



## What the UNCRC says:

### Article 12

1. *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 being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.*

2. *For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.*

## What the UN Committee said to the UK Government in 2008:

The Committee recommends that the State party:

- a) Promote, facilitate and implement, in legislation as well as in practice, within the family, schools, and the community as well as in institutions and in administrative and judicial proceedings, the principle of respect for the views of the child;
- b) Support forums for children's participation, such as the United Kingdom Youth Parliament, Funky Dragon in Wales and Youth Parliament in Scotland;
- c) Continue to collaborate with civil society organisations to increase opportunities for children's meaningful participation, including in the media (para 33).

## What the Government says:

### 10 year Strategy for Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (2006):

*"in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, we will be proactive in obtaining the views of children in matters of significance to them."*

### "Working together, achieving more" (2009):

*A statement by the four UK administrations on their response to the UNCRC Concluding Observations.*

*"We will continue to support the participation of children and young people in each administration, and also will:*

- Consider how to increase opportunities for participation, both in schools and colleges and in community settings; and
- Explore how to give children and young people in the four administrations a voice on non-devolved, European and international issues."

## What children and young people say:

"People pretend they're listening, but they're not – this is very frustrating when people pretend that they are listening, but it turns out that they are not – this happens a lot"

"I've been to about 30 meetings like this and nothin' changed. \*\*\*\*in' nothing comes out. You sit here, spend an hour talking and then you're like, what's come out of this? You don't have any hope, do you? You don't have any hope that anything's going to come out of it"<sup>11</sup>

"Advice and information. How are we expected to handle ourselves and take decisions an' all that if we don't have information. We get nothing like that from schools, nothing that matters to our lives"<sup>12</sup>.