



PLANT YNG NGHYMRU
CHILDREN IN WALES

Impact Report

2023-2024



The difference we make at Children in Wales

We believe every child and young person in Wales deserves to be heard, respected, and have all their rights fulfilled. That's why we're here—to listen to what matters most to them, work closely with the organisations that support them, and ensure their voices reach those in power. Our vision is a Wales where every young person can thrive, with their rights fully recognised and fulfilled.

As the Welsh national umbrella body for organisations and individuals working with babies, children, young people, and their families, we work directly with young people and the Welsh Government to shape policy and legislation, ensuring children's rights remain at the forefront of national decision-making.

Our members span the voluntary, statutory, and professional sectors. We connect them to combine their strengths, and we promote the incredible work they do to support young people. Additionally, we engage directly with children and young people through Young Wales and other funded projects.



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Welcome from Hugh Russell, CEO at Children in Wales

Welcome to Children in Wales' first Impact Report.

Children in Wales exists to make a difference: to our members, to babies, children, and young people, and—by helping children have their voices heard and shape policy—to wider society in Wales. In a year where budgets have again been tight across the public and third sectors, and during which we have seen the disheartening loss of sister organisations like Chwarae Teg and Children England, it's more important than ever to emphasise the fundamental difference we make, in collaboration with our members. Embedded in our way of working with children and young people is a closed-feedback loop: we ensure that those who have contributed their voices and experiences are kept informed of the outcomes of their contributions. I hope that this report offers the same experience for members, who can read about the considerable difference that we have made together over the last year.



2023-24 is a year which we can look back on with pride, as one in which we celebrated 30 years of promoting children’s rights. We took the opportunity to celebrate the organisation’s considerable achievements over that period, from successfully lobbying for the establishment of a Children’s Commissioner’s office in Wales to our more recent work to influence the introduction of The Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Act 2020. An overview of these contributions was neatly captured in a wonderful book, [“Pause, Play, Fast-Forward: The Journey of Children in Wales”](#), which we supported young people to write themselves, and which was launched at the Senedd, where so many of our efforts to improve children’s abilities to access their rights have found fruitful, collaborative resolution over the years.

Of course, 2023-24 was much more than just a nostalgic celebration of past achievements: we continued to push forward towards our vision of a Wales where all children and young people have all their rights fulfilled. We provided a platform for young people to be heard through our Young Wales work; influenced numerous areas of government policy in line with our members’ expectations (notably our work to press Welsh Government on their Child Poverty Strategy); and delivered training to thousands of delegates in crucial areas such as safeguarding and children’s rights.

Read on for a sense of the difference that Children in Wales makes.

Our year in numbers

Celebrated our **30th anniversary** as a charitable organisation

Ran **290 training sessions** on topics such as safeguarding and children's rights, with **over 4,000 attendees**

Young Wales facilitated **643** young people to take part in **16** Welsh Government Consultations – through in-person focus groups

A total of **200** Young Wales **volunteers** aged between 11 – 25

34 news stories published on our website with a readership of **33,032**

24 Ministerial engagement sessions were held for young people throughout the year

Convened **71** meetings of our **15** Professional Policy Networks

Attended **42** meetings convened by Welsh Government

64 sessions hosted through Young Wales, including Advisory Board meetings, residentials and volunteer induction sessions, engaging approximately **640** young people

Completed **123** external activities, including engaging in events, research and activities which further the rights of children and young people

3,097 young people's voices heard through engagement sessions, surveys, events and consultations

Provided **16** responses to public consultations

Ended the year with **310 members**, (220 organisations; 49 individuals; and 41 students and young people)

Attended **25** meetings convened by other agencies



Impact: The difference we make for babies and early years

www.childreninwales.org.uk



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'I need opportunities to express myself as I explore, play and have the chance to make choices.'



Listen to my Voice

Children in Wales has been working to promote awareness that babies have their own thoughts and are able to communicate from birth, and that we can listen to them. Listening to babies helps them feel safe and understood, allowing them to express their needs and build a foundation of trust and secure attachment. A baby's voice can be heard and seen in the noises and movements they make, their response to the environment and through their interactions with the people who are with them.

