



Ariennir gan
Lywodraeth Cymru
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Welsh Government

National Approach to Statutory Advocacy for Children and Young People

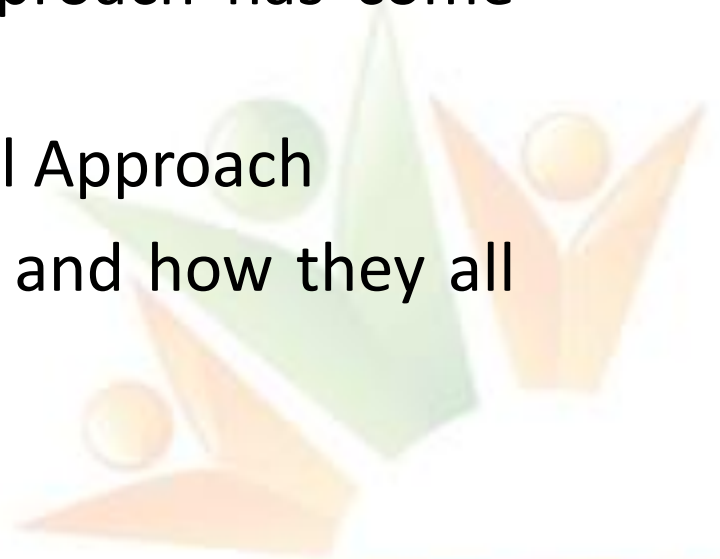
What does that mean for Local Authorities and Commissioners?



Learning Outcomes

By the end of the session you should be able to

- Understand the role of an advocate, and different types of advocacy
- Understand the history and where the National Approach has come from
- Understand the over arching principles of the National Approach
- Be aware of each element of the National Approach and how they all link



What is Advocacy ?

- Advocacy is promoting the views, wishes and feelings to ensure they are taken into account and acted upon during the decision making process that affect a child's life.
- It is enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- It's not working from a best interest perspective but representing their voice and being on their side.



The UNCRC – Article 12 – Advocacy

- The Convention on the Rights of the Child sets out the rights that must be realized for children to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse. It reflects a new vision of the child. Children are neither the property of their parents, they are human beings and are the subject of their own rights.
- The Convention offers a vision of the child as an individual and as a member of a family and community, with rights and responsibilities appropriate to his or her age and stage of development. By recognizing children's rights in this way, the Convention firmly sets the focus on the whole child.
- Can you name the 2 countries that did not sign up to the UNCRC?

Advocacy is...

...about speaking up for children and young people.

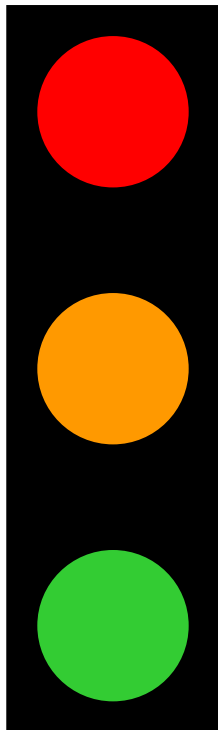
...about empowering children and young people to make sure that their rights are respected and their views and wishes are heard at all times.

...about representing the views, wishes and needs of children and young people to decision-makers, and helping them to navigate the system.

*National Standards for the Provision of Children's Advocacy Services,
Welsh Assembly Government. February '03.*



The Advocate's role is, at the request of the child/young person, to support them to express their wish to:



