



## Talking about **Children's Rights**

The List of Issues from the  
Committee on the Rights of the Child



**Children's  
Commissioner  
for Jersey**



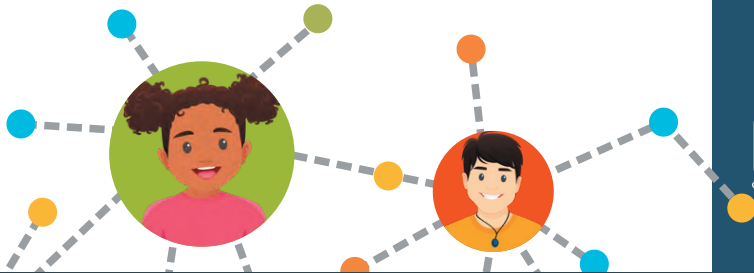
**All children have rights, no matter who they are, where they live, or what they believe in.**



These rights are in the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**.

The UNCRC is a list of **more than 40 rights** that make sure children:

- are safe
- are treated fairly
- have the things they need to survive and develop
- have a say in decisions that affect their lives.



## The Committee on the Rights of the Child

There's a Committee that protects these rights. They check on governments to see if they are living up to their promises and responsibilities.

The Committee is a group of 18 experts from all over the world. They listen to children to find out what it's really like living in their country.

## This year:

The Committee has just sent a **List of Issues** (questions) to the UK Government to ask about what they are doing to make sure children get all their rights.

The UK is a **UN Member State**. The UK contains several countries — England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, as well as Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies, like Jersey. They all have responsibility for children. All of these governments have to show what they are doing to realise children's rights. So, the **Children's Commissioners** from each of the UK's countries are talking to children and young people.

As Children's Commissioners, we work for children, not the Government. We promote and protect children's rights.



**We want to talk to you about some of the issues on the list. We want to find out about your experiences of rights and what matters to you.**

## The reporting system

The UK Government has signed up to the UNCRC and has agreed to:

- put children's rights at the centre of everything they do
- protect and promote children's rights.

The UK Government has to report regularly to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. The other governments help write the report so the Committee knows what's happening in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and Jersey. The Committee checks up to see that governments are doing the right things for children.

✓ **Article 4** The Government should make sure my rights are respected.

✓ **Article 42** Everyone should know about children's rights.



## How it works



We're now going to look at some of the questions the Committee asked in February 2021.



# The List of Issues



Some serious events — like the Covid-19 pandemic — affect everyone's life. But your rights don't go away when those events happen. Governments should always work to do what's best for you and protect your rights.

The Committee wants to know if your rights have been protected or harmed through events like the Covid-19 pandemic.



**Article 3** Adults must do what's  
best for me in my day-to-day life.



## Covid-19

Covid-19 has changed our lives. There have been many new rules, like physical distancing and limits on travel. It's changed how we shop, how we learn, and who we can visit us. Now schools are open again, but lots of things are still done in different ways.



**Were your rights protected  
during the pandemic?**

## Brexit

The European Union (EU) is a group of countries across Europe that work together. In January 2020, the UK left the EU. This is sometimes called Brexit.

When the UK was part of the EU, it shared lots of laws and rules with other countries. Now things are changing, and the UK needs to develop its own way of working. That includes things like:

- how we buy and sell things (like food) from other countries
- how people move for work across Europe
- how people travel
- how young people go to other countries to study and learn.



**Were your rights protected as the  
UK left the European Union?**



## Talking about the Government's actions

The Government has agreed to put children's rights at the centre of everything they do. The Committee wants to know how governments are protecting your rights.



**Article 42** Governments should promote children's rights so everyone knows about them.



Governments should:

- protect children's rights
- make sure laws and policies are based on children's rights
- have ways to check that laws don't harm children's rights, like impact assessments
- check their work protects children's rights
- make sure there is enough money and resources to protect and promote children's rights
- make sure that budget cuts to services don't go against children's rights
- make sure children are involved in planning
- collect information about children's rights
- make sure professionals have training to understand children's rights
- promote children's rights
- make sure children know they have rights.



**Is the Government putting  
children's rights at the centre  
of everything they do?**



## Talking about who is a child

The Committee wants to make sure that everyone under 18 is getting their rights. To make sure this happens, all countries need to agree who a child is and work to protect them in the same ways.

Sometimes, the law treats children under 18 as adults in a way that gives them less protection than other children. For example, it might allow them to get married or join the army.

This can affect children's rights in different ways. It could mean that some children are safer than others.

