

*Children and Young People's  
Assembly for Wales*

# FUNC+ Report

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A Young People's report on the UNCRC

The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records in a business setting. It highlights how proper record-keeping can help in decision-making, legal compliance, and financial management. The text emphasizes that records should be organized, up-to-date, and easily accessible.

Next, the document addresses the challenges of data management in the digital age. It notes that while digital storage offers convenience, it also introduces risks such as data loss, security breaches, and information overload. Solutions like cloud storage, encryption, and regular backups are suggested to mitigate these risks.

The third section focuses on the role of technology in streamlining business processes. It describes how automation and software solutions can reduce manual errors, save time, and improve overall efficiency. Examples of tools used for project management, customer relationship management, and accounting are provided.

Finally, the document concludes by stressing the need for continuous learning and adaptation. As technology and market conditions evolve, businesses must stay informed and be willing to adopt new practices to remain competitive and successful.

# Contents

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- Foreword	4
- FUNC Process	5
- Education	8
- Health	13
- Safety and Protection from Harm	17
- Discrimination	20
- Information	22
- Participation and Rights	23
- Recommendations	25
- Wales Today	38
- Young People's Stories	40
- Conclusion	42

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# Foreword



The following data was collected over the summer of 2012 to contribute to Funky Dragon's 'Funky's United Nations Challenge' (FUNC) report. The FUNC project follows on from the 'Our Rights, Our Story' (OROS) report submitted to the Committee in 2008. The aim of the project was to write a young person's report to be submitted to the United Nations when the fifth UK State Party submission to the Committee is presented.

Since this data was collected there have been substantial changes to Funky Dragon with wider implications for the rest of Wales and how young people in Wales access their rights. In 2013 the Welsh Government took the decision to remove core funding for Funky Dragon. This led to the closure of Funky Dragon and all activities relating to the Grand Council. The trustees decided to continue on a purely voluntary basis. Wales is now one of the few nations in Europe and the wider world not to have a national youth parliament. You can read more on this on page 34.

At the time of writing this report the trustees of the Children and Young People's Assembly for Wales (formerly trading as Funky Dragon) are continuing to meet. The board has commissioned a scoping exercise to determine a best practice youth parliament model. This model should be ready for a wider consultation with young people and other stakeholders in Wales in the Autumn of 2015.

The Children and Young People's Assembly for Wales is delighted to present this report to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. The board would like to thank the members of the FUNC steering group, Grand Council and former staff members of Funky Dragon who all helped to contribute to this final report. We also hope that these recommendations evoke conversation and discussions with decision makers.

Yours,  
The trustees of the Children and Young People's Assembly for Wales.



# The FUNC Process



The research followed on from the previous report and was partly designed to look at how the Government had responded to recommendations made in the OROS report in 2008. The steering group did this by looking at:

- The OROS report.
- The Welsh Government response to OROS.
- The UN Concluding Observations.
- The Welsh Government response to the Concluding Observations
- Any policy changes that have come from the recommendations posed in OROS.



Following on from this process we were able to discover the following themes for the next report. Some of these were similar to those in OROS, whilst others were new. The themes included:



EDUCATION



HEALTH



INFORMATION



PARTICIPATION  
AND RIGHTS



SAFETY AND  
PROTECTION FROM  
HARM



DISCRIMINATION

Following on from identifying these themes the young people were trained in the skills of teamwork, research, consultation, communication, presentation, literacy, numeracy and data analysis among others. The steering group of young people led the process, devised the research methods and content. They also analysed the data, made initial recommendations and presented these to the Grand Council for wider comments.

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The second half of 2012 was the data collection part of the project. The Funky Dragon Development Workers visited groups across Wales to collect qualitative data via workshops and focus groups and quantitative data using our online survey.

The data collection period ended in December 2012, with a total of 1,273 people having completed the survey. In the period between December 2012 and March 2013 Funky Dragon staff carried out initial analysis of the data, which involved basic grouping of answers and cross tabbing of survey results. The data was then ready for the steering group to begin more detailed analysis and the drafting of recommendations.



During the 2013 March residential the data from the FUNC survey and other research was analysed by the steering group. The number of topics assigned to each group were dependent on the amount of data that needed to be analysed.

The groups and themes were:

**Education and Participation**

- Bethan Domaille, Cardiff
- Aaron Hamilton, Flintshire
- Manon Elias, Gwynedd

**Health, Safety and Protection from Harm**

- Lucia Jones, Powys
- Rhys Evans, Pembrokeshire
- Matthew Walker, Conwy

**Information and Discrimination**

- Scott Allen, Vale of Glamorgan
- Rosie Barnett, Cardiff
- Alex Atkins, Swansea

The analysis involved the following stages for each of the six themes:

- Identify key statistical findings
- Identify related significant/ interesting qualitative data and/ or Grand Council evidence
- Discuss and write Conclusions/ findings
- Write recommendations

At several points during this process the steering group returned to the Grand Council to undergo wider discussion on the questions being asked, methods being used and the conclusions being drawn.



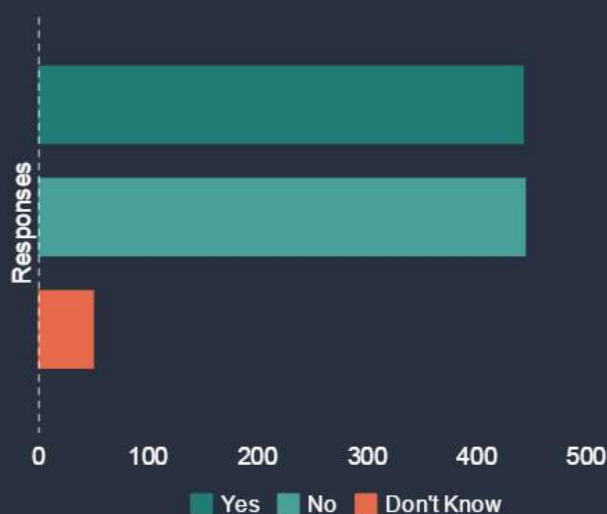


# Education



As part of the FUNC research we were eager to find out how many young people were affected by bullying. In *Our Rights, Our Story*, 45.68% of young people that took part said that they had been victims of bullying. In the FUNC research the number that said they have been victims of bullying had risen to 47.2%.

