



# THE RIGHT WAY

## A Children's Rights Approach in Wales

**A Children's Rights Approach** is a principled and practical framework for working with children, grounded in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Making rights  
a reality

# THE RIGHT WAY

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Improving  
children's  
lives

# WHY A CHILDREN'S RIGHTS APPROACH

Foreword by Sally Holland, the Children's Commissioner for Wales

**As Wales' children's champion** I aspire to a Wales where all children and young people have an equal chance to be the best that they can be. In 2017 very many children and young people in Wales lead safe, happy and active lives and feel listened to and respected by the adults around them. However, despite lots of effort by organisations working with children, there remains much to do in order to make rights a reality for all children in Wales.

Too many children are living in poverty and are not receiving the services or resources they need to be healthy, well-educated and to develop to the best of their abilities. These children are not receiving human rights they are entitled to under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child ([UNCRC](#)). **A Children's Rights Approach means that organisations will prioritise children's rights in their work with children and families to improve children's lives.**

Many children do not have the opportunities to develop their talents and potential, and face discrimination because of their background, or because they are children. **A Children's Rights Approach means that all children are given the opportunities to make the most of their talents and potential.**

Too often, children do not know they have rights which means they cannot take advantage of the rights they possess. **A Children's Rights Approach means that children are given access to information and resources to enable them to take full advantage of their rights.**

Despite being experts on their own lives, children are often excluded from decisions that affect them. **A Children's Rights Approach means that children are provided meaningful opportunities to influence decisions about their lives.**

Children are often powerless to hold to account decision-makers, or those responsible for services. **A Children's Rights Approach means that authorities and individuals are accountable to children for decisions, and for outcomes that affect children's lives.**

My work is guided by the UNCRC and I strive to ensure that it is implemented fully in Wales. I have created this guide with expert advice from the Wales Observatory on Human Rights of Children and Young People (based at Swansea and Bangor Universities) to encourage public services across the country to commit to the UNCRC and improve how they plan and deliver their services as a result. It contains information on ways to embed children's human rights in organisations and the benefits of doing so. Also included are some inspirational practice examples, which illustrate how some organisations are at the forefront of making rights a reality for children in Wales.

I want to see a Wales which recognises its children and young people as active citizens with an important contribution to make to their communities and the nation. I am certain this guide will provide children and young people with the skills and opportunities to do just that, which, in turn, will help deliver real changes in children's everyday quality of life and equal chances to fulfil their potential.

# INTRODUCTION

**A Children's Rights Approach** is a principled and practical framework for working with children, grounded in the UNCRC. It is about placing the UNCRC at the core of planning and service delivery and integrating children's rights into every aspect of decision-making, policy and practice.

Policy and legislation on children in Wales is underpinned by the UNCRC. The [\*Rights of Children and Young Persons \(Wales\) Measure 2011\*](#), the [\*Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014\*](#) and the [\*Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015\*](#) all establish duties on public authorities that contribute toward the realisation of children's rights. A Children's Rights Approach is consistent with these duties, and will help public sector bodies to meet their statutory duties.

Similarly, a range of organisations in the private and non-governmental sectors in Wales have a significant part to play in the implementation of children services, and therefore have an obligation to contribute toward better realisation of children's rights in Wales. A Children's Rights Approach will help organisations in the private and public sectors give effect to children's rights.

This guide provides principled guidance and practical help on a Children's Rights Approach to planning and delivering services for children. The guide explains human rights and their relevance for public authorities and other organisations. It introduces sources of human rights and human rights duties, before explaining how each of the principles of a Children's Rights Approach may be put into operation. The focus is practical, offering guidance on procedures to give effect to children's rights.

## The human rights of children

Human rights guarantee basic freedoms and meet the basic needs of all humanity, underpinned by respect for human dignity. Human rights are binding on government and on public authorities at all levels in the UK, and provide a strong ethical framework for planning, decision-making and action<sup>1,2</sup>.

Children are entitled to their human rights, including being able to access and exercise their rights. Children's rights are set out in international treaties, including the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). Children's rights are entitlements, they are not optional. Children aged 0-17 years are given special human rights protection by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

In 1991 the United Kingdom formally agreed to ensure that every child in the UK has all the rights listed in the convention by ratifying the UNCRC. The Welsh Government adopted the Convention as the basis for policy making for children and young people in Wales in 2004. The Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011, strengthened and built on the rights based approach of the Welsh Government to making policy for children and young people in Wales, placing a duty on all Welsh Ministers to have due regard to the UNCRC when exercising any of their Ministerial functions.

