

Candidate



Child  
Friendly  
Community

unicef

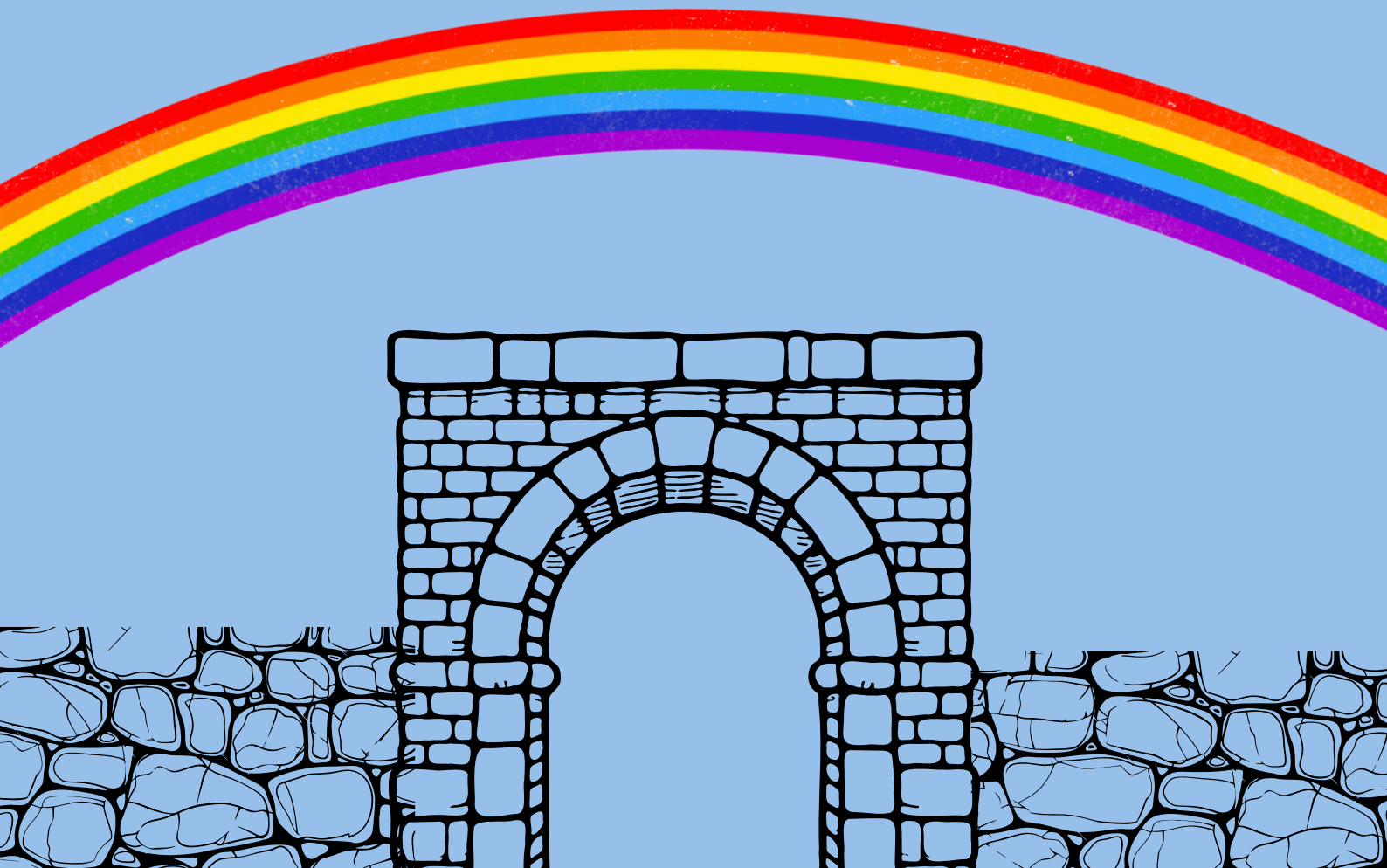


UNITED KINGDOM

# ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25

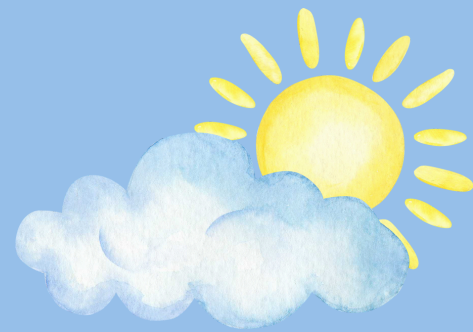
## DERRY CITY & STRABANE

### CHILD FRIENDLY CITIES & COMMUNITIES





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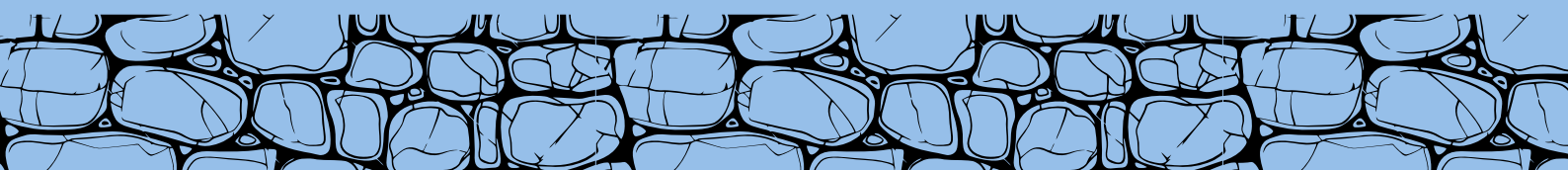
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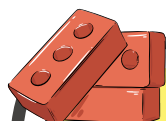
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# WHAT IS THE CFC PROGRAMME?



**Child Friendly Cities & Communities (CFC) is a programme run by UNICEF UK. It works with local councils and other organisations to help make sure children's rights are part of everyday life.**



**The aim is to build places in the UK where all children - whether they are in care, visiting a library, or going to a children's centre - can have their voices heard and benefit from local services, spaces and decisions that affect them.