

For teachers and youth workers

RIGHTS HERE RIGHT NOW.

Activities to support
completion of the
online survey
by children
and young
people

YOUTH@CLC

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About this Guide

The following is intended as a guide only. It has been put together to ensure the children and young people who are completing the survey are as well informed as possible about the subject matter, including the importance of their role in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child reporting process.

The guide has been drafted by

experts in the field of children's rights and youth participation. It sets out some topics that may be useful to discuss, background about the relevant topics and further resources to inform activities.

Activities and discussions should be adapted to suit the children and young people completing the survey.



The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

You may find it helpful to begin with an outline of the UNCRC and periodic reporting process

The UNCRC contains 42 Articles which refer to the basic rights that all children under the age of 18 should expect to enjoy here, following ratification of the Convention by the UK government in 1991.

These rights cover every aspect of children's lives (e.g. civil and political rights; play; health; welfare; an

adequate standard of living; education; family life and alternative care; protection from all kinds of violence, abuse and exploitation; special protections for particular vulnerable or marginalised groups such as refugees and asylum seekers, young people in conflict with the law, those using drugs or at risk of exploitation and abuse).

Useful resources:

- Children's Law Centre '[Your Rights](#)' information for young people, available from [here](#).
- Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) booklet '[Your Guide to Your Rights](#)', available [here](#).
- UNICEF '[Know Your Rights](#)' teaching materials, available [here](#).

Useful contacts to refer young people for support:

- www.childrenslawcentre.org.uk/useful-contacts-for-young-people/

The survey

You may wish to discuss the context and purpose of the survey

The online survey is aimed at 12-17 year old children in this jurisdiction, to include those in and outside the formal education system, and those not in any form of employment, education or training. The format is a 15 minute online questionnaire, to be completed anonymously by individual children and young people.

The results from the survey will directly inform a children and young people's report about children's rights in this jurisdiction, which will be submitted to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (UN Committee) in September 2022. Following its examination of the UK government and devolved administrations (including the NI Executive) in January 2023, the UN Committee will make recommendations about changes to

law, policy and practice needed to ensure that all children can fully enjoy all of their rights. By participating in the survey, children and young people - as rights holders under the Convention - will have the opportunity to directly hold government to account for the promises it made to them by ratifying the UNCRC in 1991.

YOUTH@CLC, the Children's Law Centre and other NGOs will use the UN Committee's recommendations to lobby the NI Executive over the coming years to ensure that real progress is made towards implementing these changes, in the interests of all children and young people in this jurisdiction. We will also make sure that children and young people receive feedback about the UN Committee's recommendations.

Before asking young people to complete the survey, it might be useful to generate some discussion linking the topics covered in the survey to current issues with which they may already be familiar or have personally experienced. This will help them see the relevance of completing the survey - for their own lives and to inform positive changes in policies and practices affecting the lives of all under-18 year olds in this jurisdiction. The examples given are based on existing research.

UNCRC Article 12: Voice of the Child (Participation)

Question for children and young people: Do you think your views and opinions are heard and taken into account in your family, school / college, community, and political decisions?

You could ask young people to identify examples from their own lives or those of other young people they know.

Examples of children's voices not being heard include:



Adults generally make decisions on behalf of children and young people in court proceedings (e.g. family custody disputes), schools and communities.



Children and young people are denied democratic rights. For example, the voting age is currently set at 18 years - many young people think the voting age should be lowered to 16.



Children and young people are not fully consulted when laws or policies are being developed which affect their lives (e.g. school closures during COVID-19, or under-18s being excluded from the recent High Street Voucher scheme). If they are consulted, they often don't feel that their views and suggestions are listened to or taken into account in final decisions.



Disabled young people, and younger children, are particularly voiceless because adults assume they are unable to express their views and do not find ways of communicating with them or enabling them to participate

UNCRC Article 2: Non-Discrimination

Question for children and young people: Do you think children and young people are discriminated against or treated unfairly on the basis of their age?

You could ask young people to identify examples from their own lives or those of other young people they know.

Examples of how children and young people are treated unfairly by virtue of their age include:



Children and young people are often negatively stereotyped and demonised in the media as being the cause of 'anti-social' behaviour.



Many children and young people are asked to leave shopping centres or cafés because of age-based assumptions that they are likely to cause trouble simply by being young or because they are wearing 'hoodies'. Note: Current discrimination legislation in this jurisdiction does not make it unlawful for children and young people to be treated in this way. Young people may be of the view that this law should be changed - a good topic for a debate.



Higher car insurance premiums discriminate against 17 year olds who need car transport in their daily lives.



In some communities children and young people lack leisure facilities, safe play areas or access to public spaces to hang out with their friends.



Young people are often asked to 'move on' by community members or the police on the basis of perceived threat to local property and residents.

UNCRC Article 2: Non-Discrimination (continued)...

Question for children and young people: Do you think there are any specific groups of children and young people who experience prejudice, preconceived opinions not based on fact or actual experience, or discrimination by being treated unfairly or differently?

You could ask young people to identify examples from what they have observed in their own communities and in the media.

