



PLANT YNG NGHYMRU
CHILDREN IN WALES



Cefnogir gan Fwrdd Partneriaeth
Rhanbarthol Cwm Taf Morgannwg
Supported by the Cwm Taf Morgannwg
Regional Partnership Board

A **Baby Voice response** to the Draft mental health and wellbeing strategy.

The Draft Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy is all age, including babies and young children. Consultation has been encouraged from all age groups, including young children and easy read versions and tools have been produced to facilitate this. The Strategy specifically references the importance of the First 1000 days (from conception to age 2). One of the greatest challenges in representing this youngest age group is that they do not have a voice and so can easily be ignored or overlooked.

We often think of a baby as simply too young to understand, remember or be harmed by their experiences. However, the research tells us that the opposite is true. The First 1000 days is a critical period of development and can impact a child's mental health and wellbeing, physical health, and wider life outcomes throughout adulthood. It is crucial therefore that we focus on their unique needs specifically and take proactive steps to include their voice in the consultation process.

To achieve this, staff from across Cwm Taf Morgannwg who had previously engaged in Task and Finish groups to design a series of Baby & Toddler Voice statements, were approached to be part of the focus group aimed at responding to the Consultation from a baby's perspective.

Process

An online focus group was held on 3rd June 2024 with 18 professionals working with babies and young children in various roles (list of attendees below).

Prior to the focus group representatives from Children in Wales, the Parent Infant Foundation and CTM Nurturing Families service reviewed the strategy and consultation

questions and devised 6 appropriate questions that could be asked to elicit a baby voice response.

Focus group members were asked to:

1. Hold a baby (under 1 year old) in mind; this baby could be thriving and doing well or could be facing difficulties.
2. Respond to the questions from the baby's perspective.

Questions and results

The first 2 questions are broad open questions, and the following 4 relate more strongly to the strategy's focus.

1. What are you enjoying in your life at the moment?



2. What would you like to change in your life at the moment?



3. When do I feel loved? What makes me feel loved?



4. What are the most important things grown-ups should know to keep me feeling happy and safe?

you are better than toys
 responsive to my sounds
 the world is new to me
 responsive to my needs
 notice how im feeling
 when im hungry
 comfort when needed
 read me stories
 to be nurtured
 listen to me understand
 i need cuddles and smiles
 not to use loud voices
 when i need to be held
 keep me fed
 warmth clean and fed
 being present with me
 my ques
 give me time to learn
 when to ask for help
 seek support if needed
 keep me clean
 when i am hungry
 respond gently
 when i want a cuddle
 cuddle me
 when i need feeding
 i feel how you feel
 respond to me
 i love you
 sing to me
 i need to be talked to
 nutrition needs
 in tune with my needs
 im fully dependent
 how much i need sleep
 im my own person- nurture
 my cues
 when to keep calm
 im learning all the time
 importance of interaction
 youre my favourite person

5. How do I show you how I am feeling?

body movements
 body language
 i make sounds and copy
 through my eye contact
 i make noises
 making sounds
 by crying
 smiling gurgling
 laugh
 i make noises smiles
 sounds
 goggle
 gurgling
 facial expressions
 movements
 cooing
 play
 crying
 cry
 i cry
 smiles
 eyes
 by laughing
 wriggling
 laughing
 i will stretch
 use of gaze
 smiling
 smiling or looking away
 cries
 behaviour and gestures

6. What do I need when I'm sad or upset?



Attendees at focus group:

Facilitators:

- Anna Westall Children in Wales
- Julie Powell-Jones CTM Nurturing Families Service
- Dr Liz Gregory Parent Infant Foundation

Participants:

- Stacy Chamberlain- NYTH/NEST Coordinator CTM.
- Martha Sercombe, Clinical Lead for Perinatal Mental Health Network, NHS Executive
- Hugh Russell CEO of Children in Wales
- Rebecca Powell Merthyr Tydfil Flying Start Expansion Lead officer
- Trudy Jones, Debbie Lewis and Lucy Holifield Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board (CTMUHB).
- Annamaria Bevan Head of Ely and Caerau Integrated Children's Centre Cardiff.
- Sara Wiggins, Flying Start Cardiff
- Fay Fear, Infant Feeding Co-ordinator Health Visiting Service.
- Jackie Prosser, Children's Partnership Officer BAVO.
- Jade Beasant CTMUHB, Perinatal Team Leader.
- Aileen Johnson, Parent Group Coordinator Flying Start.

- Kayleigh Roper, Team Manager Edge of Care Services Bridgend County Borough Council.
- Orion Burns - Gwent Parent-Infant Mental Health Service