

CHILD FRIENDLY CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Recognition Assessment Outcome Report: DERRY CITY AND STRABANE DISTRICT

PART OF UNICEF'S GLOBAL



Child
Friendly
Cities
Initiative



UNITED KINGDOM



INTRODUCTION

Child Friendly Cities & Communities (CFC) is a UK Committee for UNICEF (UNICEF UK) programme that works with councils to put children's rights into practice.

The programme aims to support councils and their partners to embed a child rights-based approach across local strategy, policy, service delivery and public spaces.

Over three to five years a council, their local partners, and children and young people work together on an ambitious journey towards international recognition as a UNICEF Child Friendly City or Community.

Child Friendly Cities & Communities is part of UNICEF's global Child Friendly Cities Initiative, which reaches over 30 million children in close to 50 countries.

Summary

Over the past seven years, Derry City and Strabane District, led by Derry City and Strabane District Council (DCSDC) and the Western Health and Social Care Trust (WHSCT) and partners, has been taking part in UNICEF UK's Child Friendly Cities & Communities (CFC) programme, developing and implementing strategies for advancing children's rights, and working towards achieving 'Child Friendly' status, as recognised by UNICEF.

Following assessment of progress, UNICEF UK is granting Derry City and Strabane District [full recognition](#).



ABOUT RECOGNITION

Recognition is the final stage of the Child Friendly Cities & Communities journey.

Recognition signifies that UNICEF publicly **recognises** that a council and its local partners have taken significant and sustainable steps towards advancing the human rights of children and young people growing up in their community. **'Child Friendly' status recognises progress, not perfection.**

Cities or communities become eligible for recognition after implementing their CFC action plan for a minimum of 2 years. The action plan sets out how change will be achieved across six thematic 'badges,' or priority areas, which are chosen in collaboration with children and young people.

Councils and their partners are asked to demonstrate, through relevant, good quality evidence, how they have achieved the ambition set out in their CFC action plan, what they have learned,

and how they plan to take forward the commitment to realising children's rights across the city or community once 'Child Friendly' status has been achieved.

At the end of their programme journey, cities and communities are asked to:

- Submit documentation setting out their case for recognition.
- Submit detailed evidence against the outcomes and indicators in their CFC action plan.
- Host a live assessment, during which UNICEF UK's independent CFC Recognition Advisory Panel holds exploratory discussions with key representatives from the area, including children and young people.

There are four possible assessment outcomes:

Recognition: 'Child Friendly' status	The council and its partners have made sustainable progress across all their priority areas and set out a robust plan for building on this progress. Child Friendly status lasts for three years.
Conditional Recognition	The council and its partners are required to complete actions, expand their sustainability ambitions, address gaps or submit missing evidence within an agreed time frame before being officially and publicly recognised.
Suspended Assessment	Evidence is missing or incomplete, but a promising case has been put forward. Assessment will be repeated later.
No Recognition	The quality of evidence poor, the sustainability plan is unconvincing, local commitment is unconvincing.