We launched a pilot project with Cwm Taf Early Years Transformation Board called 'Listening to the Voice of the Baby', using creative methods to support an understanding of a baby's voice and enhance parent-infant relationships. This project led to the development of a set of resources for parents on babies' and young children's rights, from the viewpoint and voice of the baby and young child.

Children in Wales also supported Cwm Taf Health Board to develop a Baby and Toddler Voice. A set of statements from the baby's perspective, detailing what a baby needs and can expect from their caregivers and wider community. The Children's Rights in Early Years Network are now working towards developing a national approach.

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'As you listen to me you will understand me more. I express what I like and don't like through my gaze, movement, facial expressions, noises and sounds I make. Yes, I do cry but I am only trying to tell you something.'



Listen to my Voice

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PLANT YNG NGHYMRL
CHILDREN IN WALES

'I'm ready to communicate with you and want to find out about this big wide world, it is all so new to me.'



Listen to my Voice

In 2023-24, this was the impact:

Our Listening to the Voice of the Baby project was positively evaluated, with the report noting:

- The sessions allowed the baby's voice to be given space, be recognised, listened to and heard by parents.
- The key messages alongside the creative movement sessions clearly improved both parents' knowledge, awareness, and confidence of baby's voice.

This learning facilitated further conversations with two additional local authorities on how this approach can be used in parenting and family support services

A range of key message posters were developed and have been widely shared, detailing unique insights into baby voice and rights from the baby's perspective.


The Children's Rights in Early Years Network (CREYN) supported the development of [four new children's rights resources for parents](#), created by Welsh Government. These resources complement the broader initiatives of Early Childhood Play, Learning, and Care (ECPLC).



Listen to my Voice

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'Give me t
to share m
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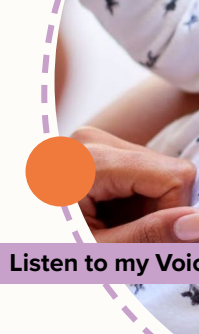
Listen to my Voice

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'I need eve
about wha
me and ho
you make



what I need, I'm watching your body language and facial expressions, and this can help me feel safe and help my brain grow and develop.'



Listen to my Voice



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ime and space
my voice, and
know what life
me.'

Listen to my Voice

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CHILDREN IN WALES

'I know you won't always know what I'm trying to tell you, that is okay. Talk to me about what is happening, this will help us work things out together and for me to know what is going on.'

'I might not
already com
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and the sou
'voice'; you
it all means



Listen to my Voice



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everyone to think
at things are like for
ow I would feel before
any decisions.'

Listen to my Voice

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PLANT YNG NGHYMRL
CHILDREN IN WALES

'As you listen to me you will understand me more. I express what I like and don't like through my gaze, movement, facial

'I see a lot
you help o
life is like
share my v



Impact: The difference we make for children and young people



We run a youth-led volunteering programme 'Young Wales', which is funded by the Welsh Government and ensures young people are listened to and empowered.

This work is underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the Children and Young People's National Participation Standards.

We have also introduced the Youth Voice Network to help young people to understand and engage with democracy and the election process.



In 2023-24, this was the **impact:**

Through events, meetings, residentials, consultations and the Young Wales Annual Festival, young people met and engaged with **62 policymakers** from Welsh Government and **10 members of the Senedd**, including **4 ministers**. They also contributed to **16 consultations**.

The book "[Pause, Play, Fast-Forward: The Journey of Children in Wales](#)" was launched, with **1,284 readers** so far. Written by young people for young people, it charts the history of the organisation and its campaign to place children's rights at the centre of policymaking in Wales.

12 young people became peer researchers on the impact of the cost of living crisis on sustainability for young people in Wales. The findings of their research will be published in November 2024.

We ran a participation programme with young people aged 6 to 16 with additional learning needs (ALN) to explore how effectively the new ALN reform in Wales is supporting them. We gained valuable insight and feedback in **25 sessions** across **4 schools** in Wales.