# Guarantee basic freedom and needs

The UNCRC recognises that children are in a different situation than adults and will often have different needs, and that children face particular challenges because childhood involves stages of physical or emotional development. Part 1 of the UNCRC contains 41 articles, which guarantee children a comprehensive set of rights. Article 42, in Part 2 of the UNCRC requires the State, including public authorities, to make the UNCRC widely known to children and adults. The remainder of Part 2, and Part 3 of the UNCRC deal with monitoring and reporting responsibilities to the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

The rights set out in the UNCRC are an additional safeguard of their safety and development, and support children's capacity to take decisions and act autonomously. All of the articles of the convention cover three main themes:

## **Participation, Provision and Protection.**

The articles on **Participation** are based on the idea of the child or young person as someone who actively contributes to society as a citizen in the here and now and not just someone on the receiving end of good or bad treatment from others.

**Provision** articles cover the basic rights of children and young people to survive and develop. These range through health care, food and clean water to education and environment which allows children to develop. The Convention is clear that the best place for a child is normally with their family, and that the Government has a duty to support and assist parents but provide special care when children are unable to live with their parents.

**Protection** articles deal with exploitation of children and young people at work; physical, sexual and psychological abuse; discrimination and other mistreatments which many still suffer, including in the UK. The Convention makes it a duty for Governments to protect children and young people and, where necessary, to provide rehabilitation for them.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child<sup>3</sup> is a committee of experts responsible for monitoring the implementation of the UNCRC. The Committee holds regular sessions to review and assess the progress toward realisation of children's rights by Governments across the world, including the UK. The Committee also make suggestions to help Governments better realise children's rights. These are set out in documents called General Comments<sup>4</sup>.

# A 'CHILDREN'S RIGHTS APPROACH'

The model set out in this guide has been developed with public authorities in Wales in mind and takes account of themes consistently highlighted as integral to a **Children's Rights Approach** rooted in the UNCRC. Many authorities will already have procedures which are consistent with a Children's Rights Approach: adopting the principles and practices described below will complement or improve what is already working.

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The principles of a Children's Rights Approach<sup>5</sup> are:

- **Embedding children's rights**
- **Equality and Non-discrimination**
- **Empowering children**
- **Participation**
- **Accountability**

## **Embedding children's rights**

Children's rights should be at the core of planning and service delivery. The UNCRC needs to be integrated into every aspect of decision-making through procedures and actions. At its most basic this requires acknowledgement of the UNCRC as a framework for services impacting on children. Children's rights should guide decisions and actions having a substantial impact on children's lives in areas such as education, health or social care, but also in other areas such as planning, transport and the environment. There should be coordination across departments, and with external organisations to ensure application of the principles and practice of a Children's Rights Approach. This will help ensure that the best interests of the child are a primary consideration in all decision-making affecting the child (as guaranteed by Article 3 of the UNCRC). Policy, procedures and actions, as well as budgets should all be developed and implemented taking into account their impact on children's rights. It should be clear and transparent where children's rights have been taken into account.

In order to put this principle into practice authorities should aim to:

- **Make express reference to the UNCRC** as a framework for service planning and delivery in all significant policy statements or other documents setting out the authority's vision or key objectives (e.g. the corporate plan). This should come from the highest level of an authority. For example: a policy statement, adoption of a charter or pledge (or other instrument).
- **Ensure that leaders and staff**, who are required to put the commitment into practice, are aware of this commitment and familiar with the UNCRC.
- **Develop a strategy or scheme** setting out how it intends to ensure that children's rights are taken into account at all levels of decision-making to facilitate a coordinated Children's Rights Approach across departments and with external organisations.
- **Introduce procedures** to give effect to children's rights, these might include:
  - **developing a communication plan** for staff setting out how the organisation intends to develop awareness and understanding of children's rights;
  - **developing and making use of performance indicators** which reflect children's rights (e.g. should be incorporated in business planning, budgeting and other strategic planning);
  - **children's rights impact assessment** i.e. the proofing of any policy and budgetary decisions for their direct or indirect impact on children (or children's rights assessment integrated into Equality Impact Assessment);
  - **introducing children's rights implementation** as standing items on the agenda of key strategy meetings;
  - **requiring reporting on progress** on children's rights implementation to strategic policy meeting or groups.
- **Prioritise training on children's rights** for all staff, with the intensity of training appropriate to context and role that a member of staff performs.
- **Identify key individuals and/or establish a team** with responsibility to promote children's rights within the authority and to act as champions of children human rights, who are available to support others to develop and implement policy and practice.
- **Carry out an initial and then regular audit** of all significant policy statements or other documents to assess compliance with the above.
- **Carry out an initial and on-going evaluation** of levels of knowledge and understanding of children's rights amongst staff at all levels.
- **Prioritise protection of children's rights** through commissioning, and incorporate the principles of a Children's Rights Approach throughout the commissioning cycle.
- **There should be a clear commitment** to ensuring adequate human and financial resources are allocated to support the organisation to implement children's rights.