Recognition Assessment Framework

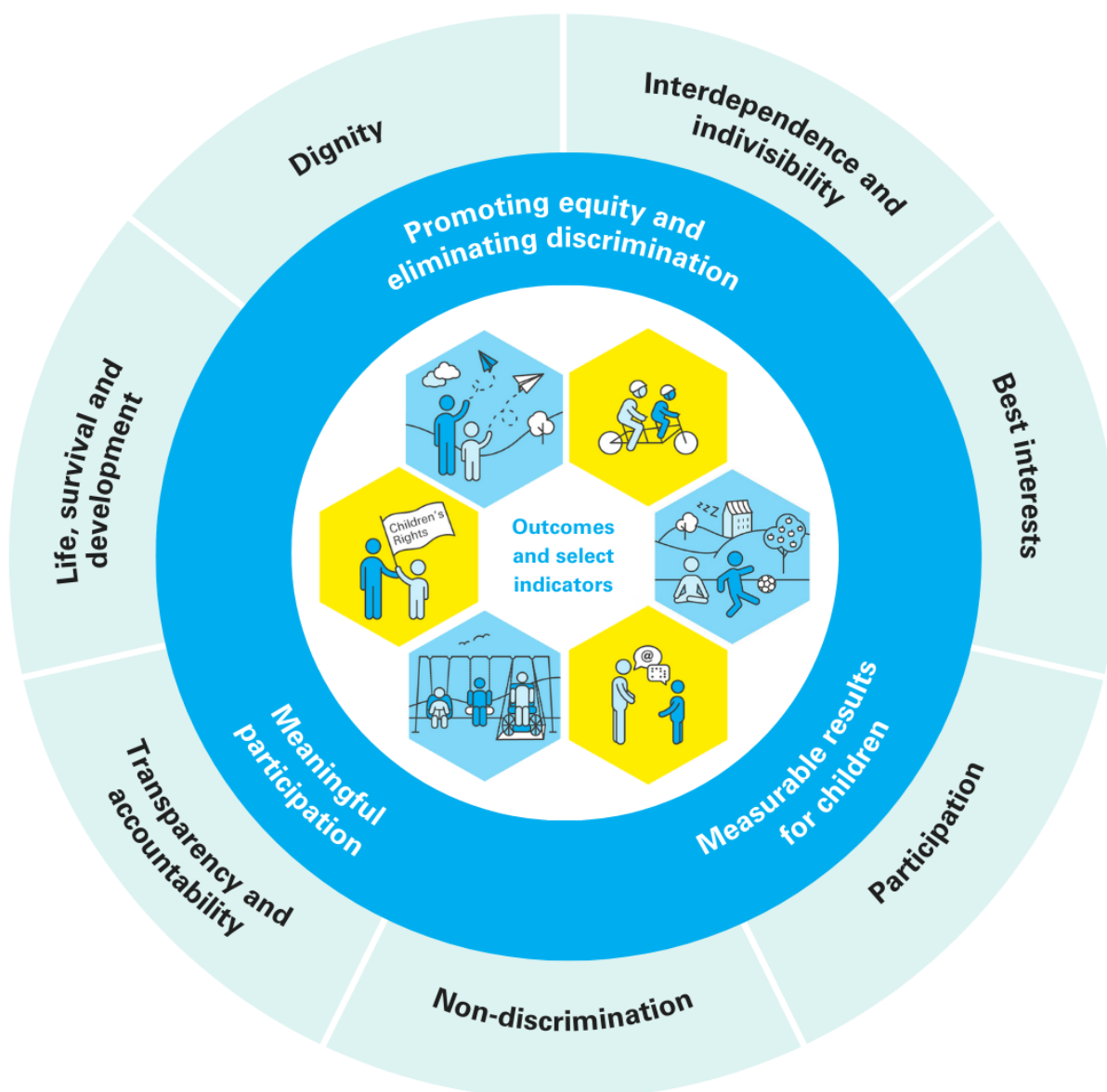
Assessment of evidence, progress and impact is carried out by UNICEF UK and scrutinised by the independent CFC Recognition Advisory Panel. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is the foundation of the CFC assessment framework. It is realised through the seven principles of a **child rights-based approach**:

- Dignity
- Transparency and Accountability
- the Best Interest of the Child
- Non-Discrimination
- Participation
- Life, Survival and Development
- Interdependence and Indivisibility.

These principles are reinforced by the global Child Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI) minimum criteria: **measurable results for children**, including quality, relevant, and significant data; **meaningful and inclusive child participation**; and a **demonstrated dedication to eliminating discrimination**.

Finally, the specific outcomes and indicators set out in the Derry City and Strabane District partnership's CFC action plan against locally chosen 'badges' are at the centre of the framework against which progress is assessed.

The image below shows the Recognition Assessment Framework; the seven principles of a child rights-based approach are around the outer ring, the global CFCI minimum criteria in blue, and the icons representing the partnership's badge choices ([Cooperation and Leadership](#), [Communication](#), [Culture](#), [Healthy](#), [Education and Learning](#), and [Equal and Included](#)) are at the centre.



ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIP

Derry City and Strabane District joined the programme in 2018. The application and accountable body is the Western Area Outcomes Group (WAOG). Derry City and Strabane District Council (DCSDC) and the Western Health and Social Care Trust (WHSCT) have acted as lead partners on behalf of the wider partnership since the application. Education Authority (EA) Youth Service became a lead partner in 2021. Youth Justice Agency (YJA) became a lead partner in 2023. The partnership's CFC action plan badge areas, as chosen by young people, are: [Cooperation and Leadership](#), [Communication](#), [Culture](#), [Equal and Included](#), [Education and Learning](#), and [Healthy](#).

In April 2025, the partnership submitted a story of change, a consultation capturing children and young people's views on its progress, a draft sustainability plan and 117 pieces of evidence, including survey data, case studies, service performance data and more. A youth summary of the CFC programme was also submitted, capturing the views of 10 youth groups on the progress made under the CFC programme. Documents and evidence were verified and assessed by the CFC team at UNICEF UK using the assessment framework.

On Thursday 19 June 2025, over 70 representatives from Derry City and Strabane District attended an assessment day at Waterside Youth Centre and Acorn Farm. There was a series of roundtables facilitated by the Recognition Advisory Panel, including a workshop session for children and young people. UNICEF UK would like to thank everyone who was involved in this process, especially the children and young people.

