



Children's  
Rights Alliance  
for England

# State of Children's Rights in England **2016**

## Briefing 2 Children at the Centre: The General Measures and General Principles of the CRC



## Briefing 2

# Children at the Centre: The General Measures and General Principles of the CRC



**ARTICLE 2** States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the CRC to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that the child is protected against all forms of discrimination or punishment.

**ARTICLE 3** In all actions concerning children, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.

**ARTICLE 4** States Parties shall undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative and other measures for the implementation of the rights recognised in the CRC. With regard to economic, social and cultural rights, States Parties shall undertake such measures to the maximum extent of available resources.

**ARTICLE 6** States Parties recognize that every child has the inherent right to life and shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child.

**ARTICLE 12** States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child. The views of the child should be given due weight in accordance with the child's age and maturity.

**ARTICLE 23** A disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in the community. States Parties recognise the right of the disabled child to special care and ensure they have effective access to education, training, health care, rehabilitation, preparation for employment and recreation opportunities.

**ARTICLE 42** States Parties undertake to make the principles and provisions of the Convention widely known, by appropriate and active means, to adults and children alike.

**ARTICLE 44.6** States Parties shall make their reports widely available to the public in their own countries.

### Definitions and Glossary

**Children:** This briefing refers to "children" which covers all children and young people under-18 as set out by article 1 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

**States Party:** Countries which have ratified the CRC.

**General Measures of Implementation (GMIs):** Articles 4, 42 and 44.6 of the CRC, which set out what is required to ensure children's rights are fully respected. Further guidance is set out in a General Comment by the UN Committee. This says that States Parties should take legal measures to implement the CRC so decisions can be challenged in court; and non-legal measures, such as carrying out child rights impact assessments when making policy and budgetary decisions.

**Reservation and Declarations:** A Reservation allows a State to ratify a Convention as a whole but place a specific exception on part of a Treaty. A Declaration sets out how a State interprets an aspect of a Treaty which they believe is unclear.

**Optional Protocol:** This is an additional legal instrument that adds to a treaty. The CRC has three Optional Protocols on: the involvement of children in armed conflict; the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and a communication procedure. States must independently ratify a Protocol.

## About this briefing

The UK ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1991. This means that all areas of government and the state; including local government, schools, health services, and criminal justice bodies, must do all they can to fulfil children's rights. In June 2016 the UK Government was examined by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (UN Committee) on its compliance with the CRC for the first time since 2008. The UN Committee set out a number of concerns (summarised below) and recommendations (Concluding Observations) for change.<sup>1</sup>

This briefing is part of CRAE's *State of Children's Rights 2016* and assesses the progress made in England towards implementing the UN Committee's recommendations relating to the CRC General Measures of Implementation (GMIs) and the General Principles. It highlights areas of progress and concern since July 2015 when CRAE coordinated the England civil society report to the UN Committee as part of the last UK examination.<sup>2</sup> This was endorsed by 76 civil society organisations.

### What is the CRC?

The CRC applies to all children aged 17 years and under and sets out the basic things that children need to thrive - the right to an adequate standard of living, to be protected from all forms of violence, an education, to play, be healthy, and be cared for. Children's rights should act as a safety net – meaning children always receive at least the minimum standard of treatment whatever the changing economic climate.

The CRC has four guiding principles (General Principles) which are rights in themselves but also the framework through which all the rights in the CRC should be interpreted. They are: non-discrimination (article 2); the best interests of the child (article 3); survival and development (article 6); and respect for the views of the child (article 12).

This briefing is based on written and oral evidence from CRAE's members and additional analysis of recent laws and policies, newly published research, official statistics, and responses to Freedom of Information requests.