**



**This programme is part of a global Unicef project called Child Friendly Cities, which supports nearly 30 million children in 40 countries around the world. Right now, Derry City and Strabane District Council (DCSDC) is the only area in Northern Ireland that is part of the CFC programme.**

**The Convention explains who children are, all their rights, and what governments need to do to protect them.**

**All the rights are connected, they are all equally important and they cannot be taken away from children.**

**There are 42 rights in total, they are called 'Articles'.**





# **IN A CHILD FRIENDLY CITY AND COMMUNITY EVERY CHILD WILL BE ABLE TO:**



**Have a say about  
decisions that affect  
them**

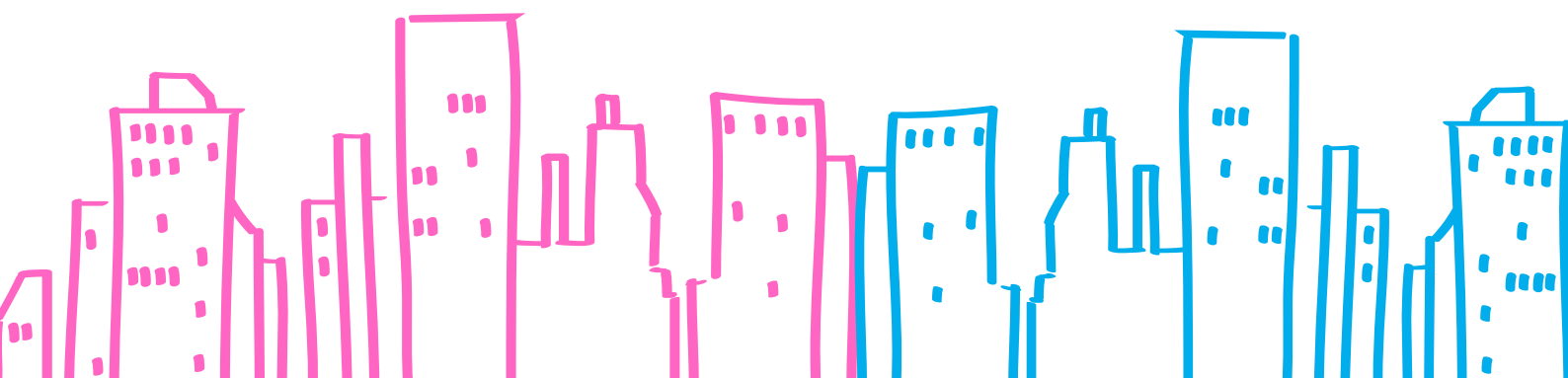
**Access good health,  
education, transport  
and other services**

