Working Towards a Child Safety Strategy for Wales
INTRODUCTION

Children in Wales is leading the development of the Child Safety Strategy for Wales, which aims to prevent deaths and reduce unintentional injuries in children and young people. We are working in partnership with the Collaboration for Accident Prevention and Injury Control (CAPIC) and the Child Accident Prevention Trust, with additional support from many organisations across Wales. Health Challenge Wales, a department within the Welsh Assembly Government, is funding the development of this strategy.

The Child Safety Strategy acknowledges both work that has been undertaken and recommendations for the future of child accident reduction in Wales.

Children in Wales’ aim is to reduce deaths and injuries from accidents (unintentional injuries) to children and young people in Wales. In 2004 at least 154,489 children and young people under the age of 19 were treated in Accident and Emergency departments across Wales due to injury.1 An estimated 14,990 of these children were under the age of 5 and injured in the home in 2004.2 A significant proportion of these injuries could have been prevented.

The focus of the proposed Child Safety Strategy and Action Plan for Wales, will be to underpin and present approaches to reach the injury and death reduction targets already present in Welsh Assembly Government policy: in particular, within the National Service Framework for Children (NSF), Road Safety Strategy and the Fire and Rescue National Framework for Wales.

In addition, the strategy will focus on measures to increase the effectiveness of current accident prevention work across Wales. The Child Safety Strategy and Action Plan for Wales aims to:

- Reduce health inequalities - children from the poorest families are at least three times more likely to be killed in accidents than those who are from the wealthiest families
- Improve the health and well-being of children in Wales
  - Prevent or reduce the severity of avoidable injury
  - Create a safer urban environment in which children can be encouraged to play
  - Increase safer access to open spaces and opportunities for physical activity

The proposed strategy will not attempt to prevent all injuries or to act as a ‘Cotton Wool’ approach to our children’s safety, but as a means to reducing the numbers of unintentional injuries that are serious, disabling and life changing for children and young people in Wales.

These measures are not only beneficial to the short and long term health of the child population but also contribute to a reduction in health sector costs by reducing admissions and attendances at hospitals.

1 All Wales Accident & Emergency (A&E) Attendance Analysis 2004
2 All Wales Accident & Emergency (A&E) Attendance Analysis 2004
A RIGHTS BASED APPROACH

All policy on children and young people by the Welsh Assembly Government is underpinned by a commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). As an umbrella body, Children in Wales aims to ensure that the Convention becomes a reality in Wales. It is important that rights enshrined in the Convention are respected. Article 24 (e) relating to this field, must also be balanced with the rights of the child to play and be involved in leisure activities as outlined in Article 31 for instance.

Article 19
1. States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

Article 24
e) To ensure that all segments of society, in particular parents and children, are informed, have access to education and are supported in the use of basic knowledge of child health and nutrition, the advantages of breast-feeding, hygiene and environmental sanitation and the prevention of accidents;

Article 31
1. States Parties recognise the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.

The aim of the Action Plan is to focus on preventing fatal, serious and disabling injuries. We cannot prevent all injuries without severely restricting children’s lifestyles. If parents perceive their environments to be dangerous, rightly or wrongly, they will restrict the activities of their children. This can prevent injuries but also reduces the healthy activities that children wish to undertake with the possibilities of long-term damage to children’s physical and social well-being.

Children and Young People: Rights to Action
INITIAL FEEDBACK

What are children and young people saying?

Children in Wales held consultation events with children aged 6 to 16, from both rural and urban areas, to gain a snapshot of their views and opinions on safety matters and prevention of unintentional injuries.

All the children and young people believed that roads and cars are the biggest cause of harm they face. Children identified water danger and the sea as the next biggest cause of injuries, with violence by others or injury through 'being stupid' following closely behind as major concerns.

Education about keeping safe was prevalent at the primary schools but not so in secondary schools. However, recollection of young people about an awareness campaign that ran some years ago when they were themselves primary school children was often clear and detailed.

When asked how to reduce serious injuries, road safety initiatives were the highest priority of children and young people. Suggestions included having more zebra crossings, slower speed limits, more traffic lights and better policing. There were calls by young people to improve community relations, introduce formal safety education within secondary school, run first aid training courses for children and young people and address misuse of alcohol and drugs.

The young people also noted that they had to be allowed to take some risks, as this is part of their learning process. They wanted to be able to take risks they could handle, and not overstep their abilities. If they understood and learned their limits, with support then they can keep themselves safer.

What are mothers, fathers and carers saying?

Parents and carers are crucially important role models for their children. It is important that they are confident and able to give clear safety guidance to children and young people. It is of concern that research indicates this does not happen in many families. (According to the research undertaken by the Department of Transport’s Think Campaign, three quarters of parents do not always use zebra crossings to cross the road when in a hurry. 63% of parents will not wait for the green light before crossing the road when in a hurry. One in five admitted to crossing the road whilst talking on a mobile phone.)