### Concerns of the UN Committee 2016

- Lack of justiciability of the principles and provisions of the CRC under domestic law
- No comprehensive action plan to ensure full CRC implementation
- Lack of a statutory obligation to systematically conduct child rights impact assessments
- Insufficient human, technical and financial resources to ensure effective coordination and evaluation of CRC implementation
- Reductions in legal aid have had a negative impact on the right of children to be heard in judicial and administrative proceedings
- Exemption of children from protection of age discrimination under the Equality Act 2010
- Counter-terrorism measures widely perceived as discriminatory, particularly on Muslim children
- Many children in certain groups, including Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller children, children of other ethnic minorities, disabled children, children in care, asylum seeking and refugee children, and LGBTQ children continue to experience discrimination
- The best interests of the child is still not reflected in all legislation and policy matters
- Infant and child mortality is linked to the level of social and economic deprivation
- Children's views are not systematically heard in policy making or by professionals

## Introduction

The last 18 months have resulted in changes to the political landscape not seen in recent times. The UK's decision to leave the European Union (EU) in June 2016 casts doubt on the continued enjoyment of many rights and entitlements children currently enjoy due to EU law. Uncertainties around the economy and concerns over rises in the cost of living could also adversely affect struggling families with children. Hate crimes and racist language have also increased since the referendum result.

With the appointment of a new Prime Minister in summer 2016, there was an opportunity for renewed political leadership on how we treat children. Unfortunately, this opportunity was missed. England no longer has a government minister with responsibility for the rights of all children and the threat that the political conversation over the coming years will be dominated by Brexit, with little space for issues affecting children, is very real.

## What progress have we made?

In October 2016, the Minister for Vulnerable Children and Families laid a statement before parliament on the UN Committee's Concluding Observations (COs) which urged government departments to reflect on its concerns. The Department for Education (DfE) has retained a team with responsibility for the CRC following the UK's examination by the UN Committee at the end of May 2016.

Government is taking forward a number of actions to strengthen children's participation and address discrimination. These include implementation of provisions in the Children and Families Act 2014, which strengthen disabled children's participation rights; the establishment of an independent review on the disproportionate number of people from Black, Asian and other Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities in the criminal justice system; and commissioning training to improve advocacy for looked after children.

## Where do we need to improve?

### General measures of implementation

#### No progress on signing up to CRC complaints procedure

There's been no progress on signing the Optional Protocol on a Communications Procedure. Government maintains *'the UK already has strong and effective laws under which individuals may seek enforceable remedies.'*<sup>3</sup> Disappointingly, it also continues to keep its Declaration to the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict, which sets out when it might not be possible to prevent deployment of under-18s in hostilities. Furthermore, children are still held alongside adults in the Military Corrective Centre and many police stations don't have separate cells for children.<sup>4</sup> This is despite removing its reservation to article 37(c) - the requirement to keep detained children separate from adults.

#### Children's legal rights under threat

The Government persists in opposing calls to explicitly incorporate the CRC into domestic law. **A proposal in the Children and Social Work Bill poses a significant threat to the legal rights that children currently enjoy.** Clauses 29-33 allow local authorities to opt out of specific pieces of children's legislation for up to six years. During debates in the Lords the Government gave examples of things local authorities could opt out of. These included the removal of independent reviewing officers from "low risk" children in care and removing looked after status from children remanded to custody.<sup>5</sup> An amendment tabled at Report in the Lords to remove the clauses was passed by 245 to 231 votes but Government may reinsert the clause when the Bill goes to the Commons. A broad alliance of 43 organisations<sup>6</sup> has come together to call on the Government to scrap the plans.

Concerns remain with the Government's continued commitment to repeal the Human Rights Act and replace it with a British Bill of Rights. The new Secretary of State for Justice confirmed that Government will press ahead with plans despite widespread opposition.<sup>7</sup>

Organisations and academics have also expressed disquiet that children could lose rights following the result of the EU referendum.<sup>8</sup>

### A lack of government leadership for all children

Disappointingly, an opportunity to appoint a Cabinet Minister for children in the reshuffle following the appointment of the new Prime Minister in July 2016 wasn't taken. Instead the role of Minister for Children and Families was replaced with a Minister for Vulnerable Children and Families. This is a backwards step. The UN Committee has made clear senior political leadership is required if children's rights are to be fully respected.