**Express their views  
freely and be  
supported to do that**

**Feel safe and  
protected from  
discrimination and  
harm**

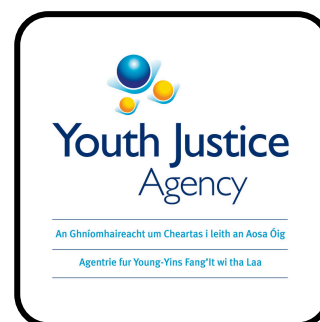
**Enjoy a clean and safe  
environment**

**Enjoy public areas and  
meet other children  
freely**



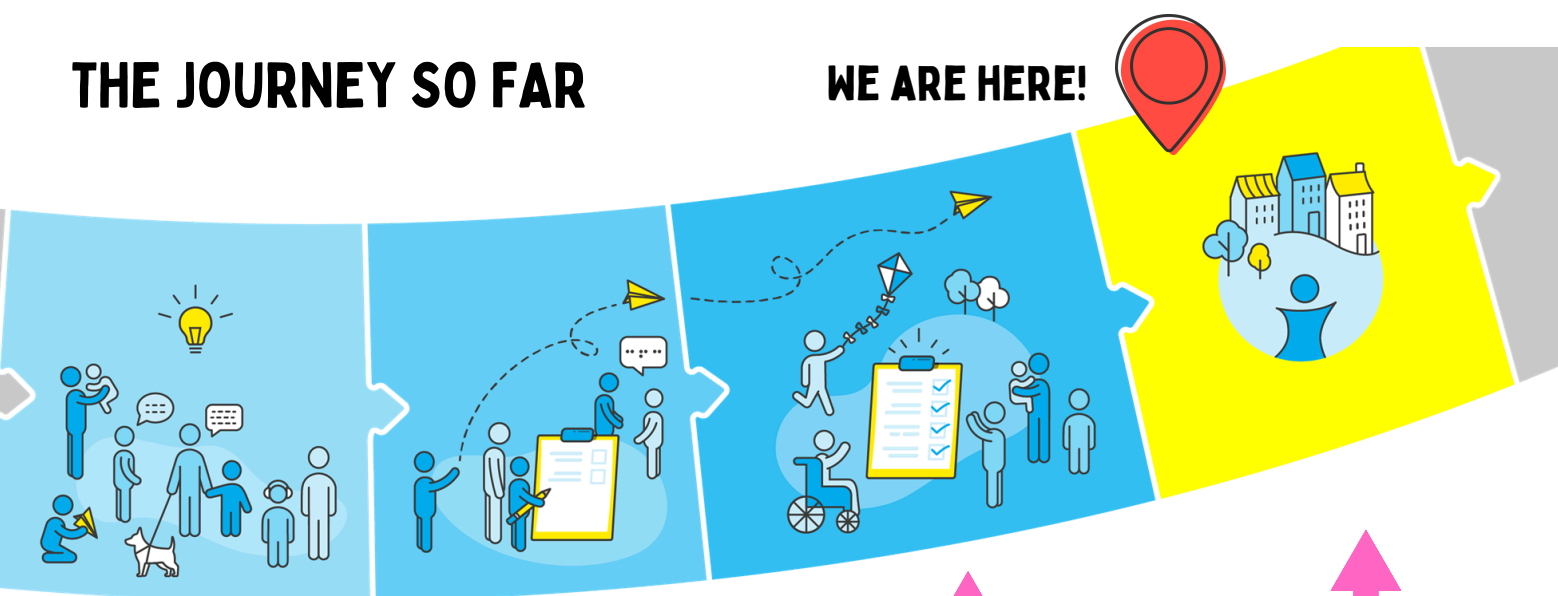
# WHO IS INVOLVED IN CHILD FRIENDLY CITY AND COMMUNITY DERRY CITY & STRABANE ?

