

## **5. CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE**

5.1 The Assembly Government has established a Cabinet Sub-committee on Children and Young People to give a lead to children and young people's issues at the highest executive level in Wales. It is chaired by the Minister for Children and Young People, Jane Hutt. Other core members of the Cabinet Sub-Committee are the First Minister, Rhodri Morgan, the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, Jane Davidson, and the Minister for Culture and Sports, Jenny Randerson. Other Assembly Ministers are co-opted as necessary. This Sub-committee is addressing issues affecting children and young people, including those issues raised by the Children's Commissioner.

### **Child Poverty Strategy**

5.2 The Welsh Assembly Government believes that tackling child poverty is a fundamental component of its broader strategy to improve quality of life and extend opportunity to every community in Wales. No-one, especially children and young people in Wales, should be disadvantaged or prevented from achieving their full potential because of where they live or their family circumstances.

### ***Where we are today***

5.3 The Welsh Assembly Government is to develop a strategy to combat child poverty in Wales and a Child Poverty Task Group is to be set up to take this work forward.

### ***What we are doing***

5.4 The Child Poverty Task Group is being established under the chairmanship of Charlotte Williams, lecturer in social policy at University College, Bangor. The group will produce a report which sets out a long-term strategic direction and recommendations for further action on which the Assembly Government can develop firm proposals for action from 2003-04. As part of its work, it will conduct an audit of existing Welsh Assembly Government policies and programmes which impact on child poverty. More detail on some of these policies is set out below.

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### **Planning and Participation for Children and Young People**

5.5 The Assembly Government has established a strategic planning framework for all services for children and young people. A key element is providing opportunities for their participation in policy development and programme implementation.

5.6 The Assembly bases its approach to the involvement of children and young people on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 12 of the Convention sets out to ensure that children and young people are listened to, treated with respect and have their race and cultural identity recognised.

### ***Where we are today***

5.7 The Assembly has drawn up a set of seven core aims to underpin all its activities for children and young people. All programmes that have an effect on children and young people are now being considered under these seven aims.

5.8 Guidance on local planning arrangements for services for children and young people sets out a structure for each local authority area of a Framework Partnership involving local authorities, the NHS and voluntary sector, with two sub-groups. Children's Partnerships produce *Early Entitlement* plans for all services for those aged 0-10 and their families, and Young People's Partnerships (YPPs), which produce *Extending Entitlement* plans for those aged 0-25. Framework plans pull together the key aims and priorities for the whole age group. The guidance stresses the requirement to involve children and young people in the preparation of plans affecting them.

5.9 *Extending Entitlement* plans were received in March 2002, while the first *Early Entitlement* and *Framework* plans were received in October 2002. During the same year, arrangements were also put in place to improve communication between the organisations which work to support young people at an all-Wales level (All-Wales Young People's Organisations - AWYPO). The Assembly Government arranged a number of meetings between senior representatives of all such organisations to ensure co-ordination of activity across Wales, to complement work undertaken by the local YPPs.

### ***What we are doing***

5.10 The agenda for 2003 includes consolidation on developments to date and new activity. Work to support and drive forward local Framework, Children's and Young People's Partnership activity and AWYPO co-ordination will continue.

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5.11 A contract to establish baseline data from which to evaluate the impact of the *Extending Entitlement* project will begin, and an evaluation framework will be developed in close collaboration with national and local partners.

5.12 In March 2004, Young People's Partnerships will be required to report on their achievements during the first 18-month period of the project. Reports will include a clear indication of progress made towards achieving locally-agreed priorities, as well as the three nationally set indicators (involving young people in decision-making processes; joint staff training initiatives to meet needs identified by the YPP; and gaps filled in provision including out-of-school activities).

5.13 The Assembly Government provides funding for Funky Dragon, the Children and Young People's Assembly (formerly known as Llais Ifanc / Young Voice). This is a self-governing, representative body for the whole of Wales which is developing effective links between local and national participation organisations, within Wales, and on a UK, European and world-wide basis.

5.14 Funky Dragon has established a Management Council made up of representatives of local for a and other representative voluntary groups covering a wide range of young people. The Minister for Health and Social Services and the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning hold six-monthly meetings with the Management Council of Funky Dragon to enable them to discuss the Welsh Assembly's programme priorities.

