales for the very small number of children who require this care.

Leaving care

Welsh Government should amend legislation and guidance for the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 to secure all care leavers entitlement to a Personal Advisor up to the age of 25.

Welsh Government should make more definitive progress on extending the entitlements of the 'When I'm Ready' scheme to provide an equivalent level of support for young people leaving residential care. This should be secured on a statutory basis.

Removing the element of profit from children's care services

Welsh Government must commit to taking concrete actions within the next year towards reducing and ultimately ending profit making in children's care services, without detriment to children and young people's current care arrangements.

POLICY AREA

RECOMMENDATION

Education, Citizenship and Cultural Activities

Elective Home Education

Welsh Government must implement statutory guidance giving effect to my three tests in full in 2020, to ensure children's rights are being respected wherever they are educated.

The UNCRC in the Curriculum for Wales

To ensure an enduring commitment to the human rights of children the **Welsh Government** should introduce a duty upon all relevant bodies to pay due regard to the UNCRC in the delivery of the curriculum. This duty should be placed on the face of the Curriculum and Assessment bill.

Bullying

Welsh Government should ensure that schools' self-evaluation incorporates a record of all incidences and types of reported bullying. Schools should be expected to use this information to plan, monitor and evaluate their preventative and responsive anti-bullying work, in line with the approach described in the re-drafted Respecting Others, and the impact of this should be assessed as part of school inspection.

Additional Learning Needs

The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 applies to young people up to the age of 25. Government must ensure that there is a statutory duty that requires all children and young people covered by the Act to be provided with safe transport to their place of education.

Welsh Government should therefore reconsider their response to my 15116 annual report recommendation to review the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 and associated statutory provision and guidance.

POLICY AREA

RECOMMENDATION

Adequate Standard of Living

Poverty

Welsh Government need to take account of the recommendations of the Charter for Change report, and publish a delivery plan setting out in detail how departments across Government will take practical steps to mitigate and tackle the impact of child poverty.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Welsh Government works as a matter of urgency to establish continuation arrangements for the important work currently being delivered through the Together for Children and Young People Programme.

Health Transitions

Welsh Government should ensure that health boards have effective guidance that will lead to children and young people having access to coherent multi-agency pathways for transition to adult services. Children and young people should be directly involved in the creation of their care plans.

This guidance should also ensure that 16 and 17 year olds accessing health services for the first time, including emergency care, have a clear pathway to age-appropriate care.

Health Advocacy

Welsh Government should establish national standards for health-related advocacy for all children and young people who require it and monitor health boards' progress towards commissioning sufficient advocacy, and their promotion of it.

Organisational Processes



Organisational Processes

As a public office in receipt of public funds, the Commissioner is committed to implementing rigorous and transparent accountability and decision-making systems. Our evaluation framework is designed to provide an overview of the delivery of our core work and the internal processes within the organisation. It focuses on four elements: the Commissioner's people, the Commissioner's organisational processes, the Commissioner's financial sustainability and value for money and children and young people of Wales. You'll be able to read about two of the four elements – our work with children and young people and financial sustainability – elsewhere within the report, and below we've included highlights in relation to the Commissioner's people and organisational processes. Our Governance Statement on page 110 onwards also touches on elements of this evaluation cycle.

Organisational Processes



Commissioner's people

Training:

Table 6 on page 96 demonstrates that nine team members from across the majority of grades, working patterns and gender applied and benefited from external training.

In addition, during the financial year 2018/2019, all members of the team participated in our organisational learning and development programme through external training providers:

- **Stonewall Cymru**
- **Project Management Training (Accredited)**
- **Media Training**
- **Strategic Planning Days**
- **Plain English Training**
- **Cymraeg Clir**
- **Cyberbullying awareness**
- **Conversations with vulnerable people delivered by the Samaritans**

Sickness:

Cumulative percentage for 2018/19 is 5.45%

Workforce Profile and Equal Pay Profile for the financial year 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019

We routinely collect workforce statistics in relation to all of the protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act and these statistics help us to identify positive actions in relation to equality each year. We do not publish all of these statistics in this document due to the small size of our workforce and the difficulty in maintaining anonymity of this potentially sensitive data.

1. Workforce Gender Statistics

Table 1
Headcount by gender and comparison against census population data 2014 Wales (3,092,000)
31 March 2019

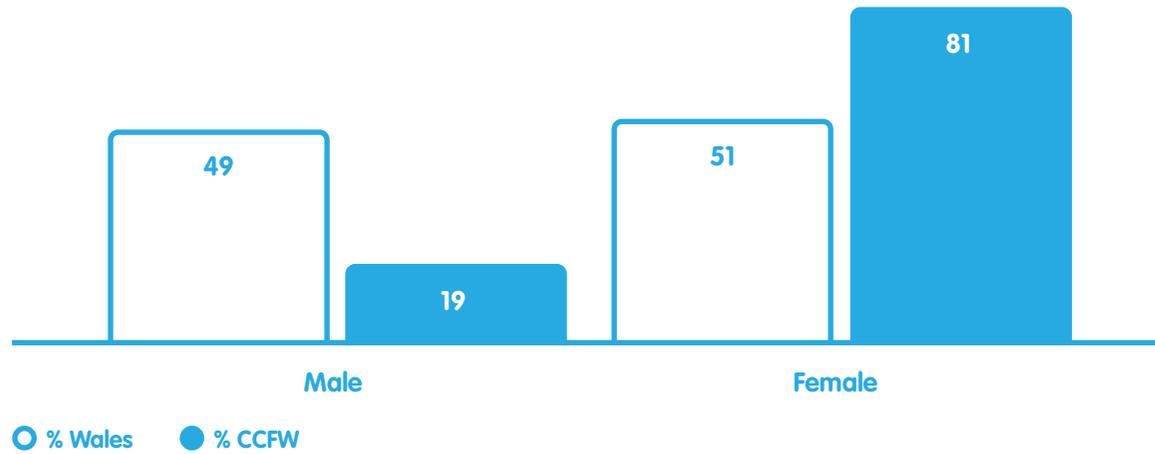


Table 1 shows that the gender split in CCFW on 31 March 2019 does not reflect the gender split in the population of Wales as a whole.

Table 2
Gender trend over the last 5 years

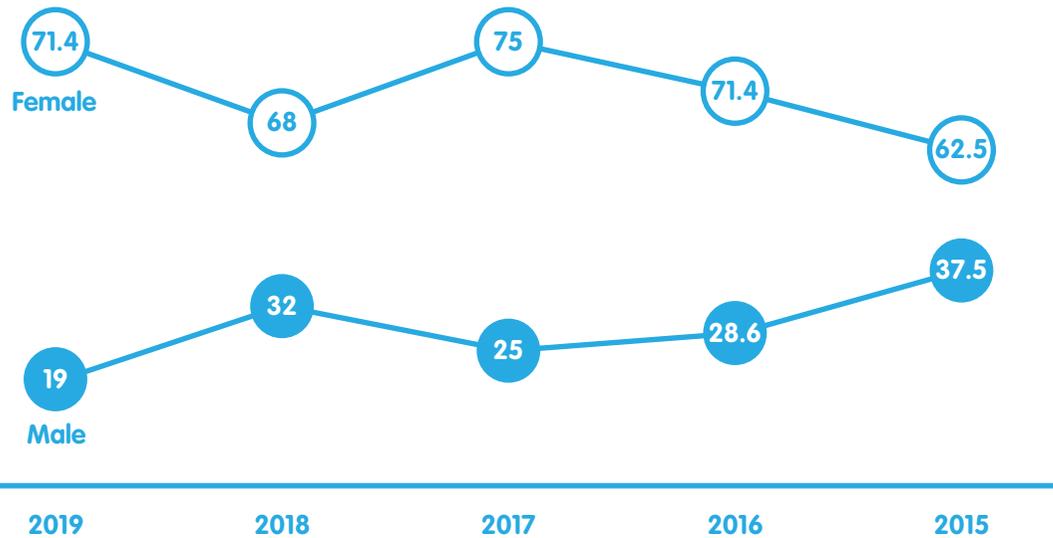


Table 2 highlights gender trends for our organisation over the last 5 years. Whilst we were pleased to report an improvement in our gender balance last year, this year we have seen a disappointing reduction in male members of the workforce. We will continue to work hard to improve our gender diversity in recruitment processes with carefully worded adverts and gender balanced interview panels.