Wales'  
commitment  
to children



### Case Study:

A Welsh Health Board has adopted a Children's Rights Charter, which was developed in consultation with children and young people. It sets out 10 overarching commitments to children's rights, all of which reflect different articles of the UNCRC. The charter has been endorsed by the leadership of the Health Board and is to be used as a guide for all staff, planning and operational, to provide a framework for working with children and young people. Since introducing the charter, the Board has appointed a lead on children's rights who works closely with senior management on implementing its commitment. The Health Board has started work on procedures to give effect to children's rights, working closely with the Wales Observatory on Human Rights of Children and Young People. These procedures will include information packs and training for all staff, and on policy tools to monitor and evaluate progress on putting children's rights at the heart of services. The Health Board has also established a Children's Panel to advise the authority on children's issues in healthcare.

## Equality and Non-discrimination

Equality is about ensuring that every child has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents, and that no child has to endure poor life chances because of discrimination. Equality involves treating all children fairly, and providing them with opportunities and resources according to their needs, equal with others, ensuring that they are able to develop to their fullest potential. Authorities should also be aware that children can be affected by direct and indirect discrimination and ensure that policies and practise do not indirectly discriminate against those under 18. Promoting equality means taking action to tackle discrimination. Non-discrimination is a right under the UNCRC (Article 2). There should be no discrimination against children as individuals or as a group, and authorities must be aware of the damaging impact of multiple discrimination: when a child faces discrimination on more than one ground (e.g. a disabled child who is living in poverty). Authorities should be aware of the many barriers impeding access to services, including socio-economic, institutional, and cultural, and should be responsive to the situation of children subject to discrimination and unfair treatment who will need special assistance to enjoy their human rights. **Authorities should understand that decisions taken today can have a discriminatory impact on future generations of children.**

In order to put this principle into practice authorities should aim to:

- **Include a clear commitment** to promoting equality and tackling direct and indirect discrimination (including multiple discrimination) against children and specific groups of children in all significant policy statements or other documents setting out the authority's vision or key objectives (e.g. the corporate plan).
- **Make all staff aware that discrimination** can lead to unfair and unequal outcomes and should make the implications of discrimination against children widely understood by staff, service users and children themselves.



Equality  
for all our  
children



- **Ensure staff understand** the need to take account of the impact of decisions on future generations, including any discriminatory impacts.
- **Gather relevant data**, including disaggregated data, to enable identification of discrimination or inequalities in the realisation of children's rights to identify children who are being or may be discriminated against.
- **Develop appropriate priorities, targets and programmes of action** to reduce discrimination against excluded, socially marginalised, disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and to promote equality for these groups.
- **Include impact assessment of children's rights** in any equality impact assessment (treating age as a protected characteristic), where there is no separate procedure for a Children's Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA).
- **Through the use of CRIA or Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**, ensure children are involved in the proofing of all budgetary decisions that have a direct or indirect impact on them.
- **Provide information to children** to support their involvement in any of the above procedures, in a language or format appropriate to their age and maturity, culture, or disability.
- **Require commissioned services** to be provided in ways that do not discriminate against children or groups of children.

Case Study:  
Challenging discrimination against young Gypsies and Travellers

In 2009 the charity Save the Children approached some of the young Gypsy Travellers in a Welsh Local Authority area and asked them what they thought would help them to have their voices heard. The young people suggested that a forum is established to discuss issues that are important to them and to build their confidence, skills and aspirations. The project was originally European Social Fund (ESF) funded but later became a core funded Traveller Education Service offering support to Gypsy Traveller children in all schools across the local authority.