In Derry City and Strabane there are four lead partners from four different organisations. These four organisations are working hard to make Derry City and Strabane a child friendly city.



## THE JOURNEY SO FAR

## WE ARE HERE!



### DISCOVERY

The council, community and children and young people came together to agree their priorities, known as 'badges'

### DEVLOPMENT

An action plan was drafted and approved showing how the council will achieve progress in those badges

### DELIVERY 2-4 Years

The council works with the local community and children and young people to carry out the action plan

### RECOGNITION 3 years

A panel of experts assesses the council area's progress and decides whether to recognise Derry City and Strabane as a UNICEF UK Child Friendly City or Community

# THE LUNDY MODEL

The Lundy Model of Participation is a way to help adults make sure children and young people have a real say in decisions that affect them.

It has 4 parts:

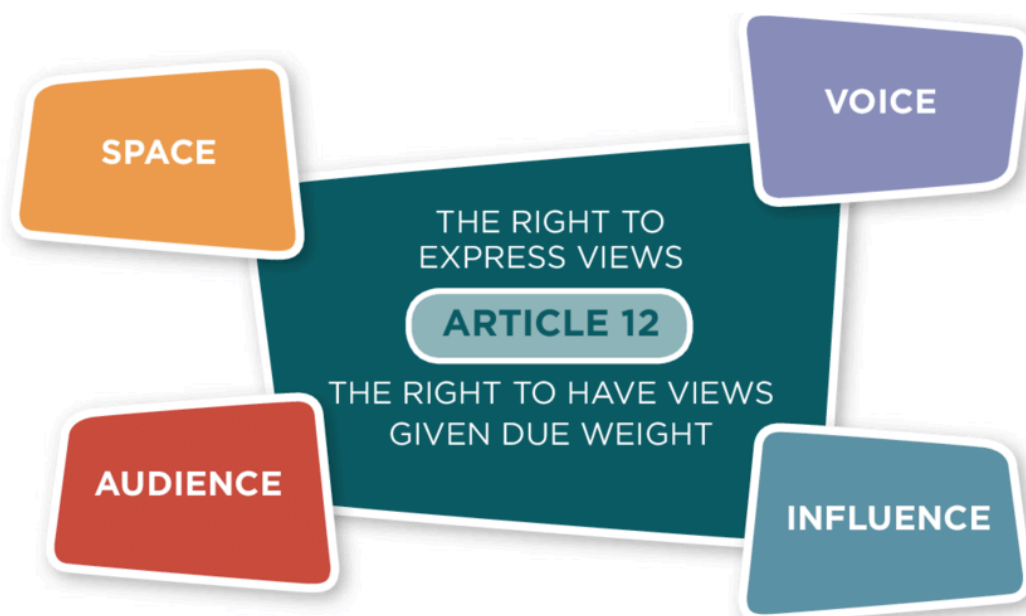
**Space - Children need a safe and welcoming place where they can share their views.**

