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- Much of our interaction with others is political, even if we do not realise it.
 - Every time you have an opinion, an argument, make a decision or disagree with someone, you are engaging in a political process.
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- The only difference between this and national politics is the scale and influence the opinions, disagreements and decisions have.
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- In the UK, every citizen is allowed to disagree with government decisions and protest peacefully against them if they choose. How does this affect the role of the public services?
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Levels of government and their responsibilities

- ❑ European Parliament (EP): Although the European Parliament is not strictly part of the UK levels of government, it has a significant impact on European Union (EU) citizens and their public services. The parliament has 736 members who represent all 27 member states of the EU.
 - ❑ Brexit will impact on this
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- There are 72 that are directly elected from the UK and are there to represent the interests of our country. The role of the parliament is to draft legislation that has an impact across all the EU states on issues such as:
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- ☐ • the environment
 - ☐ • equal opportunities
 - ☐ • transport
 - ☐ • consumer rights
 - ☐ • movement of workers and goods.
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Central government

- Is the layer of government that operates across the whole country. The central government of the UK is based at the Palace of Westminster in London.
 - It contains the major central political institutions of the UK: the House of Commons and the House of Lords..
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- Together with the ruling monarch, these three institutions are known as Parliament. It is usually located in the country's capital city and it has very specific responsibilities that no other level of government is able to do
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- ❑ For example:
 - ❑ sign treaties or agreements with other nations
 - ❑ make laws
 - ❑ defend the nation.
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Devolved parliaments

- Devolution is a process whereby power is transferred from a centralised governmental organisation to a regional organisation.
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Devolution consists of three elements:

- ❑ The transfer of power to another elected body that is lower down the chain of authority.
 - ❑ The geographical move of power from the capital to another city or town.
 - ❑ The transfer of roles and responsibilities of government from central to regional assemblies.
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- ❑ Advantages Regional assemblies can reflect and take into account cultural and linguistic differences between the region and central government.
 - ❑ Regional assemblies are more in touch with the needs of their people; laws will be fairer and more readily accepted by the people.
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- ❑ Reduces the burden on central government. Because regional assemblies only deal with the work of the region they are more efficient.
 - ❑ Central government can concentrate on issues of national importance rather than being concerned about the regions.
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- The combative politics seen in centralised government are reduced in regional assemblies where parties are happier to work towards common goals.
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Disadvantages

- ❑ Establishing regional assemblies is very expensive. Why create an organisation to do what central government already does?
 - ❑ Regional assemblies lack the decision-making experience of central government.
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- ❑ Regional assemblies may conflict with central government.
 - ❑ Regional assemblies may lead to the break up of the UK.
 - ❑ Low voter turn out in devolution referendums suggests a
 - ❑ lack of popular support for regional assemblies.
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National Assembly Wales

- The National Assembly for Wales and the Welsh Government are 2 distinct organisations – the same as the UK Parliament and UK Government.
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- The National Assembly for Wales is the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people, makes laws for Wales and holds the Welsh Government to account.
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- It has 60 elected Assembly Members (AMs). It is the Welsh equivalent to the UK parliament in Westminster, which houses every MP from across the UK. The Senedd in Cardiff Bay is the home of the debating chamber for the National Assembly for Wales.
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- ❑ The Welsh Government is constituted by the First and other Ministers.
 - ❑ Elections to the National Assembly for Wales are held every 4 years. The Welsh Government is formed by the party - or coalition of parties - holding most seats.
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The Welsh Assembly Government

- The Welsh Assembly was established by the Government of Wales Act 1998, after a Welsh referendum showed public support for the idea. The Welsh Assembly has 60 members. Became known as the Welsh Government in May 2011
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- Like the Scottish Parliament, the Welsh Assembly Government has considerable scope to deal with regional issues such as transport, health, education and the environment.
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- ❑ Wales also has A First Minister. The current First Minister is Carwyn Jones, formally appointed by the Queen on 12 May 2011, who appointed ten ministers and deputy ministers
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- Carwyn Jones was elected by the whole executive and is usually the leader of the largest political party. One substantial difference between the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly is that Wales does not have jurisdiction over its own criminal and civil law; it is subject to English law in this area.
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Who we are

- The First Minister of Wales heads the Welsh Government. Together with Welsh Ministers and the Counsel General they form the Cabinet. Civil servants based in offices throughout Wales support them in developing and delivering their work.
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- The Welsh Government is elected by the people of Wales to carry out a programme of government. This involves making decisions and ensuring delivery on areas devolved to us on matters that affect people's daily lives.
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We do this by:

- ❑ developing and implementing policies
 - ❑ setting up and directing delivery and governance in these key areas, such as local government and the NHS in Wales
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How we differ

- The Welsh Government and the UK Government both look after different interests in Wales. Welsh Government are responsible for most of the day-to-day issues, for example health, education, agriculture and local government. The UK Government looks after other areas such as defence, taxation, pensions and benefits.
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- ❑ Wales' voice in the UK Government is represented by the Secretary of State for Wales Alan Cairns and supporting staff in the Wales Office.
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☐ The Welsh Government is responsible for many areas of our daily life in Wales.

