

Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Bill

Children's Rights Impact Assessment

1. Describe and explain the impact of the proposal on children and young people.

The Commission will promote a shared focus for the tertiary education sector, improving information, advice and services to learners and businesses across Wales.

The intended positive impacts on children and young people are:

- Strengthening the arrangements to protect learners studying at tertiary education providers.
- Ensuring that learning and training opportunities are of the highest quality and deliver the desired learner outcome.
- Guaranteeing equal respect for both vocational and academic routes.
- Clearer access to courses.
- A clear link to career pathways by linking in with the employment sector.

The Commission will be required in law to ensure that suitable education provision is provided for young people to access post compulsory education and training.

With its overview of all tertiary education learning providers, the Commission will be perfectly placed to ensure that gaps in provision are addressed and that barriers faced by different groups of young people are identified and resolved.

In the long-term it is hoped that this will increase the ability of learners to access sustainable employment and career success, working to ensure that the correct learning opportunities are available to match the needs of the Welsh labour market.

This in turn will lead to greater potential for employability resulting in associated improvements in income levels, health and wellbeing for children and young people and their families for current and future generations.

To ensure that young people were able to have their say in the shaping of the new Commission consultants proficient in engagement with young people were appointed to speak to children and young people in schools and produce a young person's consultation. This was published in November 2017 and the results can be viewed on the Welsh Government website: <https://gov.wales/reformed-post-compulsory-education-and-training-system>

Young people experience many different barriers to accessing tertiary education, which the results of our consultation exercise have shown. These range from financial problems to transportation and lack of interest in progressing their learning. Although the provisions of the Bill will not directly address these it is hoped that the Commission with its oversight of the entire sector will examine these different barriers that young people face and work to tackle these.

2. Explain how the proposal is likely to impact on children's rights.

These are the articles within the UNCRC which relate to our proposed legislation:

Article 12: Children have the right to say what they think should happen, when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account.

Consultants proficient in engagement with young people were engaged to produce a young people's consultation on the proposed tertiary education reforms. This was designed with children in mind and a child friendly version was created. The consultation ran for eight weeks and asked for the views of children and younger learners on our proposals for tertiary education reform. Young people from a range of age groups and socio-economic backgrounds were invited to share their views. The 'learner voice' was also captured at Skills Cymru events, where engagement with learners from a range of backgrounds and ages took place, from primary school to older adults. The feedback received from this event helped to ensure that learners' views have been taken into account as the policy has been developed.

Article 28: Children have a right to an education. Discipline in schools should respect children's human dignity. Primary education should be free. Wealthy countries should help poorer countries achieve this.

The Commission will be required in law to provide suitable provision for education when young people progress from compulsory to post-compulsory education and training. By overseeing the entire tertiary education sector the Commission will have the opportunity to address gaps in provision and look at ways to help young people to overcome barriers to their learning.

Article 29: Education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full. It should encourage children to respect their parents, and their own and other cultures.

A key focus of the new commission will be protecting the rights of learners, ensuring that both vocational and academic studies are valued equally. This will help each child to develop their own particular talents whether that is through a vocational or academic avenue.

Article 30: Children have a right to learn and use the language and customs of their families, whether these are shared by the majority of people in the country or not.

Providing opportunities for individuals to learn through the medium of Welsh in the tertiary education sector is a key priority for the new commission. This will help to ensure that the Welsh language skills children and young people have learned in school are maintained and developed for use in future employment. This will also allow children who speak Welsh as their first language the opportunity to learn their chosen subject through the medium of their preferred language.

No conflict with the UNCRC articles has been identified. The proposals give greater effect to the rights listed above.