Progress across all six priority areas

The evidence demonstrates good progress across all six priority areas, including:

- Clear evidence of the **improvements over time as perceived by children and young people**, including in areas of having a say in decisions, access to child-friendly information, and feeling valued in public spaces;
- Significant **development of child rights awareness** with over 500 staff trained, and child rights training now required in key roles across the city and district;
- Developing a systemic culture of child rights by establishing **effective strategic planning and review mechanisms** across the partnership, including the Children's Rights and Participation Board, and linking to other core and strategic work, like Local Growth Development plans;
- Establishing a **strong and committed partnership** of four key organisations, embedded as a genuine collaboration with shared leadership working towards upholding child rights;
- Showing strong commitment to child rights through a **whole system approach to governance**, navigating a complex landscape of local and regional partners;
- Valuing and supporting the **voice and input of children and young people** through significant scale initiatives such as Your Say Child Rights (2023) and the Mayor's Initiative (2024/5);
- Developing a consistent way of engaging with children and young people, with a **youth voice structure in place** with the North West Ministry of Youth;
- A commitment to the **embedding of child rights** through policy and procedure in areas such as complaints, informed consent, job descriptions;
- Development of a **wider child rights culture** in the area through third party arrangements, such as grant funding agreements and management contracts for commissioned services;
- A significant level of **rights-based culture change** through organisational development, particularly strong in the Youth Justice Agency;
- The innovative development of **communications methods and resources** with children and young people such as through the Dual Language Defenders work and the Youth Justice Agency review of guidance;
- **Valuing the concerns of children and young people**, responding to concerns about emotional and mental health through Emotional Wellbeing Teams in Schools making emotional health support more accessible and child friendly; CAMHS / YJA service to support mental health of young people in the justice system and a child-friendly version of the Mental Health Strategy;
- Developing other noteworthy and innovative approaches to delivering child rights principles, such as the **Period Positivity campaign work** upholding the dignity and empowerment of girls and young women.

Recommendations

The assessment identified some recommendations for consideration by the partnership in the next phase of its child rights development:

- **Community influence and engagement:** Greater consideration should be given to how the wider community will be included and influenced through the delivery of the CFC Sustainability Plan. The approach could be expanded to include schools, housing, the business sector, the community and voluntary sector, and more;
- **Inclusion:** The partnership should continue to develop ways to reach young people that are seldom heard, including through greater engagement with the voluntary and community sector;
- **Impact:** The partnership would benefit from consistent evidence gathering around the impact of young people's participation, and developing more feedback mechanisms to young people on the impact of their participation;
- **CRIA:** When developing and extending the use of child rights impact assessments (CRIAs), the partnership should consider how this process will be underpinned by engagement with children and young people;
- **Participation:** Continue to focus on how the partnership's strong work in this area can be further developed to include more leadership opportunities for children and young people;
- **Public space:** Greater attention should be paid to thinking about the experiences of children and young people in public and commercial spaces, and we recommend engagement with stakeholders, such as the business community, to ensure that commercial spaces are welcoming and non-discriminatory spaces for children and young people;
- **Engagement legacy:** Derry City and Strabane District Council's political leaders should consider how best to build on the significant legacy from the Mayor's initiative which ran from 2024-5;
- **Regional advocacy:** Having received Child Friendly status, the partnership should explore how it can use this to advocate for children's rights and a child rights-based approach on a regional basis.

Assessment outcome

On balance, Derry City and Strabane District has established an impressive child rights infrastructure, with examples of excellent, embedded practice and strong involvement of children and young people.

The Sustainability Plan shows a focus on workforce development, participation mapping, Child Rights Impact Assessments (CRIAs), child-friendly communication, and the Lundy Model of Participation.

Based on these commitments and progress achieved to date, Derry City and Strabane District is awarded UNICEF Child Friendly status.

Badge by badge review

Each of Derry City and Strabane District's badges, or priority areas, are set out over the following pages. A table summarises a selection of the specific activities and strategies that the partnership adopted, the outcomes they worked towards, and the indicators they selected to measure progress and impact.

Each table is accompanied by commentary on the assessed progress, including recommendations for further development.

Please note, in the tables we have sometimes used the following abbreviations due to space constraints:

CYP - Children and young people

CR - child rights

CRBA - child rights-based approach.

Progress

Overall there has been good progress in Communication, and it is clear that all four partners are learning from each other in relation to communications. Widespread adoption of the Lundy Model by all four agencies is providing a common language across diverse professions and contexts and being used well to support meaningful communication across the partnership about the quality of participation and youth voice.

The Child Friendly Annual Report is very clear in reporting what has taken place and there are some great developments and steps forward reflected. Some of the language used may need review by children and young people to ensure it is child friendly. This may be something to think of for future reports, but in providing information on the achievements of the programme it's a well-produced document and a good starting point for future development.

There was an impressive strategic approach by the YJA who have comprehensively reviewed communications over a three-year period. They have reviewed all guidance leaflets with young people and families to ensure they are child friendly, trauma informed and accessible. They have then identified short, animated videos as being a more accessible format and these have been piloted and are now being taken forward. YJA have also for the past three years reported on Participation in their annual Performance Impact report.

The EA have also provided evidence that youth project monitoring now includes assessment of communication with children and young people of child rights information; whether there is an appropriate and effective participative structure for children and young people in place; and if a child rights-based approach (CRBA) is also being applied. It is positive to see this embedded into a corporate standards management process.