2. Workforce Age Statistics

Table 3
Age profile

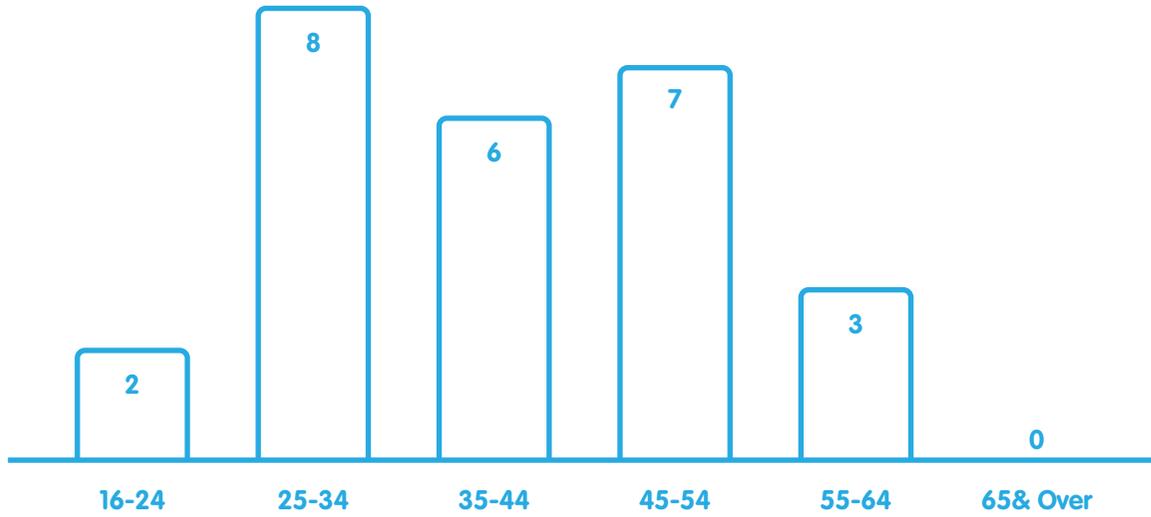


Table 3 shows that most age ranges are represented in the organisation except age 65 and over at present.

2. Workforce Gender, Contract type and Pay Statistics on 31st March 2019

Table 4
Age profile

PAY - BAND or equivalent	Full time Male Permanent	Full time Male Permanent	Part time Male Permanent	Part time Male Temporary	Full time Female Permanent	Full time Female Permanent	Part time Female Permanent	Part time Female Temporary	Total
Team Band £19- 22k pa					1	2	1	1	5
Officer band 3 £23 – 27k pa					1				1
Officer band 2 £29 – 35k pa	3				6		4		13
Officer band 1 £37 – 44k pa			1		1		1		3
Exec. Officer band £48–58k	1				1				2
Commissioner £90-95k pa							1		1
Partnerships & Collaborations							1		1
Total	4	0	1	0	10	4	6	1	26

The Job Evaluation and Grading System that underpins the pay system in CCfW system allocates a banding to individual posts based on seven different work factors: autonomy, problem solving, decision-making, impact, management of resources, contacts and communication, knowledge and skills. This system ensures that differences in pay relate to specific job requirements.

Table 4 describes our current work force by gender, pay band, contract and working pattern. Further analysis of these patterns reveals some continuing gender pay differences.

Grading:

Of the 21 female staff in post on 31 March 2019, 4 female staff members (14% of the female workforce) are employed in the three highest pay bands, this is compared to 2 male staff members (40% of the male workforce). Although the smaller number of male employees occupy a disproportionate number of senior roles in the workforce as a whole, the gender balance of the Management Team is weighted toward female members of staff with 4 female members and 2 male members.

Only female staff members occupy the lowest pay band in CCfW and this has been the case since 2011 when we began collecting workforce equality statistics.

Salary:

Female staff continue to be the larger part of our workforce however the average salary for a female worker on 31 March 2019 was £35,807 and the average salary for a male worker was £39,571. There is a difference of £3,764 this year. This is the biggest differential reported since 2015/16 and is due to the reduction in male staff members this year from 8 to 5 people and the recruitment of female graduate interns on the lowest grade.

Working pattern:

Of the 21 females employed, one third of the workers occupy part time roles (33% of the female workforce or 7 people) compared to just one male employee (20% of the male workforce).

Table 5

PAY - BAND or equivalent	Full time Male Permanent	Full time Male Permanent	Part time Male Permanent	Part time Male Temporary	Full time Female Permanent	Full time Female Permanent	Part time Female Permanent	Part time Female Temporary	Total
Officer band 3 £23 – 27k pa	1								1
Officer band 2 £29 – 35k pa	1						2		3
Officer band 1 £37 – 44k pa	1								1
Partnerships & Collaborations						1			1
Total	3	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	6

Seven new people joined the team between April 2018 and March 2019 (3 temporary posts and 3 permanent posts) and six staff members left the team in the same period.

This is a 23.5% turnover rate.

6. Workforce Training and Development Statistics

Table 6

PAY - BAND or equivalent	Full time Male Permanent	Full time Male Permanent	Part time Male Permanent	Part time Male Temporary	Full time Female Permanent	Full time Female Permanent	Part time Female Permanent	Part time Female Temporary	Total
Team Band £19- 22k pa						1			1
Officer band 3 £23 – 27k pa							1		2
Officer band 2 £29 – 35k pa	1						1		2
Officer band 1 £37 – 44k pa			1		1		1		3
Exec. Officer band £48–58k	1				1				2
Commissioner £90-95k pa						1			1
Total	2	0	1	0	2	2	2	0	26

Our processes

Complaints: We received 2 complaints this year and lessons from them have been shared with relevant staff members and are discussed on a quarterly basis with our Management Team and with the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

Our work on implementing the Welsh Language Standards:

Welsh Language Act

The following information provides details about how we have complied with section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales Measure) 2011 requiring her to adhere to a set of Welsh Language standards imposed on our office by the Welsh Language Commissioner in 2016.

How we have complied with the Act

We actively promote the Welsh language and the principles of the Welsh language (Wales Measure) 2011 and we've put in place structural measures to ensure we comply with Welsh language standards. A member of the management team leads on compliance with all equalities and Welsh language legislative requirements.

This year we have:

- Continued to monitor and ensure compliance with the Welsh Language standards at monthly management team meetings.
- Improved the Welsh language skills of the workforce. All non- fluent staff have participated in internal Welsh Language tuition. Learning opportunities have been provided for staff according to their level of skills.
- Reviewed with staff existing opportunities to improve their Welsh language skills and implemented changes to the provision of in house Welsh learning.
- Attended Welsh Language Commissioner workshop on Policy decisions and internal operations.
- Rebranded and updated external website ensuring that both were compliant with Welsh language standards.
- Continued to offer our services through the medium of Welsh or English, according to the choice of those accessing our services, including all written materials, webinars, ambassador days and all other engagement with children, casework service and reception.

Number of employees who have Welsh Language skills at the end of the year in question

(Standard 145) – As at 31 March 2019 there were 26 members of staff employed at the Commissioner’s office. Of the 26 people employed during that period:

- 8 describe themselves as proficient in Welsh.
- 6 describe themselves as having intermediate level skills in Welsh.
- 3 describe themselves as having advanced skills in Welsh.
- 0 describes themselves as having foundation level skills in Welsh
- 9 describe themselves as unable to speak Welsh/entry level Welsh

Number of employees who attended training courses we offered in Welsh during the year

(Standard 146) –

We offered one training course in Welsh during the year - “Cymraeg Clir” – which was delivered to five staff in the office.

In order to help staff improve their Welsh Language skills we commissioned tailored Welsh Language training courses during this period.

Number of new and vacant posts that we advertised during the year that were categorised as posts where:

- **Welsh Language Skills were essential** – One temporary Administrative Officer post, one Executive Support Officer Post, three permanent Participation Officer posts, one temporary Participation Officer post, and one Head of Policy and Public Affairs post.
- **Welsh Language skills needed to be learnt when appointed to the post** – Nil
- **Welsh Language skills were desirable** – Two Policy Officer posts and two graduate intern officer posts.
- **Welsh Language skills were not necessary** – One temporary Finance Project Manager post

Number of complaints received during the year in relation to compliance with the operational standards with which we were under a duty to comply – No complaints have been received in relation to compliance with the operational standards.

Our work on implementing the Equality Duty

Our 2016–2020 strategic equality plan outlines how we intend to ensure that my team and I work towards ensuring that children and young people in Wales grow up in a country where equality and children’s human rights are central to the way in which public services are delivered. This plan includes four broad strategic equality objectives, progress against which we discuss on a quarterly basis at management team meetings.

As the champion for children and young people in Wales we take great pride in our extensive engagement work with those who we’re here to represent. A year into post the Commissioner consulted with over 7000 children and young people who told us they led safe, happy and active lives. But we also heard about how they missed out in a variety of ways and how they are discriminated against or face additional barriers because of their age, their disability, their race or religion, because they are LGBT or because of their gender. We drew on the results of this work as we drafted Sally Holland’s first equality plan as Commissioner.

This year, to help create Sally’s final three-year strategic work plan as Commissioner, we consulted again, this time with over 10000 children, young people, parents and professionals from across Wales. The results of ‘Beth Nawr? | What Now?’ and the evidence review on the human rights of children in Wales will shape the team’s work until Sally leaves post but it also provides a real insight in terms of the realisation of children’s rights in Wales and seeks to establish what data are currently being collected in Wales to enable the monitoring of children’s rights. Encouragingly, there are some real positives but there remain areas of great concern, including the lack of official monitoring data on the negative language and bullying in schools related to children’s protected characteristics reported by both children and young people. Our 2019/20 work plan aims to tackle some of those concerns.

Accounts



Audit and Risk Assurance Committee's Annual Report

Under its Terms of Reference, the committee is required to produce an Annual Report summarising the work done during the year to support the Annual Accounts and Governance Statement. The Children's Commissioner's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) is therefore pleased to present this report for the year ending 31 March 2019.

Introduction

The primary role of the Committee is to provide independent advice to the Children's Commissioner for Wales, to assist her to discharge her responsibilities as Accounting Officer. The Committee reports directly to the Children's Commissioner for Wales and members act in an advisory capacity and have no executive powers.