**Voice - Children must be given the chance to say what they think in a way that works for them.**

**Audience - Adults must listen to what children say.**

**Influence - Children's views should be taken seriously and used to help make decisions.**

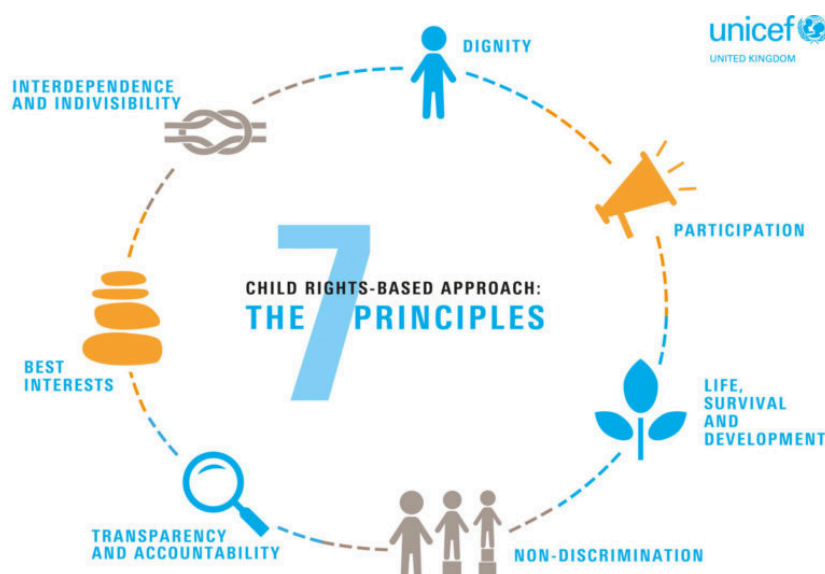
This model helps adults respect children's rights and make sure their opinions are heard and matter. The Lundy model helps the UNICEF CFC lead partners ensure that children and young people are involved in all the badge/priority areas.



# THE 7 PRINCIPLES OF A CHILD RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

A Child Rights-Based Approach is a core part of the UNICEF Child Friendly Cities and Communities programme. A Child Rights- Based Approach helps to make sure that every child is treated with respect, listened to, and given the chance to grow up safe, healthy, and happy. Here's why it's important:

- 🌍 1. To protect all children- It helps keep children safe from harm, like abuse, neglect, or unfair treatment.
- 🧠 2. To help children develop and thrive- It supports children's learning, health, and well-being, so they have the best chance to succeed in life.
- 🗣️ 3. To make sure children have a say- Children get to share their thoughts and be part of decisions that affect them, like in school or in their community.
- ⚖️ 4. To treat all children fairly- No child is left out or treated unfairly because of things like race, gender, disability, or where they live.
- 👩⚖️ 5. To remind adults of their responsibilities- It makes sure adults – like teachers, parents, doctors, and leaders – know they must respect and protect children's rights in everything they do.





# WHAT ARE THE BADGES?

Derry and Strabane are working towards making changes in 6 areas called badges, the first 3 are badges that all cities and communities have to work towards on the UNICEF Child Friendly City or Community Programme:



**CULTURE**



**COOPERATION &  
LEADERSHIP**



**COMMUNICATION**

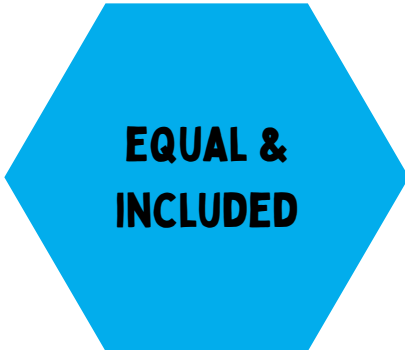
The other 3 are optional and decided by each community at the discovery stage – we chose:



**EDUCATION &  
LEARNING**



**HEALTHY**



**EQUAL &  
INCLUDED**

Lets have a look at some examples of the key progress we have made on the badges in 2024-2025





The Council doesn't run children and young people's services itself, but it helps by giving money to groups that do. These groups must agree to learn about children's rights and show how they will support them in their work.



One funding programme, called Peace Plus, gives about £8 million to projects that help different communities get along better. A small team at the Council looks after this. Children and young people were asked what kind of projects they wanted the money to go to. Now, the Council is making sure that all groups applying for this money know about children's rights and include them in their work. Training is also given to help these groups understand and use children's rights properly.



Online training courses about children's rights are now available to all Council staff, staff in Youth Justice Agency (YJA) and the Western Health and Social Care Trust (WHSCCT). YJA and the WHSCCT made children's rights a part of new staff training and YJA made online children's rights training mandatory for all YJA staff of all roles.



