



What the UNCRC says:

Article 9 *Children should not be separated from their parents unless this is in their best interests. If court proceedings take place then all interested parties should be able to participate and make their views known. Children should be able to maintain contact with their parents unless this is contrary to their best interests.*

Article 20 *Children who are deprived either permanently or temporarily of their family environment are entitled to special protection and assistance provided by the Government. Appropriate care alternatives should be available and should pay due regard to continuity and the child's ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background.*

Article 21 *States which permit adoption should ensure that the best interests of the child are the paramount consideration and that adoption is only authorised by competent authorities.*

Article 25 *Children who are placed for the purposes of care, protection or treatment have the right to a periodic review of the treatment provided and all other circumstances relevant to their placement.*

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

The Committee expressed concern at the insufficient resourcing of staff and facilities to support children in alternative care, inadequate monitoring and review of children's care, frequent placement changes, limited contact between children in care and their family and children's limited access to complaints.

They also noted concerns about children in care from low income families and the situation of children whose parents are in prison (para 44).

The Committee made a number of recommendations including that the State should:

- Take into account the views of children and ensure they have access to complaints mechanisms
- Monitor the status of children in care including those in kinship homes, foster care and pre-adoptive homes
- Assess why so many children with disabilities are in long term care
- Facilitate contact for children separated from their parents and siblings
- Provide training and education to prepare children for adult life (para 45).

What children and young people say: ²³

Residential care

"Manager abuses their power big style, picks and chooses what happens, all different sanctions, even if you do the same stuff".

"All staff should be trained in how to restrain properly without getting hurt".

Continuity of care

"[I] felt when I was moving that it was my fault and that there was something wrong with me".
 "I've had ten social workers and I've only been in care two years...you get to know them then they go".²⁴

Participation in care planning

"I come out [of the LAC Review] and think what happened there – I don't understand three-quarters of it".

Transitions

"[Young people should be able to] build up time living on own so that it's not a shock when you have to do it– like someone being there at night to supervise them so they are safe in case something goes wrong".