More needs to be done to ensure adequate coordination of CRC implementation. A child rights team staying in place within the DfE is welcome, but it lacks the capacity and authority needed to effectively monitor and coordinate children's rights across government.

### Inadequate response to the UN Committee

While we welcome a Ministerial statement made in October 2016 on the UN's COs, which included a renewed commitment to the CRC, it is disappointing that Government continues to resist calls for a child rights action plan. This is urgently needed so Government can set out how it will address the concerns raised by the UN Committee and be held accountable on such action. The distribution of the COs across Whitehall is positive, as is a call for government departments to reflect on the UN's recommendations, but these steps alone will not ensure the UN's concerns are fully addressed.

### No movement on assessing decisions against children's rights

**Government remains unconvinced of the value of child rights impact assessments (CRIA) despite a UN Committee recommendation to make them statutory.**

This is despite evidence showing the 2010 Ministerial Commitment to give 'due consideration to the CRC' has had little tangible impact on how decisions are made. In answer to a Parliamentary

Question asking departments how they have taken into account the CRC, only the DfE and the Department for International Development gave examples of how the CRC had influenced policy making.<sup>9</sup> This demonstrates the need for a statutory duty on public sector bodies to have due regard to the CRC and would also help Westminster catch up with legislation in place in Wales and Scotland. The Government opposed amendments to the Children and Social Work Bill to introduce a public sector child rights duty but positively, it did commit to looking at the issue further and considering evidence from devolved nations<sup>10</sup> There's also been no progress on fully disaggregating Government spend on children or carrying out CRIA on spending decisions.

### Inadequate legal aid remains a key threat to children's rights

The drastic reduction in legal aid introduced by the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASPO) remains one of the greatest threats to children's rights. Recent research finds: **'Access to justice in England has been undermined and fundamentally weakened by the cuts to civil legal aid in breach of the UK's international human rights obligations'** and has had a significant impact on children making claims in their own rights and in Family Court Proceedings.<sup>11</sup> During the passage of the LASPO Bill, the Government argued that expanded Exceptional Case Funding (ECF) would provide a "safety net" but this isn't born out by facts. Ministry of Justice (MoJ) data shows that only eight children and 28 young adults were granted legal aid under the ECF Scheme between October 2013 and June 2015.<sup>12</sup> A report published in summer 2015 also concluded that the changes had left separated children '*without a vital lifeline*' and undermined '*their chances of finding a permanent and safe solution to their immigration issues.*'<sup>13</sup>

Government is yet to confirm when its planned review of legal aid will commence. The UN Committee called on the UK to: *'assess the impact and expedite the review of the reforms on legal aid... in order to ensure that such reforms do not negatively affect children's access to justice...'*

## General Principles

### Discrimination persists for particular groups of children

IN 2016, the UN Committee repeated its 2008 recommendation that the UK take *'urgent measures to address the "intolerance of childhood"'* demonstrating that much more needs to be done in this area.

### Anti-terrorism strategy stigmatising children

Serious concerns have been raised about the *Prevent Strategy*. A new report concludes that Prevent – and in particular the introduction of the statutory duty on teachers and many public servants to report signs of radicalisation – is stifling fundamental rights and freedoms of children, including freedom of expression and belief. The report demonstrates that Muslim children have been disproportionately impacted and fear being reported for expressing political and religious views.<sup>14</sup>

The UK's Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation has raised concerns that *'aspects of the programme are ineffective or being applied in an insensitive or discriminatory manner.'*<sup>15</sup>

Reported incidents back up this assertion: examples include a four year old boy being referred for drawing a picture of his Dad chopping a cucumber and his description of the picture being misheard as his father having a "cooker bomb."<sup>16</sup> In March 2016, the National Union of Teachers passed a motion rejecting the Prevent duty<sup>17</sup> and in August 2016, the Home Affairs Select Committee called for an independent review of the decision to make it statutory. It concluded that ***Prevent is proving counterproductive by alienating those who may be susceptible to radicalisation.***<sup>18</sup>

