

CHILDREN IN WALES - PLANT YNG NGHYMRU

**Supporting Children & Families in Rural Communities:
Rights to a Decent service- A Welsh perspective**



Mike Lewis, Policy Director
mike.lewis@childreninwales.org.uk

Aim of Presentation

- To examine a range of perspectives on how services should be provided to children and young people and their families in rural communities
- To examine how child poverty and social exclusion affect the experiences of children and young people in the immediate and longer term in rural communities

Definitional Issues & Young peoples perspectives

- So what does the data really tell us?
- Sparsity and social support
- So who are services designed for?
- Universalism v's specialist services {from tier 1 to tier 4}
- Costs
- Offering equality of access/offering choice

The Poverty and Exclusion Interface

- addressing child poverty
- addressing family poverty
- promoting social inclusion
- challenging social exclusion

Rurality and Double Marginalisation- the experiences of specific groups of children and young people

What Works:

- Rural proofing
- Multi service outlets
- Improved multi agency working with a focus on delivery
- Effective involvement of children and young people
- Taking services to families and taking families to services
- Effective use of ICT
- Operating mobile services
- Taking a life stages approach

What Doesn't Work

- Short term solutions
- Using urban solutions in rural environments
- Not involving children , young people and families in service design
- Not including the additional factors which effect rural communities e.g. distance , travel etc

Some lessons from Surestart

- Early and continuous engagement with scattered communities
- Recognising and working with social diversity
- A range of delivery methods overcoming obstacles presented by distance
- Raising expectations and meeting them within an explicit and realistic timescale
- Addressing resistance to change
- Be prepared for low levels of take-up
- Capital developments planned on an appropriate scale

Some lessons from Sure start (2)

- Making creative use of existing premises
- Small scale investment strategies
- Trying where possible to meet the needs of all the community at same time
- Realistic assessment of costs and benefits
- Providing a higher per capita cost than in urban areas
- Being creative about skill shortages –growing local talent
- Planning for sustainability

What does a rights based agenda look like [5 dimensions]?

- They need to be in existence
- You must be able to exercise your rights
- You must be able to enforce your rights
- You must be informed of your rights
- You must have someone to defend your interests

**United Nations Convention on the
Rights of the Child – the challenge
for the 21st Century**

Implications for future research

- Mike.lewis@childreninwales.org.uk