Governments should:

- make sure you have to be 18 before you can get married
- make sure you have to be 18 before you can join the armed forces, like the army or the navy.



**Are all children under 18 in  
your country getting their  
rights?**



**Article 1** Everyone under 18  
has these rights.





## Talking about the guiding principles of the UNCRC

There are 4 guiding principles in children's rights. That means that rights can be put into these groups when people are thinking about all children's rights.

The four guiding principles are contained in four articles of the UNCRC:

- **Article 2 All children have these rights.**
- **Article 3 Adults must do what is best for me.**
- **Article 6 I should be supported to live and grow.**
- **Article 12 I have the right to be listened to and taken seriously.**

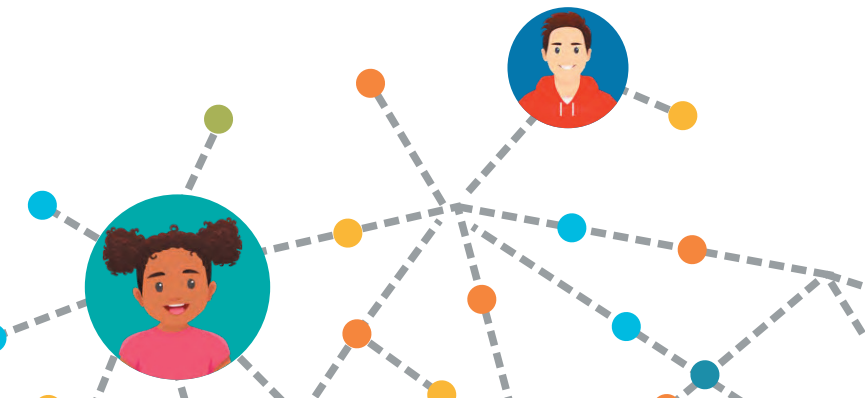
The Committee wants to know what the Government is doing to protect these guiding principles.

Governments should:

- make sure all children are treated fairly and have the same rights
- make sure no laws treat any group of children negatively because of their age, race or beliefs
- make sure no child is treated differently for any reason like where they live, their ethnicity, or a disability
- deal with issues that harm a child's life: including lack of money, lack of food, lack of services like healthcare and poverty
- make sure children have the support they need to be listened to and have a say in decisions
- make sure everyone understands how important it is to respect children
- make sure all children can use their right to legal help if they need to.



**Are the 4 guiding principles  
being protected?**







Talking about

## civil rights and freedoms

All children have rights and freedoms that belong to them from birth. They don't have to do anything to get them. The Committee wants to know how these rights and freedoms are being protected.



**Article 7** I have a right to a name and to belong to a country.



**Article 8** I have a right to an identity, nationality and family relationships.



**Article 13** I have the right to find out and share information.



**Article 14** I have the right to have my own thoughts and beliefs and to choose my religion with my parents' guidance.



**Article 15** I have the right to meet with friends and to join groups.



**Article 16** I have the right to keep some things private.



**Article 17** I have the right to get information in lots of ways, so long as it's safe.



Governments should:

- make sure all children have their rights respected, including refugee or migrant children
- respect children's right to gather together and protest peacefully
- change the law so that people can't use mosquito devices (which use sound to drive children away from an area)
- change the law so children don't have to take part in religious worship at school
- make sure children don't face 'stop and search' checks by Police unless it's needed to keep them safe
- make sure that online learning is private and safe
- make sure children have information that is easy to understand
- make sure all children can connect to online services and use them
- make new laws that protect children from online harm like bullying
- help children and families know how to use the internet and help them get the skills they need to keep them safe online.



**Are your civil rights and freedoms protected?**

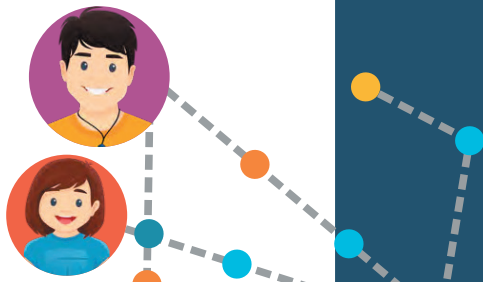


Talking about

## keeping children safe from violence and harm

All children should be safe no matter where they are. They should never face violence or harm. That includes physical punishment. Physical punishment includes smacking or hitting a child. The Committee wants to know what governments are doing to keep children safe.