Feedback from Young Wales residentials

“It’s a fulfilling role to be part of and gives a sense of purpose, makes you feel like you can make a difference.” - Young Wales Volunteer

“What I like about the residential is that I’m being included when I’m normally excluded” - Young Wales Volunteer

“The sense of pride from making a difference. Everyone can make a difference in the world, even you” - Young Wales Volunteer



In 2023-24, this was the **impact:**

As part of the Hub developments, parents from the Parent Network in Caerphilly were asked to [share their stories and journeys](#). They told us this gave them a sense of **pride, confidence and an ability to see how far they have come** and the importance of sharing their voice. These stories aim to inspire and encourage other parents to get involved and be heard.

202 new schools signed up to receive our [toolkit](#) and support on Tackling the Impact of Poverty on Education. This brings the total to **236 schools** with over **84,500 learners**, prompting **changes in school behaviours and policies**.

100% of the schools that received the resources said they had found these useful, with many starting to address at least **2 of the 5** main areas highlighted.

91% of attendees of our Poverty Awareness training said they had found the session to be useful or informative and **80%** said it had increased their awareness of this issue.

Our new resource for school governors 'The Price of Pupil Poverty: A Guide for Governors' was launched via webinars to **249 attendees** in June 2023.

Feedback on the [Guide for Governors](#)

"The resources and support are extremely useful. I have found the checklist and action plan particularly helpful."

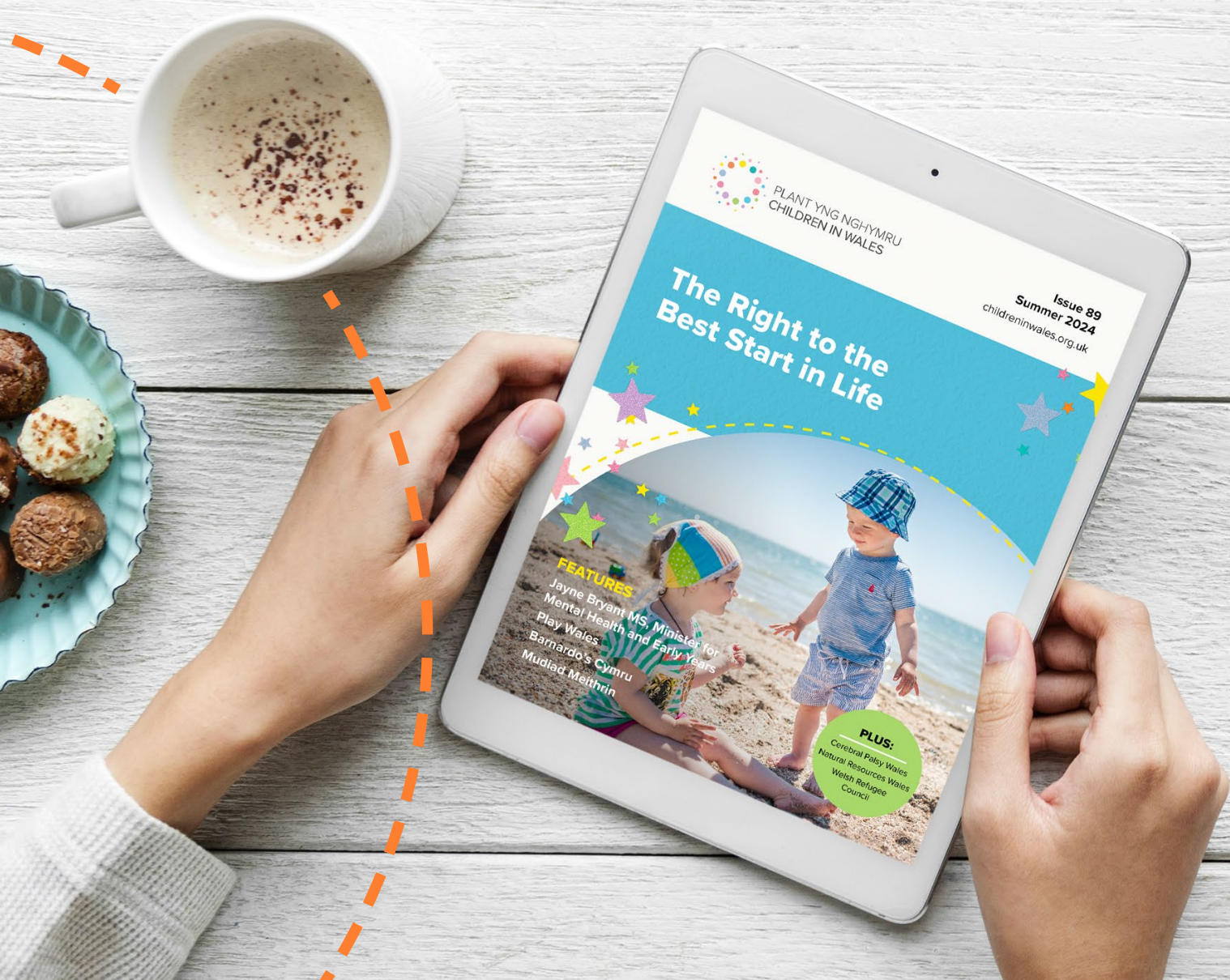
"I have already recommended them to other schools."