## Have you ever been a victim of bullying?



In response to OROS, the Welsh Government stated that they issued anti-bullying guidance to schools in September 2003. This guidance, 'Respecting Others', advises schools to ensure that staff and pupils are involved in the development of a schools anti-bullying policy". (p7 *The Right Way Forward*.)

Even though the numbers have only increased by just under 2%, the significance of the finding is that the percentage has increased rather than decreased. This shows that the guidance we have in place at the moment is not enough and that children and young people need a new approach to target bullying in schools.

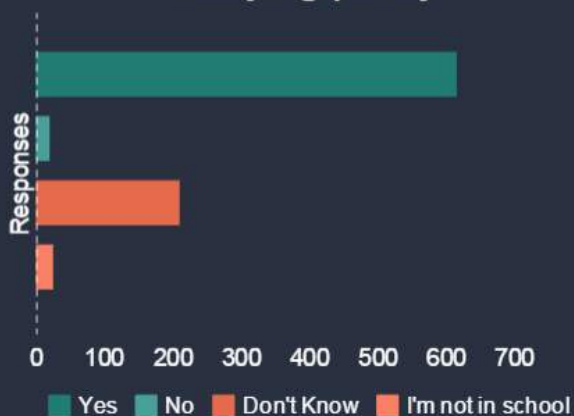
In the FUNC survey 67.6% said they knew their school had an anti-bullying policy. Of those who answered 'Yes', the majority (53.2%) did not know the contents of the policy. Of the young people who know about their school's anti-bullying policy 40.2% think it is 'quite effective'. However, 32.5% think it 'makes no difference'. In our qualitative research young people gave a number of reasons for this.

- Lack of awareness.
- Lack of reinforcement.
- Lack of action on behalf of the school or teachers.
- Young people don't have enough faith in the policy.

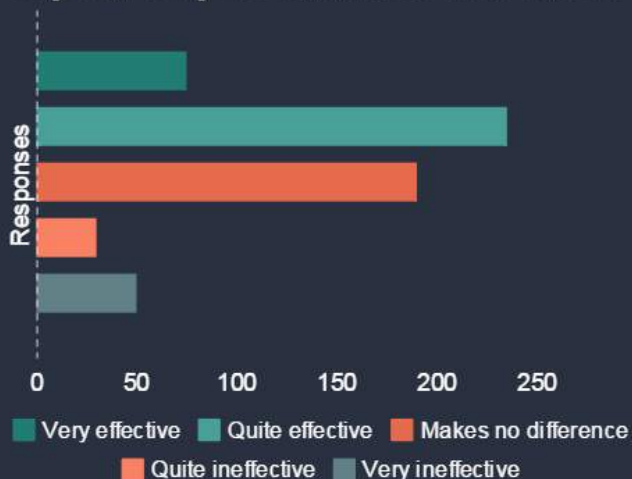


Although most young people who did know of their anti-bullying policy deemed it "Quite effective" (40.2%), just under a third of them said it "Makes no difference." This shows that improvements still need to be made

### Does your school have an anti-bullying policy

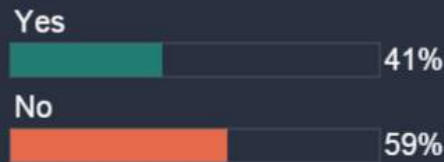


### If yes, do you think it is effective?



# Careers Advice

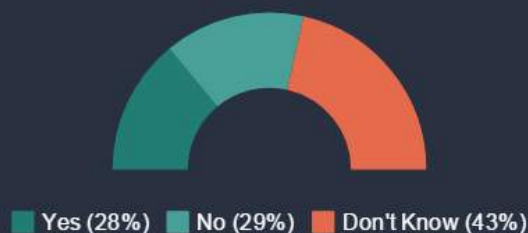
Have you used the internet to get careers advice?



Have you used the internet to get careers advice? (vulnerable young people)



Do you feel you are able to meet with careers advisers as often as you want?



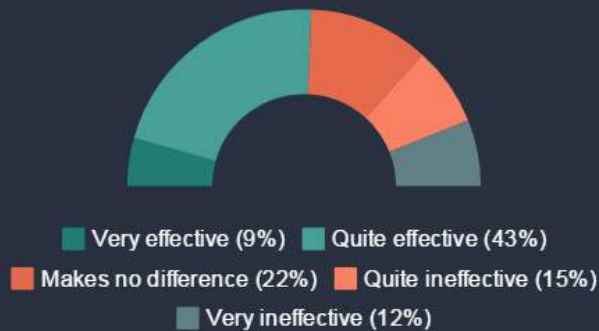
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# Personal and Social Education (PSE)

The topics covered in PSE lessons vary between counties and schools. However, drugs, sex education and healthy living were the most popular subjects across all counties. This was also evident from the qualitative data. From the qualitative data, one of the reasons why young people don't find PSE useful or interesting is because of the way they are taught.

The majority of Lesbian and Gay young people disagreed strongly or disagreed that PSE is useful and informative. From the qualitative data gathered we can suggest that one of the reasons for this is that the information taught might not be relevant to the pupil.