Examples of specific groups experiencing discrimination include:



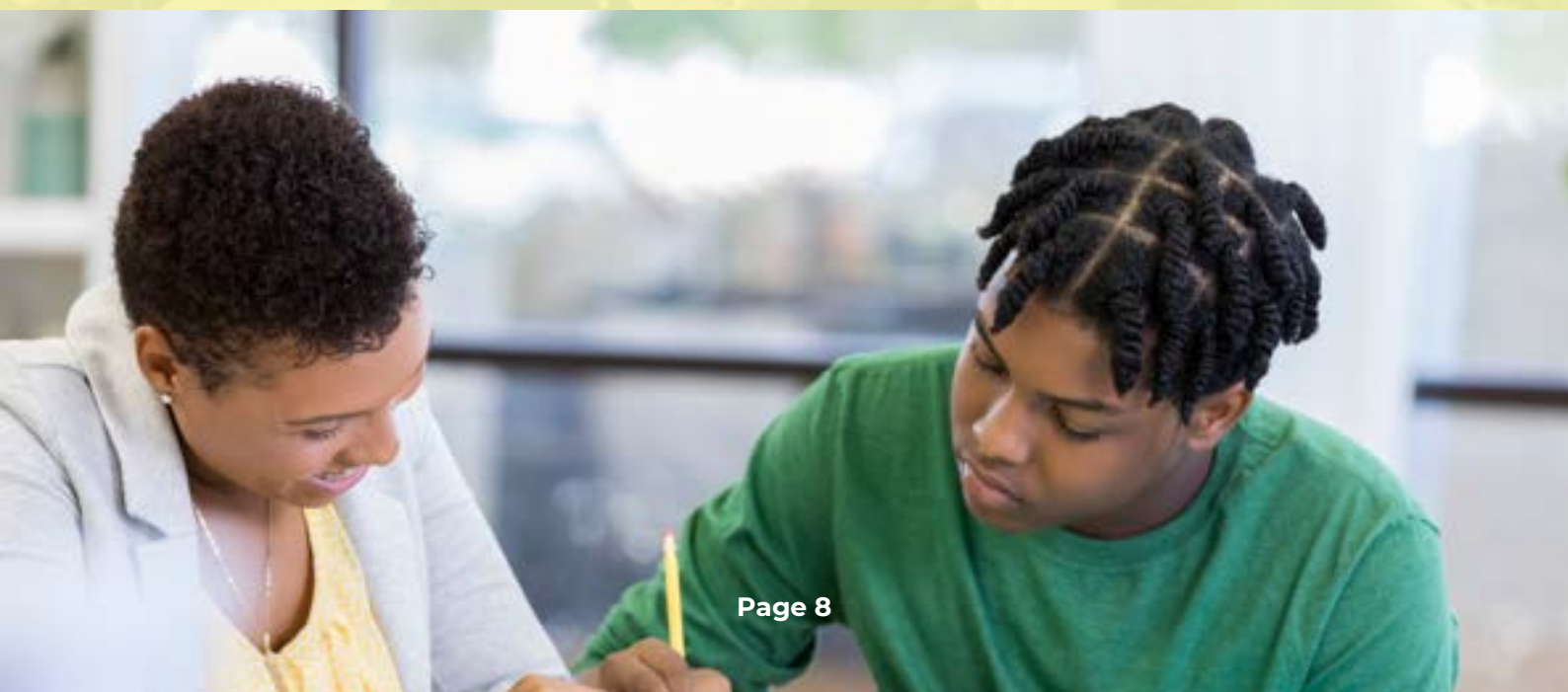
Disabled children and young people not being provided with appropriate support to enable their participation in play activities, or experiencing negative attitudes and comments from other children and their parents.



Refugees and asylum seekers, Roma, Travellers or children from minority ethnic communities being bullied in school or criticised for speaking their first language if this isn't English.



LGBTQ+ young people experiencing homophobic bullying and name-calling which is not recognised or responded to by teachers or in school anti-bullying policies.



UNCRC Article 6: Survival and Development

Question for children and young people: What do you think is important for children and young people's development? By development we mean to make sure they are healthy, safe, can develop physically, mentally, morally, socially, spiritually, and are prepared to live independently.

You could ask them to think about the issues or circumstances that either positively support or negatively affect children and young people's wellbeing and development.

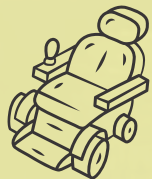
Examples of issues affecting children's survival and development include:



Limited access to factual information about the effects of different drugs, or sources of support for those using substances.



Difficulties accessing appropriate counselling or mental health services, at the time and in the way that these are required.



Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) having to wait a long time for assessments or additional support in school.



Children, young people and parents not being able to access family support when they are going through a difficult time (such as bereavement or domestic violence).



Children having to leave their home country to escape war, persecution or disaster.

UNCRC Article 6: Survival and Development (continued)...

Question for children and young people: What help and support do children and young people need to develop their personalities, talents, mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential?

You could ask them to consider this question in relation to:



Education



Families or Alternative Care



Health



Youth and Community Provision

UNCRC Article 42: Knowledge about Children's Rights and the UNCRC

Questions for children and young people: What rights do you think children and young people should have? Are these rights promoted and protected in this jurisdiction?

And finally, at the end of your lesson / session, you could ask the children and young people:

If you could change one thing for children and young people here, what would that be?

or

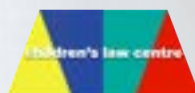
To make things better for children and young people here, what advice would you give to the government?

The survey will go live on Monday 14th March. Children and young people will be able to access the survey at <https://childrenslawcentre.org.uk/survey/>

We appreciate you spending time helping children and young people understand and prepare for completing the survey, and look forward to receiving their responses.

Thank you.

YOUTH@CLC and the Children's Law Centre.



Save the Children