"Although very sad it was also very thought provoking, and I had a meeting with the head teacher of our school the very next morning to make sure our school was doing absolutely everything possible for our pupils."



Impact: The difference we make for our members

Children in Wales' membership comprises individuals and organisations interested in improving the lives of children, young people, and families in Wales. In 2023-24, members received fortnightly updates from across the sector, opportunities to promote project updates and job vacancies from their organisations, access to exclusive events and resources such as training workshops and networking opportunities, and the opportunity to contribute to and feature in our quarterly magazine, which is shared through the website, social media, and e-mailing channels.



In 2023-24, this was the impact:

We ended the year with **310 members**, (220 organisations, 49 individuals and 41 students / young people).

We sent **78 news bulletins** and relevant updates to our members and subscribers.

3,645 people signed up to and received our regular training information.

359 people received our two-weekly member e-briefing.

We published **4 issues of our magazine**, featuring articles from **49 of our member organisations**, showcasing their crucial work to an audience of over **5,000**.

In our annual membership survey, **88%** of respondents answered **“yes”** to the question, **“Has the information you receive from Children in Wales supported your organisation to achieve better outcomes for children, young people, and their families?”**

Member feedback also noted:

“Children in Wales played a key role in the development of our Child Poverty Task Force.”

“The increase in knowledge has supported us to improve the work we do.”

See the section below to learn about our impact in influencing government and decision-makers together with our members.

The collage displays four magazine covers from Children in Wales, Spring 2024. Each cover includes a title, author, and a photograph. The covers are:

- Issue 24: Give children the best start in life with a playful childhood** by Dawn Bowden MS. Features a photo of a woman and a child.
- Issue 25: Centering Children's Rights in a Time of Change** by Anna Sinclair. Features a photo of children on bicycles.
- Issue 26: Children's rights in private family law proceedings and the Pathfinder pilot** by Anna Sinclair. Features a photo of a child's hands.
- Issue 27: Wales' Childcare Crisis: Time for Action to Support Parents in Poverty** by Sarah Rees. Features a photo of a child's hands.

 Below the covers are two more articles:

- How parents should be supported to meet the needs of children throughout their childhood** by Dawn Bowden MS. Includes a photo of a woman and a child.
- Prioritizing the rights of babies, children and young people in Wales** by Sean O'Neill, Anna Westall, Karen McFarlane, Faitha Ali & Russell Baker. Includes a photo of children in a park.

