

Reframing Support for Families following Parental Separation

Children Come First

Children's lives are affected when parents separate. Parents need information and guidance at an early stage, to prioritise child welfare through and beyond the time of their separation. In addition, we seek a framework of support services that all children can access that respects the rights, agency and needs of children of all ages, hears their voice and promotes and protects their long-term development and wellbeing.

- Provide clear information to schools, youth services and health professionals about family breakdown and children's rights, so that those working with children and young people are equipped to provide accurate information and signposting.
- Raise awareness of children's rights and needs for their long-term wellbeing when parents separate, so a child-focussed approach becomes normal.
- Develop an App dedicated to providing information and support for children and young people, linked to and alongside an authoritative website for children of parents who live apart.
- Children need to be reached where they are, so the app/website will need to be promoted via BBC Bitesize, podcasts and other media outlets for children and young people.
- Through the above three (direct contact from schools/youth services/health, public education, and the app/website), all children and young people aged 10 and over will come to know about their right to have their voices heard in any process for resolving issues between parents. The child can speak to the mediator or, if another process is underway, a child consultant.
- As an immediate step, the Legal Aid Authority should include the cost of child-inclusive mediation in funding mediation between parents; it is currently excluded.
- Parliament should be invited to incorporate the UNCRC into domestic legislation so that a child's Article 12 right to be consulted on matters which affect them, particularly when parents separate, is recognised by statute
- Ensure coordination and parity of provision for children in Wales.

These initiatives would result in the establishment of online and direct services for information, consultation, support and representation for children and young people whose parents separate.

Hearing the voice of the child will become a normal part of family separation.