

# Citizens' Day

## Children's Rights: Empowering Young People

**BELFAST MODEL SCHOOL FOR GIRLS**

22 June 2016



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Chief Executive

# Citizenship and Young People's Rights

Children's & Young People's Rights can be seen as a pathway to Citizenship

Children's & Young People's Rights are about empowerment (of all)

Children's & Young People's Rights are exercised every day e.g. accessing education, health serv's

Citizenship is about belonging and understanding your rights and the rights of others

# Overview

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- **The Rights Based Approach: Empowering Citizens**

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- **The 'Children's & Young People's Strategy'**

# NICCY's Role & Remit

## Legislation:

‘The Commissioner for Children and Young People (Northern Ireland) Order (2003)’ .....

.....Our work is based on / to have regard to the

**UNCRC**

(The United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child)

# NICCY's Role, Remit & Citizenship

## Mission

**‘To safeguard and promote the rights and best interests of children and young people’**

**[Art’ 6 (1)]**

## Vision

**‘A society in NI where all Children and Young people flourish, are valued and their views are respected.’**

# NICCY Statutory Duties

## Promote

Awareness and understanding of the rights and best interests of Children & Young People;

Awareness of function / location of the Commissioner and how to contact her

## Monitor

The **effectiveness of law and practice;**

The **adequacy and effectiveness of services;**

## Advise

**Advise government and relevant authorities;**

**Communicate effectively with children and young persons and their parents**

**Seek views of Children & Young People**

Article 7 (2003 Order) outlines the Duties of the Commissioner

# NICCY Statutory Powers

## Undertake / Commission / Advise

Research or educational activities concerning the rights or best interests of children and young persons or the exercise of her functions;

Conduct investigations as she considers necessary or expedient to meet her duties listed above

Compile info<sup>1</sup>, provide advice and publish any matter (including research, educational activities, investigations and advice) concerning the rights and best interests;

## Issue Guidance / Make Representations

In relation to any matter concerning the rights or best interests of children or young persons;

Make representations or recommendations to any body or person relating to the rights and best interests of children and young persons;

## Advocacy / Addressing breaches of Rights

Assist with complaints to relevant authorities;

Bring, intervene in or assist in legal proceedings.

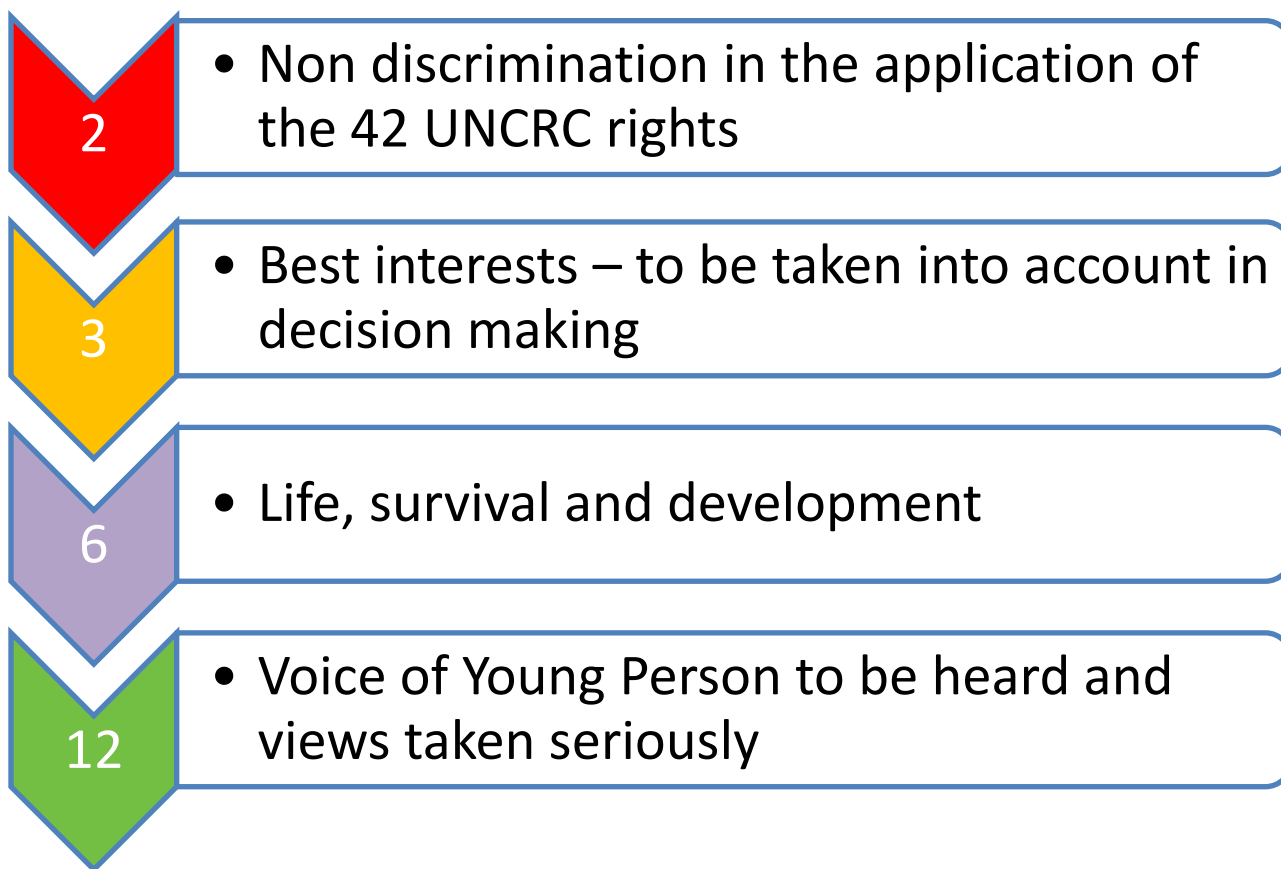
**Articles 8-15 outline the Commissioner's general powers**

