

---

## May 2018 Update

### England

---

Following the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's examination of the UK's child's rights record in June 2016, a UNCRC Action Group has been set up Co-Chaired by the Department for Education and the Children's Rights Alliance for England. The Action Group's aim is to work collaboratively to ensure follow up to the UN CRC Committee's Concluding Observations. All the major children's charities sit on the group, including Barnardo's, NSPCC and the Children's Society, alongside the Children's Commissioner for England, the Equality and Human Rights Commission and a representative from the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights.

The Department for Education is currently working on an online training tool for civil servants on children's rights, which will be launched in the autumn to coincide with International Children's Day. There has been no progress on achieving a similar child rights duty on minister's in England in line with progress in Wales and Scotland. However, the UK Government is committed to developing a child rights impact assessment (CRIA) tool to support policy making. While this is clearly significantly weaker than a statutory child rights duty it is none the less positive progress. Both the child rights training and the CRIA template are being developed in collaboration with a sub-group of the UNCRC Action Group.

Following the referendum result to leave the EU, there have been concerns raised about the impact of Brexit on children's rights. A coalition on children's rights and Brexit has been established to try and address these apprehensions. The coalition has published a briefing paper [Making Brexit work for Children](#) looking at some of the key risk to children's rights following the UK exit from the European Union and setting out recommendations. The coalition has also carried out a substantial amount of work during the passage of the EU (withdrawal Bill). It has been working to ensure that safeguards are in place so that when decisions are made post Brexit the impact on children's rights is considered. The coalition is calling for a ministerial duty to have due regard to the UNCRC when making a decision which concerns an area of policy which is currently a competency of the EU or at the very least a ministerial statement which makes a commitment to do this.

Children's organisations have also been working with the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the Equality and Diversity Forum to ensure that the [EU Charter of](#)

[Fundamental Rights](#) is maintained post Brexit day. The Charter guarantees the protection of children's rights by EU institutions and by EU member states when they implement EU law and is of crucial importance for children. It includes rights enshrined in the UNCRC - such as the right to care and protection, to express views freely in accordance with age and maturity, and the principle of children's best interests being a primary consideration in decision-making. This is important because children's rights enshrined in the Charter have been translated into practice through EU legislation, policy and case law. Given its importance for children's rights, we were therefore delighted that during Report stage of the Bill in the House of Lords, Peers passed an amendment which ensures the Charter will be included in retained EU law. It's initial absence from the Bill drew heavy criticism by the [Equality and Human Rights Commission](#), human rights organisations, such as Amnesty International and Liberty as well as the Children's Rights Alliance for England and Together, the Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights. As the Bill goes back to the House of Commons we'll be working to ensure that the Charter amendment is not overturned.

You can also read more about children's rights and the EU (Withdrawal) Bill in this [blog](#).