The UN Committee called on the UK to *'Strengthen the oversight mechanism, including regular independent reviews, to assess and ensure that the implementation of the counter-terrorism measures... will not have a discriminatory and stigmatising impact on any group of children.'*

## Case study

### Vulnerable children being denied legal aid

Josephine is a separated migrant child aged 17 and originally from Uganda. She arrived in the UK aged 14 after the death of her parents via an international adoption arrangement which had been organised by her British "uncle" who was living in Uganda. Soon after her arrival, an application was made to regularise her status and she was granted indefinite leave to remain in the UK with her "aunt" and "uncle". These adults had only been masquerading as safe and reliable hosts. Instead, they turned a formal care arrangement into something ugly and exploitative. Josephine was subjected to conditions of domestic servitude and physical and emotional abuse. She was forced to care for the young child of her adopted parents, given limited freedom of movement, and was rendered powerless by threats made to return her to Uganda where she had no existing family or social networks.

At 16, Josephine escaped finding refuge with another aunt and uncle. She is now safer, happier and doing well in her final year at college. When we met her, she was making an application to become naturalised as a British citizen. Despite clear indicators of trafficking Josephine was never referred into the National Referral Mechanism. As a result of the changes she cannot get legal aid to support her application for naturalisation or to make a referral into the National Referral Mechanism. Josephine's only source of money is income support, which she uses for basic subsistence and education. She has been placed under considerable pressure to save money in order to pay the £750 administration fee for her application and she cannot afford the additional costs of a solicitor.

Source: This is an edited version of a case study in: The Children's Society (2015) *Cut off from Justice: The impact of excluding separated children from legal aid*



**Only 8 children and 28 young adults granted legal aid under the Exceptional Case Funding Scheme between October 2013 and June 2015**

### **Gypsy/Roma and Traveller children remain disadvantaged**

Compared with the general population, Gypsy/Roma and Travellers are more likely to suffer bad health, including lower life expectancy, high infant mortality rates, low child immunisation rates and greater prevalence of anxiety and depression.<sup>19</sup> They are also more likely to have no qualifications and be economically inactive than the population as a whole.<sup>20</sup> A recent report concludes that these poor outcomes are *'symptomatic of the marginalisation and non-inclusion they experience as children in school'* with formal school exclusions a key indicator of this marginalisation. The report undertakes an analysis of the reasons for Traveller and Gypsy/Roma children's exclusion from school. It finds that these children are more likely to be excluded for *'persistent disruptive behaviour'* and argues (in line with DfE guidance) that schools should consider if *'such disruptive behaviour is a result of unmet needs'*. Traveller children are also four times more likely and Gypsy/Roma children three times more likely to be excluded for physical assaults than the total student population. The research concludes this is likely to be due to these children reacting to discriminatory or racist bullying which has been documented to be widespread.<sup>21</sup> See Briefing 4 for more information on the educational attainment gap and exclusion figures.

### **Discrimination persists for LGBTQ children**

Recent research concludes that across policy areas there's a lack of representative and quantitative data on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) people which hinders a reliable assessment of the extent of disadvantage for these groups. Of the data available, it finds that **homophobic, biphobic and transphobic**

**bullying remains a major problem in schools** and heteronormativity in educational institutions reinforces feelings of alienation among LGBT students.<sup>22</sup> This is consistent with research on transgender children which found that a large proportion experience harassment or bullying at school (91% of trans boys and 66% of trans girls) often leading to depression, isolation and a desire to leave education early.<sup>23</sup>

### **Increase in racial abuse since EU referendum**

The recent report on the UK by the UN Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination raises deep concerns that **the EU referendum campaign was marked by 'divisive, anti-immigrant and xenophobic rhetoric'**.<sup>24</sup> In England and Wales in July 2016 hate crime reports peaked at nearly 60% higher, and is still 14% higher, than at the same point last year.<sup>25</sup> For more information see Briefing 4.