5.15 A website provides opportunities for young people to be consulted and to offer their views on issues that concern and affect them ([www.funkydragon.org](http://www.funkydragon.org) or [www.draigffyncci.org](http://www.draigffyncci.org)). In addition, Funky Dragon has released guidelines, "Breathing Fire into Participation" for use by statutory, voluntary and community organisations to enable the development of effective participation mechanisms for children and young people.

5.16 Children and Young People's Forums or networks are in place in most local authorities as the main vehicle through which the views of children and young people can be heard.

## **Canllaw On Line and Learning Pathways**

### ***Where we are today***

5.17 Canllaw Online Cyf is funded by the Welsh Assembly Government to deliver a range of high quality information services for all young people in Wales, including:

- An Information Handbook for all young people of school leaving age;

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- The Euro under-26 Discount Card, which allows anyone under the age of 26 to obtain discounts for travel, services and shopping at a range of outlets across the continent, including 300 in Wales;
- A fully bilingual information Website which updates information with hyperlinks to young-person- friendly websites;
- Telephone helplines for young people, including a Personal Support Line and Legal Advice Line;
- Support for the development and operation of a network of information providers across Wales ("Info-Points");
- A consultation service and packages for all those involved in the development and delivery of information products and services to young people; and
- A range of training opportunities including Information training packages for all those involved in the delivery of Information products to young people.

## ***What we are doing***

5.18 The present contract with Canllaw On-line focuses on 16-20 year olds. Work is planned to establish the information needs of 11-15 year old young people across Wales and possibly those aged 20-25.

5.19 The Assembly has conducted a large scale consultation exercise on proposals for 14-19 learning in Wales, "*Learning Country Learning Pathways 14-19*". The proposals are based on equality of opportunity and social inclusion, and set out structures to enable young people to engage in a curriculum which is relevant and reflects their interests, aptitudes and learning styles, together with an entitlement to a range of opportunities and experiences which would enable them to develop the wide range of essential skills they need for life and work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The action plan developed as a result of the consultation will be published in April 2003.

## **Children's Commissioner for Wales**

5.20 The Children's Commissioner for Wales, Peter Clarke, was appointed on 1st March 2001. His role is that of a statutory, independent Commissioner with a wide-ranging remit to review the effect of policies on and the delivery of services to children. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child welcomed the establishment of the independent Children's Commissioner for Wales when it issued its observations on the Report of the UK delegation in October 2002 in Geneva.

## ***Where we are today***

5.21 Following the enactment of The Children's Commissioner for Wales Act 2001, the Commissioner's powers were extended from regulating children's services to areas such as transport, the environment, agriculture and economic development, as well as those services directly related to children.

5.22 The Commissioner can make representations to the Assembly about any matter affecting the rights or the welfare of children in Wales. He acts as a champion of children's rights and is also empowered to examine the case of an individual child if it has more general application to children's lives in Wales.

5.23 Three Assistant Commissioners have been appointed to cover in detail the areas of policy

and service evaluation, legal issues and communications with children and young people.

### ***What we are doing***

5.24 Peter Clarke published his annual report, covering activities during his first year of office, in the autumn of 2002. This included reference to his first formal Examination, Clywch, in which he is investigating whether appropriate procedures were followed as a result of allegations by pupils against their teacher. He will be considering safe practice and procedures for working with children in the performing arts in the light of what may have occurred in this instance.

5.25 Jane Hutt, the Assembly's Minister for Children and Young People meets regularly with the Children's Commissioner, in order to discuss issues of concern to children and young people in Wales.

### **Cymorth - the Children and Youth Support Fund**

5.26 The Assembly Government has announced the creation of a unified grant to be known as Cymorth - the Children and Youth Support Fund. The grant will bring together the existing funding for Sure Start, the Children and Youth Partnership Fund, Youth Access Initiative, the Play Grant and the National Childcare Strategy.

### ***Where we are today***

5.27 Cymorth will be introduced from 2003-04. The funding programme has been developed on the basis of research evidence which shows that targeted support for children and young people can improve the life chances of children from disadvantaged families.

### ***What we are doing***

5.28 Funding priority under Cymorth will be given to Communities First areas, where appropriate, as there is evidence to demonstrate that services made available on an area basis can avoid stigmatising individual families. The indicative allocation, currently over £39 million in its first year of operation, is aimed at those children whose life chances might be jeopardised if special action is not taken. The grant will fund project work and some central infrastructure costs within the following themes for activity:

- Family support;
- Health promotion;
- Play, leisure and enrichment;
- Empowerment, participation and active citizenship;
- Community development;
- Training, mentoring and information;
- Building childcare provision; and
- Inclusion and access.