## I think PSE lessons are useful and informative





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# Counselling

When discussing bullying for the gathering of qualitative data, a lot of young people said it would be useful to have somebody to talk to or counselling services available. This suggests that they don't have access to this service or that they are unaware of how to access it.

Do you have access to a school or college counsellor if you need one?



■ Yes (54%) ■ No (14%) ■ Don't Know (32%)







The information we gathered, on young people's views on healthcare, was from workshops, focus groups and our all Wales survey which was accessible to young people across Wales, via the internet. The questions we asked were chosen in consultation with young people and guided by the articles in the UNCRC and similar research conducted by Funky Dragon in 2007 called 'Our Rights, Our Story' (OROS).

Accessing school nurses – Across all age groups a significant number of young people told us they do not know if they are able to access a school nurse, with one young person stating that, "Mae angen l ysgolion cynnig fwg o wybodaeth meddygol" (Schools need to offer more medical information).

Exercise provision in schools – Our research shows that there is a discrepancy between age groups of young people accessing extra-curricular exercise in schools, despite individuals stating, "I would like tips on how to stay healthy", when questioned about school exercise.

Are you able to access a school or college nurse? (11-15 year olds)



■ Yes (67%) ■ No (6%) ■ Don't Know (26%)  
■ Not in school or college (1%)

Are you able to access a school or college nurse? (16-17 year olds)



■ Yes (60%) ■ No (8%) ■ Don't Know (28%)  
■ Not in school or college (4%)

# 'Young People Friendly' Services

All Young People

13 Year Olds

Are the following services young people friendly? (Dentists)

Are the following services young people friendly? (Dentists)



Always (52%) Usually (30%) Sometimes (11%)  
Rarely (2%) Never (4%)

Always (64%) Usually (23%) Sometimes (5%)  
Rarely (3%) Never (0%)  
Never used this service (4%)



# Physical Exercise

## 11-15 Year Olds

Do you want to go to an exercise/fitness class?



■ Yes (60%) ■ No (40%)

## 16-17 Year Olds

Do you want to go to an exercise/fitness class?



■ Yes (61%) ■ No (39%)

## 11 Year Olds

Do you want to attend an exercise/fitness class?



■ Yes (37%) ■ No (63%)

## 12 Year Olds

Do you want to attend an exercise/fitness class?



■ Yes (64%) ■ No (36%)



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## 5x60 Activities

5x60 activities is a Welsh Government initiative that aims to increase the amount of young people of secondary school age that take part in sport and physical exercise. The scheme tries to promote 60 minutes of activity a day, for 5 days a week. The activities are usually free to access and are there for all students to take part in.



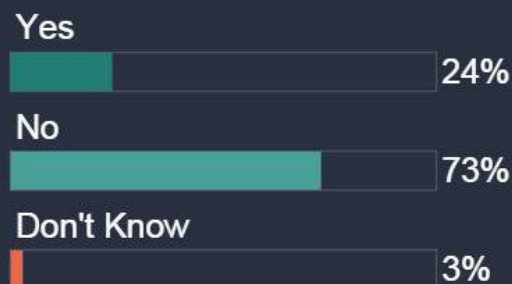
### 11-15 Year Olds

Do you take part in 5x60 activities?



### 16-17 Year Olds

Do you take part in 5x60 activities?





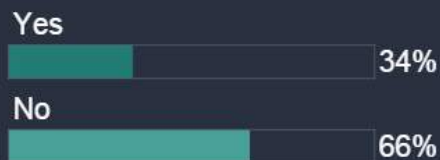
# Safety and Protection from Harm



## PCSO Knowledge

PCSO stands for Police Community Support Officer. Their job is to provide support to fully certified police officers at events, liaise with the public and deal with minor offences among other responsibilities. We asked young people whether they knew of their local PCSO.

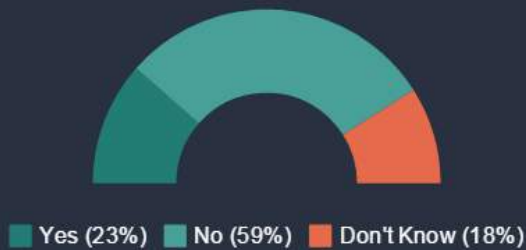
Do you know who your local PCSO is?



# Online Safety

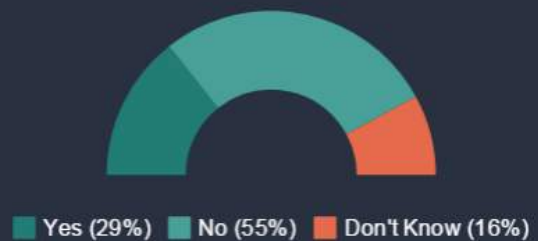
## 11-15 Year Olds

Do you think that making friends online is safe?



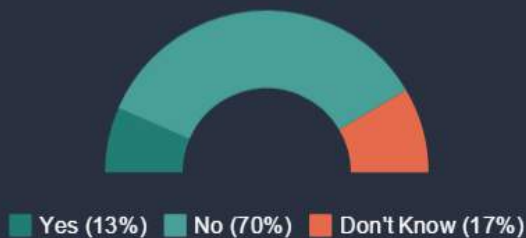
## 16-17 Year Olds

Do you think that making friends online is safe?



## 11 Year Olds

Do you think that making friends online is safe?



## 15 Year Olds

Do you think that making friends online is safe?



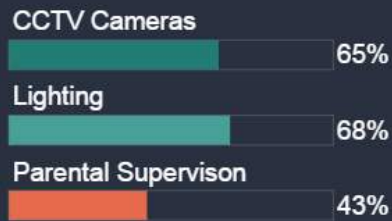
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# What makes a place safe?