☐ These areas include:

☐ education

☐ health

☐ local government

☐ transport

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- ☐ planning
 - ☐ economic development
 - ☐ social services
 - ☐ culture
 - ☐ Welsh language
 - ☐ environment
 - ☐ agriculture and rural affairs.
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- ❑ The role of the Welsh Government is to:
 - ❑ make decisions on matters regarding these areas, for Wales as a whole
 - ❑ develop policies and implement them
 - ❑ propose Welsh laws (Assembly Bills).
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- The Welsh Government has a budget of more than £15 bn, of which more than £5 bn goes to the NHS in Wales and more than £4 bn directly to local authorities which deliver many other services.
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Defining “policy”?

- “Policy” is described in the Concise Oxford dictionary as a course or general plan of action to be adopted by government, party, person etc.
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What is policy?

A policy is a plan of action for tackling political issues. It is often initiated by a political party in government, which undergoes reforms and changes by interested parties, for example, lobby groups. Policy designates a process. (Social policy definitions, 2003).

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- ☐ Identify a policy that has affected you?
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Smoking

- Health Act 2006 was a piece of social policy that included provision for the outlawing of smoking in workplaces and enclosed public places.
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- This was echoed in the civil service's own definition in the Modernising Government White Paper of 1999, namely policy making is the process by which governments translate their political vision into programmes and actions to deliver "outcomes", desired changes in the real world.
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Policy and Law Reform Wales

The issue of rights and well-being of children has been significant on the Welsh political landscape for many years, not least because there have been strong links between government and non-governmental organisations.

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- Since the devolution settlement and the establishment of the National Assembly in Wales in 1999, there has been a plethora of policy and strategy documents relating to children and young people.
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- Devolution has heralded a new more inclusive approach to governance, and within this context children have assumed critical importance to the new governments of Wales
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- "Children and young people should be seen as young citizens, with rights and opinions to be taken into account now. They are not a species apart, to be alternately demonised and sentimentalised, nor trainee adults who do not yet have a full place in society". (Rights to Action)
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- In 2002, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child welcomed the fact that the Welsh Assembly Government had used the Convention as the framework in its strategy for children and young people.
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- In 2004, the emphasis on the importance of children's rights can most clearly be seen when the Assembly, within the limits of its powers, adopted the Convention as the basis of all its policy making for children and young people, positioning its overarching strategy for children within a rights-based framework linked to UNCRC implementation.
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- In 2004, the Welsh Assembly Government issued Rights to Action, a policy document adopting 7 Core Aims for Children, which are presented as a direct translation of the UNCRC's articles into the following broad policy aims:
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A flying start in life: Articles 3, 29, 36

A comprehensive range of education and learning opportunities: Articles 23, 28, 29, 32

Enjoy the best possible health and freedom from abuse, victimisation and exploitation: Articles 6, 18-20, 24, 26-29, 32-35, 37 and 40.

Access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities: Articles 15, 20, 29, 31

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- ❑ Be listened to, treated with respect and have their race and cultural identity recognised: Articles 2, 7, 8, 12-17, 20.
 - ❑ Have a safe home and community which supports physical and emotional well-being: Articles 19, 20, 25, 27, 32-35, 37 and 40.
 - ❑ Are not disadvantaged by poverty: Articles 6, 26, 7, 28.
 - ❑ Specific national initiatives have followed which are based on these 7 Core Aims and cite the UNCRC as a basis:
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- ❑ National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services (NSF)
 - ❑ The All Wales Youth Offending Strategy
 - ❑ Sexual health and well-being strategy
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- ❑ The first Child Poverty Strategy for Wales 'A Fair Future' and the current draft Child Poverty Strategy for Wales
 - ❑ Children and Young People Well-being monitor has been developed with statistics that are explicitly linked to the UNCRC and can be seen as measures to implement the seven core aims.
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- ❑ Extending Entitlement (2002) is another national initiative that falls under the umbrella of the 7 Core Aims and is the Assembly's legal direction on youth services. It sets out universal basic entitlements for young people aged 11-25 years.
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- The National Assembly for Wales can play a key role in supporting local Young People's Partnerships to deliver this universal entitlement.
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10 Entitlements

- ❑ Education, training and work experience-tailored to their needs
 - ❑ Basic skills which open doors to a full life and promote social inclusion
 - ❑ A wide and varied range of opportunities to participate in volunteering and active citizenship.
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- ❑ High quality, responsive, and accessible services and facilities.
 - ❑ Independent, specialist careers advice guidance, student support and counselling services.
 - ❑ Personal support and advice - where and when it is needed and in appropriate formats- with clear ground rules on confidentiality
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- ❑ Advice on health, housing benefits and other issues provided in accessible and welcoming settings.
 - ❑ Recreational and social opportunities in a safe and accessible environment.
 - ❑ Sporting, artistic, musical and outdoor experiences to develop talents, broaden horizons and promote rounded perspectives including both national and international contexts.
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- The right to be consulted, to participate in decision making, and to be heard, on all matters which concern them or have an impact on their lives.
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- "The Assembly Government has adopted the UN Convention as the foundation for all its dealings with children and young people, and local authorities and their relevant partners should have regard to its principles in providing services".
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