

## UK Children's Commissioners' Joint Written Statement — Playday 1<sup>st</sup> August 2018

For the 31<sup>st</sup> anniversary of National Playday we join together as the independent Children's Commissioners of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales to;

Celebrate every child's right to play under Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

and

Urge everyone to play their part in ensuring we create the best possible opportunities for all children and young people to embrace their right to play.

### **Every child has the right to play**

Play is fun, uncertain, challenging, flexible and unpredictable!

Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) creates a specific right for all children to have rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to their age and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.

The Convention recognises that these elements enrich children's experiences and are an essential aspect of childhood.

### **Play is important to children and has extended benefits**

Children and young people tell us that play is important to them. The fun and happiness they experience through play is because they choose what to do and what direction it takes. It is this aspect that makes play unique, special and different to sport or organised activities that have a goal in mind.

But as well as being fun, play offers children so much more. It benefits their health and wellbeing and contributes to the realisation of many of other rights. It provides them with opportunities to learn, to be physically active, develop their physical and emotional health and skills, freedom of expression and form friendships.

### **Voice and choice**

As Children's Commissioners, we have all had the privilege of hearing from children about the great opportunities they have to play and some of the excellent work that is happening to promote and facilitate play in family and community life. Unfortunately we also aware that these are not available to all. Some of the reasons for this include;

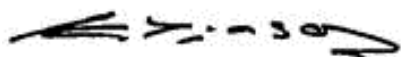
- children and young people feeling that they do not have enough time due a range of factors including school work;
- that the outdoor and indoor spaces do not always encourage or enable them to play – this is particularly the case for children with disabilities but also others including older children;
- that people around them do not always give them the permission or support they sometimes need.

Throughout time, play has sometimes taken a back seat to other aspects of life and this is still the case in modern lives in the UK with competing demands on time, resources and the influence technology. As Commissioners, we are asking all adults to help make sure this doesn't happen.



With this in mind we urge:

- All adults to consider how they can help children and young people across the UK have time, space, permission and support to play, both in their family life and in their community
- Organisations to think about whether they are doing all they can to empower and involve children and young people to have a say in ideas and decisions that affect their rights – including their right to play.
- Governments and statutory agencies to actively promote and protect children's right to play through the provision of adequate resources



Koulla Yiasouma, Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People



Sally Holland, Children's Commissioner for Wales



Bruce Adamson, Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland



Anne Longfield OBE, Children's Commissioner for England

**Further information:**

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Children's Commissioner for Wales, Children's commissioner for England, Children's Commissioner for Scotland, Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People

Play Wales, Play England, Play Scotland, PlayBoard Northern Ireland

International Play Association

The Right Way: Children's Rights Approach in Wales

Spot Light Report Article 31: Children's Commissioner for Wales