Traditionally within the Gypsy Traveller community, young women have been encouraged to marry at a young age. However by encouraging and supporting these young women (through, for example, peer mentoring projects) to stay longer in education and gain qualifications it has supported them to have a choice with regards to marrying at a young age or instead seeking employment. There has been a considerable improvement in the overall educational attainment of young Gypsy Travellers in the areas, with more young people gaining GCSEs levels 1 and 2.

This service is also supporting Gypsy Traveller children to be involved in influencing decision making in the local authority area as well as at a Wales wide level and Democratic Services have been teaching children and their families about democracy and citizenship. Children are supported to be involved in a variety of different forums, for example from school councils, to the county youth forum, the Police Commissioner's panel, and the Wales Wide Travelling Ahead Forum. The children are also involved in the recruitment processes of staff who work directly with children in the Local Authority area. Young Gypsy Travellers go into schools with the Traveller Education Service to challenge stereotypes relating to the Gypsy Traveller community and the Policy and Community Support Officer and the School Police Liaison Officer also talk to young people across the area about challenging negative attitudes to the Gypsy Traveller community. This programme of work has succeeded in reducing the levels of discrimination against Gypsy Traveller children and their families by the key services working together to generate positive images of Gypsy Travellers and by empowering young people; through increasing their educational attainment, their opportunities to influence decision making and to be involved in the life of their community.

## Empowering children

Human rights should empower children. Children's rights should be seen as entitlements; they are not optional. Empowerment means enhancing children's capabilities as individuals so they are better able to take advantage of rights, and to engage with, influence and hold accountable those individuals and institutions that affect their lives. Children should be given information to increase their understanding about human rights, and access to resources to enable them to make use of rights in their everyday lives. Empowering means removing barriers to children's access to information or resources that enable them to understand and exercise their rights. Empowerment is about enabling children to make choices and to affect outcomes for themselves and their families. Empowerment changes the relationship between children and authorities. It means adults handing over some or all power to children, or sharing power with children, so that children can better control and direct their lives, in particular in areas where this ability was previously unavailable to them. This principle applies equally to younger children and should be seen as an important contribution to the development of the child (guaranteed by Article 6 of the UNCRC). It may be especially relevant to children who are members of excluded, marginalised or disadvantaged social groups.

In order to put this principle into practice authorities should aim to:

- **Review services and resources** to identify barriers to children's access, including in collaboration with children as service users, in particular in relation to services to excluded/marginalised or disadvantaged social groups.
- **Develop appropriate priorities, targets and programmes of action** that enable all children to develop their capabilities and to gain access to resources that support realisation of their human rights (for example, health, education or play).
- **Provide children with opportunities and the skills to engage** with and influence policy processes and mechanisms, (including commissioning), by offering training or information accessible to children of (different ages/abilities) and establish clear guidelines for how children will influence decisions.
- **Gather relevant data**, including disaggregated data and longitudinal data, on resources available to children, in particular in relation to excluded/marginalised or disadvantaged social groups, and make this available to children.
- **Provide children with opportunities** to act collectively to develop ideas and proposals, to take action and to influence decisions.
- **Proactively identify opportunities for children** to take decisions according to age and maturity, including opportunities to make significant choices which transform their lives, and inform children of these opportunities.
- **Provide children with accessible information**, training and education to develop their understanding of their human rights.
- **Provide children with accessible information** on independent human rights providers, advocacy services and professional legal advice.
- **Ensure that resources are identified** in budgets to support education, training and development opportunities for children.

### Case Study: Young Commissioners

An historical example of empowering children is provided by a Welsh Youth Council. The Youth Council, together with Barnardo's and the Council's Youth Service supported 28 children to become AQA-trained Young Commissioners. They were involved in commissioning Families First projects, and were able to directly influence decisions on how some of the £29 million available was spent. For more information, see: <http://archive.thesprout.co.uk/en/news/cardiff-youthcouncil-award/11413.html>

### Children's Rights Unit (CRU)

A Welsh Local Authority and Health Board have funded a children's rights unit, set up to ensure that children and young people's rights are respected and protected. By providing

information and training the CRU helps children and young people to become aware of their rights, and puts them in a position to be able to demand their rights, or to make a contribution to the running of organisations that have an impact on children's lives, which have traditionally been adult only domains. For example, the CRU Young Trustee Project provides training, 'Preparing to be a board member' to 15-25 year olds on issues of governance and leadership. To date, over sixty children and young people have taken the training, and over thirty children are on institutional boards such as the Welsh Rugby Union, Hillside Secure Unit and the CRU itself. By providing children with the skills required to sit on organisational boards the CRU has contributed to their development as individuals, and has enabled them to participate in decision-making at the highest level, taking decisions that affect the lives of children, as well as adults.