- ✓ **Article 19** I have the right to be protected from being hurt or badly treated.
- ✓ **Article 24** I have the right to good quality health care, to clean water and good food.
- ✓ **Article 28** I have the right to an education.
- ✓ **Article 34** Nobody should touch me in ways that make me feel uncomfortable, unsafe or sad.
- ✓ **Article 37** I have the right not to be punished in a cruel or hurtful way.
- ✓ **Article 39** I have the right to get help if I have been hurt, neglected or badly treated.



Governments should:

- ban all physical punishment
- ban any use of pain as a punishment in schools or other places
- ban separating children from others as punishment
- stop disabled children being restrained or held down in schools and other places
- make sure electrical weapons like tasers are never used on children
- ban smacking and promote positive ways of discipline that don't use pain
- stop children seeing and experiencing violence in the home
- stop violence against girls and women
- stop sexual exploitation and abuse against children, including online sexual abuse
- make sure children who have witnessed or experienced a crime have access to support services that are adapted to them
- stop cyberbullying
- stop knife crimes
- stop gangs recruiting and being violent to children
- stop paramilitary groups from recruiting and being violent to children
- stop children from being used as 'spies' by Police or the Government.



Is the Government doing enough to keep children safe?



## Talking about **family and other care**

Every child has the right to a family and to be cared for. If children can't stay with their family, the Government should make sure they have the best care possible. The Committee wants to know what governments are doing to support families and help children grow up in safe and happy homes.

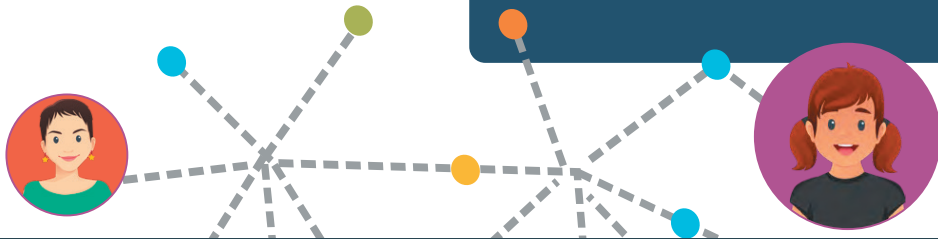
- ✓ **Article 5** The Government should respect the right of my family to help me know about my rights.
- ✓ **Article 9** I have a right to live with a family who cares for me.
- ✓ **Article 10** I have the right to see my family if they live in another country.
- ✓ **Article 11** I have the right not to be taken out of the country illegally.
- ✓ **Article 18** I have the right to be brought up by both parents if possible.
- ✓ **Article 20** I have the right to special protection and help if I can't live with my own family.
- ✓ **Article 21** I have the right to have the best care if I am adopted.
- ✓ **Article 25** If I am not living with my family, people should keep checking I am safe and happy.
- ✓ **Article 27** I have the right to have a proper house, food and clothing.

Governments should:

- make sure there is enough money and services to give all families the support they need, including childcare
- make sure families get the support they need quickly, so children can stay with them
- make sure children in care get a stable home and help from a social worker
- support children leaving care.



**Is your right to a family life being protected?**





## Talking about health and welfare

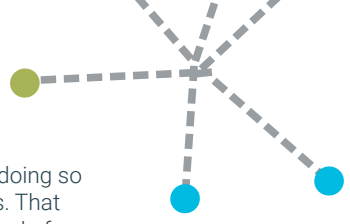
The Committee wants to know what governments are doing so all children are healthy and well in all areas of their lives. That includes protecting their right to a basic, healthy standard of living.

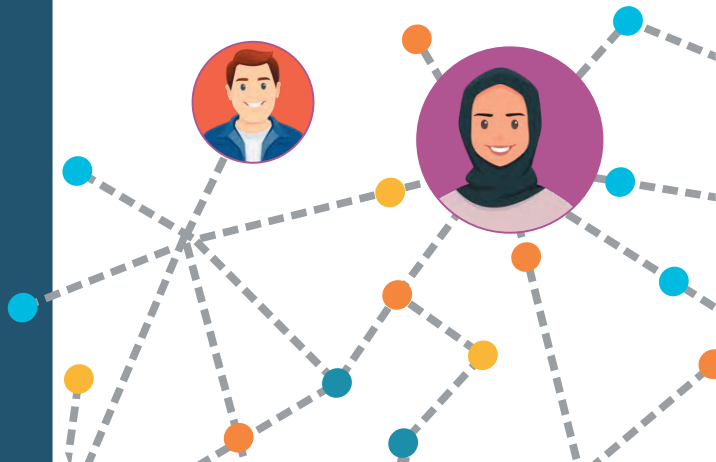
Governments should:

- make sure all children have the best health care possible
- make sure children have access to enough healthy and nutritious food to stop them becoming underweight, overweight or obese
- tell new parents, and others, about how important breastfeeding is
- support children with a mental illness and children who self-harm
- make sure children with mental health issues get support quickly
- reduce air pollution and greenhouse gases, so children have clean air, and tell the public about their effects
- reduce the number of children living in poverty
- reduce homelessness
- make sure all children have a safe, healthy house to live in.



