



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Suggested changes for
**Advocacy Services
for Children and Young
People in Wales**



Who we are

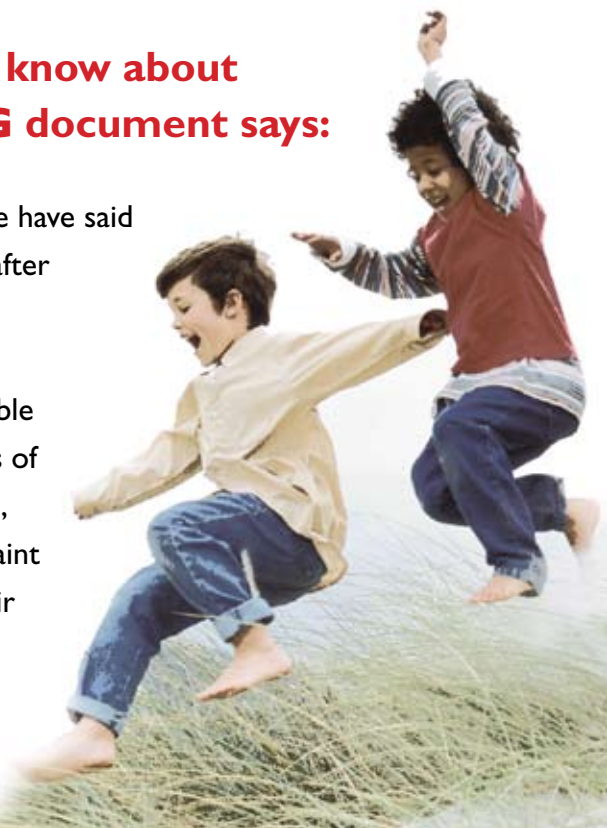
We are the Young People's Advisory Group (YPAG), a group of young people who work with Tros Gynnal. We talk to their Trustees and take part in conferences and consultations about the lives of children and young people. We have worked on producing this document to let you know what the Assembly say should happen to Advocacy.

The BIG consultation document that this is based on is over 39 pages long – ridiculous! So we're going to try and make this one shorter and easier to understand...

In case you don't know about advocacy the **BIG** document says:

Children and young people have said that they have felt better after having advocacy support.

Advocacy should be available for lots of different groups of children and young people, not only to make a complaint but to help them have their voices heard about things that affect them.



Two separate reports have said that things need to change.

The Children's Commissioner's 'Telling Concerns'

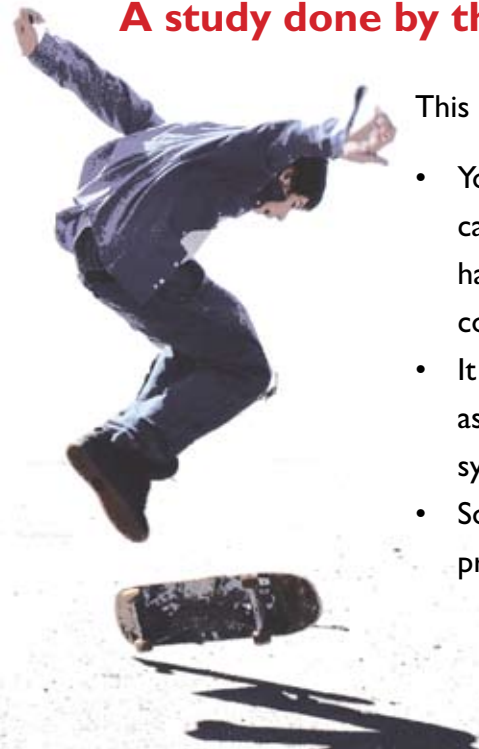
This report says:

- There is a need for Advocacy services to be independent
- The services need to be easy to reach and of a high quality
- Advocacy services across Wales need to work together
- Advocacy should be available for everyone to raise an issue with any part of the Council.

A study done by the University of Cardiff

This study found that:

- Young people often don't know they can complain. Those that do often have a bad experience and are left confused.
- It depends on where you live in Wales as to how good or bad the complaints system is.
- Some Advocacy services have problems around being independent.



The document says that things should get better after the changes because it will...

- Make Advocacy services more independent
- Help them get longer contracts
- Save money by working together
- Make sure the quality of the services are the same all over Wales
- Meet the needs of children and young people better

Changes for the Advocacy Services

The suggestions for improving Advocacy services are that more Advocacy services are available and that they work for 3 stages or 3 groups of children and young people.