5.29 Proposals for the Fund will be incorporated in local frameworks. Partnerships have been asked to set a range of specific local targets, and these will be aggregated to provide national targets for the scheme.

## **Children First**

5.30 Children First is the Welsh Assembly Government's programme to tackle the recommendations of the Utting and Waterhouse reports and to improve outcomes for all children in need.

### ***Where we are today***

5.31 Launched in 1999 as a 3 year grant aided programme, Children First has been extended by 2 years to March 2004. The policy programme will continue beyond that date.

5.32 Children First is closely linked to other Assembly Government policies and strategies to improve the quality of children's social services, including:

- the development of National Service Frameworks (NSF) for children, incorporating the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Strategy, a disabled child NSF and a children in special circumstances NSF (covering children in need and socially excluded children);
  - the implementation of a Framework for the assessment of children in need and their families;
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- the development of a new integrated children's system which will bring together the Framework for assessment and the Looking After Children (LAC) system;
  - a new strategic framework for improving placement choice and stability for looked after children;

- the introduction of national minimum standards of care and inspection by the Care Standards Inspectorate for Wales, for children's homes, residential schools and colleges and other care settings; and
- new National Standards for the provision of advocacy services for children.

### ***What we are doing***

5.33 Significant resources have been made available to the Children First programme. Provision for 2003-04 is £25.2 million rising to £31 million in 2004-05 and £48.9 million in 2005-06. In 2003-04 the bulk of this will be distributed to local authorities as grant. In addition to targets against 11 key objectives set by the Assembly, local authorities and their partners are expected to set local targets in their management action plans. The Assembly Government continues to monitor implementation of the programme.

### **Childcare**

5.34 Access to good quality childcare is vital to enable parents to participate in work or education, and thus avoid social exclusion. It also provides positive experiences and role models for children.

### ***Where we are today***

5.35 Since the Government launched its National Childcare Strategy in 1999, support to childcare within Wales has been channelled through Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships within each local authority. While provision of childcare overall has increased, the number of registered childminders has reduced, and voluntary sector playgroup provision sometimes struggles to sustain itself. At the same time, funding from the New Opportunities Fund has enabled some 22,000 new out of school childcare places to be provided. Funding from the Assembly Government has increased each year since 1999.

### ***What we are doing***

5.36 In May 2002 the Assembly Government announced a new Childcare Action Plan, building on the report of a Ministerial Childcare Task Force. Amongst the 24 actions are commitments to include childcare within the unified fund "Cymorth", to introduce start up grants for childminders, to develop children's information systems in each locality, and to promote access to European Structural Funds. Within the Action Plan, the Welsh



Development Agency has commissioned research to examine the business support needs of the childcare sector. The Agency has also announced a major contract with the National Childminding Association in Wales to encourage new registrations of childminders. The Welsh Assembly Government has commissioned Chwarae Teg to develop a report on the economic impact of childcare and care of other dependants.

5.37 The Childcare Action Plan also sets a variety of objectives, including a target to reverse the decline in the number of childminders; to develop at least one integrated centre in each local authority combining early years education, childcare, play and other services for children and families; and to develop a staffed and computerised children's information service in each authority. Each Framework partnership, within their Cymorth plans, has been asked to set local childcare targets which will be aggregated to create national targets.

## **Personal and Social Education**

5.38 Personal and Social Education (PSE) aims to equip children and young people to become more personally effective, healthy and responsible in society.

### ***Where we are today***

5.39 The Qualifications Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales (ACCAC) published a Framework in 2000 for Personal and Social Education. The Framework identifies how aspects of a person in society can be developed in schools and covers the social; community; physical; sexual; emotional; spiritual; moral; vocational; learning and environmental aspects of a person's development.

### ***What we are doing***

5.40 The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning has announced plans to give PSE statutory status as part of the Basic Curriculum for maintained schools in Wales for pupils aged 5 to 16 from September 2003. This legal change requires secondary legislation. All schools and LEAs have already been informed of these plans and the Assembly Government intends to issue formal guidance in Spring Term 2003. The guidance will restate the importance of the PSE Framework issued by ACCAC in 2000 as the document on which schools should base their PSE provision.