In 2024 YJA made the job of Participation Officer more senior and with more responsibility. This means that participation and children's rights in YJA is sitting at the right level to become a part of all of the work YJA does with children and young people.



One of the big achievements in the WHSCCT this year was making sure children's rights are part of the training for social care staff. The training team worked closely with others to include children's rights in lots of important training courses.



The Education Authority Youth Service (EA) has developed the participation toolkit to ensure the voice of children and young people is central to decision making affecting young people's lives. The Lundy model was key to the development of this piece of work.



This year, a group called the Western Area Outcomes Group (WAOG) had special training from UNICEF about children's rights. This group includes senior staff from important services that work with children and young people in the area. The group is led by the Director of Families and Children's Services in the WHSCT. The training helped get support from top staff in many different organisations.



The WHSCT also made sure that children's rights are now part of their main group for listening to children and young people's views (called the Involvement Forum).



In 2024 and 2025 YJA consulted with children and young people, parents and carers and victims of crime on their lived experiences of YJA services. Their feedback informed the YJA corporate plan 2025-2028.



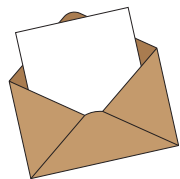
In 24/25 Child Rights Based Approach Training was delivered to key audiences including Council staff, EA staff, YJA staff, WHSCT Staff, the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) team as well as community youth workers. A total of 138 practitioners and those who work both directly and indirectly with children and young people were trained.



The Mayor, with help from the Council, launched Our Guildhall, Our Space - a safe and welcoming place for young people to hang out. Over 700 young people aged 12 to 20 have taken part. The March 2025 event, funded by the Health Trust, was a big success and showed how much local leaders care about young people.



The North West Ministry of Youth - Youth Voice group has also worked hard this year to speak up for children and young people. They've shared ideas with the Department of Education and helped plan the Our Guildhall, Our Space events, making sure everyone feels included.



In 2024-2025 YJA worked with its other justice partners in the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) to review the first letters and information sent to children and young people when they are invited to a Youth Engagement Clinic. The YJA Participation Officer worked with parents and children and young people to improve the communications and make them less intimidating and more child friendly.



A small scale media review was carried out by DCSDC media team with examples of where Child Rights were and were not upheld. The 2023/2024 review showed that 84.6% of local media news stories were positive and 15.4% negative and children's rights were not upheld.



In 2025 YJA has committed to publishing a child-friendly version of the YJA corporate plan 2025-2028. This will be completed with children and young people.



The WHSCT has improved its staff website (SharePoint) to help people learn about the services it offers. This includes explaining the laws and rules that guide their work. This year, they added a focus on children's rights to their Early Intervention services. This helps share their work on becoming a UNICEF Child Friendly Community. The website now includes helpful children's rights materials, like presentations on the Lundy Model, checklists, UNCRC info, and easy-to-read guides.



EA has developed its practice to include the use of podcasts to broadcast the voice of young people and ensure they feel included in discussions about issues that affect their lives. This has seen the facilitation of discussions by young people for young people and can now be used as an educational tool to raise awareness.





The WHSCT has started using a new newsletter called FYI as part of its Early Help plan. It shares information about the support available for young people and families in the area. It also helps young people find help for their mental health and wellbeing, including links to online support like the Youth Wellness menu.



In 2024 YJA developed a case study for research called 'Implementing Trauma Informed Approaches in Northern Ireland' it shows the learning YJA has went through to become a trauma informed organisation for children, young people and their families.



The FLARE youth worker co-delivered a personal and social development programme at Lenamore Youth Centre, focusing on horticulture and climate, underpinned by an emotional health and wellbeing framework. The programme involved up to 10 young people aged 9-11 years old and ran for six months from March to August.



EA staff undertook ACES and Circle Of Courage training to assist in the delivery of a Childs Rights Based Approach to meet the needs of young people. By enhancing empathy and understanding, youth workers feel they can now better support children and young people.



The development of a child rights based approach to Outdoor Education by the EA Outdoor Learning Service has seen the creation of more inclusive environments where young people can express themselves freely and participate in decision making processes. The development has seen an enhancement to the co-design process and activities are developed in partnership with young people instead of being pushed upon them.