STOP something

CHANGE something

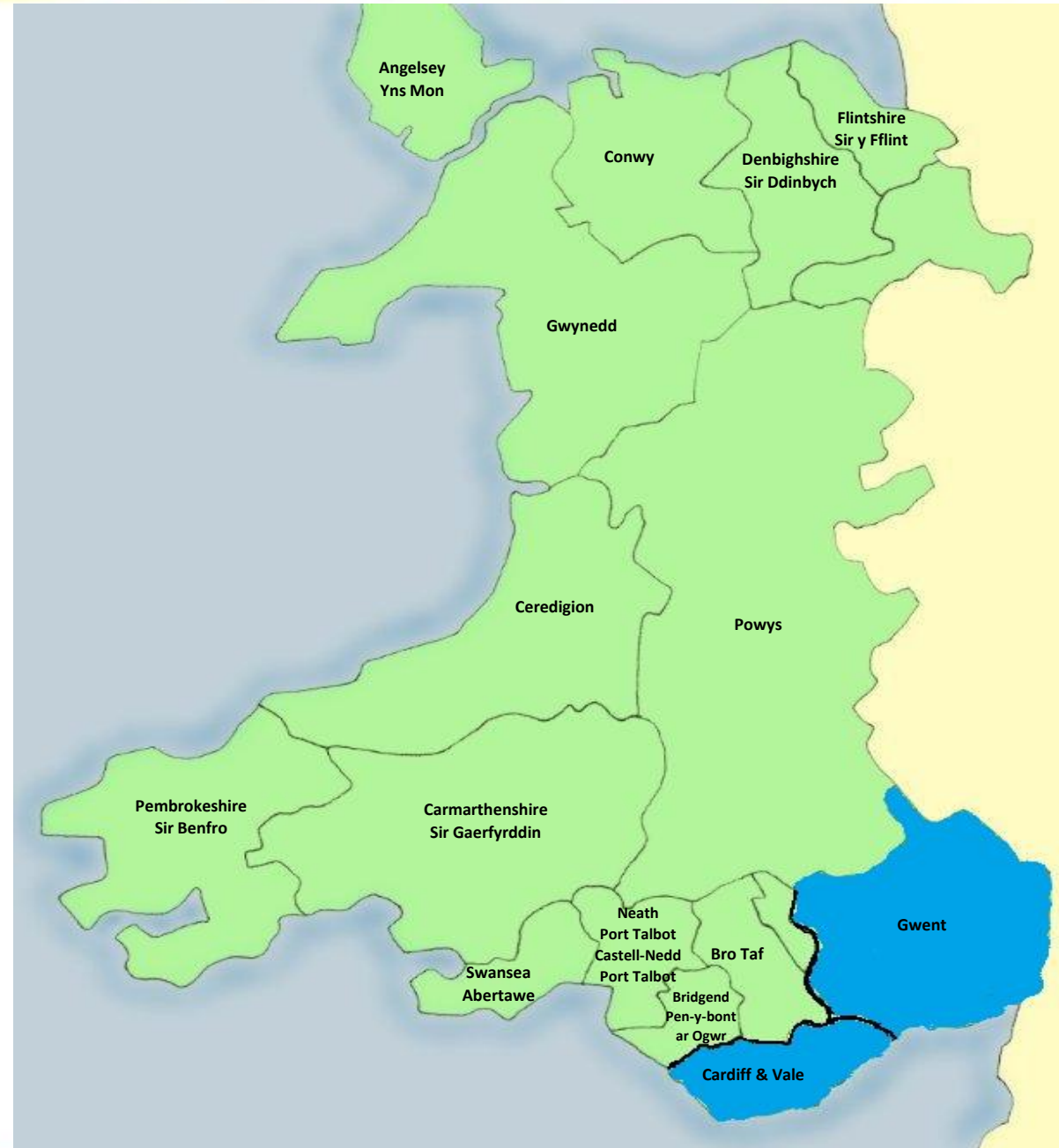
START something



What that looks like on the ground



gwasanaeth eirolaeth
ieuenctid cenedlaethol
national youth
advocacy service



The difference advocacy can make

I could be involved in a way I have never been able to before.

Joe, 10

People had to give me an answer instead of just ignoring me.

Ellie, 12

My advocate helped me to say what I wanted to say at meetings.
Zara, aged 8

I know what my rights are now and that I can complain if my rights are affected.
Dan, aged 14.