## **Narrowing the Gap in Schools Performance**

5.41 The Assembly Government is committed to driving up standards of achievement in schools. In order to achieve this objective, one of the issues to be addressed is the means by which the gap between the performance of schools can be narrowed; that gap relates largely to schools in deprived areas by comparison with those in areas of greater prosperity. There is

statistical correlation between schools with lower levels of pupil attainment and deprivation.

### ***Where we are today***

5.42 The Assembly's Partnership Council agreed in October 2000 to establish a joint task group to look at the range of performance of schools with a view to identifying educational, social and financial issues and making recommendations for action. The task group is responsible for developing proposals of a strategic nature which, when implemented, can be expected to raise significantly the standards of achievement in schools, particularly in deprived areas, whilst at the same time maintaining and improving the performance of schools which are doing well.

### ***What we are doing***

5.43 One of the key issues being looked at is the factors that have contributed to the success of some schools, focusing particularly on what initiatives work in those schools in deprived areas that are successful i.e. the schools that are "bucking the trend". The task group will submit a report of its findings to the Assembly/Welsh Local Government Association Partnership Council with a view to the subsequent dissemination of good practice.

## **School Attendance and Behaviour**

5.44 Local Education Authorities are required to have Behaviour Support Plans (BSPs) in place giving details of training, consultation, guidance and other services available to schools to help them effectively manage pupil behaviour. The first BSPs were drawn up in 1998, and LEAs published revised plans in the first half of 2001.

5.45 Ten per cent of (half-day) sessions in Welsh schools in 2001-02 were missed through authorised and unauthorised absence with 1.7 per cent of sessions being missed through unauthorised absence.

5.46 Funding under the Grants for Education Training and Support (GEST) programme can be used to address challenging behaviour difficulties, attendance, and pupil disaffection in schools. Local authorities determine exactly how this money is spent within their local priorities and circumstances.

### ***Where we are today***

5.47 *Learning Country* outlined targeted support for:

- Schools with serious problems of poor behaviour, low attendance and low attainment;
- Early intervention to help young children who have problems concentrating and co-operating;

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- Extension of training for practitioners in behaviour and conflict management; and
- Encouraging parents to take responsibility for their children's conduct.

5.48 Following a two-day conference on *Tackling Disaffection Together* in October 2001 a task and finish group was set-up to recommend approaches to tackling attendance problems. This group reported in October 2002.

### ***What we are doing***

5.49 The action plan to take forward the task and finish group's recommendations is due to be released early in 2003. This will entail measures such as improving the information available on absences and reviewing electronic registration, the role of the education welfare service and the link to magistrates courts when prosecuting truancy cases.

5.50 Consultation began in February 2003 on new anti-bullying guidance for schools as part of a widescale review of guidance on pupil support and inclusion. Consultation is also ongoing on developing legislation and procedures relating to school exclusions under the new Education Bill. The Bill will also allow for targeting all absences from school - rather than just unauthorised absence.

In 2002-3, £10.86m was allocated under GEST for *Tackling Social Disadvantage* (which includes activities to address school attendance and behaviour). Additionally £500K for each of the next 3 years has been allocated to fund 10 pilot projects in tackling disaffection.

### **Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in Schools**

5.51 The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to ensuring that all pupils have the opportunity to acquire ICT skills which they will need in the workplace, and to make use of ICT in all curriculum areas.

## ***Where we are today***

5.52 The Assembly has provided £60 million since 1998-99 to improve ICT provision, training and support in schools. Local education authorities have confirmed that all schools in Wales are now connected to the Internet. In addition, the Assembly has provided £9.9 million as part of the *Cymru Ar-lein* initiative in order to equip every school in Wales with an interactive whiteboard and other multimedia equipment.

5.53 An independent Advisory Panel on ICT in schools has been established to advise Ministers on priorities for future action. The Panel will be informed by the recommendations of the ICT Task Force, which was also established in 2002.

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5.54 The National Grid for Learning (NGfL) Cymru website is dedicated to serving the curriculum needs of pupils and teachers in Wales, providing high quality materials to support the Curriculum Cymraeg in both English and Welsh.

## ***What we are doing***

5.55 The Assembly is:

- Providing continued financial support via the Grants for Education Support and Training (GEST) programme to help local education authorities improve ICT facilities and support for their schools;
- Supporting the development of a broadband network for lifelong learning, to which all schools are connected, over the next three years;
- working with the Advisory Panel on ICT and the ICT Task Force to develop a strategic approach to key issues such as ICT procurement by schools, technical support and teachers professional development in the use of ICT; and
- continuing the development of NGfL Cymru including measures to support the sharing of good practice in the use of ICT in schools.