In 2025 YJA continued to roll out the colocated CAMHS service within the YJA western area team. Research showed us that children and young people in contact with justice faced different barriers in accessing mental health services. Now we have a mental health practitioner based in our local YJA team a number of days per week.



This year, CAMHS and EA worked together to create Emotional Wellbeing teams in schools. The goal is to make mental health support easier to find and more youth friendly. Young people helped review things like the 'Young Persons Guide to Mental Health' and other CAMHS materials. They helped design clearer appointment letters, leaflets, video etc. There are also versions for parents in other languages and in easy-read formats.



This year, the Emotional Wellbeing Teams in Schools (EWTS) ran a survey in schools as part of the Healthy badge work. The survey was sent to all young people in the first group of schools taking part, and 4,031 young people filled it in. The answers gave the team lots of useful information to help improve mental health and emotional wellbeing support. It also showed the top 5 topics young people think schools need more training and awareness on. Listening to young people is an important part of making the service better.



The restart of the REACH programme by the EA saw the further embedding of the emotional health and wellbeing framework in local schools. By offering a range of youth work approaches, including workshops, group work, and one-to-one support. REACH aims to develop positive emotional health, increase readiness for learning, and build resilience among pupils.



The continuation of the FLARE programme has enabled workers to deliver programmes that address personal and social development through various activities, including horticulture and climate education. These programmes are co- designed to create experiential learning environments where young people can engage with nature, develop new skills and improve their emotional resilience



A new Dual Language Child Rights Defender programme was tested in Irish Medium primary schools. Children said it helped stop discrimination and made them feel important and respected. It was run by NICCY and the Council, with lessons in the children's own language and schools. A video about children's rights was also made in Irish, Ulster Scots, and sign languages. It will be shared online soon.



As part of the Council's Play Plan, 4 new parks have opened, with another coming in summer 2025. Work is also happening on 12 more parks, and plans are being made to add communication boards to help everyone enjoy the space.



The WHSCT has seen an increase in the number of unaccompanied young people accessing their services over the past year. As highlighted in our UNICEF CFC action plan we are committed to ensuring that the voice of our more marginalised young people are involved and heard in our processes.




In 2024-25 the YJA reviewed its informed consent information for the equality monitoring process. A child friendly equality monitoring form and a child friendly information cover sheet was created with children and young people.



This year our Children Looked After (CLA) team within the WHSCT have successfully recruited a small group of young aged 10-15 years to join our Youth Ambassador Forum (YAF) utilising the Lundy model for participation. The YAF have designed and planned the first event of their project which was the "Easter Eggtravaganza". This was a hugely successful event which the Youth Ambassadors co-designed, produced and facilitated by the Youth Ambassadors along with the CLAS team.