Impact: Our influencing work with government and decision-makers



Report on the 7th Annual Child and Family Poverty Surveys 2023

Karen McFarlane | October 2023



In partnership with



UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

1 I am under 18, so these rights are for me

5 My parents/ carers must have support so I can access all my rights

6 I have the right to life

10 I have the right to see my family if they don't live with me

11 I have the right to not be taken out of my country illegally

12 I have the right to have my views heard and taken seriously

13 I have the right to express my views

16 I have the right to privacy

17 I have the right to access reliable information

18 I have the right to be brought up by both parents if possible

20 I have the right to be cared for and protected if I can't live with my own family

21 I have the right to be brought up to the best of my ability if I am adopted

25 If I am away from my family, my treatment and care must be reviewed regularly

26 My family must have financial help if they need it

27 I have the right to food, clothing, and a clean, safe home

28 I have the right to an education

30 I have the right to learn about my culture, customs, language and religion

31 I have the right to relax, play and take part in cultural activities

34 I have the right to be protected from sexual abuse

35 I have the right to be protected from abduction, sale, and trafficking

36 I have the right to be safe from harm

39 I have the right to extra help if I have been hurt, neglected, or badly treated

40 If I am accused of breaking the law, I have the right to legal help and to be treated fairly

41 When my country has extra laws to protect children, these must be followed

Who responded

Practitioners and professionals responded from all 22 local authority areas across Wales. A total of 371 responses were received, with 84% of respondents working directly with children, young people and families.

All respondents had a remit for children, young people and/or families. Those directly involved with children and families, work with a **minimum of 110,000 families** each year. This figure is a cautious, adjusted estimate and care has been taken to exclude the possibility of double-counting across organisations and local authority areas. The principal, unadjusted





54

2 I have these rights no matter what

3 Any decisions must consider what is best for me

4 My Government must make sure I can access all my rights

7 I have the right to a name and nationality

8 I have the right to an identity

9 I have the right to live with my family, if that is best for me

14 I have the right to have my own thoughts, beliefs and religion

15 I have the right to meet with friends and join groups

19 I have the right to be kept safe from violence, abuse, or neglect

22 I have the right to be cared for and protected if I am a refugee

23 I have the right to special protection and support if I have a disability

24 I have the right to good healthcare

25 I have the right to reach my full potential

32 I have the right to be protected from doing dangerous work

33 I have the right to be protected from illegal drugs

37 I must be treated with respect and care if I am accused of breaking the law

38 I must not join the army until I am at least 15 years old

42 I have the right to know about all my rights

CYMRU IANG YOUNG IN WALES
PLANT YDDEI NIDYFFERD!
CHILDREN IN WALES!

We collaborate with a diverse range of stakeholders to influence change across Wales. Through our professional networks, membership, thematic projects, and advocacy efforts, we actively engage in external meetings, dialogues, media, and events to drive impact.

We published our [7th Annual Child and Family Poverty Survey Findings Report](#), helping to shape and inform the Welsh Government’s strategy around family poverty.

We presented at a Child Poverty conference in Swansea University; provided oral evidence to the Equality and Social Justice Committee; worked with schools through our Price of Pupil Poverty project and worked with local authorities to inform the development of local strategies.

Following the publication of our State of Children’s Rights in Wales report, we highlighted the key issues impacting on children and young people to inform the United Nations dialogue with the UK and Welsh Government in Geneva.

Our work in respect of parenting and family support has included several new developments, notably our administrative support for two new Welsh Government networks – Family Information Services Network and Family First Network. We continue to manage the national Parenting Network and deliver the annual State of Parenting in Wales survey and report and support stakeholders including Welsh Government to enhance their parenting programmes, engagement and focus.

The first 1000 days and the early years remained a key priority, with our continued facilitation of two professionals' networks and our collaborations with academics, practitioners and decision-makers.

Additional Learning Needs (ALN) reform also remains a key priority for us and our members as we continue to engage with Welsh Government officials and raise concerns through our [TSANA network](#) regarding the implementation of the Additional Learning Needs Act, as well as informing related strands of work being delivered by ESTYN and Senedd committee inquiries.

We have continued to engage in dialogue with partners and Welsh Government in respect of the Programme of Government activities impacting on children in care, including supporting the development of the corporate parenting charter, legislation in respect of eliminating profit from the care of children, independent advocacy arrangements and influencing the ongoing Senedd inquiry into 'radical reform' of services for care experienced children. We also deliver training and the Getting Ready project.

Children in Wales, along with members of the All-Wales Advocacy Providers Group and the Welsh Government National Advocacy Forum, continues to campaign for quality and sufficiency in advocacy.