## **Physical Education and Sport**

5.56 The Welsh Assembly Government attaches great importance to physical education (PE)

and sport within schools. The report produced for the National Assembly by the PE and School Sport Task Force "Action Plan for Wales", published in June 2001, promotes a common vision for improving standards and strengthening the delivery and effectiveness of provision of PE and school sport for all young people in Wales.

### ***Where we are today***

5.57 The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning has welcomed the Task Force's Plan and is making resources available to the Sports Council for Wales to take forward a number of the key recommendations.

### ***What we are doing***

5.58 The Assembly is giving sports a renewed emphasis in schools and communities and taking forward a number of recommendations in the PE and School Taskforce Report. An extra £5 million has been announced to support continued implementation of key recommendations in the Action Plan over the next three years, £1m in 2003-04; £1.5m in 2004-05; and £2.5m in 2005-06.

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5.59 Work is also underway to ensure that the £48.7 million being made available for PE and sport in Wales through the New Opportunities Fund, complements the efforts of schools, local education authorities and the Sports Council for Wales to promote sport and healthy lifestyles throughout the country.

### **Literacy and Numeracy**

5.60 The Assembly is committed to driving up standards of teaching and attainment in schools by increasing the percentage of 11 and 14 year olds reaching the standards expected of them for their ages.

### ***Where we are today***

5.61 Evidence from National Curriculum attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 during 2002 indicates a successful approach to raising standards in primary schools. The percentage of 11 year old pupils achieving Level 4 or above in National Curriculum Key Stage Tests has increased considerably in literacy and numeracy; these indicate an all-Wales improvement since 1996 of around 43% in English, 39% in Welsh and 30% in maths, and have met the targets set for 2002. However progress is much slower in Key Stage 3. There is evidence that

the challenge of coping with transition from primary to secondary school can be associated with the downturn in achievement.

### ***What we are doing***

5.62 The main thrust of our plans for 2002-03 onwards will be to ease that transition and to address the dip in standards through Key Stage 3. Wales-only powers are provided in the Education Act 2002 which will require the governing bodies of secondary schools and their feeder schools to plan together to facilitate the transition of pupils from primary to secondary schools. A consultation process will commence in 2003 and it is planned that the statutory requirements will come into effect from September 2004.

5.63 In addition the Welsh Assembly Government is working with ESTYN, the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales (ACCAC), the Basic Skills Agency and others to develop materials to support secondary schools and local education authorities in implementation of strategies to increase performance in these skills across the Key Stage 3 curriculum. The first of these materials, a guidance document entitled "*Aiming for Excellence in Key Stage 3*" was published in December 2002. This will be followed by materials being produced by BBC Wales and ACCAC giving evidence of best practice which will be published in Spring 2003. Further guidance materials are planned for future years.

### **Family Literacy and Numeracy**

64. Poor literacy and numeracy skills are closely linked to poverty; not just

economic poverty but poverty of aspiration and expectation and cultural

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poverty. The inter-generational impact of poor basic skills is well documented. Children with poor basic skills are far more likely to have parents who struggle with reading, writing and number work. Functionally illiterate and innumerate parents lack confidence and often are too stigmatised and ashamed to let their child's teacher know.

### ***Where we are today***

5.65 The successful Family Literacy and Family Numeracy schemes in Wales have shown that parents with few, if any, qualifications are drawn into learning by the opportunity to help their children. They help break the cycle of underachievement and low expectation and although no panacea to all of the problems of low standards in basic skills, they represent a significant contribution to preventing failure.

## ***What we are doing***

5.66 Family programmes are a strong and important element of the National Basic Skills Strategy for Wales. The number of family literacy and family numeracy courses are being increased and local education authorities are being encouraged to look at their overall strategic planning for them. This includes newly developed family workshops - three-hour taster sessions that encourage parents to take part in the full course, and *'Keeping up with the Children'* courses to keep parents informed of the literacy and numeracy skills their children are gaining at school and the methods used by teachers in the classroom.

## **Work-Related Education**

5.67 It is important that pupils are prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of employment and adult life. Work Related Education plays a central role in preparing all young people to make a full and effective contribution to adult and working life.