There have been some thoughtful rights-based approaches to the development of communications, including:

- the WHSCT Autism Cafes, brought together service providers, parents/carers and children in a variety of locations to access support services and further information. This has received positive

feedback and is evidence of a rights-based approach to taking action rather than accepting that young people waiting for autism diagnosis and/or support are on long waiting lists.

- EA have now adopted creating podcasts with young people as an approach to developing the voices of children and young people. A project supported young men who had been in tension with local residents to explore relevant issues and create a podcast and is underpinned by some strong rights-based approaches to the work.
- VOYPIC (Voice of Young People in Care) young people with care experience co-designed 12 meeting standards which are now embedded in the care system.
- In 2023, through 'Your Say Child Rights' 28 organisations came together to deliver child rights workshops and to hear from 170 children and young people aged 10 – 18 years old.

COMMUNICATION

Impact Indicators	Children and young people (including those with additional needs) are aware of: - Child rights - UNCRC Children and young people are creating media content Children and young see positive stories about people their age in the local media and communities. Annual Child Friendly Progress update complete and available on web pages There is an ongoing mechanism to collect local data on child rights awareness (EA Unit Moderation Form) Child rights brand with cross organisational support The Lundy Model of participation is being used by Lead agencies to shape and evaluate participation Children and young people see positive stories about people their age in the local media and communities						
Outcomes	There is better awareness of child rights and the importance of children, young people and adults working together to make improvements		All children and young people, including those with additional needs can access child friendly information and support to make their lives easier, healthier, safer and happier		Children and young people see positive stories about their achievements. Staff involved with the media understand and value child rights		
Select strategies	Child Friendly progress updates provided annually. The Lundy Model of Participation (Space, Audience, Voice, Influence) is the preferred visual tool to promote participation and is incorporated within appropriate toolkits/ guidance. Youth Justice Agency (YJA) has co-designed Child Friendly info/ leaflets with CYP & speech and language therapists. Dedicated CFC web pages to promote to CYP and the wider community. Child rights / UNCRC related awareness is being developed in alternative formats (Irish/ Ulster Scots/ Sign Language – ISL, BSL & Makaton) CYP with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are supported at all youth centres through safe, welcoming, and inclusive spaces with bespoke programmes. Mapping of Autism services (statutory and CVS), autism cafes piloted and then sustained.						
CRBA	Dignity	Participation	Best Interest	Life, Survival, Development	Interdependence and Indivisibility	Non-Discrimination	Transparency and Accountability
CFCI Minimum Criteria	Equity and non-discrimination		Data		Participation		

Progress

There has been very substantial progress made in this badge. Overall, there is an established commitment to cooperation and leadership in child rights, with evidence of embedded mechanisms now operating routinely to support strategic partnership working. The culture shift is clear and each of the four organisations are holding each other to account through the partnership. There has been strong participation and engagement of young people, however translating this into genuine youth leadership is lagging a bit further behind. It was acknowledged that there is still work to be done for the wider community to develop awareness of child rights, and it is positive that this was recognised.

Particularly well developed is the level of cooperation between the four key partners, supported by a 'whole system approach' to governance which navigates complex arrangements. There has been a clear evolution in the governance structure and mechanisms for the programme. This has involved the formal CFC partnership growing from DCSDC and WHSCT to include EA and YJA. This is a significant governance structure and set of mechanisms which represents an ongoing commitment to strategic development of child rights, has evolved through learning and experience, and is now operating routinely. The Child Rights and Participation Board brings partners together to maintain a focus on child rights.

There is evidence that by operating as a coherent partnership, learning is being shared and there is curiosity between the partners to approaches taken. Passion was in evidence on the assessment day, with a clear common purpose amongst everyone involved.

The evidence of YJA rights-based culture change is particularly comprehensive, clearly evidencing a pathway from senior decision making to the lives and futures of children and young people. The culture change reflects a strong ethos of rights in action, is clearly embedded in policy and practice, and represents a sea change in how young people encounter youth justice services.

Civic leadership is also in evidence through the Mayor's initiative which demonstrates the impact of collaborative working, with the partner agencies

pooling resources towards a common purpose. This initiative gave a place to the voice of 700 CYP at the heart of the civic realm, being not only a practical exercise, but also symbolic of change. Efforts were made by all four agencies to ensure that less heard children and young people were involved. While this initiative has been established under the current Mayor's term which will shortly come to an end, there is a significant legacy in this approach for political leaders to consider building on.

The structure of youth voice through North West Ministry of Youth (NWMoY) is in place and a pathway established, including discussion with political leaders in April 25. There has been youth voice at different points in the programme, including:

- Youth Participatory Budgeting in 2020
- a Small Grants Panel including CYP in decision making in 2023
- the Your Say, Your Rights event in 2023
- NWMOY research visit to Cardiff in 2023 funded through PEACE IV
- Mayor's Initiative in 2024.