Finally, through our broader representative function, including our active contributions to Welsh Government meetings; engagement with Senedd members; our consultation responses to Welsh Government and Senedd inquiries, we have helped ensure that the priority issues for children, young people and the professional services there to support them remain prominent.

In 2023-24, this was the impact:

Child Poverty:

Through our ECPN Cymru professional network, we **influenced Welsh Government** to refresh their Child Poverty Strategy and were invited to form an **External Reference Group** to support their endeavours and to consult with children, parents and stakeholders.

This involved **providing advice to Ministers and officials** to inform the content of the refresh, in addition to informing on current trends and issues.

Our 7th Annual Child and Family Poverty Survey Findings Report **informed the development of the Welsh Government strategy** and supported stakeholders in their work.

The report included **371 respondents**, including practitioners and professionals from all **22 local authority areas** across Wales and **84%** of respondents working directly with a minimum of **110,000** children, young people and families annually.

322 delegates booked on to the Child and Family Poverty Survey Webinar and the findings were covered in **national media** ([Newyddion S4C](#), [S4C Newyddion website](#), [WalesOnline](#))

Feedback from the poverty survey webinar:

“Thank you; it was really helpful (although bleak) to hear you talk through the findings. So, so important for this information to be shared far and wide. Thank you.”

“A great webinar. Although I was aware of barriers I now feel better informed with actual data to back up concerns when advocating for children, young people and families.”

Children's Rights:

Many of our recommendations in our State of Children's Rights in Wales report were recognised in the **UN's Concluding Observations** as we worked with officials to press for a formal response to be published.

Our work as part of the Children's Rights Advisory Group has supported Welsh Government officials in **developing their Children's Rights Impact Assessments**, which are more routinely being developed and published.

Our Cross-Party Group on Children and Young People focused on delivering the **4 priorities** of the group:

1. Edge of care
2. First 1000 days
3. Adverse childhood experiences
4. Child poverty

The group, chaired by Jane Dodds MS, continues to secure widespread **engagement from our members, Senedd members and the relevant Welsh Government teams**.

As part of the Early Years transformation programme, we worked with Cwm Taf Morgannwg in support of their work around **baby and infant charter**; contributed towards **initiatives on baby voice** to enhance engagement with pre-school children in decision making; engaged with partners to support the delivery of the **children's participation in schools project** and informed the development of **children's rights in the Early Years resources** being developed by Welsh Government.