This report focuses on the Committee's work in relation to the Children's Commissioner for Wales' governance arrangements, risk management, internal control and assurance framework.

To ensure the Committee complies with the Good Practice principles set out in HM Treasury's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Handbook, members were invited to complete the National Audit Office's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Effectiveness Checklist, the results of which have been taken into account in preparing this Annual Report.

Membership

Non-Executive Members

- Jocelyn Davies (Chair), a former Member of the National Assembly for Wales
- Aine Denvir, a childcare solicitor
- Margaret Provis, former Civil Servant
- Nina Ruddle, Head of Public Policy Engagement at Wrexham Glyndwr University
- Arwel Thomas, former Civil Servant

Commissioner's staff

- Sally Holland, Children's Commissioner for Wales
- Tony Evans, Head of Finance
- Sara Jermin, Head of Communications and Performance
- Christian Webb, Executive Assistant to the Commissioner, who provides Secretariat support to the Committee (until August 2018), replaced by Ceirios Williams, Executive Support Officer

Others

Representatives from Deloitte LLP (internal auditors) and the Wales Audit Office (external auditors).

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee's Annual Report

Remuneration

Members do not receive any remuneration but can be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses occurred.

Conflicts of interest

As members of ARAC, each member of the Committee completes an annual declaration of interests, held in accordance with all relevant data protection regulations. In addition, the first agenda item for any ARAC meeting allowed for the declaration of any interest specific to the agenda items for that meeting.

Training

The Chair attended a sector update workshop on cyber-security, GDPR, Risk Assurance and changes in relation to IFRS 16 and IR35 in October 2018, hosted by Deloitte LLP. Plans are in place to host refresher risk management training with Deloitte LLP for all members in 2019/20.

Meetings

We aim to meet at least four times a year. During this financial year, meetings were held in May 2018, July 2018, October 2018 and February 2019.

Attendance Record

MEMBER	ATTENDANCE LEVEL
Jocelyn Davies	100%
Aine Denvir	75%
Margaret Provis	100%
Nina Ruddle	25%
Arwel Thomas	100%
Sally Holland	100%
Tony Evans	75%
Sara Jermin	100%
Christian Webb	100% *Secretariat until August 2018
Ceirios Williams	100% *Secretariat from September 2018
Deloitte	100%
Wales Audit Office	100%

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee's Annual Report

Committee Business

Terms of Reference, reviewed annually, details the Committee's remit and work plan. They were last updated and approved in May 2018. Included within the Terms are details of the Committee's standing agenda items, including:

- **Risk Register**
- **Cyber Security Risk Register**
- **Finance report**
- **Internal Audit report**
- **External Audit update**
- **Governance / evaluation framework**

The Committee's Chair reviews the agenda prior to its despatch to Committee members and attendees.

In addition to the routine items, the Committee reviewed the following updated internal policies during the 2018/19 financial year:

- **Risk Management Policy**
- **Document Retention Policy and implementation plan**

and advised on the draft governance statement, new risk appetite statements, draft work plans, information asset register and the draft budget estimate to the Welsh Government. Members also advised on the process by which the organisation undertook a review of its accommodation in Swansea and received quarterly reports on lessons learned relating to a complaint.

To ensure that appropriate matters can be raised in confidence, the Chair and non-executive members also meet with representatives of External and Internal Auditors in private at least once a year.

Overall Assessment

External Audit

reported the Auditor General's intention to issue an unqualified audit report on the financial statements. A number of recommendations were also included as a result of issues arising from the audit, in relation to the qualitative aspects of the Commissioner's accounting practices and financial reporting, oversight of the financial reporting process and some internal controls. The Commissioner's team report on progress made in relation to these recommendations on a quarterly basis to the Committee and separate meetings have been held to discuss progress with the Commissioner and separately with the Head of Finance and his team.

Internal Audit

Deloitte LLP, as the Commissioner's appointed internal auditors, provide independent and objective assurance to the Accounting Officer on risk management, internal control and governance. They completed a full internal audit programme in 2018/19, as approved by ARAC and stated in its annual report to the Committee:

"Based on our work undertaken our overall assessment is that the classification of assurance for corporate governance is **substantial assurance**."

"Based on our work undertaken our overall assessment is that the classification of assurance for risk management is **substantial assurance**."

"Based on the work we have undertaken during the year we are able to conclude that the Commissioner has a basically sound system of internal control, which should provide **substantial assurance** regarding the achievement of the Commissioner's objectives."

*Definition: Assurance level – Substantial. The framework of governance, risk management and control is adequate and effective.

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee's Annual Report

Conclusion

As a result of its work and the findings of internal and external audit, the Committee can provide the Accounting Officer with assurances that the governance, financial management and risk management arrangements in place are appropriate and have operated satisfactorily during the financial year.

The Committee thanks the Commissioner and her staff for being open and receptive to challenge and for the cooperative approach they have taken to the Committee's work. Members would also like to extend their gratitude to the internal and external auditors for their constructive contribution and collaboration.

Prepared by
Jocelyn Davies, Chair
May 2019

Accounts 2018-19 Directors' Report

Introduction

The Children's Commissioner for Wales is an independent children's human rights institution. The principal aim of the Commissioner is to safeguard and promote the rights and welfare of children. Two laws set out rules about how she can carry out her work and give her certain powers. These are the Care Standards Act 2000 and the Children's Commissioner for Wales Act 2001 (which amended the Care Standards Act 2000).

Here is a summary of the Commissioner's powers

- **The power to review and monitor the arrangements for complaints, whistleblowing and advocacy of defined public bodies;**
- **The power to review the exercise of functions (powers and duties) or proposed exercise of functions of defined public bodies, including Welsh Government;**
- **The power to examine cases, in respect of individual children;**
- **The power to provide assistance to individual children; and**
- **The power to make representations to the First Minister, Welsh Ministers and the Counsel General about any matters affecting the rights and welfare of children which concern her and for which she does not have the power to act.**

The Commissioner does not have the power to act in a number of defined circumstances:

- **Matters that have not been devolved to the Welsh Government which include immigration and asylum, child poverty, justice and policing, and children in the military;**
- **Where CAFCASS (the Children and Court Advisory Service) is able to act;**
- **Where Welsh Ministers have functions in respect of family proceedings; and**
- **From enquiring about or reporting on any matter that is or has been the subject of legal proceedings.**

Professor Sally Holland took up her post as the Commissioner from 20th April 2015, having been appointed by the First Minister, for a seven year term. The remaining senior officers took up appointments between May 2006 and August 2016 and were appointed by the Commissioner under Schedule 2 paragraph 4 of the Care Standards Act 2000.

Senior Officers

The following persons served as the Management Team during 2018-19:

- **Professor Sally Holland - Children's Commissioner for Wales;**
- **Andy Wallsgrove – Head of Practice;**
- **Sara Jermin – Head of Communications and Performance;**
- **Tony Evans - Head of Finance;**
- **Amanda Evans – Head of Human Resources; and**
- **Rachel Thomas – Head of Policy and Public Affairs.**

Accounts 2018-19 Directors' Report

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

The Commissioner's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee provides advice and assurance in respect of corporate governance, risk management and control within the Commissioner's office and the adequacy of the internal and external audit arrangements. It meets at least bi-annually and is made-up of senior officials of the Commissioner's Office and Non-Executive members. The Non-Executive members of the Committee are:

- **Jocelyn Davies – former Member of the National Assembly of Wales**
- **Aine Denvir – Child Care Solicitor;**
- **Margaret Provis – former Civil Servant;**
- **Nina Ruddle – Head of Public Policy Engagement at Wrexham Glyndwr University, and**
- **Arwel Thomas – former Civil Servant.**

Funding

The Children's Commissioner for Wales is independent of, but funded by the Welsh Government. In 2018-19 the Commissioner received £1.543 million (2017-18: £1.583 million) to fund the Commissioner's activities. The funding in 2017-18 included £40,000, from the Welsh Government, to fund a specific project (Bright Spots) within the period.

Format of the Accounts

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Paragraph 7(2) Schedule 2 of the Care Standards Act 2000 and the Accounts Direction issued by Welsh Ministers. A copy of that direction can be obtained from Children's Commissioner for Wales, Oystermouth House, Charter Court, Phoenix Way, Swansea, SA7 9FS.

These accounts have been prepared for the period from 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019 and reflect the assets, liabilities and resource outturn of the Children's Commissioner. These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Government's Financial Reporting Manual (FRM) issued by HM Treasury. The accounting policies contained in the FRM apply International Accounting Standards (IFRS) as adopted or interpreted for the public sector context.

Results for the Year

The Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure shows expenditure, for the period, of £1.579 million (2017-18: £1.524 million). The general fund balance as at the year-end is £235,000 (2017-18: £271,000).

During 2018-19 the Commissioner's staff changed to 22.50 (whole time equivalent) from 22.36 (whole time equivalent) members of staff, which includes full time and part time employees.

Accounts 2018-19

Directors' Report

Learning and Development

The Commissioner continues to invest in the provision of learning and development opportunities for staff.