## ***Where we are today***

5.68 The currently non-statutory, *Framework for Work-Related Education for 14-19 year olds* was introduced in September 2000. The Framework offers key learning opportunities:

- Good quality work experience of at least one week at Key Stage 4;
  - An enterprise activity;
  - Mentoring support from employers for action planning and setting personal goals;
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- Vocational or vocationally-related courses;
  - Direct inputs from employers, into the curriculum or coursework assignments;
  - Competitions or projects sponsored by employers; and

- Out of hours study involving employers.

### ***What we are doing***

5.69 The recommendation of ACCAC in May 2002 that Work Related Education should become statutory was accepted. Provision has been made in the Education Act 2002 to add Work Related Education to the basic curriculum for pupils aged between 14 and 16. This will become effective from September 2004.

### **Arts and Culture**

5.70 The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to improving access to arts and cultural experiences for young people. The Minister for Culture Sport and the Welsh Language published her culture strategy "*Creative Future: Cymru Greadigol*" in February 2002. The strategy reinforced that improving access to cultural experiences for young people was a priority area for the Government.

### ***Where we are today***

5.71 The additional funding for the Arts Council for Wales in 2002-03 and future years will be prioritised for improving access to the arts for young people.

### ***What we are doing***

5.72 The Welsh Assembly Government is:

- Providing free access to the National Museums and Galleries of Wales;
- Reviewing the arrangements for engaging young people in the arts via the Arts Council's Task Force on "Arts and Young People";
- Requiring the national remit companies ((Welsh National Opera, BBC NOW, Clwyd Theatr Cymru etc) to have policies in place which exploit their talent base fully for educational purposes;
- Establishing a Youth Arts Fund;
- Supporting redevelopment of Urdd's Glan Llyn camp; and



- Ensuring all public libraries, where practicable, offer free Internet access and other ICT services to the public by the end of December 2002. As of January 2003, access was being offered in 92% of libraries and will be available in the remaining 8% by April 2003, following integration with the Assembly Government's Broadband Initiative.

## **Youth Justice Services**

5.73 Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) were established under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. They are led by Local Authority Chief Executives and consist of five statutory partners: local authority social services and education; police; probation; and health. YOTs are responsible for the provision of the full range of youth justice services in their areas and are designed to prevent and reduce youth offending by means of close inter-agency co-operation between all the statutory partners. Wales is covered by 17 YOTs, which have been in operation since April 2000.

5.74 Primary responsibility for funding YOTs lies with the local agencies themselves. The Youth Justice Board for England and Wales is responsible for monitoring YOTs and provides additional funding to promote good practice.

### ***Where we are today***

5.75 The Assembly maintains an ongoing dialogue with the Youth Justice Board in order to ensure that its policies take full account of the Welsh situation and to ensure a focus on specific Welsh issues. As a result of these discussions the Youth Justice Board opened a 28 place discrete unit for 15-17 year old young offenders within HM Prison Parc in March 2002. The Youth Justice Board has also agreed the provision of a 60-80 place secure training centre in South Wales by 2005. The Assembly Government is currently pressing the Home Office to provide funding for this new Centre, which is needed to reduce the large number of young offenders currently sent to custody in English institutions.

### ***What we are doing***

5.76 An All Wales Youth Offending Strategy Group, chaired jointly by the Minister for Health and Social Services and the Chair of the Youth Justice Board, has been established to devise a strategy for Wales which fully addresses the cross-cutting aspects of youth justice. The Group is in the process of drafting a comprehensive youth justice policy for consultation in the spring of 2003 and to be published by the end of the year.

5.77 The Assembly funds NACRO Cymru to supply advice and guidance to youth offending teams in Wales on a wide range of issues. NACRO is receiving £133,000 per year from the

Assembly Government to continue this work over the three years commencing 2002-03.

## **Services for Children with Special Health Needs**

5.78 "Children with special health needs" are defined as those who are physically impaired or who have complex or chronic medical conditions; or who have emotional, behavioural or learning difficulties associated with a diagnosed medical condition. Such children need treatment, care and associated services to develop their full potential and live as independently as possible.

5.79 Services for children with special health needs are provided by the NHS, social services, local education authorities and the voluntary sector. There is some evidence that services are not co-ordinated as well as they could be and that there are gaps in service provision.

### ***Where we are today***

5.80 The Health and Social Services Committee decided in July 2001 to undertake a review of services for children with special health needs. The review covered the availability of primary, community and social care services for children with special health needs.

### ***What we are doing***

5.81 The Committee's report on the review was published in November 2002. The Government response will be discussed in an Assembly Plenary in February 2003.