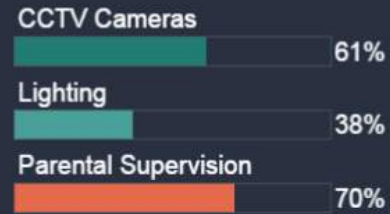
All Young People

11 Year Olds

What do you think makes a place safe?



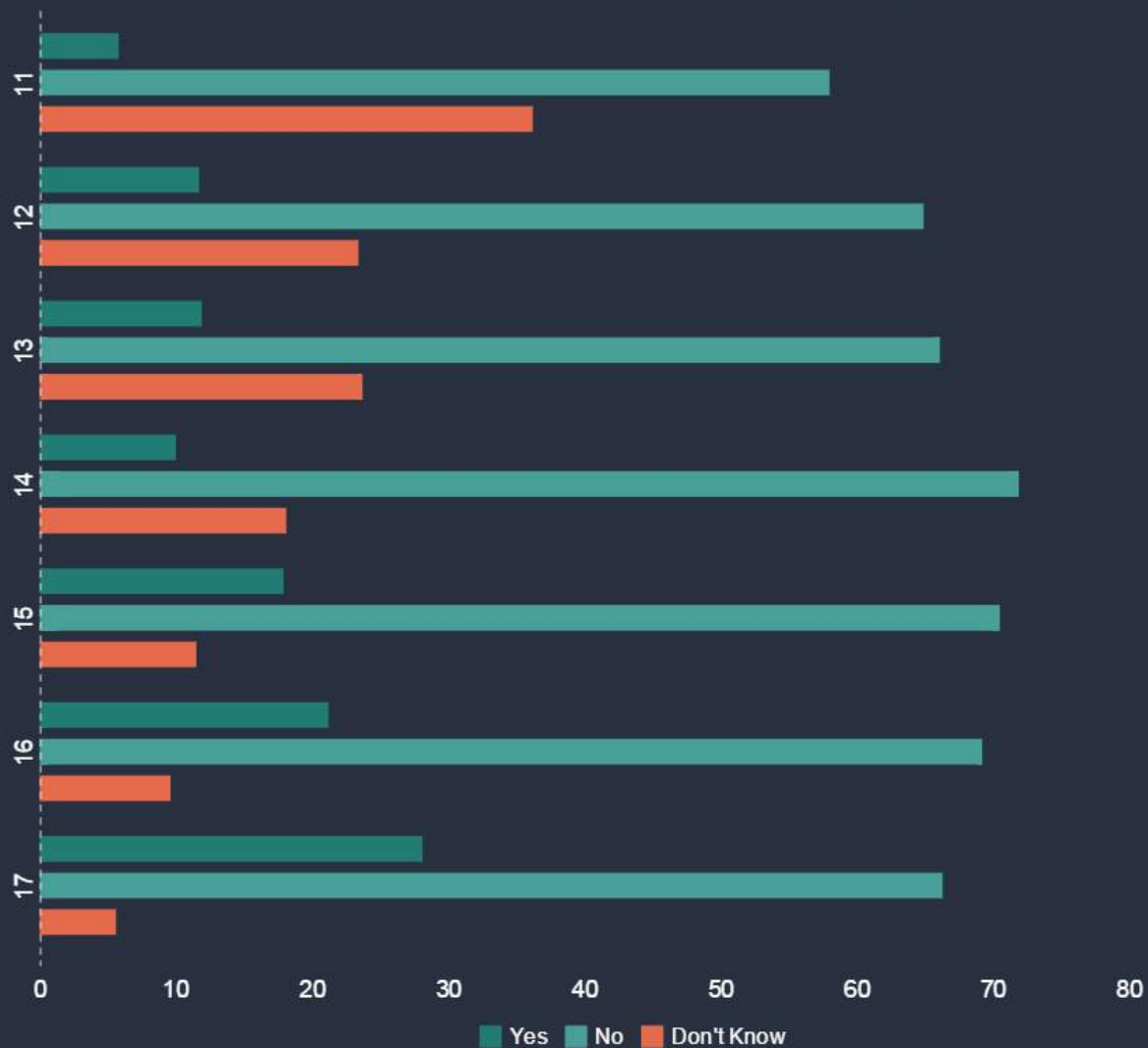
What do you think makes a place safe?



# Discrimination



Have you ever been discriminated against?

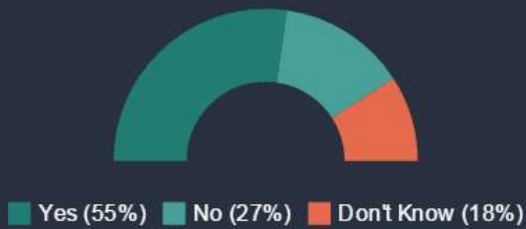




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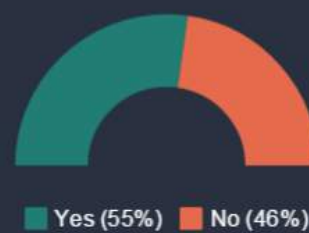
## Gay Young People

Have you ever been discriminated against?



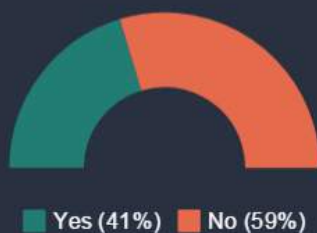
## Young People Questioning their Sexuality

Have you ever been discriminated against?



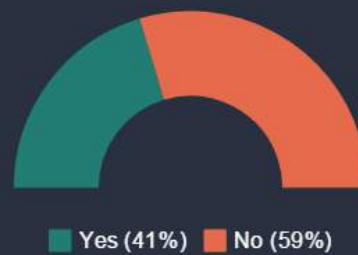
## Disabled Young People

Have you ever been discriminated against?