We will seek the views of parents and carers on the full Child Safety Strategy and Action Plan in order to ascertain the best ways to deliver safety information to them and their children.

What are practitioners saying?

The first series of regional workshops in Wales attracted over 200 practitioners from a diverse range of professions. They included workers from NHS Trusts, voluntary sector children’s’ organisations, Fire and Rescue Service, Local Health Boards, SureStart, County Borough Councils, Early years Partnerships, St John’s Ambulance, Youth Offending Teams, Welsh Assembly Government and more. The workshops were funded by Health Challenge Wales and hosted by Children in Wales working alongside Collaboration for Accident Prevention and Injury Control (CAPIC), Child Accident Prevention Trust (CAPT) and Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA). The common themes to arise from these workshops were:

- While injury prevention is everyone’s responsibility, often no one takes lead responsibility for it.
- Although there is some good work happening within our communities in Wales to prevent unintentional injuries to children and young people, there needs to be much more focus.
- Social issues present a significant challenge when promoting child safety and some groups are hard to reach.
- Lack of parenting skills and parenting support services present challenges.
- There are challenges in areas relating to the development of a professional workforce, time, resources, allocated responsibilities, lack of statutory duty and incomplete legislative framework.
- Home safety lacks the knowledge, resources and leadership framework that is present to support the Road Safety Strategy and this should be addressed.

The overall conclusion from these workshops was that we needed:

1. More structure to accident prevention for children and young people in Wales: both on an all Wales and local authority level.
2. To produce and utilise programmes that follow evidence based approaches.

http://www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk/research/ppt/2007-02b.ppt
KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Improving national and local structures

In addition to identifying the most effective prevention programmes, three structural measures need to be put in place if deaths and serious injuries are to be reduced:

1. **Clear leadership**, nationally and locally. Preventing unintentional injuries cuts across the responsibilities of a number of departments in the Welsh Assembly Government. One department must take the lead and coordinate activities to ensure that effort is not duplicated or, worse still, not undertaken.

2. **Coordination** of activities between agencies and departments, again at national and local levels.

3. Improved **communication and partnership working** between all the parties who can make a difference to the safety of children and young people in Wales.

We therefore recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government:

- Adopt and support the Child Safety Strategy and the Child Safety Action Plan currently under development as part of a European EuroSafe initiative.
- Identify a lead responsibility able to communicate and co-ordinate the Child Safety Strategy and the Action Plan policy, and to coordinate funding for reducing unintentional injuries in children, across all departments including: Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills; Health and Social Services; Economy and Transport; Environment, Sustainability and Housing; Public Health and Health Professions; Rural Affairs and Social Justice and Local Government.
- Establish a multi agency Child Safety Implementation Group to report progress on implementation of the action plan to the Ministers.
- Liaise with key stakeholders across Wales, the UK and internationally.
- Investigate and invest in the development of quality assurance schemes in the field of safety promotion for children.
- Link the Child Safety Strategy and Action Plan into the new child death review board.
- Promote the Child Safety Strategy and publicise the targets.
- Coordinate national communication campaigns to promote child safety.

A collaborative Wales wide organisation should be identified to:

- Liaise with key stakeholders across Wales, the UK and internationally.
- Carry out a skills audit in Wales to assess qualifications and expertise in each area of accident prevention in children.
- Map the training currently available in the field of injury prevention and what needs to be provided to practitioners in Wales.
- Monitor the development and implementation of a Child Safety Strategy and Action Plan for Wales that is consistent with the measures already contained within several WAG policies.
- Convene a Wales wide network of agencies and stakeholders with an interest and role in accident prevention.

Local Frameworks - Key recommendations

Injury prevention is the responsibility of several agencies. In order to improve partnership working and collaboration to prevent accidental injuries and deaths in children we recommended:

- Local accident prevention coalitions are formed (if not in existence) in each local authority area in Wales. They should work closely alongside the Local Health Boards, the Local Safeguarding Children Boards and the NHS trusts. They could form part of the structure of Children and Young People’s Framework Partnerships.
- These injury prevention coalitions should assess the needs of their areas based on local or extrapolated data and then target and plan interventions as needed at a local level.
- The injury prevention coalitions should set out an action plan according to local need but prioritising from within the national action plan framework.
- The action plan should be made public and promoted within each area.
THE NEED FOR RESEARCH ON CHILD INJURY PREVENTION

Thirty years ago there was very little valid research work on preventing injuries to children. However, we now have an extensive evidence base. Academics from Swansea and Cardiff Universities are recognised as national and international leaders in the field of injury prevention. Some of the work in Wales is seen as world leading. In particular, the development of the All Wales Injury Surveillance System (AWISS), the continuously updated evidence base on effective interventions available through the CAPIC website (www.capic.org.uk), the development of web tools for home safety (www.safehome.org.uk), and research into the prevention of injuries to pedestrians, in playgrounds and in the home and the promotion of water safety.

