

Universal Periodic Review: UK 4th Cycle

Children's participation and non-discrimination

Suggested questions for the UK:

- What measures are in place to ensure that children's views are systematically taken into account in decision-making at UK, devolved and local level?
- What steps are being taken to facilitate participation in a way that meets the needs of each individual child, including early years and young children, disabled, Care Experienced and disadvantaged children in decisions affecting their lives?
- What steps are being taken at UK and devolved level to prevent and address discrimination experienced by children, including Black and other minority ethnic children, children living in poverty, disabled children, Gypsy/Traveller and Roma children, migrant, asylum-seeking and refugee children, care experienced children, LGBTI children, girls and young women, Irish Language speakers, young carers, children with a parent in prison, and children in armed forces families.
- What steps are the UK and devolved governments taking to address the lack of fully disaggregated data, which would provide a better understanding of the impact of legislation and actions on particular groups of children, including those with protected characteristics and those who experience discrimination?
- When will the Northern Ireland Executive introduce Age Discrimination legislation to protect all children from all forms of discrimination on the grounds of age and ensure effective remedies?

Suggested recommendations for the UK:

- UK and devolved governments should establish permanent, inclusive structures to facilitate the systematic participation and involvement of children at all stages of decision making that impacts their lives.
- UK and devolved governments should strengthen efforts to prevent and address discrimination and inequality experienced by children including Black and minority ethnic children, children living in poverty, disabled children, Gypsy/Traveller and Roma children, migrant, asylum-seeking and refugee children, care experienced children, LGBTI children, girls and young women, Irish Language speakers, young carers, children with a parent in prison, and children in armed forces families.
- UK and devolved governments should take appropriate steps to strengthen data collection mechanisms and address current gaps in the availability of disaggregated data.

Participation

Children are frequently excluded from decisions that impact their lives. This includes individual cases, where children's views are not taken into account in decisions about their education, health, care and more, but also significant policy interventions such as the UK and devolved governments' responses to COVID-19. As a

result, many decisions fail to consider children’s needs and can have a discriminatory impact on children from certain backgrounds.

Across the UK, there is no permanent structure or action plan to facilitate systematic participation and involvement of children in policy-making. Although strategies and/or guidance on children’s participation have been produced in Scotland,¹ Wales² and Northern Ireland,³ efforts to implement these can be tokenistic and fail to update children on how their views have been taken into account. There is no equivalent strategy in England. Provision for disabled, early years and young children is particularly patchy, as are adequate participation structures at local level.⁴ As a result, services continue to be designed and delivered which fail to meet children’s needs and further the implementation of their rights. Children are calling for this power imbalance to be addressed, with genuine opportunities for co-production.⁵

Non-discrimination

Recommendations 134.81 - 134.94 are at risk. Children from certain backgrounds continue to be at increased risk of discrimination including bullying, stereotyping, negative public attitudes and barriers to accessing services. Children who are particularly at risk include Black and minority ethnic children, children living in poverty, disabled children, Gypsy/Traveller and Roma children, migrant, asylum-seeking and refugee children, Care Experienced children, LGBTI children, girls and young women, Irish Language speakers, young carers, children with a parent in prison, and children in armed forces families.

In England and Wales, Black and minority ethnic children are disproportionately represented at all stages of the criminal justice system, including interactions with the police.⁶ More than half of children in prison are from Black or minority ethnic backgrounds.⁷ In Northern Ireland, specific groups remain over-represented in custody, including children in care, Catholic children, children with mental health issues or learning disabilities.⁸

In Northern Ireland, proposed age discrimination legislation, which excluded children aged under 16 years of age, did not progress during the Assembly suspension and has not been reintroduced.

