

Children First pioneer projects announced

Children First is the name for children's zones in Wales. Their purpose is to allow the local community and organisations to work together to address the specific needs of children and young people in the area and to reduce the inequalities some children and young people face compared with their peers in more socially advantaged places.

The approach, which involves working collaboratively around a specific place for the benefit of children and young people forms part of the new ambition to create resilient communities announced by the Cabinet Secretary earlier this year.

Announcing the projects, the Cabinet Secretary said:

“Children First is about initiating change at the local level, based on the needs of the specific place, identified by listening to children and young people and the local community. It will aim to bring together all the services and support which will be effective in addressing the needs of children and young people from birth to adulthood.

“Children's and young people's rights should be central to Children First, including the right to participate in decisions affecting them. Adverse Childhood Experiences or ACEs are also a priority. I am convinced that we need to find ways to prevent ACEs and mitigate their impact, to give our children and young people and the communities they live in the opportunity to flourish.

“I am very grateful to the 19 organisations who put forward expressions of interest in establishing Children First areas. We have identified five proposals that are ready to proceed as pioneers. They will give us the opportunity to see how the approach works for a range of issues, in different communities across the country.

“I hope that in time, the benefits of Children First areas will be clear and there will be an increase in delivery of this multi-agency, collaborative approach. I am encouraged that a number of the other proposals we received could also be developed to become Children First projects, and we will ensure that learning from our pioneers is shared with others to allow further projects to come on stream as quickly as possible.”