Priorities  
and  
targets

Information  
and  
engagement

## Participation

Participation means listening to children and taking their views meaningfully into account. All children should be supported to freely express their opinion; they should be both heard and listened to. Their views should be taken seriously when decisions or actions are taken that affect their lives directly or indirectly (as guaranteed by Article 12 of the UNCRC). Participation can take place in different forms, appropriate to different circumstances. Children should be supported to take part in decisions that contribute to the lives of their family, shape the communities they live in and wider society. Children's views will need to be taken into account and given due weight in light of their age and maturity, but young age or relative immaturity is no reason for discounting children's opinions or for giving them less attention in decision-making processes. Children should be fully informed and given opportunities to be involved in decision making. It should be clear how children have influenced decisions and how their views have been taken into account, with feedback always given to the children who are involved in the process. Participation should not be understood as an end in itself, but as a process, which is safe, enabling and inclusive, and which supports dialogue between children and professionals. Barriers to participation should be identified and removed.

In order to put this principle into practice authorities should aim to:

- **Include a clear commitment to participation of children** in all significant policy statements or other documents setting out the authority's vision or key objectives (e.g. the corporate plan) and adopt the [National Participation Standards](#).
- **Carry out initial and regular assessment of children's participation** across all areas of a public authority functions. Decide at what level participation will occur in different policies and procedures. A participation model can help define this and clarify the degree of ownership that young people will experience in the process.
- **Prioritise children's participation throughout the commissioning cycle.**

- **Develop appropriate priorities, targets and programmes of action** to increase participation, in particular amongst otherwise excluded/marginalised or disadvantaged groups.
- **Involve children directly in the design,** monitoring and evaluation of service delivery, and involve children in the proofing of all policy and budgets that have a direct or indirect impact on them, including CRIA or EIA.
- **Identify safe places and space,** including time, for children to participate.
- **Involve children in the recruitment of all staff** who have responsibilities that impact on children.
- **Provide feedback to children and staff** on the outcomes of children's involvement in any of the above procedures, proactively highlighting any changes and/or benefits brought about by their participation.
- **Provide information to children to support their involvement** in any of the above procedures, in a language or format appropriate to their age and maturity, culture, or disability.
- **Ensure that resources are identified** in budgets to support participation.



Listen and  
feedback

### Case Study: Local Authority Budget Process

More than 100 children and young people (aged 7 to 18) were invited from local primary and secondary schools in a Welsh Local Authority to participate in the Council's Big Budget conversation. This was the Council's third annual budget consultation with children and young people in the city. Participation was initiated by city officials as part of a broad policy of giving due regard to the UNCRC in policy-making. Council officials developed consultation tools to engage with a total of 114 pupils from primary and secondary schools in advance of the budget. For example, one workshop presented participants with ten budget headings with resources allocated to each. Participants were asked to consider what they would do as the Council if they had to cut 20 percent of the budget. Participants described their rationale for any suggested cuts, or for protecting spending in some areas. The Council asked in this consultation for children and young people's advice on what to prioritise as the Council reduced the overall budget. It is an example of how children can be involved in decision-making processes where resources are constrained and may not be available for the promotion of children's rights, but where the realisation of children's rights could be better achieved through redirecting or retaining funding for particular services.

## Accountability

Children's human rights give rise to obligations which demand accountability. Authorities should be accountable to children for decisions and actions which affect their lives. Children should be provided with information and given access to procedures which enable them to question and challenge decision-makers. Accountability requires effective monitoring of children's rights standards as well as effective remedies where there is a failure to meet these standards. For this to be effective authorities need to be transparent and provide reasons for their decisions and actions. Authorities, and all staff with responsibilities that impact on children, must understand that children have human rights and that they have an obligation to respect, protect and fulfil<sup>6</sup> children's rights. All those involved should understand that they are accountable to children for meeting this obligation. Children should be made aware of their human rights, and should be given information to understand the responsibilities and obligations of public authorities and other organisations. To obtain any human right a child must know they are entitled to it and be able to actively claim their human rights, including when making a complaint or challenging decisions and actions. Accountability means holding decision-makers to account, which requires information and data on performance against children's rights standards.