Recommendations referenced from the UK’s UPR 2017 (3rd cycle)

134.81	Reinforce measures to combat all forms of discrimination and inequality	Georgia A/HRC/36/9/Add.1 - Para. 3	Supported
134.82	Combat racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia, and all forms of discrimination against migrants.	Islamic Republic of Iran A/HRC/36/9/Add.1 - Para. 3	Noted
134.83	Implement measures to fight against prejudices, xenophobia and violence against women and girls	Paraguay	Supported

¹ Scottish Government (2021). [Decision making: children and young people’s participation.](#)

² Welsh Government (2016). [Children and Young People’s Participation in Wales: Good Practice 2016.](#)

³ Northern Ireland Executive (2020). [Children and Young People’s Strategy.](#)

⁴ See for example Children’s Rights Alliance for England (2020) Civil society report to inform the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child’s List of Issues Prior to Reporting

⁵ Together (2020). [Civil society report to inform the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child’s List of Issues Prior to Reporting.](#)

⁶ Ministry of Justice and Youth Justice Board (2020) Youth justice statistics 2018 to 2019

⁷ UK Government (2022). [Youth Custody Report: June 2022.](#)

⁸ Children’s Law Centre (2020). [Northern Ireland NGO Stakeholder Report.](#)

		A/HRC/36/9/Ad d.1 - Para. 3	
134.84	Dedicate more resources to fight against negative stereotypes in the media against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons, Gypsies, Muslims, refugees and persons granted asylum.	Spain A/HRC/36/9/Ad d.1 - Para. 3	Supported
134.85	Combat religious hatred including incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence in political discourse and in the media	Malaysia A/HRC/36/9/Ad d.1 - Para. 3	Supported
134.87	Review and strengthen current measures to combat societal discrimination against members of racial, religious and ethnic minority groups	USA A/HRC/36/9/Ad d.1 - Para. 3	Supported
134.88	Take further measures to combat racism and xenophobia	China A/HRC/36/9/Ad d.1 - Para. 3	Noted
134.89	Elaborate a strategy to counter discrimination of Gypsy/Traveller and Roma communities, created in consultation with members of these communities.	Guatemala A/HRC/36/9/Ad d.1 - Para. 3	Noted
134.90	Ensure that UK Government takes all necessary steps to prevent all kinds of discrimination directed at minorities in the community namely the Roma community.	Indonesia A/HRC/36/9/Ad d.1 - Para. 3	Supported
134.91	Collaborate in the approval of an integration strategy for Gypsies, Travellers and Roma people in all the United Kingdom.	Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela A/HRC/36/9/Ad d.1 - Para. 3	Noted
134.92	Strengthen and activate existing laws in field of combating discrimination of Gypsy/Traveller community and Roma.	Lebanon A/HRC/36/9/Ad d.1 - Para. 3	Supported
134.94	Develop a comprehensive strategy to address inequalities experienced by ethnic minorities .	Sierra Leone A/HRC/36/9/Ad d.1 - Para. 3	Noted
134.178	Pay priority attention to gender equality and discrimination against women, as well as discrimination on grounds of race and ethnicity.	Uzbekistan A/HRC/36/9/Ad d.1 - Para. 3	Supported
134.183	Continue efforts to combat discrimination on any ground.	Bosnia and Herzegovina A/HRC/36/9/Ad d.1 - Para. 3	Supported

About us

Children's Rights Alliance for England (CRAE)

CRAE works with around 100 members to promote children's rights and monitor government implementation of the CRC in England. See: www.crae.org.uk Contact: lking@crae.org.uk

Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights)

Together is an alliance of almost 500 NGO and individual members that works to improve the awareness, understanding and implementation of the CRC in Scotland. See: www.togetherscotland.org.uk Contact: juliet@togetherscotland.org.uk

Wales UNCRC Monitoring Group

The Wales UNCRC Monitoring Group is a national alliance of non-governmental and academic agencies tasked with monitoring and promoting the CRC in Wales. It is currently facilitated by Children in Wales, the national umbrella organisation. See: www.childreninwales.org.uk Contact: sean.oneill@childreninwales.org.uk

Children's Law Centre

The Children's Law Centre is a registered charity and specialist children's human rights centre in Northern Ireland, founded on the principles enshrined in the CRC. See: www.childrenslawcentre.org.uk Contact: fergalmcferran@childrenslawcentre.org