## Young People in Receipt of Free School Meals

Have you ever been discriminated against?

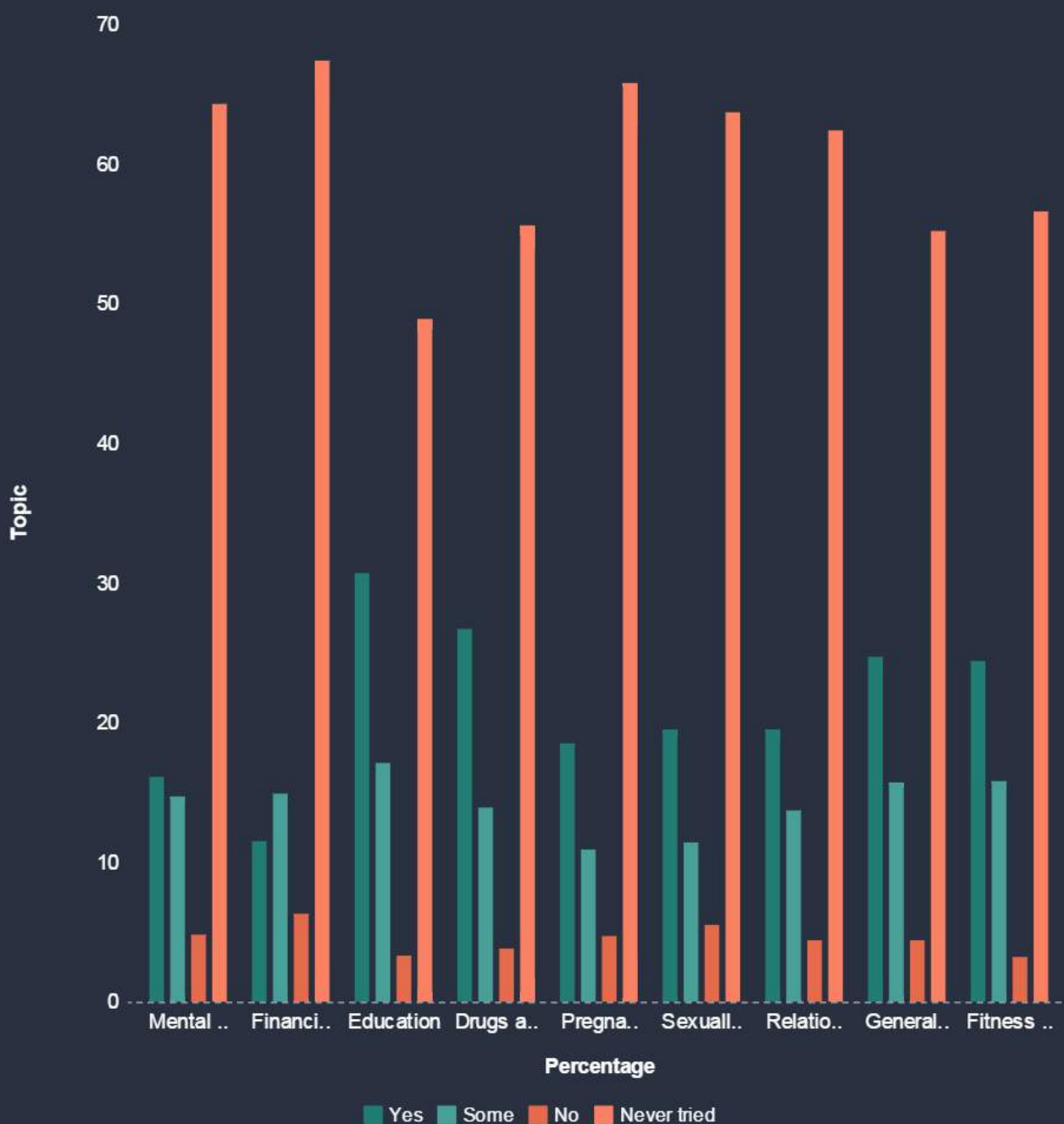


# Information



Since writing the recommendation that “governments should promote young people’s information websites to a greater degree” the Welsh Government has also removed funding for Clic Online, the national online information service for young people. This was delivered by Pro-mo Cymru.

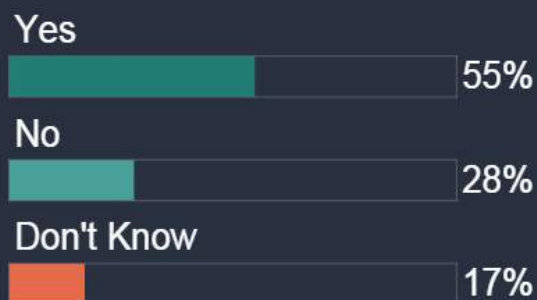
Were you able to access the information you wanted, in a way you can understand, on the following topics?





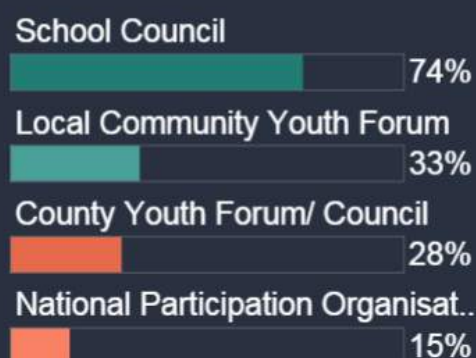
## Votes at 16

Do you think the voting age should be lowered from 18 to 16?



## Participation

Have you been involved in any of the following?







