

# **Children's rights and the care review**

## **Submission by coalition of coalitions**

As a coalition of coalitions working with and for children and young people in England, we ask that the children's social care review publicly commits to upholding the principles and provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) through its working methods, analytical framework and proposals for change.

The UNCRC entitles all children to a comprehensive set of economic, social and cultural and civil and political rights, without discrimination. It guarantees a wide range of support and social protection to parents. Children separated from their families are granted special protection and assistance – vital safeguards to ensure they can recover from harm and thrive. Those who have been abused or suffered other rights violations are entitled to recover in environments which nurture their health, self-respect and dignity. The treaty's preamble affirms the importance of every child being able to grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding.

The UK ratified the Convention in December 1991, shortly after the Children Act 1989 came into force – an Act of Parliament which upholds many aspects of the international treaty. Article 4 of the Convention requires governments to take all possible action to implement the treaty in law, policy and practice; this includes using the maximum available resources to uphold children's economic, social and cultural rights.

Our organisations are unequivocally committed to the full implementation of the UNCRC in England and urge this review to build on positive children's rights developments, both national and international. This would mean:

- The review promotes and strengthens children's rights; a Child Rights Impact Assessment of its own proposals and recommendations would provide an assurance mechanism for this.
- Children's rights standards (as expressed in domestic and international law) form the framework of the review.
- The review refrains from making any recommendations which dilute or delete existing legal protections which children, young people (including care leavers) and families rely upon.
- Children's meaningful and effective participation is at the heart of the review, informed by the Committee on the Rights of the Child's comprehensive

guidance on implementing Article 12 of the Convention, the child's right to be heard and taken seriously. This applies to both the review's working methods and to the recommendations it makes for strengthening children's rights: all children have the right to express their views freely, to have these given due weight and to be heard and represented in all administrative and judicial proceedings when decisions are being made about them.

- Children and families benefit from increased legal entitlements and social protection, because of this review; and
- The review champions government systems and structures which work for children and their families, and all those who care for, protect and support children and young people.

Separately, we call on the government to accelerate the process of full incorporation of the UNCRC into UK law, consistent with recommendations made by the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

### **The Alliance for Children in Care and Care Leavers**

Ben Twomey and David Graham, Co-Chairs  
*36 organisations*

### **Together for Children**

Carolyn Willow, National Steering Group Member  
*230+ organisations and individual supporters*

### **Alliance for Youth Justice (AYJ)**

Pippa Goodfellow, Director  
*70 organisations and 20 individual members*

### **Association of Lawyers for Children (ALC)**

Siobhan F Kelly and Hannah Perry, Co-Chairs  
*Almost 1,000 individual members*

### **BASW England (British Assoc. of Social Workers) National Standing Committee**

Andy Gill, Chair  
*Almost 21,000 individual members*

### **Care Review Watch Alliance**

Christian Kerr, Steering Group Member  
*13 steering group members*

### **Every Child Leaving Care Matters (ECLCM)**

Ed Nixon, Chair of the Board  
*10,000+ campaign supporters*

### **Refugee and Migrant Children's Consortium (RMCC)**

Maya Pritchard, Co-Chair  
*60+ organisations*



**TOGETHER FOR CHILDREN**

**CARE REVIEW WATCH ALLIANCE**

**Refugee & Migrant Children's Consortium**