Much still remains to be done and research into more effective ways of preventing child injury whilst promoting physical activity and beneficial developmental experiences should be a priority for Wales. We recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government oversee the development of a research strategy to include:

- Improving the evidence base for effective injury prevention,
- Understanding and reversing social inequality in injury risk,
- Improving injury surveillance.
WHAT PROGRAMMES SHOULD WE BE IMPLEMENTING?

Evidence suggests that the implementation of the following programmes would help to prevent injury and deaths of children and young people in Wales.

ON THE ROAD

Pedestrian Safety

All children in Wales should receive evidence based roadside education programmes such as Kerbcraft, by the age of 10. In Wales there are several different schemes and programmes operated by the various road safety teams. Children in Wales believes that a Wales wide review should be undertaken to ensure that each local authority are using the same methodological approach to roadside education with every child. This will aid in the evaluation of the programmes being used and ensure consistency of quality across Wales.

Urban design, engineering and speed enforcement also have considerable roles to play in ensuring that all residential areas are low speed and child friendly. Children should be able to play outdoors and walk to school in reasonable safety. This is not currently the case. There is considerable scope for greater use of traditional and newer methods of slowing traffic, including the wider adoption of initiatives such as the DIY street initiative promoted by SUSTRANS.

20 mph speed zones

Children in Wales fully supports the call to implement 20mph speed zones around every school, nursery and play area in Wales. However, we recommend that the implementation of 20 mph speed zones should be further extended to include all residential areas. The Welsh Assembly Government should monitor the implementation of these measures. The Welsh Assembly Government should also consider supporting the proposal from the Injury Observatory for Britain and Ireland to develop a web based Safe Area tool, which would allow the public to assess safety in their areas.

Children as car passengers

Road safety officers should be trained on in-car safety and should offer the service on demand. The service should also be available to families referred through other agencies and professionals. The availability of in-car safety advice varies greatly on a geographical basis in Wales at the moment.

Cycle training

Only a minority of children in Wales are given an opportunity to undertake cycle training through their school or local authority to national standards. Children in Wales would like the Welsh Assembly Government and their partners to ensure that every child in Wales is offered the opportunity to have cycle training by the age of 12. This will also allow a prime opportunity to stress the need to use cycle helmets and to make cycle helmets available to them according to their needs, ensuring that poverty is not a hindrance to usage of helmets.
WHAT PROGRAMMES SHOULD WE BE IMPLEMENTING?

IN THE HOME

Child Safety Equipment Schemes

Children in Wales calls on the Welsh Assembly Government to make sufficient funds available for every local authority in Wales to implement an on-going child safety equipment scheme for vulnerable families. Schemes like these are currently suffering sustainability issues where they exist and unfortunately in some authorities they do not exist at all, creating geographical inequalities.

Where schemes do exist, there is an inconsistency in service in terms of equipment offered, use of evidence based good practice and knowledge for and of practitioners. Children in Wales recommends that all local scheme providers receive standardised training to ensure that families have access to the same effective advice, information and equipment.

Following identification of families in need through contact with services such as:
- Health Visitor
- Midwife
- Communities First Team
- Pre School provision
- Flying Start
- Community Nurses
- Social work teams

Vulnerable families should receive the following safety equipment:

- Smoke alarms (where it does not currently happen)
- Thermostatic mixing valves to prevent bath scalds
- Fireguards
- Appropriate safety gates
- Window restrictors
- 4 point safety harness for highchairs
- Cupboard/drawer restrictors

Advice for families on accident prevention for babies and young children

Those working within the home setting are ideally placed to offer both behavioural and environmental advice on the prevention of home accidents. Specialist training and guidance should be made available to enable practitioners to undertake this work more effectively. For example, Health Visitors are responsible for giving accident prevention advice to families of babies and small children. Guidance and training should be developed on the breadth of advice that should be offered and at what stage of child development it should be offered. Health Visitors can also refer to other services for more in depth advice and safety equipment.
Working Towards a Child Safety Strategy for Wales

WHAT PROGRAMMES SHOULD WE BE IMPLEMENTING?

OUT AND ABOUT

Whilst it is recognised that there are many aspects to Out and About, the Child Safety Strategy and Action Plan should focus on prevention of drowning as this is one of the main causes of death to children in Wales.

Children in Wales supports the encouragement of children to experience the natural environment through play, physical activity and interaction. To reduce the risk of drowning, every child in Wales should be taught to swim by the age of 12, if there are no physical barriers preventing the child/young person from swimming. Equally important is the need for all children and young people to receive water safety education by the age of 12.