COOPERATION AND LEADERSHIP

Impact Indicators	No of key audiences trained: - Senior Leaders - Politicians Leadership staff have an awareness of child rights and the UNCRC. Young people feel they can influence change/decision making NW Ministry of Youth are linking in with politicians a minimum of once per quarter. Young people are supported to influence local and regional services.			CRIA pilot is complete, and learning is shared Summary of CRIA pilot Organisational commitment – process/ timescales for roll out of CRIA	Children's authorities and children's service providers are working together on issues relating to CYP and child rights. There is an ongoing mechanism for prioritising participation and child rights. CR are included in service plans. Organisations are pooling financial/ non-financial resources on issues relating to CYP/ child rights.		
Outcomes	All children and young people have the chance to have their voice heard. Adult decision makers value youth voices and have the skills to work together to make improvements			Staff and leaders in services working with children and young people can use tools to champion child rights (e.g. Child Rights Impact Assessments)	More people, organisations and businesses work together to improve the rights of CYP		
Select strategies	A significant proportion of key audiences at the decision-making level are trained in Intro to Child Rights in Practice. Opportunities for CYP to speak with leaders e.g. Meet Cllrs/ Mayor/ Local Democracy Week/ Your Say Child rights DCSDC 'Youth Voice' has regular opportunities to shape the direction of Local and Regional services. Ongoing process/ structure for young people to shape: - EA Small Grants - EA Local Voice budget All youth clubs have a participative structure in place to make decisions about the youth club/ local area / DEA Model			CRIA pilot complete Organisational commitment for roll out of CRIA and commitment embedded within sustainability plan Politicians are championing child rights - council motions Online CRIA module is accessible on e-learning platform	Governance structures include voices of CYP and are used to consistently prioritise child rights. Child rights are included in Service Plans. Key partnership structures are embedding child rights in action plans CYP in DCSDC are included in the development of a child friendly version of the CYP Strategy. Multi-agency governance is established and effectively resourced to oversee the implementation of child rights across the district, and child rights governance structure provides opportunities to hear from seldom heard voices.		
CRBA	Dignity	Participation	Best Interest	Life, Survival, Development	Interdependence and Indivisibility	Non-Discrimination	Transparency and Accountability
CFCI Minimum Criteria	Equity and non-discrimination			Data		Participation	

Progress

There is clear evidence of progress in a child rights-based approach (CRBA) being embedded into the culture of the partnership organisations. This can be seen in policies, procedures, job descriptions, funding and management arrangements and training programmes. The work under this badge has allowed Derry City and Strabane District to build their policies and practice to a position where beyond Recognition a CRBA will be part and parcel of working in the council area.

An example through WHSCT of children and young people's involvement in developing a child rights culture is where children and young people contributed to the development of the contract for short stay breaks. The contract had been retendered in response to children and young people talking about their negative experiences. A separate contract clause on child rights was included in the contract. In response to consulting with children and young people on their experience of the service, videos of what happens during the short breaks have been developed to support children and young people who are uncertain about attending.

A total of 572 professionals have undertaken CFC child rights training from Mar 2018- Mar 2025 (with a pause during the pandemic).

Derry City and Strabane District has made steps in strategically embedding the use of a CRBA, which means that policy mandates consideration of child rights in practice, and funding agreements require the implementation of a CRBA.

Finalised Local Growth Plans (LGPs) show how child rights are being committed to through training, implementing a CRBA and through considering children and young people who are most at risk of marginalisation. The LGPs were completed in 2023 and will continue to be actioned until 2028.

Informed consent procedures are in evidence across all four partners, an example from DCSDC shows how the informed consent process is being used systematically, and how children's rights have been used to shape the process.

Child-friendly complaints procedures have been developed and implemented by EA and YJA, with YJA able to articulate how procedure has been

adapted in relation to complaints that were raised through the complaints process.

YJA have made child rights training mandatory for all staff, and DCSDC have a newly available staff training module on child rights. For both agencies, measures have been put in place so that there is sustainability around training the workforce (it is also an outcome within the Sustainability Plan).

Funding/management agreements embedding child rights has been introduced by DCSDC in the form of final Service Level Agreement (SLA) Template for the Consensual Grant-Making Model 2024 – 2025 and an SLA Action Plan.

A CRBA has been embedded into the PEACEPLUS programme, with sustainability being built into different processes, such as tendering. Processes were built in for children and young people to contribute to qualitative evaluation. Awareness of child rights was introduced as part of the grant application process for applicants, with time set aside to introduce applicants to child rights in practice.

The evaluation for the Good Relations consultation shows that, for the most part, the Lundy Model is being effectively implemented although there are some areas that have been flagged by young people. One of the notable gaps was around feedback loops and keeping children and young people informed. After using the evaluation at a larger scale event, it became clear that the current format of the evaluation was not suitable. Children and young people were invited to co-design an amended version of the evaluation and, when used, this was completed by 105 children.