Principles of advocacy

- Person-led
- Independent
- Supporting the person to speak out
- Non-judgemental
- Empowering
- Confidential



Well-being statements

- Securing rights and entitlements
- Physical and mental health, and emotional well-being
- Protection from abuse and neglect
- Education, training and recreation
- Domestic, family and personal relationships
- Contribution made to society
- Social and economic well-being
- Suitability of living accommodation



What is Advocacy?

| Advocacy is | Advocacy is not | An advocate must |
|---|--|--|
| Representing a person's wishes and feelings. | Counselling. | Be led by the person – only doing what they request. |
| Ensuring a person's rights and entitlements are being met. | Support work. | Represent what the person wants, regardless of their own opinions. |
| Accessing information to ensure the person understands the process. | Befriending / mentoring. | Consult with the person throughout. |
| Helping a person consider their options. | Advising a person on what you think is best for them. | Help the person consider all their options. |
| Attending a meeting with someone to give them more confidence. | Representing a person against their wishes. | Have the time to participate as much as requested by the person. |
| Listening to a person and acting on their direction. | Talking about someone behind their back and knowing things they don't. | Be friendly whilst still maintaining boundaries. |



Advocacy is.... recap

Helping them express their views, wishes and feelings

Helping them access accurate information

Hearing their story and clarifying the issue

Helping them to decide what they want including all potential outcomes

Helping them to tell others what they want

Making positive endings when the advocacy relationship ends

Helping them to understand outcomes

Establishing what their preferred outcome is

The National Approach to Statutory Advocacy.

What do you already know? Have you already heard of NASA?



What does that mean for us?

As Local Authorities and commissioners with responsibility for implementing the Approach, several changes are required which we will explore as part of this training.

Including

- The active offer
- The National Standards and Outcomes Framework
- Local, national and regional performance monitoring and recording templates



The National Approach to Statutory Advocacy (NASA) has several *overarching principles*:

- Standardisation
- Accessibility for children and young people
- Issue based
- Positive outcomes

and *key elements*:

- The National Standards and Outcomes Framework
- The Active Offer
- Local, national and regional performance monitoring and recording templates
- Wellbeing Statements



National Standards and Outcomes Framework

- The National Standards and Outcomes framework sets out the underpinning standards and outcomes in relation to advocacy and the outcomes children and young people can expect.
- It sets out a framework against which advocacy service providers and those commissioning services can ensure those standards are being achieved. Enabling us to evidence they are making positive changes to the lives of children and young people.

Children and young people who access Independent Advocacy services can expect – .

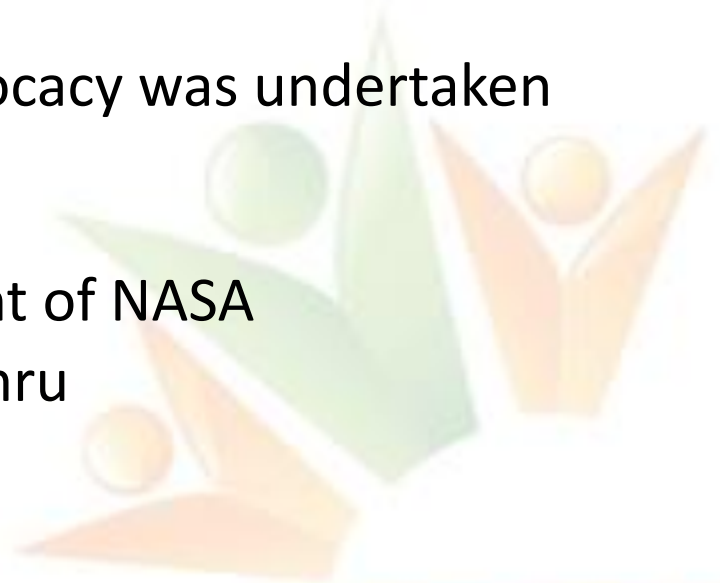
- Good quality advocacy that is easy to find and use.
- Children and young people are kept safe and their privacy respected
- Children and young people are treated with respect and valued for their differences.
- Children and young people get support and have their opinions listened to.
- Children and young people can take part in the design, planning and rating of advocacy

National Approach to Statutory Advocacy - a history

Missing Voices 2012 -“Many children and young people did not know that advocacy services existed or that they had an entitlement to receive advocacy if they were being looked after by a local authority, were leaving care or were a child in need.”