Through the Commissioner's Appraisal Process all staff are encouraged to identify personal development needs and record these needs on a Personal Development Plan. The Appraisal Policy is a process which links individual performance and development to the objectives of the organisation. The main purpose of this process is to improve every employee's performance and contribution to the achievement of objectives by providing them with the right skills and environment to do their job to the best of their ability.

In addition the Office provides all employees with regular staff development sessions each financial year. These meet its obligations with regards to learning and development that is either dictated by statute or is considered essential for all staff groups, covering topics, for example, on Child Protection and Safeguarding.

Staff Consultation and Engagement

The Commissioner regularly consults with staff on major changes to the organisation and organisational development priorities. This is achieved through a variety of methods including weekly staff meetings (Fika), regular surveys and whole team development days. In addition all staff were provided with opportunities as individuals and in groups to contribute to the strategic planning.

Staff Absences

During 2018-19 the sickness absence rate within the Commissioner's office was 5.45 percent (2017-18: 3.8 percent), based as a percentage of the total available working days.

Sustainability

The Commissioner is committed to the principles as outlined in the Wellbeing and Future Generations Act 2015, which are:

- **A prosperous Wales;**
- **A resilient Wales;**
- **A healthier Wales;**
- **A more equal Wales;**
- **A Wales of cohesive communities;**
- **A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language; and**
- **A globally responsible Wales.**

The Commissioner is committed to minimising her Office's impact on the environment wherever possible and seeks to reduce its impact via the following steps:

- **Stationery and office resources: staff are encouraged to minimise their use of office consumables whenever possible. Printing and photocopying are kept to the minimum;**
- **Travel: where practical, meetings are held using video conferencing wherever possible. More than 90 percent of the Commissioner's official journeys are carried out by train or bicycle and she encourages her staff to do the same;**
- **Energy: the Commissioner encourages all staff to be energy conscious and consider ways of reducing their carbon footprint; and**
- **Waste disposal: the Commissioner is committed to recycling all waste, subject to external restrictions.**

The Commissioner has also been aided by Glyncollen Primary School in helping improve energy efficiency to reduce the consumption of energy; and lower the carbon footprint of the office.

Accounts 2018-19 Directors' Report

Equal Opportunities

All applications for employment with the Children's Commissioner for Wales are considered on the grounds that all job applicants should have equal opportunity for employment and advancement on the basis of their ability, qualifications and suitability for the work. No job applicant or employee should receive less favourable treatment on grounds of race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, disability, religion, family/domestic responsibilities or working patterns, nor should any individual be disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable.

Auditors

The Children's Commissioner for Wales' accounts are examined and certified by the Auditor General for Wales in accordance with paragraph 9 of Schedule 2 to the Care Standards Act 2000.

Deloitte LLP provides internal audit services for the Commissioner.

During the period no remuneration was paid to the auditors for non-audit work.

Disclosure of Information to the Auditors

So far as the Commissioner's Office is aware, there is no audit information of which the auditors are unaware; and the Office has taken all the steps that it ought to have taken to make itself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

Personal Data Related Incidents

Within the financial year, there were no reported incidents involving personal data. The Commissioner maintains an information security policy and procedures that ensure incidents related to personal data related incidents are minimised.

Events since the End of the Financial Year

There have been no events since the end of the financial year that affect the understanding of these financial statements.

Statement of Accounting Officer's Responsibilities

Under Schedule 2 of the Care Standards Act, Welsh Ministers have directed the Children's Commissioner for Wales to prepare for each financial year a statement of accounts in the form and on the basis set out in the Accounts Direction. The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Children's Commissioner for Wales and of its income and expenditure, changes in taxpayers' equity and cash flows for the financial year.

In preparing the accounts, the Accounting Officer is required to comply with the requirements of the Government Financial Reporting Manual and in particular to:

- **observe the Accounts Direction issued by Welsh Ministers, including the relevant accounting and disclosure requirements, and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis;**
- **make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis;**
- **state whether applicable accounting standards as set out in the Government Financial Reporting Manual have been followed, and disclose and explain any material departures in the financial statements; and**
- **prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.**

The Commissioner is the Accounting Officer for her office by virtue of paragraph 10 of Schedule 2 to the Care Standards Act 2000. The responsibilities of the Accounting Officer, including responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances for which the Accounting Officer is answerable, for keeping proper records and for safeguarding the Children's Commissioner for Wales' assets, are set out in an Accounting Officers' Memorandum issued by HM Treasury.

Annual Governance Statement

This Statement by the Children’s Commissioner for Wales sets out the basis on which the organisation has been established, the way in which it is governed and managed and how it is accountable for what it does.

Role of the Children’s Commissioner for Wales

Established by the Care Standards Act 2000, the Children’s Commissioner for Wales is an independent human rights institution. The Commissioner’s remit is laid down in the Children’s Commissioner for Wales Act 2001, which amended the Care Standards Act 2000. The principal aim of the Commissioner is to safeguard and promote the rights and welfare of children. This must be the Commissioner’s overriding objective when undertaking her functions.

A summary of the Commissioner’s powers is available [here](#)

Current post holder

Professor Sally Holland took up her post as the Commissioner on 20th April 2015, having been appointed by the First Minister for a seven-year term.

Annual Governance Statement

Governance Structure

Below is a description of our governance structure. Further details about the membership of each group, attendance and respective terms of reference can be accessed on our website .

Sally Holland – Children’s Commissioner for Wales

- Corporation Sole
- Accounting Officer

Management Team (MT)

Comprising: Head of Communications & Performance, Head of Practice, Head of Finance, Head of Policy & Public Affairs, Head of Human Resources. Chaired by the Commissioner.

The MT’s primary purpose is to provide the Commissioner with support and advice on the strategic direction of the organisation, including contributing to the development of strategic aims and annual work plans. The MT is also responsible for the strategic leadership of the organisation, managing the operational, day-to-day running of the office in line with the organisation’s values.

Commissioner’s Advisory Panel and Young People’s Panel

Commissioner’s Advisory Panel & Young People’s Panel, comprising 10-12 adult members & 2-4 young people

Young People’s Panel, comprising 18 members aged 11–18

Provide independent advice, support, scrutiny and challenge to the Commissioner and her staff, so as to secure the effective delivery of the Children’s Commissioner’s statutory responsibilities and to act as a critical friend and sounding board for the Commissioner and her staff regarding policies and proposals, informing the policy and strategic priorities.

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

Comprising: 4–6 Non-Executive members

Advise the Commissioner on the strategic processes for risk, control and governance, accounting policies, the accounts, and the planned activity and results of both internal and external audit.

Governance framework

As a public office in receipt of public funds, I am committed to implementing rigorous and transparent accountability and decision-making systems.

My governance framework comprises the systems, processes and values by which the organisation is directed and controlled. These arrangements are firmly rooted in 'The Good Governance for Public Services', highlighted by the Wales Audit Office as a best practice model, and the 'International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector'. It also draws on elements from the 'UK Corporate Governance Code'. It builds on the Nolan Principles for the conduct of individuals in public life by setting out six core principles of good governance for public service organisations.

Below are details of the extent to which the organisation lives up to these standards and explains the reasons for adapting the principles to suit the organisation. In accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, corporate governance has been subject to internal audit by our consultants, Deloitte. They have offered substantial assurance for our corporate governance for 2018-19.



Governance framework

Being clear about the organisation's purpose and outcomes

Having a clear organisational purpose and set of objectives is a hallmark of good governance. My strategic planning approach is the systemic approach to determining my team's goals. It enables the office to fulfil its legislative remit and to deliver against the vision and objectives set out in my three-year plan: 'A Plan for All Children and Young People 2016 – 2019'.

The strategic and annual planning processes provides an overall strategic direction for all functions within the office; and helps to ensure my team and I make the most effective use of organisational resources to maximise our impact for children and young people in Wales.

Engaging stakeholders and making accountability real

My first three-year plan was developed following a large-scale consultation of over 7000 children, young people and adults who care and work for them. Included within that plan were my ambitions for 2016–2019 and during the next financial year (2019–20) a full evaluation of the impact of that plan will be undertaken and published.

To ensure my final strategic plan as Commissioner was developed based on intelligence gathered from children, young people and adults, we undertook our biggest ever consultation, Beth Nawr, where over 11000 people – over 10000 children and over 1000 adults – took part. Their views and opinions helped shape 'A Plan for Children and Young People 2019–2022', which includes my strategic objectives for the organisation.

In addition to these large-scale consultation, our participation strategy ensures I am working with and speaking up for children and young people across the country and our strategic planning policy expects all of our projects to work with children and young people to deliver change. Projects are also expected to have comprehensive communications and influencing plans to ensure we're working effectively with external partners to realise our ambitions for children and young people.

My panels of young people and adults provide me and my team with advice and challenge and plans are now well underway to ensure my work will be scrutinised by Wales' newly-established Youth Parliament.

Capacity and capability to be an effective organisation

I recognise that governance is strengthened by the participation of people with many different types of knowledge and experience. I am confident, due to our Performance Development Framework, that all members of staff have the necessary skills, knowledge and capacity to discharge their responsibilities.

All new staff members attend an induction process and also invest in developing and nurturing staff talents. You can read more about our learning and development programme here.