# Recommendations



Over the next few pages we have set out our recommendations to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. These have been thought out by the FUNC Steering Group, consulted on with members of Funky Dragon and added to by the trustees of the Children and Young People's Assembly for Wales. The issues raised can be found in the left-hand column and the recommendations are found in the right-hand column.



## Issue

The percentage of young people who say they have been bullied has risen since the Our Rights Our Story report in 2008.

2008- 45.68%  
2013- 47.2%

## Recommendations

Government should police School Bullying Policies. There needs to be national minimum standards which are monitored so that:

- Schools and colleges reinforce anti-bullying strategies throughout all year groups.
- Schools and colleges make young people more aware of their anti-bullying policy and what it says.
- Young people have a baseline for the quality of their school anti-bullying policy

Overall bullying

Females:53.1%  
Males: 42.2%

Teachers should be responsible for monitoring bullying and reporting/dealing with issues.

A support worker should also be available all day every day who only deals with bullying or similar issues.

## Issue

## Recommendations

Name calling

Females: 86.6%

Males: 82.3%

Personal and Social Education lessons (PSE) can act to resolve bullying issues by covering a wide variety of social groups/issues.

Cyber bullying

Females: 43.8%

Males: 27.4%

Specific policy/guidance should be developed to target cyber bullying and advise teachers on how best to proceed.

The majority of young people have not used the internet to get careers advice.

78.6% of those in danger of being excluded had not, compared to the overall figure of 58.8%

The services available need to be advertised widely so that all young people know about the services available to them, and how to access these services.

Services need to be more accessible in general, with more effort made to reach out to vulnerable groups such as those in danger of exclusion or those have already been excluded.



## Issue

Do you feel you are able to meet careers advisors as often as you want?

71.9% of those who answered this question answered either no or don't know.

## Recommendations

Every school should have peer support systems.

There should be more monitoring, of how those in danger of being excluded are accessing careers advice. The right advice for these young people is crucial.

42.1% of young people asked, thought that PSE lessons were useful and informative.

Although not a tiny percentage it is still a minority of all pupils.

Create guidance on what age PSE topics should be covered for maximum relevance to students e.g. careers advice and CV building in years 11 and 13

More training for teachers responsible for delivering PSE lessons is needed to make sure young people receive the best education on these vital issues that PSE covers.

A database of external organisations, available to give guest talks on issues covered in PSE, should be created for all schools to access.

Accreditation should be given to young people for work completed in PSE lessons. This should be separate to the Welsh Baccalaureate qualification so to give clarity to both students and future employees. This would also provide a way to monitor the quality of PSE lessons in schools.



## Issue

15.9% of young people asked said the subjects they would like to take are not available to them in their school. It was in relation to making decisions about education and future careers.

The majority of young people (54.1%) said they were able to access a school or college counsellor. However there was also a high percentage of 'don't know' answers (31.9%). This suggests that the young people don't know how to access it.

## Recommendations

15.9% of young people asked said the subjects they would like to take are not available to them in their school. It was in relation to making decisions about education and future careers.

Schools and colleges should better publicise these services to students and how to access them.

Every school should have peer support systems that are accessible to all.

## Issue

## Recommendations

27.9% of 16-17 year olds don't know if they can access their school nurse.

A uniform ratio of school nurse to pupils in Wales is needed.

25.8% of young people aged 11-15 didn't know whether they can access their school nurse.

More information should be made easily accessible on how to access school nurses in schools. This could be included in any future PSE curriculum/framework.

49.9% of all young people rated their dentist service as always being young person friendly.

We think there should be a system to facilitate good practice sharing across all health services.

63.8% of 13 year olds rated their dentist service as always being young people friendly.

## Issue

We asked the question “do you want to go to exercise/fitness classes?”

Overall the majority answered yes:

16-17 year olds (60.7%)

11-15 year olds (60.1%)

We noted that there was a big jump between the number of 11 year olds and 12 year olds wanting exercise classes:

11 year olds (37%)

12 year olds (64.4%)

## Recommendations

Secondary schools should advertise sporting opportunities more clearly to new students.

35.2% of 11-15 year olds took part in 5 x 60 sports activities.

10.2% of 11-15 year olds didn't know what 5 x 60 was.

72.8% of 16-17 year olds did not take part in the initiative.

Despite the fact that this initiative is aimed at secondary schools, a very high number of 11-15 year olds do not know or do not take part in these activities. FUNC has also revealed that young people want more exercise classes.

Young people need more information and should be consulted about the types of activities they want.

## Issue

(66%) of young people from 11-17 do not know who their police community support officer (PCSO) is.

The majority (59.7%) say having a PCSO makes no difference to how safe they feel although 11 year olds said it did.

55.6% of 16-17 year olds thought that making friends online was unsafe.

59.3% of 11-15 year olds believed that making friends online was unsafe.

Only 13% of 11 year olds believed making friends online was safe compared with 30.9% of 15 year olds.

We asked "what do you think makes a place safe for young people?"

68.3% of all young people said that street lighting made them feel safe.

69.6% of 11 year olds felt that adult supervision makes them feel safe. This generally declines with age, dropping by nearly 35% for 16-17 year olds (34.8%- 39.3% respectively).

## Recommendations

PCSO's need to be better known within the community and more information on them is made readily available.

This issue should be addressed via PSE lessons in schools. Although PSE is a framework it could possibly be made more uniform across Wales in regards to what is taught and how it is taught.

Our research shows that street lighting at night is important to many young people with respect to them feeling safe. We understand that lighting is being cut by local councils in Wales in order to provide a sustainable future. However, we recommend the implementation of solar lights, saving energy and making young people feel safe.



## Issue

We asked “have you ever been discriminated against?”