In order to put this principle into practice authorities should aim to:

- **Include a clear commitment** to accountability in all significant policy statements or other documents setting out the authority's vision or key objectives (e.g. the corporate plan).
- **Ensure that accountability** is continued even where services are commissioned from third parties.
- **Ensure that staff understand their responsibilities** and obligations to children including by making this explicit in job descriptions and policies governing the conduct of staff.



- **Staff supervision and performance management** should include individual responsibility for children's rights, including by use of individual performance indicators as appropriate.
- **Carry out children's human rights** monitoring consistently against children's rights standards, including developing applicable children's human rights indicators (which should be developed with the participation of children and made relevant to policy or service areas).
- **Publish annual reports on performance** against children's rights indicators and disseminate the findings widely.
- **Encourage independent monitoring** of performance against children's rights standards, including by involving children in monitoring and/or external review/inspection.
- **Provide children with accessible information** on mechanisms and the process for making complaints, and for holding the authority, or individual staff, to account.
- **Provide children with accessible information** on how to access advice, such as advisory services, human rights advocacy services or professional legal advice.

Case Study:  
A UN style reporting process

A Welsh Local Authority established a 'UN-style' reporting process, with a representative body of children and young people playing the role of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. The young people evaluated the local authority's Estyn self-evaluation against the standards of the UNCRC. A public hearing was then organised with the Local Authority's Director of Education, the Head of Performance and Community and the Cabinet Member for Education and Safeguarding. The young people asked questions of these senior managers and the elected member in front of an audience of 50 delegates. After the public hearing the young people met to finalise their report. They linked all of their Concluding Observations to the relevant articles of the UNCRC and came up with 30 recommendations for the local authority to deliver on. Their recommendations have been the catalyst for many changes within Education Services at the Local Authority since their report was issued.



Be  
accountable  
to children

# CONCLUSION

Conclusion by Sally Holland, Children's Commissioner for Wales

Investing in children's human rights has real benefits for organisations, including contributing to **enabling more children and young people** to be better involved in public services which leads to better decision making, ensuring there's a **real focus on the particular needs of children** whose voices can be lost or silenced, creating an environment where public services are **accountable to all** of its service users.

Children's human rights are delivered internationally, regionally and domestically. The UNCRC is often seen as an abstract concept. This guide is intended to bring to life the real, positive impact public services in Wales can have on delivering a Children's Rights Approach on a local level across Wales, an approach that will have a meaningful impact on how Wales responds to and safeguards the long term needs of its children.

We must endeavour to match the principles of our laws and policy with meaningful actions which improve outcomes for children and young people. Delivering a Children's Rights Approach in Wales will help heighten public awareness of the UNCRC and help us to further foster a culture which promotes thinking about the impact of what goes on in society on children, which challenges bad practice and promotes positive outcomes. Practical improvements leading to beneficial outcomes are essential for children's rights to have real meaning.



## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Find the core international human rights texts [here](#)

<sup>2</sup> Find out more about the Committee on the Rights of the Child [here](#)

<sup>3</sup> Read the Committee's observations on progress on Children's Rights in the UK [here](#)

<sup>4</sup> Read General Comments published by the Committee [here](#)

<sup>5</sup> The principles of Children's Rights Approach are not intended to be used in any particular order. Instead they should be thought about and used together to inform decision-making and service delivery. Inevitably there are some overlaps. For example, empowering children to take decisions and make choices is very close to providing opportunities for children to participate in decisions that affect their lives, and participation will only realise rights for children if it is carried out based on the principle of non-discrimination and equality. However, the overlapping principles are mutually re-enforcing and contribute to a holistic, coherent and comprehensive approach to realising children's rights

<sup>6</sup> Public authorities and other organisations can work toward the realisation of human rights for children by ensuring that they:

- **Respect Rights.** This means not doing anything that interferes with the enjoyment of human rights. For example, authorities should not treat a child's human rights as less important because they are below a certain age, or because they believe they know what is best for the child.
- **Protect Rights.** This means seeking to ensure that others do not infringe human rights. For example, by taking action where there is evidence that children's rights are being violated, e.g. where children are subject to abuse, exploitation, or discrimination.
- **Fulfil Rights.** This means taking action to facilitate the enjoyment or better enjoyment of human rights. For example, making children and others aware of their rights, and ensuring that children's rights receive proper prioritisation for resources.

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