Are your rights to a healthy  
life being protected?

- 
- ✓ **Article 6** I should be supported to live and grow.
  - ✓ **Article 18** I have the right to be brought up by both parents if possible.
  - ✓ **Article 24** I have the right to good quality health care, to clean water and good food.
  - ✓ **Article 26** My family should get the money they need to help bring me up.
  - ✓ **Article 27** I have the right to have a proper house, food and clothing.
  - ✓ **Article 33** I should be protected from dangerous drugs (including any effects of a parent's drug use).





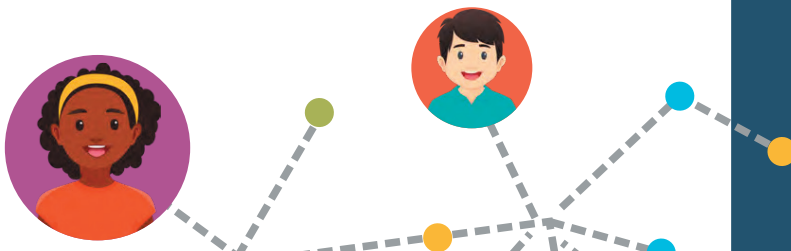
The Committee wants to know what governments are doing to make sure all children are getting an education. That includes children who may need extra support, like:

- disabled children
- children whose first language isn't English
- asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant children who have moved here from another country.

✓ **Article 28** I have the right to an education.

✓ **Article 29** I have the right to an education which develops my personality, respect for others' rights and the environment.

✓ **Article 36** I have the right to be kept safe from things that could harm my development.




Governments should:

- make sure all children get the best education possible
- check that children aren't being stopped from going to classes by their school and missing out on an education
- stop bullying in schools
- make sure there are enough resources and money for early childhood care and education
- make sure all children have lessons on reproduction and sexual health
- make sure all children have lessons on sexual orientation and gender identity (Gender identity is a person's sense of who they are — male, female, both or neither)
- make sure human rights and the UNCRC are taught in school, are in the school curriculum and are part of teacher training courses
- make sure children with disabilities have the best education possible and can go to a school with other children who do not have disabilities.



**Is your right to an education being protected?**



## Talking about special protection

Sometimes children need extra support so they can get their rights. That includes asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant children. They can need extra help with education, health care or to be treated fairly.

Children who have committed a crime or broken the law still have rights and these need to be respected, whatever they have done.

The Committee wants to know what governments are doing to make sure all children have their rights.

- ✓ **Article 22** If I am a refugee, I have the same rights as children born in that country.
- ✓ **Article 30** I have a right to speak my own language and to follow my family's way of life.
- ✓ **Article 32** I should not be made to do dangerous work.
- ✓ **Article 33** I should be protected from dangerous drugs (including any effects of a parent's drug use).
- ✓ **Article 35** I should not be abducted (taken away), sold or trafficked.
- ✓ **Article 36** I have the right to be kept safe from things that could harm my development.
- ✓ **Article 37** I have the right not to be punished in a cruel or hurtful way.
- ✓ **Article 39** I have the right to get help if I have been hurt, neglected or badly treated.
- ✓ **Article 40** I have the right to get legal help and to be treated fairly if I have been accused of breaking the law.



Governments should:

- make sure children's asylum applications to stay in the country are dealt with quickly
- make sure all asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant children get health care and an education
- change the law so that only children over 14 can be charged with a crime
- make sure that prison is only used if there are no other options left and for a short time
- make sure children accused of crimes have legal support
- stop children being locked alone in a room as punishment — in solitary confinement
- make sure children in youth prisons have education, health services and mental health services.



**Is the Government doing enough to make sure all children have their rights?**





## One last thing

There are lots of issues that affect children's lives and rights. Is there anything else that you want to talk about or that you think has harmed your rights?



We'll take everything you've told us, write a report and send it to the Committee.

**Thanks for taking part.**



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