My biennial staff survey also assists the organisation to help measure the employee experience and contributes to the continuous cycle of improvements in relation to people practices. Here are some highlights of our 2018-19 staff survey, completed by 19 members of staff (82% response rate):

100% of respondents agree or strongly agree that we listen to different communities and we work on the things that matter to them

100% of respondents agree or strongly agree that children's voices are at the heart of everything we do

100% of respondents agree or strongly agree that we evaluate and demonstrate our impact and effectiveness

89% of respondents agree or strongly agree that we demonstrate continuous improvement in our work from regular reflection

Governance framework

Promoting Values for the Organisation and Demonstrating the Values of Good Governance through Upholding High Standards of Conduct and Behaviour

Developed with staff during 2015, our values and principles for delivery underpin all my team's operational and staff policies as well as our three-year strategy. They are shared with new staff members during induction and are communicated externally on our website and in our strategic publications, including our three year strategy.

My management team and I are committed to enabling and empowering employees to meet individual, team and strategic goals and consider the process of annual appraisals, objective settings and personal development planning processes to be fundamental to achieving this aim.

In my 2018/19 staff survey, completed by 19 members of staff (82% response rate), results indicated how:

100% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they have a clear understanding of our purpose as an organisation
89% respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they understand how their work contributes to our strategic goals and annual work plan objectives
100% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that there are effective policies and procedures in place for project management and strategic planning.

Developed with staff, my Performance Development Framework helps us foster a culture that values high performance and strengthens and improves how we carry out our roles.

As an organisation we are committed to investing time and resources in the development of everyone who works here and the development of clear systems and structures to support the way we work because:

- **We know that establishing a shared understanding about what is to be achieved, and everyone understanding their role within that, enables people to deliver on behalf of the organisation and for children and young people in Wales. We achieve this through the development of our longer term strategic goals and annual work plans.**
- **We know that people make their contribution and provide the highest quality of work when they have clear, meaningful and challenging work to do. We achieve this through the setting of individual work objectives for the year.**
- **We know that the quality of the conversations between line managers and individuals has a direct impact on our success as an organisation. We hope to achieve this through the structure of regular supervision discussions and biennial one-to-one meetings for all staff with the Commissioner.**
- **We also know that having time to plan work and reflect on what went well and what could be different in the future enables individuals to grow and improve in their practice. We achieve this through our appraisal and personal development practice and our project management approach.**

Governance framework

Taking Informed and Transparent Decisions which are Subject to Effective Scrutiny and Managing Risk

Responsibility for decision-making in the office rests with me, as corporation sole. However, I have delegated aspects of the operational decision making to the Management Team. Roles and responsibilities for all staff are clearly defined in respective job descriptions and within the Governance Framework. All employees have clear conditions of employment and job descriptions, which set out their roles and responsibilities.

All staff are required to work within our project management approach, which ensures our outputs and intended outcomes for children and young people are clearly defined and achieved. A comprehensive project management plan is developed for each project, in accordance with our overhauled Strategic Planning Policy, saved centrally for all staff to access. Details of all our project work can be accessed [here](#). To support this way of working, every member of my team has had access to an Association of Project Management-approved project management training course, and a large proportion of staff members at all levels of the organisation have secured project management qualification.

Discussions and decisions taken by the Management Team and our Audit and Risk Assurance Committee are documented and recorded in minutes, which are shared with all staff on a monthly and quarterly basis respectively. Time sensitive or critical information is shared with the staff team by emails or via our weekly 'Fika' meetings, which involve all staff members. Outcomes of discussions with the advisory panels and Audit and Risk Assurance Committee are also shared with staff, and members of the team are involved in those meetings as appropriate.

Financial management is based on a framework of regular management information and a set of clear financial procedures, outlined within the organisation's Finance Handbook. Review of management information involves regular budget monitoring and reporting. Comparison of spend against budget is reposted to Management Team every month and to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee on a quarterly basis. Our project management approach also requires all project managers to develop detailed budgets, which are reported on monthly at Management Team. My internal auditors have provided substantial assurance for the organisation's budgetary control and fixed assets and moderate assurance for our banking and cash management processes.

I also take issues around fraud and maladministration very seriously. My team and I have in place policies on whistleblowing, anti-fraud, code of conduct and complaints – all have been overhauled this year and are incorporated into a rolling schedule for review.

Governance framework

Risk Management

My Risk Management Policy defines the framework for risk management within the organisation. It is based on good practice guidance from the Institute of Risk Management, the international risk management standards outlined in ISO 31000 and 'The Orange Book: Management of Risk – Principles and Concepts', published by HM Treasury.

The system of internal control in relation to risk is based on a continuous process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievements of the organisation's strategic objectives and compliance with policies and procedures. This involves evaluating the likelihood of those risks being realised and impact should they be realised on the organisation and on children and young people, and managing them efficiently, effectively and economically. In practice, it means all members of staff accepting that risks are inevitable. It also means in practice, every member of staff should be proactive in identifying and managing risks, to ensure the successful delivery of our three-year strategic plan.

My team and I manage risk on three levels:

- **Our corporate risk register, identifies risks associated with our strategic objectives.**
- **Our project risk registers and issues logs, for each project within our annual work plan, are managed by our project managers, who report to Management Team every month.**
- **Our thematic risk registers are in place for specific areas of core work e.g. cyber security. These are maintained by officers responsible for that area of work.**

Developed this year by my Management Team, and reviewed by my Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, is a suite of risk appetites for the organisation. We based our work on advice and guidance from the Institute of Risk Management, Deloitte and the UK Corporate Governance Code and below is a general statement about our risk appetite. Our other risk appetite statements can be viewed [here](#):

“We aim to be risk aware, not overly risk averse and to actively manage organisational risks to protect and grow the organisation. To deliver its strategic aims, the organisation recognises that it will have to take and manage certain risks. Intolerable risks are those that could:

- 1. Negatively affect the safety of employees or to children and young people who we work with and for.**
- 2. Damage the organisation's trustworthiness and bring our credibility into disrepute.**
- 3. Lead to breaches of laws and regulations.**
- 4. Endanger the future operations of the organisation.”**

Governance framework

Our corporate risk register is aligned with our three-year work plan, and includes risks associated with:

- **Not achieving measurable or tangible outcomes for children in accordance with our three- year strategy and annual work plan objectives.**
- **Public bodies not recognising the importance of a children’s rights approach nor embedding it in their delivery of service.**
- **Failure to adequately protect children and adults participating in the activities of the office (on and off site).**
- **Inadequate management information procedures.**
- **Non-compliance with the Commissioner’s statutory duties.**

I am satisfied that these risks have been monitored and managed effectively this year. Robust controls are in place to mitigate these risks and are reviewed monthly by my Management Team and quarterly with my Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. Where new work was required in order for us to effectively mitigate the risks, it was identified, allocated and implemented. We have also successfully removed some risks from our corporate risk register this year by either managing them effectively and closing them completely or by de-escalating them to relevant thematic risk registers for ongoing management by the relevant senior officer.

In 2019-20, to coincide with the publication of our new three-year plan, the corporate risk register will be reviewed to ensure it aligns with our new corporate goals.

The careful management of risk has been subject to Internal Audit, in accordance with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. Deloitte, our internal auditors, concluded that the classification of assurance for risk management in 2018-19 is ‘substantial assurance’. Our Audit and Risk Assurance Committee also maintained an overview of the effectiveness of risk management arrangements.

Performing effectively in clearly defined functions and roles

The organisation consists of four interrelated functions – Policy, Participation, Communications and Investigations and Advice - that work together in a whole-team approach. All teams are supported by dedicated finance officer, Head of Finance, Head of HR, administrative officers and an IT Officer. We deliver a work programme that is completely interdependent. Officers take expert roles within this according to their specialism but are dependent on the other parts of the organisation to deliver the programme of work.

All committees and advisory panels associated with the Commissioner have Terms of Reference, which are reviewed annually and are published on our website www.childcomwales.org.uk.

As outlined in our Strategic Planning Policy and Process, the Management Team reviews progress against all our projects, outlined in the annual work plan, every month. On an annual basis, via the Annual Report, I will reflect on the progress made against each of our strategic objectives.

My evaluation framework enables the organisation to demonstrate the effective delivery of our core work and internal processes and focuses on four elements: the Commissioner’s people, organisational processes, financial sustainability and value for money and children and young people. These reports are discussed monthly at Management Team meetings and quarterly by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

In place for the last three years are two advisory panels. Contained within their terms of reference is a specific requirement for them to offer considered advice to me and my staff, as necessary, so that our effectiveness is enhanced and my remit is fulfilled.

Review of Effectiveness

As Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the system of governance and in accordance with Managing Public Money in Wales, whether I comply with the Cabinet Office's Corporate Governance Code. This review is informed by the work of the internal auditors and the Management Team who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework, and comments made by the external auditors in their management letter and other reports. I have also been advised on the effectiveness of the system of governance by the work of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. I have undertaken to ensure the continuous improvement of the internal systems and to address any weaknesses as they arise.

The process applied in maintaining and reviewing the effectiveness of the governance framework was:

- **Collectively, the Management Team discussed and reviewed the operation of internal financial controls and the quality of the information provided;**
- **internal audit completed a review of the effectiveness of key internal controls; and**
- **the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee met in the year and advised on the implications of assurances provided in respect of corporate governance, risk management and control, the adequacy of the internal and external audit arrangements and management responses to audit recommendations.**

Deloitte provides the Internal Audit for my office within the period. They operate to Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. They submit regular reports, which include the independent opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of my system of internal control together with recommendations for improvement.

