

National Assembly for Wales
Environment and Sustainability Committee
WFG 47

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill
Response from Merthyr Tydfil Borough Wide Youth Forum

The above Committee's invitation to comment on the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill 2014 was discussed at the last Merthyr Tydfil Local Service Board (LSB) meeting. As young people are represented at the LSB by the Chair and the Secretary of the Merthyr Tydfil Borough Wide Youth Forum (MTBWYF), we have been asked to write to you regarding the above.

Our goal in Merthyr Tydfil is for every young person to be aware of Merthyr Tydfil Borough Wide Youth Forum's (MTBWYF) vision "It's your voice, your choice!" "Giving All Children & Young People the Right to be Seen *and* Heard" is something the MTBWYF Cabinet continues to drive forward as part of the wider strategic agenda. The Youth Cabinet believes that every Young Person should be consulted with and involved in any decisions that affect them. As part of the participation agenda, they should be involved in the shaping of all relevant activity across the County Borough.

As a result of the policy context in Wales, we believe that Children and Young People have a legal right to be consulted about decisions which affect them. In Merthyr Tydfil we are committed to the principle of the empowerment of Children, Young People and their parents and carers in how we deliver all our Children and Young People's services. This supports the three pillars of the United Nations Conventions of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) – Protection, Participation and Provision. However, we also believe that this is particularly relevant to all matters that relate to children and young people at a regional and national level. Indeed, we are extremely interested in the content of the Committee's invitation to comment on the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill 2014 - and the impact that this will have on children and young people, not just from Merthyr Tydfil, but from all across Wales.

Therefore, and to compliment policy context, such as The Rights of Children and Young Person's (Wales) Measure 2011 "*(this places a duty on Welsh Ministers to have due regard to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) from 1 May 2012 to 30 April 2014, when making decisions about the formulation, review or change of policies, or about proposed legislation. And from 1 May 2014, the duty will apply when Welsh Ministers exercise any of their functions)*" we were writing to ensure that progression of this agenda will incorporate the need for a Child & Young Person Friendly version of this important and relevant move to make Public Service Boards (PSBs) and Well-being Plans placed on a statutory footing. Indeed, we would advocate that the reforming of LSBs to PSBs will have a direct impact on all children and young people, and it is extremely important that our voices are heard and included in all correspondence on these matters.

It is also noted that no specific reference is made explicit in the Bill re: the inclusion of a young person's representative on a PSB; bearing in mind this links to provision under the Well-being of Future Generations Bill, this would appear to be an oversight

which should be addressed in the Bill. Membership of the Merthyr Tydfil LSB **includes representation of young people through the Chair of our Merthyr Tydfil Borough Wide Youth Forum and our Secretary.** To reiterate, Children and Young People's right to participate in all matters affecting them is enshrined in Article 12 of the United Nations convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). When given the opportunity to participate, young people are also given the opportunity to make change – personally in their lives, in their communities and globally. In Wales, the children and young people's participation agenda has developed in a distinct and unique way; these developments are set within the framework of Welsh Government's commitment to the UNCRC, now formally adopted as the basis of all its work regarding children and young people (Rights in Action – Welsh Government 2004 and more recently Section 12 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010.

We look forward to receiving more child and young people friendly correspondence from you in due course.

Regards,

Merthyr Tydfil Borough Wide Youth Forum (MTBWYF) Cabinet