Quote from Keith Towler, Former Children’s Commissioner, cited in Missing Voices

- A strategic review on relation to Independent Statutory Advocacy was undertaken on behalf of Welsh Government in 2014
- MEGA Group
- WG appointed advocacy professional to lead on development of NASA
- A Task and Finish Group was set up and chaired by ADSS Cymru
- Business case to the Minister of Health and Social Services
- ADSS took over lead; appointed Implementation Manager



Findings of Missing Voices 2012

- Inequality of funding
- Reporting difference
- Criteria for access
- Major issues that children and young people didn't know about their rights to advocacy
- Level of independence



Why a National Approach?

Missing Voices identified a number of challenges/ issues regarding the provision of independent professional advocacy across Wales:

Inconsistency and Criteria

Prior to NASA, the criteria for Independent Professional Advocacy was different throughout Wales.

If a child or young person has a social worker, they can now access Independent Professional Advocacy. This includes children and young people who have a care and support plan as well as those entering child protection or becoming looked after.

Post Code Lottery

Inconsistency lead to a postcode lottery for children and young people. The National Approach will ensure a standardised advocacy provision, regardless of where a young person lives in Wales.



Funding Levels

- Lack of set funding mechanisms. Each Local Authority decides the funding level for its advocacy service.

Range and Level Tool -

- Good quality and independent services that are easily accessible demand funding to match this. The National Approach has developed a “range and level tool” which can accurately calculate the funding levels required per Local Authority.
- It is based on an advocacy hour which takes into consideration salaries, management, administration needs, running costs, eligible populations, geography.
- It should ensure that all services are sufficiently funded and accessible to children and young people.

- In addition to the range and level tool and in order to support the National Approach to Advocacy, the Welsh Government has provided funding of £550k to support local authorities to deliver an “Active Offer.



Variable Practice

- No standardised training/ qualification required to become an advocate (to date)
- Not all advocates / providers undertake Issue Based Advocacy

Service not known or used

- Advocacy is often only explained to children and young people by social workers, or via a leaflet given to an individual upon entering the care system

Referring to Advocacy.

- Anyone is able to make a referral to advocacy, a young person is also able to self refer. However, the child or young person **MUST** give their consent to an advocacy referral being made.
- The child or young person must *want* to have an advocacy service. They may *have* to have many other professional services, but advocacy is always a *choice*.
- *Once a referral has been made a young person can expect to be contacted within 2 days and seen within 5 working days.*

Young People's perspective

“ I was having a hard time and had to leave my foster carer. My new carers lived quite a long way from my friends and family.. I didn't know if I would still be able to have an advocate when I moved.” *Callum aged 13.*

“I had to be put on a waiting list before I could see an advocate.” *Ali aged 9*

“ I found out from a friend about advocacy and that I could have it. No adults told me about it.” *Ossian aged 14.*

“I didn't want advocacy when I first came into care, but I didn't know who to contact or where to go when I did want advocacy later on.” *Meg aged 15.*

Active Offer

The Active Offer is a new element to statutory advocacy provision.

Missing voices reported that “ Advocacy services were not known or used.” Just having advocacy services available isn’t enough. We need to meet with children and young people to explain what these services are. Missing voices reported that.

Having an Active Offer Meeting with children and young people ensures that young people know which services are available to them and what their right and entitlements are, this including Independent Professional Advocacy.