Included in Deloitte's Internal Audit Annual Report 2018-19 was the following Assurance Statement:

“Based on the work we have undertaken during the year we are able to conclude that the Commissioner has a basically sound system of internal control, which should provide substantial assurance regarding the achievement of the Commissioner’s objectives.”

From my review of the effectiveness there are no significant internal control issues and where applicable, I comply with the principles as outlined in the Corporate Governance Code.

Programme of Improvement for Governance Issues

Along with my Management Team I will continue to monitor the internal control environment and ensure that the governance framework continues to meet the needs of the organisation.

As Accounting Officer I have a legal duty to properly manage the resources made available to me to enable my office to deliver on its statutory obligations. I must also ensure that arrangements have been put in place to ensure that my office is properly managed and governed. This Governance Statement has provided a detailed description of these arrangements.

Certification by Accounting Officer

I am assured that the system of governance in operation within my office during 2018-19 has been robust. From the review of the effectiveness of the systems of internal control I am assured that the present arrangements meet the needs of the office and ensure that they comply with best practice.

Professor Sally Holland,
Children's Commissioner for Wales and Accounting Officer
17 July 2019

Remuneration and Staff Report

Remuneration of Senior Members of the Management Team

The Welsh Ministers determine the remuneration of the Children's Commissioner for Wales in accordance with Schedule 2 paragraph 3 to the Care Standards Act 2000.

For other members of the Management Team, remuneration was determined by the Children's Commissioner for Wales based on guidance from civil service recruitment specialists.

The following sections, which have been subjected to audit, provide details of the remuneration and pension benefits of the most senior officials who have delegated responsibility within the Commissioner's office:

	Salary £000*		Benefits in Kind (to nearest £100)*		Pension Benefits (to nearest £1000)*		Total £000*	
	2018-19	2017-18	2018-19	2017-18	2018-19	2017-18	2018-19	2017-18
Professor Sally Holland – Children's Commissioner for Wales	90-95	90-95	-	-	36,000	36,000	126-131	126-131
Sara Jermin – Head of Communication and Performance**	50-60	50-55	-	-	-	-	50-60	50-55
Andy Wallsgrave – Head of Practice	55-60	55-60	-	-	19,000	19,000	74-79	74-79

* This information is subject to audit.

** Sara Jermin is a member of the Partnership Pension Scheme £4,964 was paid as employer contributions during the period.

Remuneration and Staff Report

Median Remuneration

	2018-19	2017-18 Restated*
Band of highest paid individual's remuneration (£000)	90-95	90-95
Median total	28,157	30,246
Ratio	1:3.29	1:3.02

I am required to disclose the relationship between the remuneration of the highest-paid individual and the median remuneration of employees. The banded remuneration of the highest-paid individual in 2018-19 was 90-95,000 (2017-18: £90-£95,000). I have taken the mid-point of this range to compare these amounts, this was 3.29 times (2017-18: 3.02) the median remuneration of employees. Total remuneration includes salary and benefits-in-kind. It does not include employer pension contributions and the cash equivalent transfer value of pensions.

Compensation Paid, Significant Awards to Former Senior Managers

During the period 2018-19 there were no compensation payments or significant awards to former senior managers.

Remuneration and Staff Report

Pension Benefits – Civil Service Pension Scheme

	Real increase in pension*	CETV(i) at 31.3.19*	CETV(i) at 31.3.17*	Real increase/ (decrease) in CETV*
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Professor Sally Holland – Children’s Commissioner for Wales	0-2.5	108	72	20
Sara Jermin – Head of Communication and Performance	Note 1	Note 1	Note 1	Note 1
Andy Wallsgrove – Head of Practice	0-2.5	634	515	12

Note 1: Sara Jermin is a member of the Partnership Pension Scheme £4,964 was paid as employer contributions during the period.

* This information is subject to audit.

Remuneration and Staff Report

Pension Scheme

Pension benefits are provided through the Civil Service pension arrangements. From 30th July 2007, civil servants may be in one of four defined benefit schemes; either a 'final salary' scheme (**classic**, **premium** or **classic plus**); or a 'whole career' scheme (**nuvos**). These statutory arrangements are unfunded with the cost of benefits met by monies voted by Parliament each year; and although these are defined benefit schemes it is not possible to disclose the amount of assets and liabilities of the schemes. Pensions payable under **classic**, **premium**, **classic plus** and **nuvos** are increased annually in line with changes in the Consumer Prices Index (CPI). Members joining from October 2002 may opt for either the appropriate defined benefit arrangement or a good quality 'money purchase' stakeholder pension with a significant employer contribution (**partnership** pension account).

Employee contributions are set at a percent of pensionable earnings for **classic**, **premium**, **classic plus** and **nuvos**. Benefits in **classic** accrue at the rate of 1/80th of final pensionable earnings for each year of service. In addition, a lump sum equivalent to three years' pension is payable on retirement. For **premium**, benefits accrue at the rate of 1/60th of final pensionable earnings for each year of service. Unlike **classic**, there is no automatic lump sum. **Classic plus** is essentially a hybrid with benefits in respect of service before 1st October 2002 calculated broadly as per classic and benefits for service from October 2002 calculated as in premium. In **nuvos** a member builds up a pension based on their pensionable earnings during their period of scheme membership. At the end of the scheme year (31st March) the member's earned pension account is credited with 2.3 percent of their pensionable earnings in that scheme year and the accrued pension is uprated in line with RPI. In all cases members may opt to give up (commute) pension for a lump sum up to the limits set by the Finance Act 2004.

The **partnership** pension account is a stakeholder pension arrangement. The employer makes a basic contribution of between 3 percent and 14.75 percent (depending on the age of the member) into a stakeholder pension product chosen by the employee from a panel of providers. The employee does not have to contribute but where they do make contributions, the employer will match these up to a limit of 3 percent of pensionable salary (in addition to the employer's basic contribution). Employers also contribute a further 0.8 percent of pensionable salary to cover the cost of centrally provided risk benefit cover (death in service and ill health retirement).

Remuneration and Staff Report

The accrued pension quoted is the pension the member is entitled to receive when they reach pension age, or immediately on ceasing to be an active member of the scheme if they are already at or over pension age. Pension age is 60 for members of **classic**, **premium** and **classic plus** and 65 for members of **nuvos**.

Further details about the Civil Service pension arrangements can be found at the website www.civilservice-pensions.gov.uk.

(i) Cash Equivalent Transfer Values

A Cash Equivalent Transfer Value (CETV) is the actuarial assessed capitalised value of the pension scheme benefits accrued by a member at a particular point in time. The benefits valued are the member's accrued benefits and any contingent spouse's pension payable from the scheme. A CETV is a payment made by a pension scheme or arrangement to secure pension benefits in another pension scheme or arrangement when the member leaves a scheme and chooses to transfer the benefits accrued in their former scheme. The pension figures shown relate to the benefits that the individual has accrued as a consequence of their total membership of the pension scheme, not just their service in a senior capacity to which disclosure applies. The figures include the value of any pension benefit in another scheme arrangement which the individual has transferred to the Principal Civil Service pension arrangements. They also include any additional pension benefit accrued to the member as a result of their purchasing additional pension benefits at their own cost. CETVs are calculated within the guidelines and framework prescribed by the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries and do not take account of any actual or potential reduction to benefits resulting from Lifetime Allowance Tax which may be due when pension benefits are drawn.

(ii) Real increase in CETV

This reflects the increase in CETV effectively funded by the employer. It does not include any of the increase in accrued pension due to inflation, contributions paid by the employee (including the value of any benefits transferred from another pension scheme arrangement) and uses common market valuation factors for the start and end of the period.

Changes to the Civil Service Pension Scheme

From 1st April 2015 a new pension scheme, called Alpha, came into effect. The Alpha scheme replaces the **classic**, **premium**, **classic-plus** and **nuvos** schemes. The majority of staff transferred directly into Alpha on 1st April 2015.

Remuneration and Staff Report

Staff Numbers and Related Costs

a) For the year staff costs consist of:

	2018-2019 £000		2017-2018 £000	
	Permanently Employed Staff	Other	Total	Total
Wages and Salaries	845	27	872	858
Social Security Costs	89	-	89	85
Pension Costs	145	-	145	139
Sub Total	1,079	27	1,106	1,082
Less recoveries in respect of outward secondments	(67)	-	(67)	(78)
Total Net Costs	1,012	-	1,039	1,004

The Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS) is an unfunded multi-employer defined benefit scheme but the participating organisations are not able to identify their share of the underlying assets and liabilities. The scheme was last actuarially valued as at 31 March 2007 but since this date, actuarial valuations of the Scheme were suspended pending the implementation of the Hutton Review recommendations. However, a revaluation of the scheme was conducted in 2018-19 and revised employer pension contributions were announced by HM Treasury effective from 1st April 2019. Details can be found in the Resource Accounts of the Cabinet Office: Civil Superannuation – www.civilservice-pensions.gov.uk.

For 2018-19, employer's contributions of £118,782 were payable to the PCSPS (2017-18: £103,669) at one of four rates in the range 16.7 percent to 24.3 percent of pensionable pay, based on salary bands. The Scheme Actuary reviews employer contributions usually every four years following a full scheme valuation. The contribution rates are set to meet the cost of the benefits paid during this period to existing pensioners.