Impact Indicators	Number of key audiences trained: - Elected Members - Lead Organisations Trained audiences are confident in using a child rights-based approach. Increase in CYP reporting improved communication with staff Staff at funded organisations understand child rights and the UNCRC. Satisfaction levels of CYP in communication with staff. There are ongoing organisational processes to keep child rights a priority. Child rights awareness is starting to spread to funded / commissioned services.			CYP feel they have the space to share their voice with the correct audience to have influence. Child-friendly maps provide an ongoing child-friendly way to feed youth voice into Local Growth Partnership structures Council staff are aware of and using the informed consent process Staff at funded organisations understand child rights and the UNCRC.			
Outcomes	Children and young people enjoy meeting people in their community who understand how to use child rights to improve their work.			Children and young people don't feel judged or labelled; their rights are respected by everyone	Children and young people always feel welcome and respected by people of all ages		
Select strategies	Audit to identify training audiences, put in place workforce development plans and training programme Child rights starting to be embedded in job descriptions Funding/ management agreements have been issued to projects/ services and child rights awareness raising is in progress.			Your Say Child Rights workshops and events will take place every 2 years to enable senior leaders and politicians to understand identity / greater respect for difference. CYP have a voice mechanism within Local Growth Partnerships, child rights are embedded within Local Growth Plans and child rights are included in Council's Consensual Grant making model with Local Growth Partnerships Funding/ management agreements have been issued to projects/ services and CR awareness raising is in progress Informed consent process rolled out at Council, identifying key services for a staged roll out and training for staff on informed consent Rural Youth Audit to include feedback from CYP, and EA funding youth services in some rural areas.			
CRBA	Dignity	Participation	Best Interest	Life, Survival, Development	Interdependence and Indivisibility	Non-Discrimination	Transparency and Accountability
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Progress

There is evidence of progress in this badge in responding to concerns raised by children and young people, and in establishing baseline information and services to support emotional and mental health. There was a strong link back to the work that children and young people had identified at Discovery, and youth leadership was in evidence across the badge.

At Discovery stage, feedback from children and young people was that it was difficult to access support or even to know what was available. Key responses have been to develop CAMHS communications with young people, a Youth Wellness Web (a mental health hub created by young people) and to establish the Emotional Wellbeing Team in Schools (EWTS). The development of CAMHS communications has particularly focussed on children and young people who may not meet the threshold for referral or have a delayed referral but can benefit from signposting to other services. As CAMHS is a regional service, the team have worked to the best interests principle in shaping local responses to meet needs.

There is evidence of continuing and sustainable progress in addressing concerns from young people that were raised in Discovery phase about support for emotional and mental health. The EWTS service had clearly been empowered through the CFC programme and a rights-based approach. A robust baseline has been established to understand emotional wellbeing for children and young people through CAMHS / EWTS survey. The survey in its second year had over 6000 responses, a c50% increase from the first year. A further survey was conducted in late 2024 with over 1000 school staff, providing baseline understanding of confidence levels in supporting children and young people in emotional health, awareness of signposting services, and seeking views on how schools could improve on emotional health and wellbeing support.

A YJA / CAMHS partnership service is recently up and running and has been making some referrals. This service means that where young people in justice processes may be indicating signs of mental health concerns, they can now be assessed and supported by an embedded mental health worker. The referral pathway reflects a rights-based

approach in the stages where consent from the YP is embedded in the pathway.

Evidence at sustainable progress of information and awareness for children and young people to support their health include:

FYI publication – used to communicate with the wider community and voluntary sector on children and young people's issues and services, meaning that there is wider awareness.

Period Positivity campaign work, including multiple resources and workshops within schools and youth clubs demonstrated a youth-led workstream focussed on upholding the dignity and empowerment of girls and young women across the community.

FLARE and REACH programmes supporting emotional and mental wellbeing - the work carried out by the FLARE worker covered a varied programme of activity to support emotional health and resilience, including residential, workshops, planning staff training and stress management sessions for students.

In relation to the overall recommendation to think of working more with schools in the next phase, it was noted that schools are in a really useful position and Health could be the lever to introduce a wider rights-based approach.

