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Y Gweinidog dros Blant, Addysg & Dysgu Gydol Oes
Minister for Children, Education & Lifelong Learning



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Helen Mary Jones AM
Chair
Children and Young People Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CARDIFF
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16 November 2010

Dear Helen Mary,

A WRITTEN UPDATE REGARDING WORK THAT IS BEING UNDERTAKEN TO PROMOTE THE ROLE OF THE CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONER FOR WALES AND THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (UNCRC) IN THE PERSONAL AND SOCIAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM.

Thank you for your letter of 21 October. You asked that I provide the Children and Young People Committee with an update regarding work that is being undertaken within my Department to promote the role of the Children's Commissioner for Wales and the UNCRC within the personal and social education (PSE) curriculum in Wales.

The Welsh Assembly Government has adopted the UNCRC as the basis for all our work with children and young people and has publicly stated its commitment to working towards the full realisation of all UNCRC articles for every child and young person in Wales. My Department's approach to education and lifelong learning is set within this broad context. For example, during the review of the school curriculum in Wales, which was completed in 2008, learners were consulted and opportunities were taken to insert key messages relating to the UNCRC in all curriculum documents.

You asked specifically about the PSE curriculum. All maintained schools in Wales have a statutory responsibility to provide broad, balanced personal and social education for all pupils of compulsory school age, to meet the specific needs of learners. The non-statutory *Personal and social education framework for 7 to 19-year-olds in Wales*, which is widely used in schools, is the key document that schools use when planning their PSE provision. The PSE framework has Active citizenship as one of its five themes. This theme reflects Welsh Assembly Government priorities such as: children and young people's rights and entitlements; pupil participation; and involvement in decision making. A rights-based approach is embedded within the Active citizenship theme and all learners aged 7 to 16 years old should be given opportunities to explore and understand their rights in a democratic society as underpinned by the UNCRC.

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Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)

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Similarly, the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification, which is being delivered to some 35,000 learners in over 160 schools and FE colleges across Wales, provides specific opportunities for learners aged 14 to 19 to learn about their rights.

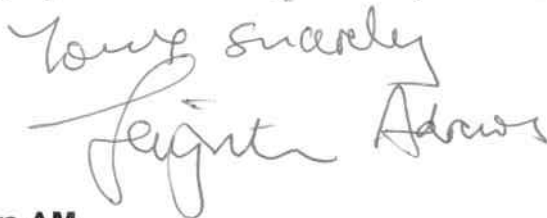
The Welsh Assembly Government recognises the need to increase the level of awareness of the UNCRC across Wales and that a clear and consistent message needs to be given. The Assembly Government's *Getting it Right 2009 - United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Action Plan for Wales*, approved by the Cabinet Committee for Children and Young People, October 2009, outlines a range of activity to 'develop and disseminate resources to raise awareness of the UNCRC with children, young people, professionals, parents and the public'.

The Assembly Government acknowledges there is a specific need to support schools with resources catering for a range of ages and abilities. Consequently, my Department has commissioned a project to develop PSE lesson plans and participative resources for primary and secondary aged children and young people to support the teaching of the UNCRC. The new bilingual resources, which will be ready in 2011, will also promote the role of the Children's Commissioner for Wales. My officials have recently met with the successful contractor who will work closely with and liaise regularly with the Children's Commissioner's staff when developing the PSE resources.

The Assembly Government's Personal and Social Education guidance website (www.wales.gov.uk/personalsocialandeducation) also highlights opportunities to promote the UNCRC within the school curriculum and signposts a range of organisations such as the Children's Commissioner for Wales that can support schools with the delivery of children's rights education. Links are also provided to Assembly Government UNCRC awareness raising materials and a bilingual toolkit 'Let's get it Right!' for use in schools.

My Department has also established positive working relationships with representatives from the Children's Commissioner's office. For example, during the recent updating of sex education guidance for schools, officials worked closely with the Policy Officer, Children's Commissioner for Wales to ensure that references to relevant UNCRC articles were included within the guidance circular. A similar example of our close partnership working is demonstrated by DCELLS officials and the Children's Commissioner's staff working together to explore, with representatives from UNICEF, how the Rights, Respecting Schools Award could be adapted for use in schools in Wales.

I hope that this update will reassure you of our commitment to work closely with key partners such as the Children's Commissioner for Wales to ensure that all learners in Wales receive high quality rights education and that they understand the role of the Children's Commissioner.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Leighton Andrews', written over a faint, larger signature that also appears to be 'Leighton Andrews'.

Leighton Andrews AM
Minister for Children, Education & Lifelong Learning