The Active Offer Meeting involves a ***designated meeting between a child or young person and an advocate. This can happen BEFORE initial LAC review or initial CP conference.***

Below is the eligibility criteria:

- ***A child or young person entering the care system***
- ***A child or young person entering the Child Protection arena (initial conference to take place)***
- ***The young person has given consent for the meeting to take place.***

- The young persons social worker explains advocacy to them, and asks if they would like a meeting with an advocate for more information



- The young person consents – the social worker refers to advocacy



- The advocate then completes the “Active Offer Meeting”



The Active Offer Meeting

Included in an Active Offer meeting should be:

- Explanation of Children's rights – UNCRC and Article 12
- Explanation of advocacy and the different types of advocacy (not just IPA)
- Information about the local Independent Professional Advocacy Service
- Information about the Children's Commissioner
- Information about the Meic Helpline
- Information about the right to complain
- An explanation that the advocate will record that this meeting has taken place, the outcome of the meeting (advocacy wanted/ not/ who/ how) and that this detail will be reported back to the Local Authority

Types of advocacy

1. Peer advocacy

An individual might look for advocacy support from someone who understands their situation because they've been there or are in similar circumstances to themselves.

2. Formal advocacy

Some broader professional roles have an element of advocacy within them. The professional can support the individual to express their views and wishes while separately expressing their own professional views or judgements.

3. Informal advocacy

An individual may seek advocacy support from someone they know on an informal basis. This type of advocacy forms part of a broader emotional relationship where the advocate may have their own strong feelings about what's best for the individual.

4. Independent Professional Advocacy

An individual may be able to access an advocate whose job is to provide them with independent support to get their voice heard regardless of their own views or opinions of the situation.

Meic Helpline

ProMo-Cymru successfully introduced a universal advocacy helpline – the first of its kind in the UK – with funding from the Welsh Government. Established in 2010, Meic is there to be “someone on your side” and is Wales’ leading one-stop information, advice and advocacy resource for children and young people up to the age of 25.

A free and confidential helpline service accessible by phone, text, instant messaging and email from 8.00am to midnight, 7 days a week.



Children's commissioner for Wales

What do we do?

- **Support children and young people** to find out about children's rights
- **Listen to children and young people** to find out what's important to them
- **Advise children, young people and those who care for them** if they feel they've got nowhere else to go with their problems
- **Influence government and other organisations** who say they're going to make a difference to children's lives, making sure they keep their promises to children and young people
- **Speak up for children and young people** nationally on important issues – being the children's champion in Wales

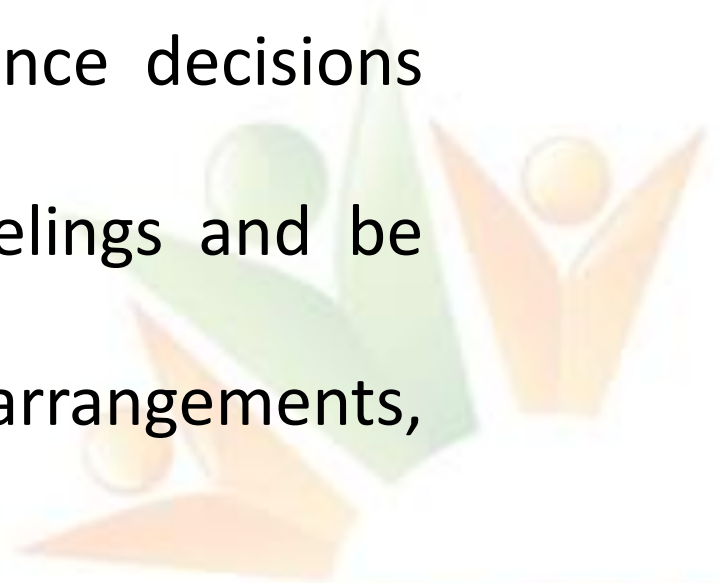


How is the NASA & Active Offer working so far?

- **Staggered start** - official start date June 2017 last contract awarded in April 2019
- **WG NASA Implementation Task and Finish Group** set up February 2018 to monitor and review the implementation processes
- **National Reporting Template** - being refined so we can collect statistics for future planning
- **Eligibility Definition Active Offer** – has been discussed, amended and a final definition agreed.
- **Training & Awareness Raising Sessions** - Social Workers, Corporate Parents etc.