Group 1 - Children and young people who:

- Are being helped by Health/Social Services and who want to make a complaint
- Are living away from home and wish to make a complaint
- Are over 11 and want to appeal against being excluded from school
- Are appealing against issues around their education statement

Group 2 - Children and young people who:

- Are placed out of county, in a residential school, prison or secure unit
- Have mental health issues
- Are severely disabled and/or have communication difficulties
- Travellers or Gypsies
- Are seeking asylum

Group 3 - Children and young people who:

The Assembly suggests that in developing these Advocacy services for groups 1 & 2 that the Advocacy services help to support other projects, services and organisations working with children and young people through training on children's rights, supporting/advocating and Participation.

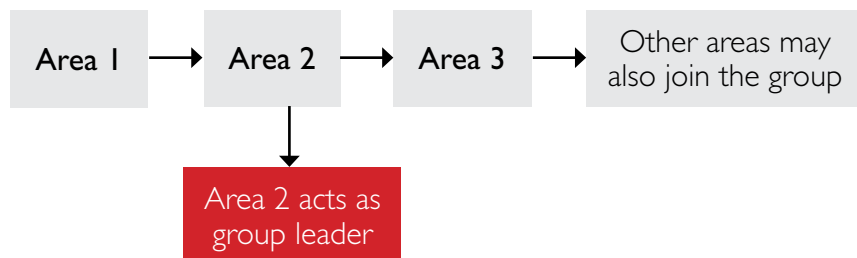


Changes for the Advocacy Services

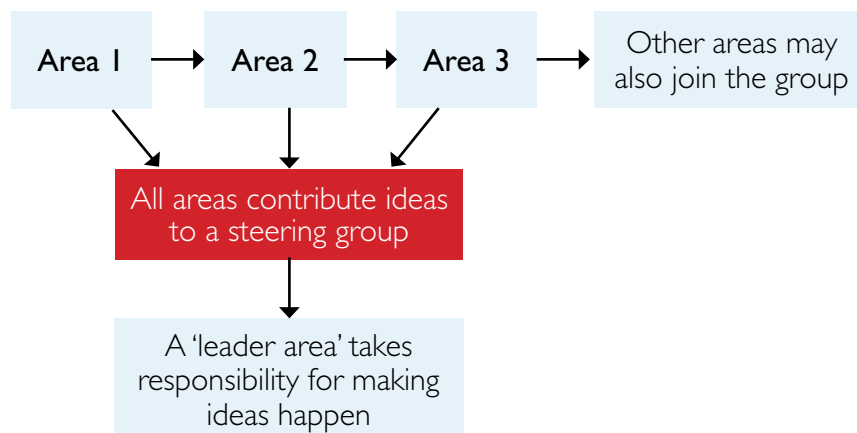
The suggestions are that Councils work together across a wider area, perhaps joining Framework Partnerships together.

Two different models are offered:

Model 1



Model 2



The Assembly also say in the document that they know that some extra support will be needed to make these changes. They offer:

- **A National Advocacy Unit**

This is a team of people who will oversee implementation of the new service (an idea mentioned in the report ‘Telling Concerns’).

- **A National Advisory Board**

Children and young people and other people will sit on the board. The board will tell ministers if things are getting better for children and young peoples advocacy and what should be done to change it if things aren’t right.

- **A more local level of support**

With a one-off grant of up to £25,000 and a number of days support from ‘IPC’, who are experts at doing this kind of thing (the Assembly also list a lot of other things they’ll do to support these changes but we’re not going to list them here [bit boring!])



Some areas of Wales have already realised that working together like this is a good way to do things and have already started doing this.

For example:

The **BIG** document talks about how groups who work in Health across Wales have joined together to buy services for children and young people with mental health needs. They have used something like model 1, where there's one lead area is in charge of the work.

The **BIG** document also says that the Welsh Assembly Government will set up a national free phone and text message service for children and young people to help them get through to an advocate quickly and easily.

So when will all this happen ????

If everybody agrees with these suggestions then the Welsh Assembly Government is thinking that all children and young people in group 1 should have a service by 2008 – and that all the children and young people in group 2 should also have a service by 2011 in all areas of Wales.

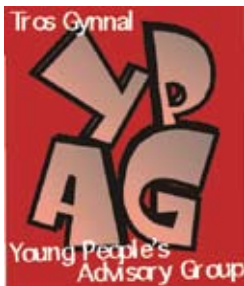
So...that's it. We finally got there!

Sorry it's still quite long but we've tried to give you the important bits.

If you want to know more about it we suggest you ask somebody local to you to explain these issues from the **BIG** 39 page document we mentioned at the beginning.

However if you want to say something about the suggestions the Assembly are making, you can send your comments to:

Thank you ----- The YPAG



The Welsh Assembly Government would really like to hear your views on how children's advocacy can be improved. Please write any comments underneath and post it to the address overleaf. You don't need to use a stamp, we will pay the postage.

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Patrick Harper
Children's Health and Social Care Directorate
Welsh Assembly Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff CF10 3NQ