DATA COLLECTION

Whilst the All Wales Injury Surveillance System (AWISS) is promoted by the European Child Safety Action Plan as a beacon of good practice and has Welsh Assembly Government ministerial support, not all hospitals participate in providing anonymised data. The data provided to AWISS is important in supporting injury prevention but does not contain the level of detail in the former Home and Leisure Accident Surveillance Systems (HASS and LASS). This was funded by the Department for Trade and Industry (DTI) and involved a sample of hospitals throughout the UK. Whilst it ceased in the UK in 2002, it has now been widely adopted across Europe in the form of the European Union Injury Data Base (IDB) and there is a European Commission requirement for all states to support the IDB.

The HASS and LASS systems were widely recognised as being useful and important for the planning of accident prevention initiatives. Our workshop feedback indicates that professionals would like this system funded again.

The Welsh Assembly Government should ensure that all hospitals in Wales adopt the four AWISS prevention orientated fields as part of the new Emergency Department Data Set. These fields take only one minute to complete at reception and can support a wide range of national and local prevention initiatives, including those relevant to self harm, suicide and violence prevention, in addition to accident prevention.

The Welsh Assembly Government and the UK government should also investigate the feasibility of funding a sample of hospitals to collect the more detailed data required by the European Union Injury Data Base (IDB). In addition, the Welsh Assembly Government should continue to support the development and provision of the web based tool, Safe Home. This tool not only provides users with advice based on the personal behaviour and their individual home environment, but can also provide insightful data on current safety practices and equipment within homes across Wales.

Inevitably accidents and unintentional injuries will occur and it is recognised that early medical intervention of these injuries plays a vital role in improving the health outcome for children and young people in Wales. However, the main focus of the Child Strategy and Action Plan is to reduce the risk, thereby reducing the number of children and young people affected by accidents and unintentional injuries.
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POLICY CONTEXT INFORMING THIS DOCUMENT

UNCRC
The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is an international human rights treaty that grants all children and young people (aged 17 and under) a comprehensive set of rights.
http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE: RIGHTS TO ACTION
The document gives details of the progress that has been made by the Assembly Government in relation to children and its commitments for the future.

NATIONAL SERVICE FRAMEWORK FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND MATERNITY SERVICES
A 10 year strategy which sets national standards to improve the quality and reduce variation in service delivery for children and young people across health, social care and other local services.
http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/docmetadata.cfm?orgid=441&id=46873

HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE AND WELL-BEING STRATEGIES
This document provides an overview of Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Strategies and the key stages involved which local authorities and local health boards are required to formulate.
http://wales.gov.uk/about/strategy/strategypublications/strategypubs/935762/?lang=en

CHILDREN’S ENVIRONMENTAL AND HEALTH ACTION PLAN
This document sets out a framework for tackling children’s health issues in relation to environmental factors.

ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY
The Environment Strategy provides the framework within which to achieve an environment which is clean, healthy, biologically diverse and valued by the people of Wales.
http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/epq/Envstratforwales/about_the_strategy/?lang=en

A FAIR FUTURE FOR OUR CHILDREN
The strategy of the Welsh Assembly Government for tackling child poverty.

ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY FOR WALES
The Wales Road Safety Strategy sets out a range of measures designed to help achieve the targets for the reduction in road casualties in the period up to 2010.

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL
The Safe Routes to School initiative was launched in 1999 with the aim of not only tackling the congestion caused by the school run, but also to remind children and parents that there are alternatives to using the car.
http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/transport/roadsafety/saferoutes/?lang=en

WALKING AND CYCLING STRATEGY FOR WALES
The Welsh Assembly Government has developed a strategy to support sustainable development, reduce adverse impact of motorised traffic and encourage healthy life styles.
POLICY CONTEXT INFORMING THIS DOCUMENT

WIRED FOR SAFETY: COMMUNITY FIRE SAFETY WORKING GROUP FINAL REPORT

A report into the adoption of hard-wired smoke detectors in social housing in Wales. Also the installation of sprinkler systems into multiple occupational buildings, for example schools and hospitals.


PLAY POLICY

The Welsh Assembly Government’s Play Policy is a broad statement of principles regarding the importance it puts on play.


HOUSING, HEALTH AND SAFETY RATING SYSTEM

The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) is the risk assessment procedure for residential properties.

http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/decenthomes/housingstandards/housinghealth/

FOUNDATION PHASE

The Foundation Phase is a new approach to learning for children from 3-7 years of age. It will combine what is currently known as the Early Years and Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum.


PERSONAL AND SOCIAL EDUCATION FRAMEWORK: KEY STAGES 1-4 IN WALES

Pupils can be helped to maintain their physical health and well-being, sustain their growth and development and know how to keep themselves safe.