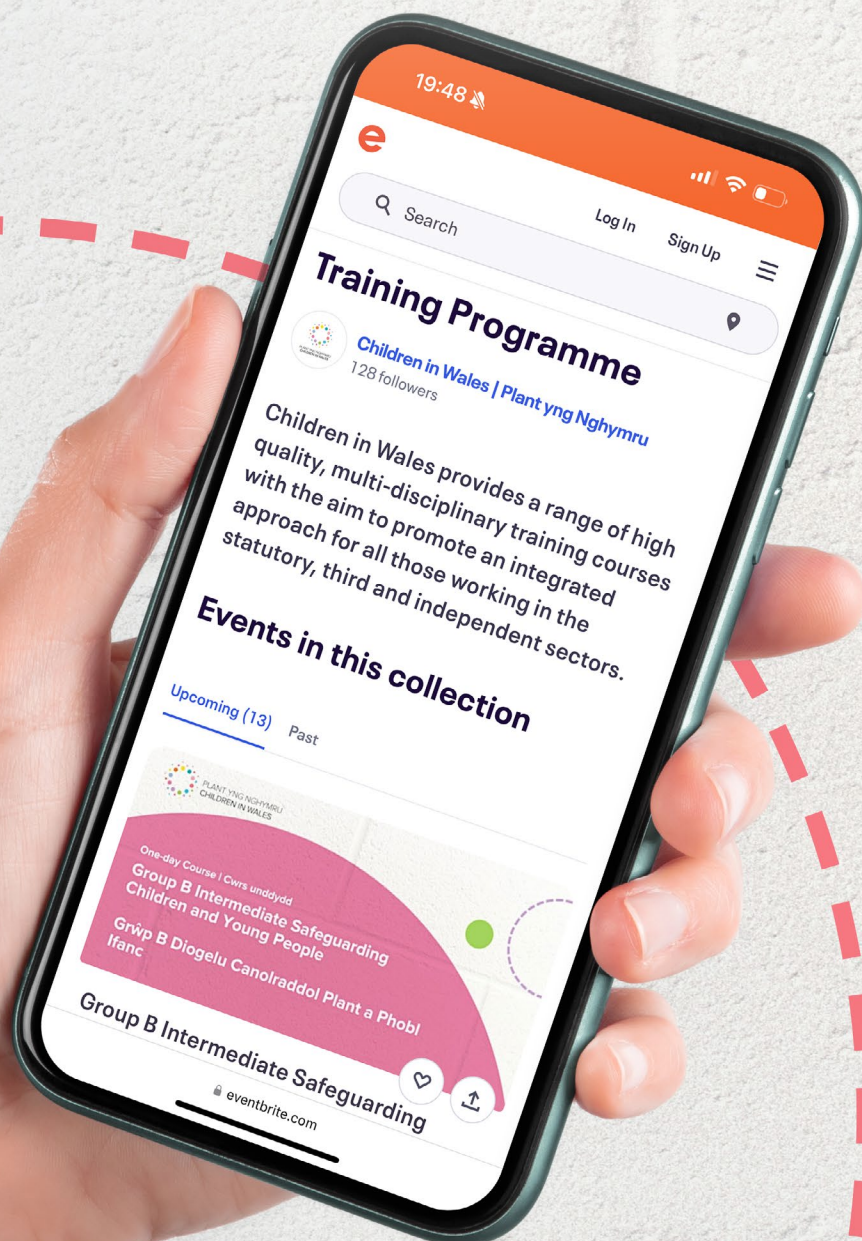
ALN Reform:

We continued to work with UK colleagues to **influence notable UK Government plans**, including potential **reform to the Human Rights Act** and legislation in respect of asylum children, by responding to Senedd LCM requests, being signatory to UK wide NGO campaigns and **influencing the human rights agenda in Wales**.

Advocacy:

Through the implementation of the National Approach to Statutory Advocacy, we have preserved **independent advocacy as a key right** for eligible children and young people, and continued to influence for advocacy to be available in other settings, including health.

Impact: The difference we make through training



Training Course

Children's Rights and Participation Series

Cyfres Hawliau Plant a Chyfranogiad

Book your place today / Archebwch eich lle heddiw

One-day Courses

Children and young people's participation encompasses all the ways in which children and young people engage in action, practices, and dialogue with adults such as parents, carers, practitioners, community members and those who work in local and wider governments, to create positive outcomes and bring about changes. It's a crucial aspect of their lives, whether at home, in their community, or in education settings.

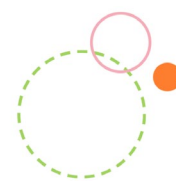
Funded by the Welsh Government, Children in Wales is providing training to raise awareness and understanding of Children's Rights and Participation at different stages of their lives, and will be delivering three courses covering:

- Early Years and Children's Rights (Children Under 7)
- Children's Rights and Participation for Children Under 11
- Children's Rights and Participation for Children and Young People Aged 11-25

No matter what age group you work with, these courses will be beneficial for anyone working with children and young people.

These courses will take participants on a journey of how Children and Young People's Rights and Participation grow and develop by exploring the concept of evolving capacities, and recognising children and young people as active agents in their own lives, who are entitled to be listened to, respected, safeguarded, and granted increasing autonomy in the exercise of rights at different ages and stages of development and maturity.

Book



About the Trainer: Siân Bibey

Siân has over 10 years' experience of working with children, young people and families in a variety of settings including: youth and community projects, social services and VAWDASV (Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence) services. During this time, Siân has gained experience of frontline working and managing teams supporting children, young people and families who have experienced Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence, CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation), CCE (Child Criminal Exploitation) and mental health and emotional difficulties because of ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) and trauma.