Impact Indicators	Youth Wellness Web: - No. of hits - Awareness of teachers - Awareness of CYP No. of hits/ downloads to Locality Planning Newsletter (professionals) No. of CYP engaged with FLARE & REACH CYP are more aware of how to support their wellbeing/ access services CYP have an ongoing mechanism to put their views forward on wellbeing in school Mental Health Champion for NI will be tasked with responsibility for progressing the Still Waiting report (NICCY report developed with CYP).			There is an understanding of a Trauma Informed Approach and how this aligns with upholding child rights in literature/ communications. When CYP feel sad, worried, or anxious, they have - somewhere to go - someone to talk to Satisfaction levels of service users with CAMHS No. of children and young people supported: Therapeutic Connections Forum Youth Justice CAMHS referral path			
Outcomes	Children and young people have access to quality, child friendly services when they need it			Children and young people are aware of the impact of alcohol and drugs on health and can access age-appropriate services to develop a healthy awareness	All children and young people know how to protect their mental health and have a safe place to go to get child friendly support when they feel sad, worried, or anxious		
Select strategies	Professionals working with CYP include access to online support/ self-help in youth sessions e.g. Emotional Health and Wellbeing Programme CF mental health strategy is promoted by Emotional Health and Wellbeing in Schools Team Emotional Health and Wellbeing is linked to all EA Youth Work Emotional Health and Wellbeing in School Youth Voice Network are trained in child rights.			Ongoing process for CYP feedback / voice to be used to evaluate the standard of the service CAMHS service user feedback is understood by staff and helping to tailor the service Designated coordinator for CAMHS referrals who assesses need and provides appropriate / Child Friendly support and signposting to other services Updated CAMHS letter for medical professionals / GPs signposting to wellbeing support options for children and young people In the event waiting lists remain, all referrals subject to a checklist ensuring they: - have been responded to / informed of outcome - chance to engage in activity that may support well-being - received an information sheet explaining wait list Permanent practitioners located within CAMHS, overseeing, rights based initiatives to support vulnerable children to access mental health services e.g. young people involved in youth justice.			
CRBA	Dignity	Participation	Best Interest	Life, Survival, Development	Interdependence and Indivisibility	Non-Discrimination	Transparency and Accountability
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Progress

Overall, there is enough evidence under this badge to show a good level of progress against the outcomes. At the assessment day, we heard genuine cross-fertilisation of thinking and approach across the four agencies. There is progress in this badge that showcases sustainable progress and the adoption of a CRBA at a strategic level.

Evidence relating to the Good Relations programme shows how child rights have been embedded into consensual grant making projects (linked to the Good Relations work) through the tender process. The interconnectedness between the CFC programme and other core and strategic work across the council, like the Local Growth Development plans, is apparent in this evidence.

The Dual Language Child Rights Defenders Programme was piloted with two Irish Medium primary schools in the Derry and Strabane district by DCSDC. The information shows positive feedback from CYP about participation in Dual Language Child Rights Defenders Programme, how children and young people feel the programme is helping tackle discrimination positively, and that children and young people feel important, respected, and valued through this work. Following the pilot, there has been work on an animation making child rights information is available in Irish/ Ulster Scots, the plan is it will be used regularly to widen engagement with specific groups of children and young people. The accessibility of this information has been considered with the animation being made available in Irish, Ulster Scots, BSL and ISL. There were encouraging changes in young people's attitude towards speaking their first language, where they had previously seen it as subversive but now regarded it as normalised after engaging them in their rights.

The evidence shows that there is an appropriate partnership in place to regularly review Play Plan progress. Through the Play Plan, there has been an increase in the number of accessible parks, and improvements in the geographical spread of parks across the district.

YJA are using play, sport and leisure as a tool to support children and young people and how this approach upholds child rights. The example provides insight into why this work is important for this

cohort of young people. This approach supports the dignity of children and young people, recognising that everyone should be able to reach their full potential no matter what their situation is, and shows understanding of the role of duty bearers in supporting their development.

A CRBA has provided the focus to welcoming young people who are newcomers, and based on feedback it seems to be supporting young people to feel safe and connected, with the Young Person's Forum important to understanding needs.

EA and YJA have developed their complaints procedures. Through engagement with EA, children and young people were able to feedback on the current communication around the complaint policy and then work on communications that they felt was more child friendly. As part of the engagement, the children and young people created a child friendly poster for their peers to better understand the comments and complaints procedure at the EA. The same was also done for the anti-bullying policy.

Following a revised complaints process being in place for YJA, they submitted an example of where a complaint by a young person was actioned and led to organisation-wide change. This illustrates that decision makers take the complaints of young people seriously and they are able to affect change through this process.