The UN Committee recommends the Government *'strengthen awareness raising and other preventive activities against discrimination and stigmatisation.'* See Briefing 8 for information on the overrepresentation of BAME children in the criminal justice system.

### **Respect for the views of the child not fully realised**

#### **No progress on lowering the voting age**

Despite positive progress in Scotland, where 16 and 17 year olds can vote in Scottish elections, 16 year olds are unable to participate in elections in England. While the Lords voted to lower the age of voting in the EU referendum to 16 years old, this was blocked by the Commons.<sup>26</sup> The UN Committee encouraged the UK to conduct consultations with children on the voting age

and recommended that it be lowered alongside the delivery of active citizenship and human rights education.

### Children not systematically involved in decision-making

Many children still feel they're not listened to or provided with feedback by professionals. There continues to be no permanent structure to facilitate systematic participation of children in policy making (provision for under-11s is particularly patchy). The UN Committee recommended Government *'establish structures for the active and meaningful participation of children and give due weight to their views in designing laws, policies, programmes and services at the local and national level.'*

**A recent review of safeguarding arrangements and healthcare of looked after children found that 'too often inspectors found the voice of the child had been lost':** 62% said their voice wasn't heard or they didn't feel involved in their care. The report concluded: *'The extent that children feel listened to significantly influences how safe and happy they feel.'* It calls on healthcare providers to better engage with children, including those with complex and severe needs, in their care planning and on how services can improve.<sup>27</sup>

Positively, Government recently announced it will commission a new training programme for existing independent advocates (a statutory provision to all looked after children).<sup>28</sup> While welcome, more needs to be done to ensure that all children in care know about and can have access to an independent advocate.<sup>29</sup> A report by the Children's Commissioner for England found that many children in care don't know about advocacy with 55% of children saying they didn't know about advocacy or how to get an advocate.<sup>30</sup>

The UN Committee recommended that *'particular attention should be paid to involving... children in vulnerable situations, such as children with disabilities' in decision-making.* Measures in the Children and Families Act 2014, aimed to strengthen the participation rights of disabled children, have started to be implemented but there is *'still a long way to go'* and challenges remain.<sup>31</sup> Research into disabled children's

experience of local decision making found: many disabled children are still excluded from participation and decision making opportunities; participation is not fully embedded in strategic, service level or individual decision making; and basic access needs to support disabled children's participation aren't being met.<sup>32</sup>

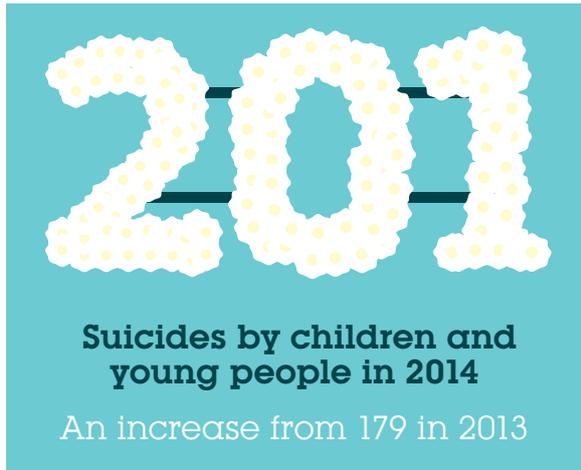
Children still have key participation rights denied in school, including to be heard, and taken seriously, by school Governing Bodies, and the right to appeal on their own behalf against school exclusions unless they are disabled. The **UN Committee recommended the UK 'ensure that all children are not only heard but also listened to and their views given due weight by all professionals.'**

### Child's best interests not a primary consideration

There's been inadequate progress in enshrining children's best interests as a primary consideration in laws and policies as the following examples demonstrate. The UN Committee recommended this right be *'appropriately integrated and consistently applied in all legislation, administrative and judicial proceedings and decisions...'*