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Remuneration and Staff Report

Employees can opt to open a partnership pension account, a stakeholder pension with an employer contribution. Employer's contributions of £24,262 were payable to one or more of a panel of appointed stakeholder pension providers (2017-18: £20,213). Employer contributions are age-related and range from 3 to 12.5 percent of pensionable pay (2017-18: 3 to 12.5 percent). Employers also match employee contributions up to 3 percent of pensionable pay. In addition, employer contributions of £1,151 or 0.8 percent of pensionable pay, were payable to the PCSPS to cover the cost of the future provision of lump sum benefits on death in service and ill health retirement of employees (2017-18: £1,412 or 0.8 percent). Contributions of £6,425 were due to the partnership pension providers at 31st March 2019, (2017 18: £14,355). All these contributions are included in Pension costs.

b) The average number of whole-time equivalent persons employed (including senior management) for the period was as follows:

	2018-2019		2017-2018	
	Permanently Employed Staff	Other	Total	Total
Directly Employed	20.67	1.83	22.50	22.36
Total	20.67	1.83	22.50	22.36

Remuneration and Staff Report

Reporting of Civil Service and Other Compensation Schemes – Exit Packages:

During the period 2018-19 there were no compensation payments or exit packages made to former employees.

Redundancy and other departure costs have been paid in accordance with the provisions of the Civil Service Compensation Scheme, a statutory scheme made under the Superannuation Act 1972. Where the Commissioner has agreed early retirements, the additional costs are met by the Commissioner and not by the Civil Service pension scheme. Ill-health retirement costs are met by the pension scheme and not included in the table.

The full costs of departure are charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure in the year that the decision is made. Amounts payable in future years are credited to a provision which is utilised when the payments are made.

Professor Sally Holland

Children's Commissioner for Wales and Accounting Officer
17th July 2019

The Certificate and independent auditor's report of the Auditor General for Wales to the National Assembly for Wales

Report on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion

I certify that I have audited the financial statements of the Children's Commissioner for Wales for the year ended 31 March 2019 under paragraph 9 (2) of schedule 2 to the Care Standards Act 2000. These comprise the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, Statement of Financial Position, the Statement of Cash Flows, Statement of Changes in Taxpayers Equity and related notes. These financial statements have been prepared under the accounting policies set out within them. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and HM Treasury's Financial Reporting Manual based on International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRSs) as adopted by the European Union.

In my opinion the financial statements:

- **give a true and fair view of the state of the Children's Commissioner for Wales affairs as at 31 March 2019 and of its net expenditure for the year then ended;** and
- **have been properly prepared in accordance with Welsh Ministers' directions issued under the Care Standards Act 2000.**

Basis for opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing in the UK (ISAs (UK)). My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of my report. I am independent of the body in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

The Certificate and independent auditor's report of the Auditor General for Wales to the National Assembly for Wales

Conclusions relating to going concern

I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the ISAs (UK) require me to report to you where:

- **the use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is not appropriate;** or
- **the Accounting Officer has not disclosed in the financial statements any identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the body's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.**

Other information

Legislation and directions issued to the Children's Commissioner for Wales do not specify the content and form of the other information to be presented with the financial statements. The Accounting Officer is responsible for the other information presented with these financial statements. The other information comprises the Directors' Report, the Statement of Accounting Officer's Responsibilities, the Annual Governance Statement and the Remuneration Report and my auditor's report on the financial statements. My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in my report, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with my audit of the financial statements, my responsibility is to read the other information to identify material inconsistencies with the audited financial statements and to identify any information that is apparently materially incorrect based on, or materially inconsistent with, the knowledge acquired by me in the course of performing the audit. If I become aware of any apparent material misstatements or inconsistencies I consider the implications for my report.

The Certificate and independent auditor's report of the Auditor General for Wales to the National Assembly for Wales

Opinion on regularity

In my opinion, in all material respects, the expenditure and income in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by the National Assembly for Wales and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them.

Report on other requirements

Opinion on other matters

As legislation and directions issued to the Children's Commissioner for Wales do not specify the content and form of the other information to be presented with the financial statements, I am not able to confirm that the other information have been properly prepared.

In my opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of my audit, the information given in the other information is consistent with the financial statements.

Matters on which I report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the body and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the other information provided with the financial statements.

I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters which I report to you if, in my opinion:

- **adequate accounting records have not been kept;**
- **the financial statements and the part of the Remuneration Report to be audited are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns;**
- **information specified by Welsh Ministers regarding the remuneration and other transactions is not disclosed; or**
- **I have not received all of the information and explanations I require for my audit.**

The Certificate and independent auditor's report of the Auditor General for Wales to the National Assembly for Wales

Report

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.

Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the Children's Commissioner for Wales for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Accounting Officer's Responsibilities, the Accounting Officer is responsible for preparing the financial statements in accordance with the Care Standards Act 2000 and Welsh Ministers' directions made there under, for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view and for such internal control as the Accounting Officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. In preparing the financial statements, the Accounting Officer is responsible for assessing the body's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless deemed inappropriate.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

A further description of the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of my auditor's report.

The Certificate and independent auditor's report of the Auditor General for Wales to the National Assembly for Wales

Responsibilities for regularity

The Accounting Officer is responsible for ensuring the regularity of financial transactions. I am required to obtain sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the expenditure and income have been applied to the purposes intended by the National Assembly for Wales and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

Adrian Crompton

Auditor General for Wales

18 July 2019

24 Cathedral Road

Cardiff CF11 9LJ

The maintenance and integrity of Children's Commissioner for Wales website is the responsibility of the Children's Commissioner. The work carried out by auditors does not involve consideration of these matters and accordingly auditors accept no responsibility for any changes that may have occurred to the financial statements since they were initially presented on the website.

The Certificate and independent auditor's report of the Auditor General for Wales to the National Assembly for Wales

Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure for the year ended 31st March 2019

	Note	2018-19 £000	2017-18 £000
Expenditure			
Administration costs:			
Staff Costs	2.3	1,039	1,004
Depreciation	2.2	8	8
Other Administration Costs	2.1	532	512
		1,579	1,524
Income			
Income from Activities		-	-
Other Income		-	-
		-	-
Net Expenditure		1,579	1,524
Interest payable/receivable		-	-
Net Expenditure after interest		1,579	1,524
Other Comprehensive Expenditure			
Net gain/(loss) on revaluation of Plant and Equipment		-	-
Total Comprehensive Expenditure for the year ended 31st March 2019		1,579	1,524

All income and expenditure is derived from continuing operations. There are no gains or losses other than those reported in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure.

The Commissioner receives funding from the Welsh Government.

The notes on pages 137 to 144 form part of these accounts.

The Certificate and independent auditor's report of the Auditor General for Wales to the National Assembly for Wales

Statement of Financial Position as at 31st March 2019

	Note	£000	2019 £000	2018 £000
Non-current assets:				
Property, plant and equipment	4		12	5
Current assets:				
Trade and other receivables	5	51		66
Cash and cash equivalents	6	478	529	573
Total assets			541	578
Current liabilities:				
Trade and other payables	7	(154)	(154)	(147)
Total assets less current liabilities			387	431
Non-Current liabilities:				
Provision for liabilities and charges	13	(152)	(152)	(160)
Total assets less total liabilities			235	271
Taxpayer's equity:				
General fund			235	271

Professor Sally Holland

Children's Commissioner for Wales and Accounting Officer
17 July 2019

The notes on pages 137 to 144 form part of these accounts.

The Certificate and independent auditor's report of the Auditor General for Wales to the National Assembly for Wales

Statement of Cash Flows for the period 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019

	Note	2018-2019 £000	2017-2018 £000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net Expenditure	2	1,579	1,524
Adjustment for non-cash transactions	2	(8)	(85)
Increase/(decrease) in trade and other receivables	5	(15)	6
(Increase)/decrease in trade payables	7	(7)	(55)
Use of Provisions	13	8	8
Net cash outflow from operating activities		1,557	1,398
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment*	4	15	7
Net cash outflow from investing activity		15	7
Cash flows from financing activities			
Net Financing from the Welsh Government		(1,543)	(1,583)
Net Financing		(1,543)	(1,583)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	6	(29)	178
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of period		507	329
Cash and cash equivalents at end of period		478	507

The notes on pages 137 to 144 form part of these accounts.

The Certificate and independent auditor's report of the Auditor General for Wales to the National Assembly for Wales

Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity for the year ended 31st March 2019

	General Fund
Note	£000
Balance as at 31st March 2017	215
Funding from Welsh Government	1,583
Comprehensive net expenditure for the year	(1,524)
Adjustment for item not passing through net expenditure	(3)
Balance as at 31st March 2018	271
Changes in Taxpayers' Equity 2018-2019	
Funding from Welsh Government	1,543
Comprehensive net expenditure for the year	1,579)
Balance at 31st March 2019	235

The notes on pages 137 to 144 form part of these accounts.

Notes to the Accounts

1. Statement of Accounting Policies

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Government's Financial Reporting Manual (FRM) issued by HM Treasury. The accounting policies contained in the FRM apply International Accounting Standards (IFRS) as adopted or interpreted for the public sector context. Where the FRM permits a choice of accounting policy, the accounting policy which has been judged to be most appropriate to the particular circumstances of the Commissioner for the purpose of giving a true and fair view has been selected. They have been applied consistently in dealing with items considered material in relation to the accounts.