As a result of this work, Siân has also developed and delivered training for a range of professionals and practitioners with the aim of raising awareness of how children and young people may be affected by VAWDASV, and the ways in which trauma awareness and trauma informed approaches can be implemented to support and safeguard children and young people.

If you are interested in buying one of our training courses specifically for your organisation, Children in Wales can organise this for you. Please contact

Cyswrtu eich cerbydau, gall Plant yng Nghymru drefnu hyn i chi. Cysylltwch

training@childreninwales.org.uk

We are the leading provider of child-focused and children's rights training in Wales.

This year, we delivered engaging, thought-provoking training courses and learning activities to delegates across all levels of the children's workforce. These included family support workers, social workers, teachers, school support staff, foster carers, housing support workers, nursery workers, dentists, GPs and more, from the statutory, voluntary, and independent sectors.

Our courses align with Welsh legislation, policy, and guidance, incorporating case studies based on real instances of abuse and neglect in Wales.

In 2023-24, this was the **impact:**

We trained **4,037 delegates** across **290 courses**.

Nearly **150** of these courses were focused on safeguarding.

We provided safeguarding training for practitioners across a **wide range of sectors**, including GP and dental practices, supported housing, childcare settings, careers advice centres, schools, as well as foster carers and family support workers.

We **reviewed and updated our safeguarding courses** to comply with the National Safeguarding Learning and Development Standards, established by Social Care Wales. We have led the sector in helping organisations access tailored courses, delivered at times and locations convenient for staff.

Feedback

"I will use the information I learnt on a daily basis in my role in helping to support and advocate for parents who have experienced Trauma in their childhood."

Katy – Building Resilience in the face of Adverse Childhood Experiences

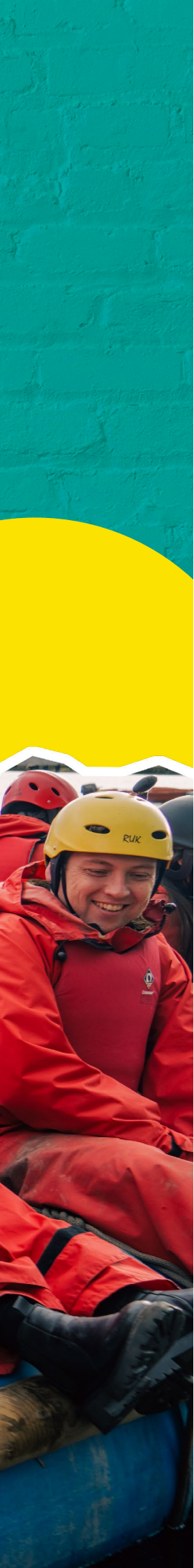
"I will be more aware of children's appearances and body language, as it may appear different." Marie – Designated Safeguarding Person Training

"I will Listen to what is being said by the child as sometimes it's not always obvious what they are referring to when they have experienced abuse."

Geraint Group B Safeguarding - Playworker

The future





There is much to be proud of in the outcomes we have achieved this last year, particularly in light of the context in which they have been achieved, which was politically unsettled, with resources still thinly spread.

Looking to the future, the year to come will bring with it the development of a new strategic direction for the organisation. We will collaborate with members, young people, colleagues and funders to set a plan for Children in Wales which allows us to maximise our resources to take long strides towards a Wales in which all children have all of their rights fulfilled.

We will, in the scope of that strategic development, look to refresh our member offer, checking in with existing members to establish what more we can do to ensure that being part of Children in Wales has the most meaningful possible impact for your work.

We will continue to ensure that youth voice is a priority for Children in Wales, working through Young Wales to provide a platform for young people to make their voices heard in decisions that affect them. Beyond that, we will work with partners to explore how we can improve their participation practices, with a focus on seeing more and more youth influence across Wales.

Our policy and influencing work will continue to be a major priority and we will look to involve members throughout, in an effort to build on the impact we have had this year.

I look forward to a year filled with collaboration in which we move forward, together with members and young people, towards our shared vision of a Wales in which all babies, children and young people have all of their rights fulfilled.

Hugh Russell, CEO at Children in Wales