EQUAL AND INCLUDED

Impact Indicators	CYP in council Good Relations (GR) programmes report feeling valued and respected: - Increased confidence - Treated well by staff Positive feedback from CYP about Dual Language Child Rights Defenders Programme. Child rights are embedded within GR programmes. Irish Language / Ulster Scots child rights video content provides a sustainable way of upholding Article 30 and Article 42. Staff understand how Signs of Safety upholds children's rights / CRBA Children's rights are being upheld in development of safety/ support plans.			Increase in the number of accessible parks Improvements in the geographical spread of parks across the district Play for Participation – Games with Aims is increasing CYP access to play in youth settings Child rights governance has an update on Play Plan progress/ aware of how play is being prioritised Play, sport and leisure are being used as a tool by lead agencies to support CYP			CYP are aware of how to make a complaint, they can access this information in a child-friendly format CYP have access to child-friendly versions of complaints procedures in key lead services		
Outcomes	Policies, services, and programmes are free from discrimination. All children and young people feel important, respected, and valued			All children and young people have access to play and leisure spaces. With a special focus on location, age, and ability			There is a process for children and young people to report complaints. The complaints are taken seriously and acted upon		
Select strategies	CYP views are used to help shape the Good Relations Strategy/ Action Plan and child rights are embedded in the delivery of Good Relations programmes for CYP Dual Language Child Rights Defenders Programme is rolled out across all Irish Medium schools in the district Signs of Safety is used as a practice framework to uphold child rights / children's voice in practice			Play Plan aligns to UNCRC articles. All parks renewed/ built have considered accessibility and age profile. CYP voices are used in the design of new play parks identified in the play plan. Site selection and design development underway for the skate park (Strabane) Youth Justice Agency understand and support CYP to connect with sport leisure and amenities within their community, and evaluate engagements			Child Rights Defenders programme will be rolled out (including complaints awareness/ mechanism) EA Youth Service will review each youth centre to ensure child friendly complaints procedures are displayed. Youth Justice Agency child friendly version of complaints policy		
CRBA	Dignity	Participation	Best Interest	Life, Survival, Development			Interdependence and Indivisibility	Non-Discrimination	Transparency and Accountability
CFCI Minimum Criteria	Equity and non-discrimination			Data			Participation		

Progress

There has been a strong youth work focus under this badge. Education and learning is approached as a whole experience for children and young people through youth work and alternative provision, while acknowledging schools as an area where further work is needed. Importance has been placed on Trauma Informed practice, understanding of ACEs and right based training to building up skills.

The action plan has been aligned with a CRBA, and has been developed with young people and stakeholders. Work delivered under this badge has included a rights-based approach being adopted in:

- outdoor learning
- engagement with school refusers
- embedding of CRED (Community Relations, Equity and Diversity) in youth work practice
- through the CONNECT programme embedding youth workers in hospitals to reduce violence among 15-25 year olds.

There are some examples of children and young people's engagement in shaping their experience of the EA – some is at a policy level, and some is showcasing practice on the ground.

EA's Action Plan outlines specific actions and outputs, including health and wellbeing programmes, personal development initiatives, anti-bullying workshops, and leadership training. This shows that 'Raising standards for all' and 'Closing the gap' are maintained as Youth Work Priorities, and the linking of all outcomes to principles of a CRBA highlights how child rights are being used to lead this work locally. The EA note that the action plan was developed through consultations with young people, stakeholders, and local advisory groups.

Engagement with children and young people to update how the EA Complaints & Anti-bullying policies are communicated to children and young people was also submitted under the Equal & Included badge. The evidence show that engagement occurred with children and young people to allow them to feedback on and update the current policy and make it more child friendly.

The Lenamore Youth Centre Annual Report for 2023-4 includes feedback from children and young

people, their parents and staff but also highlights ways of working at the centre. The report highlights key programmes that have been delivered over the year to address the needs of young people. It also includes feedback from young people, staff, and parents, showcasing the positive impact of the centre's work with a child's rights-based approach adopted throughout.

A YJA study shows the work that was commissioned by the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland and conducted by Queen's University Belfast, and the research highlights the importance of understanding and addressing trauma within youth justice settings and the work of YJA. The key findings show how the use of trauma informed approaches has improved the outcomes for children and young people (and for staff working with these groups as well), therefore highlighting the importance of this approach. Changes in the system that have strengthened a CRBA have also come about through the taking of this approach.

EDUCATION AND LEARNING

Impact Indicators	Increase in number of CYP progressing against EA Youth Work outcomes CYP are actively participating (2024/25 year only) CYP views are used to shape the business case for SMART Digital City Deal project CYP have an awareness of environmental and climate issues Enhanced personal capabilities Staff are more confident of how to use a Trauma Informed Approach in addressing incidents of bullying EA policy and procedure will be updated in line with a Trauma Informed lens						
Outcomes	All children and young people receive education for the whole child. Preparing them for life, looking at issues of their time, giving time to play and offering activities in and outside of school		CYP shape decisions made within their learning spaces to ensure their wellbeing		CYP feel accepted, free to be themselves and express themselves in learning spaces which promote health and wellbeing		
Select strategies	Young people will be included in consultation for the development of the SMART Digital Business Case Environment and Climate will be an area of Enquiry of EA Youth Service 'Raising standards for all' and 'Closing the gap' are maintained as Youth Work Priorities EA Youth Service will review the antibullying policy to reflect a Trauma Informed Approach (supporting both parties) and anti- bullying work is embedded in EA Youth Work practice Youth Work settings provide opportunities for CYP to explore and manage their health and wellbeing Community Relations Equity and Diversity(CRED) embedded in all Youth Work practice						
CRBA	Dignity	Participation	Best Interest	Life, Survival, Development	Interdependence and Indivisibility	Non-Discrimination	Transparency and Accountability
CFCI Minimum Criteria	Equity and non-discrimination		Data		Participation		

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