We have considered the impact of standards and interpretations which have been issued but are not yet effective and which have not been adopted early by the Commissioner. With the exception of International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) IFRS16 Leases, the Commissioner anticipates that the adoption of these Standards and interpretations in future periods will have no material impact on the financial statements. The impact of IFRS16, which has been issued by the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) but not yet adopted by the European Union and will apply from 2019-20, is not reasonably estimable at this stage.

The particular accounting policies adopted by the Children's Commissioner for Wales are described below.

1.1 Accounting Convention

These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention as in the opinion of the Children's Commissioner for Wales the effect of the revaluation of fixed assets at their value to the organisation by reference to their current cost is considered to be immaterial.

1.2 Funding

The only source of funding for the Children's Commissioner for Wales is from the Welsh Government via an annual grant, which is credited to the general fund when the grant is received. The grant is recognised in the period in which services are provided.

1.3 Property, Plant and Equipment

The Commissioner has valued all non-current assets at historic cost as any revaluation adjustments are, in the Commissioner's opinion, not material. The minimum level for capitalisation of individual assets is £1,000. Large numbers of the same type of asset have been grouped together in determining if they fell above or below the threshold.

1.4 Depreciation

Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the value of non-current assets by equal instalments over their estimated useful lives, as follows:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------|
| • ICT Equipment | 3 years |
| • Furniture | 5 years |
| • Office Equipment | 5 years |
| • Fixtures & Fittings | 5 years |

A full year's depreciation is charged in the year of acquisition.

1.5 Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure

Operating income and expenditure is that which relates directly to the operating activities of the Commissioner. It comprises charges for goods and services provided on a full cost basis. All expenditure is classed as administration expenditure.

1.6 Value Added Tax

The Commissioner is not registered for VAT. Expenditure and fixed asset purchases are accounted for VAT inclusive, as VAT is irrecoverable.

Notes to the Accounts

1.7 Pensions

The Commissioner's staff are covered by the provisions of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS). The PCSPS is a defined benefit scheme. The cost of the defined benefit element of the scheme is recognised on a systematic and rational basis over the period during which it derives benefit from employees' services by payment to the PCSPS of amounts calculated on an accruing basis. Liability for payment of future benefits is a charge on the PCSPS. In respect of the defined contribution elements of the scheme, the Children's Commissioner recognises the contributions payable for the year; these amounts are charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure in the year of payment.

1.8 Leases

Leases of assets where substantially all risks and rewards of ownership of a leased asset are borne by the Commissioner are classified as finance leases. The asset is recorded as a tangible fixed asset and a debt is recorded to the lessor of the minimum lease payments. Payments are charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure and a finance charge is made based upon the interest rate implicit in the lease.

Operating lease rentals are charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure in equal amounts over the lease term.

1.9 Segmental Reporting

The Commissioner's Office operates in Wales and deals with issues that impact upon children and young people in Wales. The Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure and associated notes reflects the segments that the operating results are reported.

1.10 Staff Expenses

The Commissioner provides for short term compensated absences unused at the year-end.

1.11 Provisions

The Commissioner provides for legal or contractual obligations which are of uncertain timing or amounts at the statement of financial position date, on the basis of best estimate of the expenditure required to settle the obligation.

1.12 Cash and Cash Equivalent

The Commissioner holds cash which is deposited in a commercial bank account upon receipt. Petty cash is also held at the Commissioner's office.

Notes to the Accounts

2. Other Administration Costs

	2018-19 £000	2017-18 £000
2.1 Administration costs:		
Premises	94	95
Office	63	67
Training and recruitment	19	33
Travel and subsistence	12	15
External audit's remuneration	18	18
Internal auditor's remuneration	13	12
Communication	41	51
ICT equipment	54	21
Other	214	114
Legal and professional fees	4	9
In year provision made	-	77
	532	512
2.2 Depreciation charge on ordinary assets		
	8	8
	8	
2.3 Staff costs:*		
Wages and salaries	872	858
Social security costs	89	85
Pension	145	139
Less recoveries in respect of outward secondments	(67)	(78)
	1,039	1,004
	1,579	1,524

* Further information relating to staff costs can be found in the Remuneration Report.

Notes to the Accounts

3. Segmental Information

The Commissioner's office operates in Wales and deals with issues that impact upon children and young people in Wales. It is therefore the Commissioner's opinion that her office only operates in one segment as reported.

Notes to the Accounts

4. Property, Plant and Equipment

	IT Equipment	Fixtures & Fittings	Office Furniture and Equipment	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Cost				
At 1 April 2018	193	197	211	601
Additions	15	-	-	15
Disposals	-	-	-	-
At 31st March 2019	208	197	211	616
Depreciation				
At 1st April 2018	189	196	211	596
Charged in year	7	1	-	8
Disposals	-	-	-	-
At 31st March 2019	196	197	211	604
Net book value At 31st March 2018	4	1	-	5
Net book value At 31st March 2019	12	-	-	12
Asset financing:				
Owned				
Net book value At 31st March 2018	4	1	-	5
Owned				
Net book value At 31st March 2019	12	-	-	12

All assets are owned by the Commissioner, there are no assets financed through a finance lease.

Notes to the Accounts

5. Trade and Other Receivables

	2018-19	2017-18
	£000	£000
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Trade and other receivables	-	-
Prepayments and accrued income	51	66
	51	66

6. Cash and Cash Equivalents

	2018-19	2017-18
	£000	£000
Balance at 1st April	507	329
Net change in cash and cash equivalent balances	(29)	178
Balance at 31st March	478	507

All balances as at 31st March 2019 were held with a Commercial bank and cash in hand.

7. Trade and Other Payables

Amounts falling due within one year

	2018-19	2017-18
	£000	£000
Taxation and social security	69	81
Trade payables	46	12
Accruals	39	54
	154	147

8. Commitments under Leases

Operating Leases

The Commissioner was committed to making the following payments in respect of operating leases expiring.

	2018-19 £000		2017-18 £000	
	Land & Buildings	Other	Land & Buildings	Other
Obligations under operating leases:				
Not later than one year	50	1	50	1
Later than one year and not later than five years	66	2	116	4
Later than five years	-	-	-	-
	116	3	166	5

Notes to the Accounts

9. Financial Instruments

IFRS7, Financial Instruments, requires disclosure of the role which financial instruments have had during the period in creating or changing the risks an entity faces in undertaking its activities. Because of the non-trading nature of the Commissioner's activities and the way in which her operations are financed, her office is not exposed to the degree of financial risk faced by business entities. Moreover, financial instruments play a much more limited role in creating or changing risk than would be typical of the listed companies to which IFRS7 mainly applies.

The Commissioner has very limited powers to borrow or invest surplus funds and financial assets and liabilities are generated by day-to-day operational activities and are not held to change the risks she faces in undertaking her activities.

Liquidity Risk

The Commissioner's net revenue and capital resource requirements are financed by the Welsh Government. Her office is not therefore exposed to significant liquidity risks.

Interest-rate Risk

The Commissioner's financial assets and liabilities are not exposed to interest-rate risks.

Foreign Currency Risk

The Commissioner's financial assets and liabilities are not exposed to foreign currency risks.

Fair Values

There is no difference between the book values and fair values of the Commissioner's financial assets and liabilities as at 31st March 2019.

10. Capital Commitments

There were no capital commitments as at 31st March 2019.

11. Contingent Liabilities

There were no contingent liabilities as at 31st March 2019.

12. Related Party Transactions

The Welsh Government is a related party, the Commissioner received her sole source of funding from the Welsh Government; she received £1.543 million during the period. The Commissioner has had a small number of material transactions during the period with HM Revenue and Customs (Tax and National Insurance payments); and the Cabinet Office (payments in respect of the Principle Civil Service Pension Scheme).

There were no material transactions with organisations in which senior staff, or any of their family, held positions of influence.

Notes to the Accounts

13. Provisions for Liabilities and Charges

	Early Departure	Dilapidations	Total
	£000	£000	£000
Balance as at 1 April 2018	83	77	160
Use of provision	(8)	-	(8)
In year provision	-	-	-
Balance as at 31st March 2018	75	77	152

Analysis of Expected Timings of Provisions

	Early Departure	Dilapidations	Total
	£000	£000	£000
Not later than one year	8	-	8
Later than one year and not later than five years	67	77	144
Later than five years	-	-	-
Balance as at 31st March 2018	75	77	152

Early Departure Costs

The Commissioner meets the additional cost of benefits beyond the normal Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS) benefits in respect of employees who retire early by paying the required amounts annually to the PCSPS over the period between early departure and normal retirement age. The Commissioner provides for this in full when the early departure becomes binding by establishing a provision for the estimated payments.

Dilapidations

The Commissioner meets the cost of meeting her obligations under the terms of the lease of her Swansea office, the lease ends in July 2021. The Commissioner provides for this in full by establishing a provision for the estimated payments.

14. Events after the Reporting Period

There were no events between the statement of financial position date and the date the accounts were signed that impact upon these statements. The Accounting Officer authorised these financial statements for issue on 17th July 2019.

Here's how you can get in touch with us:

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