Younger people reported less discrimination than older young people by a significant margin; 5.8% at 11 to 28.1% at 17.

The people who felt most discriminated against were gay people (54.5%) and people who were questioning their sexuality at 54.5%.

Disabled people also reported very high levels of discrimination: 40.7%

Children receiving free school meals reported above average levels of discrimination: 19.2%

## Recommendations

Keep the same levels of support that exist for younger children in place for older children.

Government should commission research into why these levels are so high. Also find out where/which local authorities are experiencing the greatest levels of discrimination.

We want government to increase awareness of discrimination.

Advertise more showing women in less stereotypically feminine roles and settings to show positive role models to young women.

Because race was the most commonly reported reason for discrimination, in our qualitative data, we think more non-biased cultural education is needed to reduce racial discrimination

## Issue

We asked the question “were you able to access the information you wanted in a way you can understand on a number of different subjects?”

Less people are able to access financial information than any other type. It was the only information category where people answered no instead of yes to the question. Grand Council members thought that financial information is too complicated for a website and that you need to talk to an expert in order to get the full picture.

We asked the question “where have you looked for information on any of the following?”

Mental health services  
Financial support  
Education  
Drugs and alcohol  
Pregnancy  
Sexually transmitted infections  
Relationships  
General health  
Fitness and nutrition

Most people have never tried to look online for the information in our survey.

When people have tried, most people used the BBC as a first source of information.

## Recommendations

The Student Finance Wales phone line should have free hours or have free access in certain places like school or Careers Wales. SFW website should advertise this.

Children need to be IT literate with regard to finances so they are able to access information they need online at a young age so they can get the right information whilst growing up.

Government should promote young people’s information websites to a greater degree. They should also make them more young people friendly using examples from the BBC to see how it’s done.

Government funded websites for young people need to be linked together. Government should encourage the BBC to link to the relevant/official information sites.

## Issue

## Recommendations

We asked the question “have you ever taken part in a consultation?”

Of those asked, 28.5% said yes. This figure is low. This could be because it is often difficult to know what a consultation is. They are so diverse in their form it is often not clear what their purpose is.

Where professionals run consultations with young people they should feed back the results and details of any action taken.

Most young people (87.9%) didn't know what had happened as a result of the consultations they had taken part in.

Young people have a right to have their say and to be told what happens as a result. The steering group asked why you would give your views if you are not going to be told the results?

Re-evaluate, promote and enforce the Participation Standards so that young people can engage in meaningful participation.

The majority of young people (55.2%) said they want the voting age lowered to 16.

Government should make young people friendly information about the political systems available. This should include information about the parties, their history and what they stand for. This will allow young people to make an informed decision about who they'll vote for when they are allowed to vote.

The UK Government should lower the voting age in all elections and referendums to 16.



## Issue

There is a big difference between young people who know how to get involved in school councils and those who are involved. 163 are involved, 522 know how to.

The figure for knowledge on how to get involved in participative structures was much lower in other areas, especially in relation to national structure for participation.

We think that young people don't know about the other organisations. School councils are in schools. Other structures are not publicised enough. Unless you have friends who are involved, you will not know about them

## Recommendations

Government should provide for youth workers or other professionals to attend assemblies in schools and tell them about the participation structures.



## Issue

We asked the question “has your school council made any changes in your school?”

Of those asked, 56.9% said no. This figure was not surprising to the FUNC steering group because their personal experience was that school councils don’t make any difference. If they did make a difference nobody knew.

## Recommendations

School councils need to feed back to their year group. This must be done regularly so pupils don’t think they have become inactive.

The Welsh Government has removed funding for Funky Dragon, the Children and Young Assembly for Wales

The Welsh Government should ensure that all young people are able to participate in decisions affecting their lives, have their voices heard and taken into account.

The Welsh Government should support the establishment of an independent, peer-led, democratically elected youth assembly for Wales.

In 2013 the Welsh Government minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty (at the time Jeff Cuthbert AM) announced that Funky Dragon's core funding would be removed. This came as a shock because there was no consultation with staff or young people about funding changes before this.

The organisation was informed that we could apply for grant funding under the Children and Families Delivery Grant. One of the requirements of this grant was that organisations submitted applications for joint work with other organisations. When this situation was put forward to the elected young people of the Funky Dragon Grand Council they believed that to apply with another organisation would sacrifice one of the integral parts of the Funky Dragon ethos, that we are an independent youth led charity.

Respecting this decision an agreement was reached with Save the Children, Wales, that they would act as our partner organisation on paper only, having minimal influence over the strategic direction and application of funds. The decision was reluctantly taken to go ahead with the application for this grant funding

In July 2014 we were informed that we had been unsuccessful in our application for grant funding. The funding was instead awarded to the umbrella organisation, Children in Wales.

What followed was a campaign that was organised by past and serving Grand Council members that asked the Welsh Government to reconsider their decision to remove our core funding. Catherine Patricia Jones, the young people's chair of Funky Dragon, submitted a petition to the Petitions Committee at the National Assembly for Wales. The petition titled "Protect the future of Funky Dragon, the Children and Young People's Assembly for Wales" said,

"We the undersigned, call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to protect the future of Funky Dragon, the Children and Young People's Assembly for Wales by restoring core funding. Wales must have an independent, youth led, publicly funded, national platform for children and young people, democratically elected at a local level, to give voice to their views and opinions and to hold the Welsh Government to account. The national platform must be empowered to work with all elected members to further children and young people's issues and to report directly to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child as Funky Dragon did so successfully in 2008.





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Funky Dragon still believes that:

1. Young people, democratically elected at a local level, should have a National Platform to voice their views and opinions.
2. That platform should be called The Youth Assembly for Wales.
3. It should be able to work with all Elected Members including Assembly Members and Members of Parliament to further young peoples' issues.
4. It should be supported to allow Welsh young people to report directly to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child.