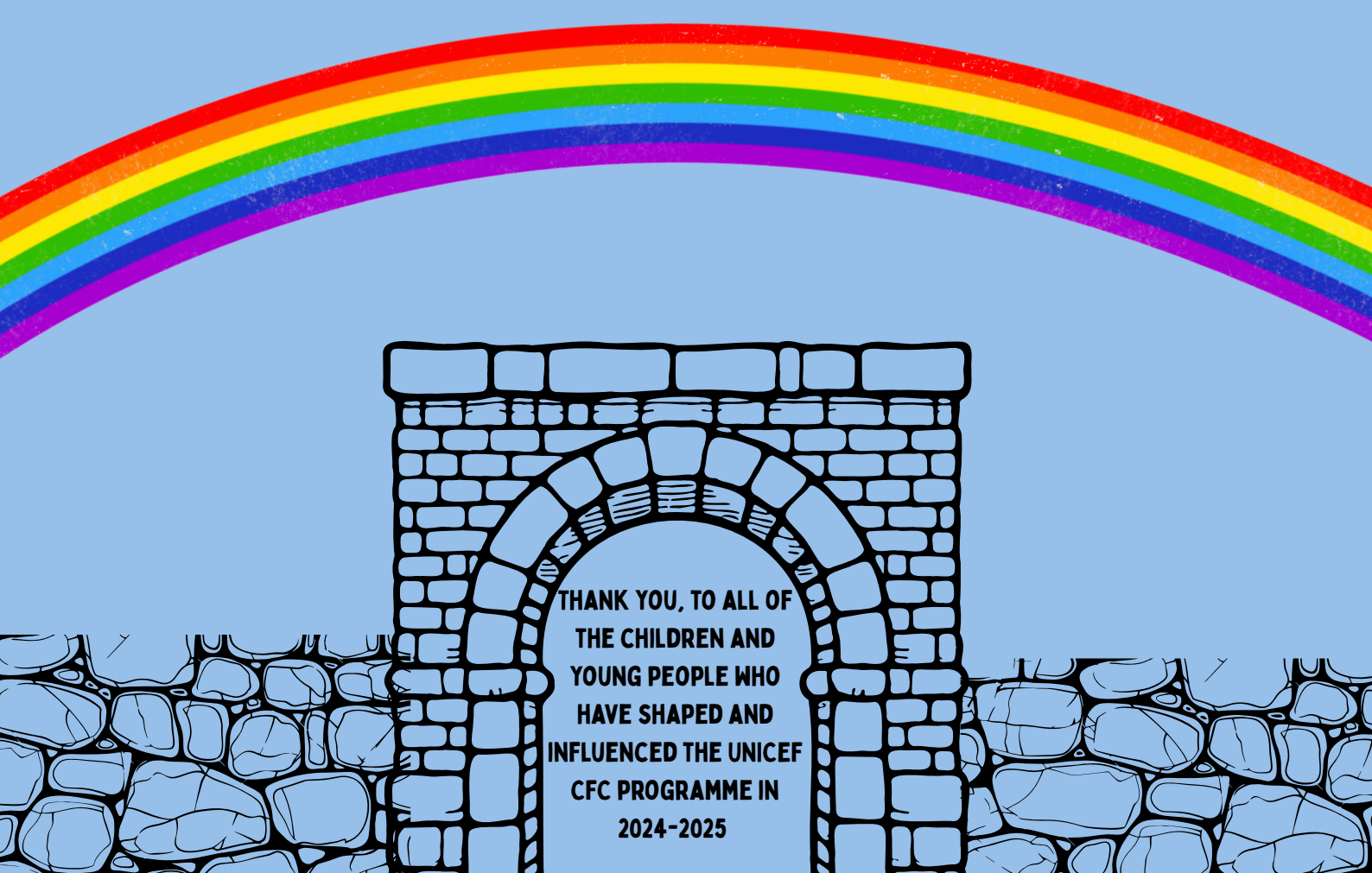


The delivery of "Games With Aims" training aligns with a child rights-based approach by ensuring inclusivity, participation, and respect for the dignity of every child. Volunteers are trained to plan, facilitate, and reflect on activities, fostering leadership, communication, and empathy.



**I COME FROM TRAUMA, MUSIC, AND PAIN,  
FROM LESSONS LEARNED THROUGH LOSS AND GAIN.  
I CARRY TALENT, STRENGTH, AND FIRE,  
A VOICE THAT SPEAKS, A HEART'S DESIRE.  
I OFFER KINDNESS, ACCEPTANCE, GRACE,  
FAMILY, LOVE, A WARM EMBRACE.  
I CARRY DIFFERENCE, A UNIQUE MIND,  
IN ACTIVISM, I SEEK TO FIND.  
FAITH AND LOVE ARE CLOSE TO ME,  
FIGHTING FOR JUSTICE, FOR ALL TO BE FREE.  
FROM THE PAST, I RISE WITH LIGHT,  
I OFFER A FUTURE WHERE ALL ARE RIGHT.**

**A POEM BY CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN DERRY CITY AND STRABANE**



**THANK YOU, TO ALL OF  
THE CHILDREN AND  
YOUNG PEOPLE WHO  
HAVE SHAPED AND  
INFLUENCED THE UNICEF  
CFC PROGRAMME IN  
2024-2025**