Following a 2013 Joint Committee on Human Rights report,<sup>33</sup> Government committed *'to consider the case for establishing a Best Interests Determination Process in the context of the existing immigration and asylum process.'*<sup>34</sup> Despite limited dialogue with organisations, this hasn't been taken forward. In its response to a recent report by the Lords European Union Committee (EU Committee) the Government has, disappointingly, confirmed that it *'believes the existing process continues to ensure that a child's best interests are taken into account at every stage and it is not clear what information might be provided through a dedicated determination process that is not already available to decision makers.'* This is in contrast to EU Committee evidence suggesting that ***'despite the existence of guidance on the application of the best interest principle, it is not respected and is regarded as an impediment to the effective operation of immigration controls.'***<sup>35</sup>

Similarly, in a March 2015 Supreme Court Judgement, the majority of the court said the Benefit Cap wasn't compatible with the CRC as



it failed to give the best interests of the child primary consideration.<sup>36</sup> Despite this judgement, in November 2016, a reduced benefit cap came into force. In its impact assessment of the change the Department for Work in Pensions claims the CRC was taken into account<sup>37</sup> despite the Deputy President of the Supreme Court, Lady Hale, saying: ***'It cannot possibly be in the best interests of the children affected by the cap to deprive them of the means to provide them with adequate food, clothing, warmth and housing, the basic necessities of life.'*** See Briefing 3 for more information on the Benefit Cap.

### Right to survival and development not fully realised

In 2014, there were 2,517 infant deaths (deaths under 1 year) in England and Wales, down from 2,686 in 2013. In 2014, the infant mortality rate was 3.6 deaths per 1000 live births, the lowest ever recorded in England and Wales. In 2014, there were 3,254 still births and 1,376 deaths at age under 7 days, which is a perinatal mortality rate of 6.6 deaths per 1,000 total births. This is a fall by just over a quarter since 1993.<sup>38</sup> Whilst these reductions are welcome, **child mortality still differs depending on the mother's country of birth, age and socio-economic factors.**

The infant mortality rate is 2.1 deaths per 1,000 live births and the perinatal mortality rate is 5.1 deaths per 1,000 total births for those with mothers of higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations compared to 5.3 deaths per 1,000 live births and 8.3 deaths per 1,000 total births, respectively, for those with mothers of routine and manual occupations.

**Table 1: Infant mortality rates by National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC), 2014, England and Wales**

National Statistics Socio-economic Classification	Infant mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)	Perinatal mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 total births)
(NS-SEC)		
Higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations	2.1	5.1
Intermediate occupations	3.0	6.0
Routine and manual occupations	5.3	8.3

Source: Office for National Statistics

Children of mothers born in Pakistan and Central Africa are more likely to die in infancy than children with mothers born inside the UK: 7.4 and 6.7 per 1,000 live births respectively, compared to 3.5 deaths per 1,000 live births.<sup>39</sup> See Briefing 7 for more information on health inequalities.

In the year ending 31 March 2016, Child Death Overview Panels compiled 3,665 reviews. This was a rise in the last 12 months after a steady decrease in the last three years. The proportion of deaths assessed as having modifiable factors (factors which, by means of nationally or locally achievable interventions, could be modified to reduce the risk of future deaths) has remained unchanged at 24% from the previous year.<sup>40</sup> The UN Committee recommended the UK *'address underlying determinants of infant and child mortality, including social and economic deprivation and inequality'*.

Alarmingly, the numbers of children committing suicide is increasing. In 2014, there were 13 suicides by children aged between 10 and 14 years and 188 of young people aged between 15 and 19 years. An increase from nine and 170, respectively, in 2013.<sup>41</sup> While the proportion of girls and boys committing suicide is similar for the younger age group there is a stark difference amongst older age groups (138 males to 50 females).<sup>42</sup> Of real concern is that data shows that as of end of March 2016, of the 119 child deaths categorised as suicide or deliberate self-inflicted deaths, 42% included modifiable factors. See Briefing 7 for more information on mental health.