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, in commenting on the last UK State report stated: Concluding observation 33. That governments' "Support forums for children's participation, such as the United Kingdom Youth Parliament, Funky Dragon in Wales and Youth Parliament in Scotland should be implemented."

This closed with over 1,600 signatures from many different countries around the world.

With Grand Council members continued campaigning seeming to not be altering the position of the Welsh Government, the board of trustees had to take the decision to make all of the 12 staff members redundant and close the offices in the north and south of Wales.

Before the decision was known about the Children and Families Delivery Grant Funky Dragon was awarded Big Lottery funding to create a children's report (under 11s) to submit to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. With the change in funding Funky Dragon was not able to match this amount. The board decided to transfer this project and its two staff members to Swansea University's Children's Rights Observatory. The report, titled "Little Voices Big Choices", was completed in July 2015 and successfully submitted to the committee.

By September 2014, the efforts of the campaigners had still not changed the decisions of the Welsh Government and unfortunately all activities relating to the Funky Dragon Grand Council had to end. This left Wales one of the only nations in Europe and the wider world that does not have a national youth parliament, assembly or forum to represent the views of young people. This is seen by many as a significant step back in the progress made in children's rights in Wales.

The grant was instead awarded to the umbrella organisation Children in Wales who in their own words describe the project entitled 'Young Wales' as "not funded to deliver a national youth assembly for Wales."

The board of trustees decided to continue on a purely voluntary basis. They have commissioned some scoping work into determining a best practice model for a youth assembly and are planning to take this proposal to young people and other stakeholders for consultation in the Autumn.



# Young People's Stories



Here are four stories from former members of Funky Dragon. In them they speak of how Funky Dragon changed their lives and how they felt when the funding was removed.

## Nia Roberts, 17, Gwynedd



To me, Funky Dragon changed my life. Before I was voted to be a Gwynedd rep, I was very shy and didn't often socialize with many people. While in Funky, I met so many amazing people and made so many friends who accepted me, and everyone accepted each other. It was a completely non-judgmental environment and I felt so welcome at every residential. It was my second family. We always had so much fun, but took our work very seriously. People think that Funky Dragon was pointless and did not help anyone. Yes it did! We took people's opinion from our regions, and took it to Funky with us so we could do our best to make sure that every voice was heard. I had the time of my life while I was a part of Funky Dragon, as did everyone else.

## Catherine Jones, 20, Bridgend

The closure of Funky Dragon has not just affected me as an individual but also the children and young people in my constituency. The platform which allows them to get their voices and opinions heard on matters that will affect them not just a national level, but also throughout Europe and internationally is now absent. Personally Funky Dragon was an organisation which allowed me to build my confidence, learn about democracy and politics whilst voicing the opinions of the people I represented. The organisation presented myself and others with many different opportunities from being part of specific steering groups such as working with The Children's Commissioner to travelling abroad. The main achievement I gained from being part of Funky Dragon was that I was elected as the UK Young Ambassador for Wales. This allowed me to consult with my fellow members of Funky Dragon on issues that affected young people in their areas, file a report and feed this back on a European level in the form of recommendations in European conferences.







## Jess Simonds, 21, Conwy

Funky Dragon allowed me to meet other young people from across Wales, from different backgrounds with different beliefs and different objectives with being a part of the organisation, an opportunity I would not have had without. My two years with the organisation was the main reason for my academic study of politics and my continued involvement in raising the voice of young people in political policy at home and abroad, I'm currently running in the BYC trustee elections and one of my main aims is to raise awareness of the setback young people in Wales have had since the closure of Funky Dragon that has put them behind young people in developing countries who have an established youth assembly and structures of representation. The reality is that young people in Wales no longer feel valued.

Since the closure of Funky Dragon I have promoted petitions, tweeted and written to my AM and MP as well as started up an online campaign to remind the Welsh government that young people are still here and require an avenue to hold them to account. It's been a saddening experience, but I'm glad Funky Dragon has given me the tools and confidence to challenge the decision and continue to fight for the voices of young people to be heard.

## Katherine Davies, 15, Swansea

I was only privileged to be part of Funky Dragon for one year. At the time of me being elected by the young people in Swansea I was 13 years old and had very low self-esteem. Funky Dragon changed me by giving me the opportunity to meet a wide range of young people from across Wales with the same love of politics and youth participation as I had. It helped me to open up and not be afraid of being myself. It gave me confidence and a wealth of opportunities that provided me with vast knowledge that I can use in the future.

Funky closing has made me feel like the Government doesn't value Young People's opinion as much as they used to. Funky Dragon acted as break away from reality where I was helping inform change. I now no longer trust Government, am disheartened by their decision and have lost confidence in myself.



# Conclusion

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To conclude, there has been a lot of progress in Children's Rights here in Wales but it is clear that there is still areas to improve on. In this report we have set out clear recommendations and areas for improvement around Education, Health, Information, Safety and Protection from Harm, Participation and Rights and discrimination. We hope that these promote engaging discussion with decision makers in Wales and across the UK.

The main message that has emerged from FUNC+ is that Wales needs a strong, reputable and representative replacement Youth Assembly that can make sure that all young people in Wales can have their say on decisions that effect their lives.

The board of trustees wishes that this report will stand in testament to the commitment and experience of the former members of Funky Dragon and its staff that have contributed over the years. We also hope that this will make sure that this method of independent, youth-led reporting on children's rights does not become a thing of the past.

The trustees of the Children and Young People's Assembly for Wales





# CYPAW Trustees

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Funky's United Nations Challenge  
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