



Disabled Children Matter Wales
Plant Anabl yn Cyfri Cymru



Manifesto

Putting Disabled Children First



Children in Wales
Plant yng Nghymru



contact a family
for families with disabled children



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Disabled children and young people are amongst the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in Welsh society. The DCMW campaign is calling on the next Welsh Assembly Government to deliver on its commitment to put disabled children and young people first.

Implementation of policy

The National Service Framework for Children Young People and Maternity Services in Wales is an excellent document which contains standards and key actions on the provision of services for disabled children and young people. Implementation of these key actions will transform the lives of disabled children, young people and their families and ensure that they have the same access to everyday opportunities as any other child or family. But up to now implementation has been very patchy. The Welsh Assembly Government should prioritise the implementation of the Children's NSF across Wales as a key objective for government between 2011 and 2015.

Legislation

In 2003 the Audit Commission said "The services that disabled children, young people and their families are offered depend largely on where they live, and on how hard parents are able to push. Regrettably, little has changed in 2010. The Welsh Assembly Government should use existing powers and bring forward appropriate primary legislation to improve the delivery of services by local government and Local Health Boards. The 'postcode lottery' of service delivery that faces disabled children, young people and their families must end. We want services to standardise access and to learn from best practice.

Audit Commission Public Sector Briefing (2003) Services for disabled children. A review of services for disabled children and their families

Transition to adulthood

Young disabled people in Wales deserve the same choices and chances as anyone else. Existing post-16 initiatives in education, training and employment open to all, should be accessible to disabled young people, including the same level of careers advice. The Welsh Assembly Government should ensure that there is a full range of further education provision available to disabled young people across Wales, especially those with complex needs. Existing pilot work on transition must be concluded quickly and the outcomes implemented in policy.

Quality services

Having the right services and equipment can make all the difference to disabled children and their families leading a full and active life. However many families receive no support at all or face long waiting lists for basic community services. The Welsh Assembly Government should implement a new approach to services for disabled children, refocusing on the effective delivery of wheelchairs and equipment, children's community nursing services, short breaks and behavioural support.

Child poverty

Families with disabled children have higher living costs than other families. A family with a disabled child is also more likely to be living on benefits or a low income, with one parent undertaking a high level of caring responsibilities. Disabled children and young people also live with a poverty of participation and can experience high levels of social isolation. The Welsh Assembly Government child poverty strategies must target families with disabled children, taking account of their particular financial circumstances, not least those who may not live in a geographical area of deprivation.

The Disabled Children Matter Wales campaign is calling on the Welsh Assembly Government to take action to improve services for disabled children and young people in Wales.

IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY

Children's NSF - Urgently complete the review of the Children's NSF and commit to a renewed focus on the implementation and delivery of all Key Actions in Chapter Five.

LEGISLATION

Short breaks – fully implement section 25 of the Children and Young People's Act 2008 in Wales to increase the duty on Local Authorities to provide short breaks for families with disabled children and work with statutory and voluntary agencies to ensure increased access to services across Wales.

Education – ensure that any plans for future legislation on additional learning needs and the future of statementing fully take into account the views and needs of disabled children, young people, their families and service providers.

Changing places – formally investigate legislative mechanisms to strengthen the duty to provide changing places facilities at large public buildings in Wales.

TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD

Further Education – monitor and evaluate the recommendations of the Ministerial Task Group on additional learning needs in post 16 education to improve access to further education and increase the choice of courses for disabled students. WAG should work with local authorities to create new provision for students with complex needs in Wales to reduce expensive residential placements in specialist colleges.

Key working pilots – fully implement the findings of the existing key working pilots and ensure the roll out a comprehensive key working service across all local authorities in Wales.

QUALITY SERVICES

Access to early years provision – Disabled children in Wales do not access the same number of pre school play sessions as their non disabled peers. Referral schemes run by MYM and Wales PPA enable children with additional needs to access their local pre-school setting, improved funding will help address the longstanding inequality of access to play for pre school disabled children across Wales.

Wheelchair services – fully implement the recommendations of Phase 2 of the All Wales Posture and Mobility Review and ensure that there is sufficient investment to deliver a high quality wheelchair service for disabled children and young people in Wales.

Community Children's Nursing Services – fully implement the Community Nursing Strategy for Wales to provide a comprehensive community children's nursing service across Wales.

CHILD POVERTY

Benefit uptake – changes to the UK benefit system will have major implications for families with disabled children. WAG must make sure that the Child Poverty Strategy meets the needs of families with disabled children in Wales and continue a benefit uptake campaign to ensure income maximisation.

Child Care – child care sufficiency audits clearly show that there is a serious shortage of child care placements for disabled children. WAG must work with local authorities to ensure equality of access for all disabled children.

Poverty of participation – WAG should ensure that all mainstream play opportunities are inclusive, although specialist play provision should also be made available to disabled children and young people who request it.



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