See Briefings 7 and 8 for information on deaths in mental health settings and custody.

## Recommendations

1. The Government should give full consideration to ratification of the Optional Protocol on a complaints procedure and the right of children to be separated from adults in detention must be fully implemented.
2. The Government should scrap its plans to repeal the Human Rights Act.
3. The Government should remove Clauses 29 - 33 from the Children and Social Work Bill
4. In consultation with stakeholders, the Government should develop a comprehensive action plan to ensure full implementation of the CRC.
5. The Government should introduce a statutory obligation on public authorities to conduct child rights impact assessments in all decision-making affecting children, including in budgetary decision-making.
6. A Cabinet Minister with responsibility for children's rights should be appointed alongside sufficient human, technical and financial resources to ensure effective coordination and evaluation of implementation of the CRC.
7. The Government should ensure all children can access adequate legal aid. At the very least, it should carry out its promised review of legal aid with urgency.
8. The Government should remove the Prevent duty from teachers and other public servants and urgently review the Prevent strategy in partnership with key stakeholders, including Muslim groups.
9. The Government should take urgent action to address discrimination experienced by many groups of children, especially in relation to bullying and school exclusions.
10. The Government should ensure that the best interests of the child as a primary consideration is enshrined in all relevant legislation and policy matters.
11. Immigration law, policy and practice should reflect the UK's legal obligations under the CRC. The Home Office should ensure that the best interest principle is a primary consideration in every action concerning children.
12. The Government should put mechanisms in place to allow for the systematic participation of children in decision making at national and local level, including young children, disabled children and children from disadvantaged groups. As a first step, it should include a commitment on children's participation in its Open Government Partnership action plan.
13. Local authorities must ensure that measures in the Children and Families Act 2014 to increase disabled children's participation are fully implemented.
14. Further steps should be taken by Government to ensure that independent and confidential advocacy is widely available. Where a child is subject of administrative proceedings there should be a statutory right to an independent and confidential advocate.
15. The Government should extend the right to vote and stand in public elections to 16 and 17 year olds.
16. The Government should take further action to address infant and child mortality linked with the level of social and economic deprivation.
17. The Government should ensure that disaggregated data is publicly available on all children who self-harm or commit suicide including those in care, custody and immigration detention.

## Endnotes

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5. HL Deb: *Children and Social Work Bill* (14 June 2016) C1203
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7. <https://www.bih.org.uk/human-rights-act-pledge>
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21. The Traveller Movement (2016) *Never giving up on them: School exclusions of Gypsy, Traveller and Roma pupils in England*
22. National Institute of Economic and Social Research (2016) *Inequality among lesbian, gay bisexual and transgender groups in the UK: a review of evidence*
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27. Care Quality Commission (2016) *Not seen not heard: A Review of the arrangements for child safeguarding and healthcare for looked after children*
28. House of Lords European Union Committee (2016) *Government's response to the House of Lords European Union Committee report - Children in Crisis: Unaccompanied migrant children in the EU 2nd Report of Session 2016-17 - published 26 July 2016 - HL Paper 34*
29. National Youth Advocacy Service Press Release (October 12 201) *Care leaver launches campaign to secure more support for children in care*
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33. House of Lords House of Commons Joint Committee on Human Rights (2013) *Human Rights of unaccompanied migrant children and young people in the UK First Report of Session 2013-14*
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42. The Samaritans (2016) *Suicide statistics report 2016*

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## About CRAE

The Children's Rights Alliance for England (CRAE) works with 150 organisations and individual members to promote children's rights, making us one of the biggest children's rights coalitions in the world.

We believe that human rights are a powerful tool in making life better for children. We fight for children's rights by listening to what they say, carrying out research to understand what children are going through and using the law to challenge those who violate children's rights. We campaign for the people in power to change things for children. And we empower children and those who care about children to push for the changes that they want to see.

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