

Child Rights Statements

Below is a summary of the feedback shared verbally at the Your Say Child Rights Event on 6th October 2023 by Young People. 23 young people shared their views verbally, the remainder were submitted in writing at the event.

This information will be reviewed by Politicians and organisations working to improve child rights. Feedback will be shared with all groups taking part in Jan 2024.

- 1. Article 24. Health, Water, Food and Environment. Article 29. Aims of Education.**
 - (RSE) Relationship and Sexual Education not inclusive “feels like this pushes the school’s own religious agenda and not representative of everyone’s views”.
 - “Violence in schools for people who are transitioning”.
- 2. Article 31. Rest, Play, Culture and Arts**
 - “Music being taken away from Ebrington” this is a place many young people would access and helps with mental health.
- 3. Article 12. Respect for Childrens Views. Article 20. Children Looked After.**
 - Foster placement living conditions, how young people in care feel like their voice is lost in decisions being made about where they will live “adults make the choices for our future”.
- 4. Article 10. Contact with parents across Countries**
 - “I wasn’t able to see my mum more because she lived in England” Children Looked After should be supported with the costs to help see their parents more often.
- 5. Article 13. Sharing thoughts freely. Article 14. Freedom of thought and religion**
 - “Our rights to share thoughts and express ourselves, our individuality is lost” especially in school settings.
 - “Trousers for all” everyone should be able to wear trousers
 - “Personal identity not taken into account”
- 6. Article 23. Children with Disabilities**
 - “Young people who are disabled experience poor mental health” their needs are not being met due to long waiting times.
 - “We, as a school, think that our city leaders should look out for us. Article 23 protects children and young people with disabilities. This article should guide law makers in our city to make decisions with children and young adults in mind and to include us in how we want to see our home be built and governed. We should have a say in how our home is shaped, so we can interact more in society and have more spaces to grow”
- 7. Article 4. Making Rights Real. Article 42. Everyone must know children’s rights**
 - “More awareness building and education of the adults who are working directly with young people, so they are aware of these rights” Children also need to know their rights “how can we make sure we’re getting these rights if we don’t know them”.
- 8. Article 26. Social and Economic Help. Article 28. Access to Education**
 - “After school fees, not everyone can afford this”
 - “Fees that are meant to be optional but parents feel that they need to pay” - leaving parents feeling shame because of financial poverty
 - “Bus passes and school meals should be free not means tested”
- 9. Article 28. Access to Education. Article 29. Aims of Education. Article 23. Children with Disabilities**
 - Exclusions and suspension of young people with additional needs “can’t get the support needed” which can result in challenging behaviour and young people out on the street during school hours
 - “Not feeling included in school” –leading to school refusal
- 10. Article 2. No Discrimination**
 - “All children should have access to youth services with government funding to sustain these”.
 - “Everyone should have access to transport” financial poverty leads to an even bigger imbalance for those living in rural locations in comparison to urban locations
 - More support and services for LGBTQ+ young people

- The cost of university should be reduced, this has become unaffordable for more deprived families and widens the equality gap
- “All children have the right to no discrimination, no matter where they live, their religion or what they look like. The trouser for all school’s campaign – allowed young people the comfort of trousers without fear of judgement or discrimination. However, in schools where this option is not carried out as it is voluntary, young people are feeling uncomfortable and ignored in school. This can lead to not working to go to school and a disruption of that person’s education. Children have the right to their own identify; such as their name, nationality and family relations. Having something like the trousers for all school’s campaign is crucial for this right to be upheld in schools as it highlights the need for respect of identity. Schools not having the options of trousers leaves students feeling lost in the expression of their identity and in a sense disrespected that their, identity is not considered when schools make decisions about uniform i.e., trousers. Children have right to speak freely on issues that affect them. The trousers for all campaign obviously took young people’s opinions and views into account when running the campaign, however some young people still feel ignored as their individual schools have not taken them on in allowing for trouser or after uniform adjustments to be made”

11. Article 30. Minority Culture, Language and Religion. Article 8. Identity. Article 2. No Discrimination

- “Everyone has the right to their own identity, no one should take this away from them, but it is being taken away from some of us here”. A young person explained his right to identify as Irish and speak Irish without this being viewed as sectarian.
- Sectarianism “lack of funding for cross community programmes” this allows young people to explore each other’s cultures and build relationships.

12. Article 34. Protection from Sexual Abuse. Article 36. Protection from Exploitation

- “We shouldn’t feel shame or guilt, it’s not our fault.....we need to talk about this more, so we don’t feel like this” the silence and negative perceptions of children who are sexually exploited makes those who have experienced this fearful to talk about it. More funding for services needed.

13. Article 24. Health, Water, Food and Environment

- “I believe we should as a society shed be more show more consideration of mental health of kids from the ages of 11-18”
- “From my experience young people’s health is not taken serious enough. Young people are often ridiculed, ignored not taken seriously or told to ‘wise up’. We are told this because many adults believe we have nothing to be sad or stressed about. But reality we are anxious about exams our future and how we may be perceived by peers, and we should be taken more seriously. I also believe that help and places to get help should be put forward more”
- “Children have the right to the best possible health care however when it comes to mental health there is a long waiting list/referral time, this causes many young people to feel like they are not being taken seriously which can make people’s situation or condition worse which makes the young people feel unimportant”
- “Even though referral times and waiting lists are long there is still a lot of help in a young person’s local community such a youth clubs. Youth workers help children and young people, and they can be seen as a safe place for many young people”.
- Mental health services in schools and youth clubs – could there be mental health guidance teams from each area and then they all meet to discuss ideas.

14. Article 33. Protection from Harmful Drugs

- Depression, drugs and alcohol are harming children and young people, not enough is being done about this