Outcomes and Impact of Advocacy

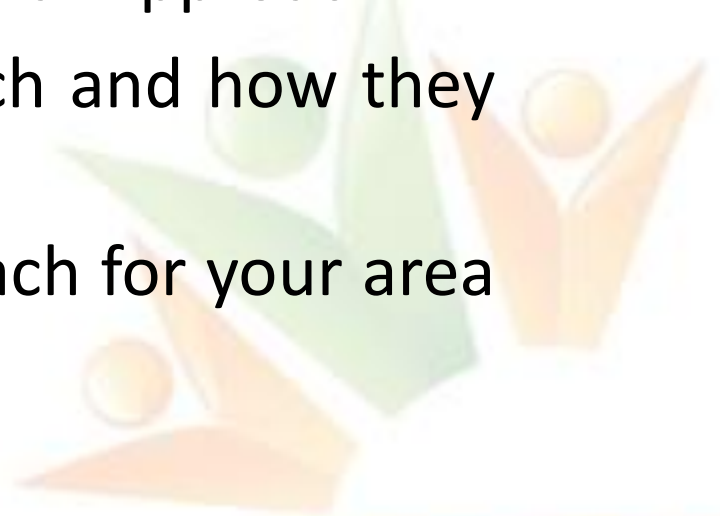
- Young people have much more of an understanding of their rights and entitlements and how to get help and they know what's in their care plan.
- The opportunity to express wishes and feelings and to be part of discussions that influences changes in their lives.
- Understand what is happening and how to influence decisions based on their care plan.
- Feel more confident and able to express their feelings and be more engaged with the people who care for them
- Changes their lives – stability of placement, contact arrangements, education etc.



Revisit of Learning Outcomes

By the end of the session you should be able to

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- Understand the history and where the National Approach has come from
- Understand the over arching principles of the National Approach
- Be aware of each element of the National Approach and how they all link
- Understand the implications of the National Approach for your area of responsibilities



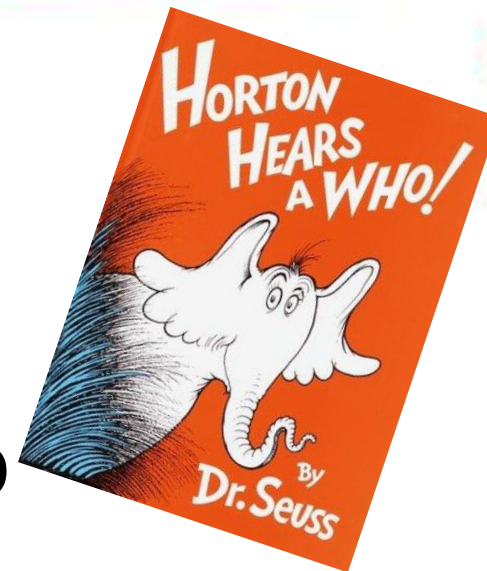
Train the Trainer Opportunities

- TGP are also offering Train the Trainer sessions on the National Approach to Statutory Advocacy.
- Participants will then be able to disseminate their knowledge back to their colleague's and work place.
- Train the trainer sessions are being held in both North and South Wales areas.
- Please email Natalie.Brimble@tgpcymru.org.uk for dates and registration.



“A person’s a person,
no matter how small”

Dr Seuss - Horton Hears a Who



“Every child has the right to say what they
think in all matters affecting them, and have
their views taken seriously”

*(Article 12 - A summary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child –
http://www.unicef.org.uk/Documents/Publication-pdfs/UNCRC_summary.pdf)*



On Going Support

For Ongoing Contact, Support and Information:

Please contact Natalie Brimble

Natalie.Brimble@tgpcymru.org.uk

Development Manager

or

Sarah.Durrant@tgpcymru.org.uk

Director of Advocacy Services

Andy.Sharp@tgpcymru.org.uk

Development Manager

Telephone: 029 2039 6974



Other Contacts and Information

- TGP Cymru - <https://www.tgpcymru.org.uk/>
- NYAS - <https://www.nyas.net/>
- Meic Helpline - <https://www.meiccymru.org/>
- National Standards and Outcomes Framework –
<https://gov.wales/advocacy-standards-and-outcomes-framework-children-and-young-people>