# UN Convention on the Rights of the Child [UNCRC]

*‘The most complete statement of children's rights ever produced and the most widely-ratified international human rights treaty in history setting out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of every child.’*



# UNCRC Principles



- ✓ Underpin all NICCY's work
  - ✓ Support citizenship

# The UNCRC

Preamble section of the UNCRC that provides the context to the rights contained in the Convention, reflects that of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights ...

*Recognizing that the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding...'*

# The Rights Based Approach: Empowering Citizens

*‘The Convention sees the child as a subject.*

*(‘not an object of charity ... given support, not as a matter of right, but because people have felt pity for them. This is one of the attitudes that the Convention challenges’).*

*S/he has the right to schooling, health care and an adequate standard of living, as well as to be heard and have his or her views respected. This goes as much for the cute toddler as for the problematic teenager.’*

*Thomas Hammarburg  
November 2009*

# The Rights Based Approach: Empowering Citizens

- Empowering
- Accountability
- Non-discrimination and equality
- Participation
- Progressive realisation

**Citizens are 'rights holders'**  
**Government are 'duty bearers'**

# UN Committee Examination of UK State Party

**UK State Party examination 23 & 24 May 2016**

**Concluding Observations & Recommendations**

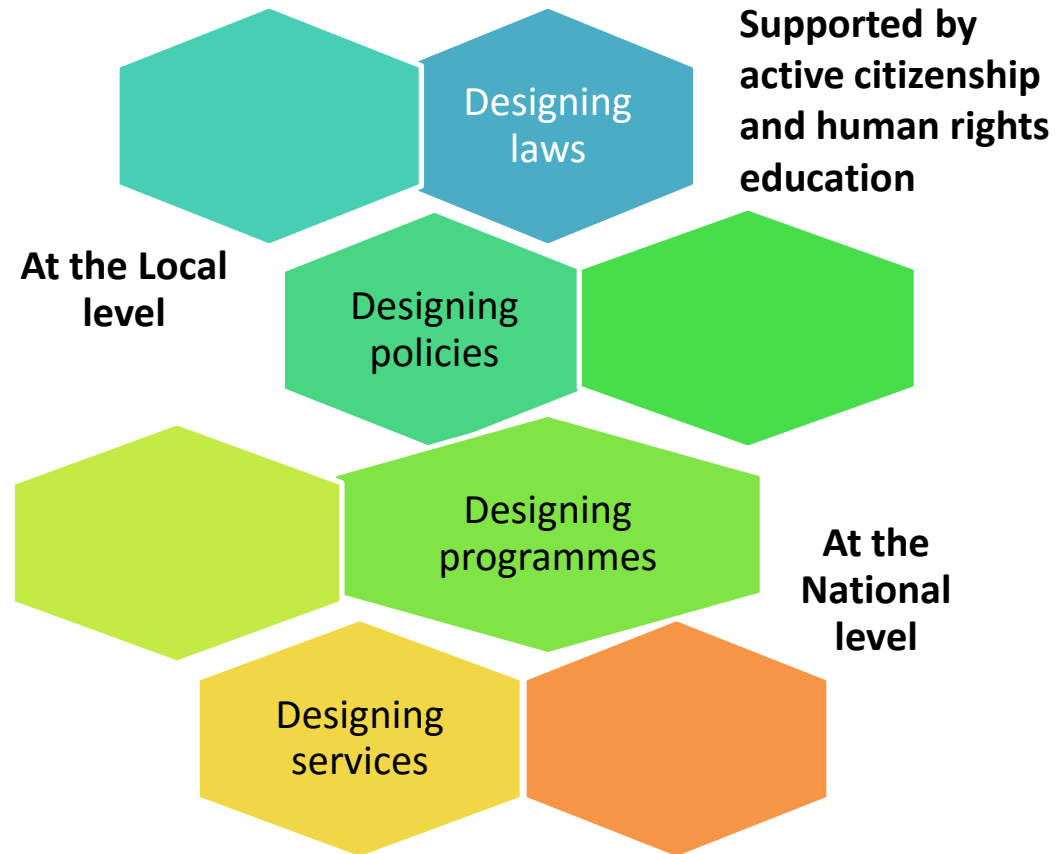
**[Adopted by UN Committee [CRC] on 3 June 2016]**

**Published on 9 June 2016**

# Concluding Observations & Recommendations

## UN Committee [CRC] 2016

Establish structures for the active and meaningful participation of children & young people - giving due weight to their views:



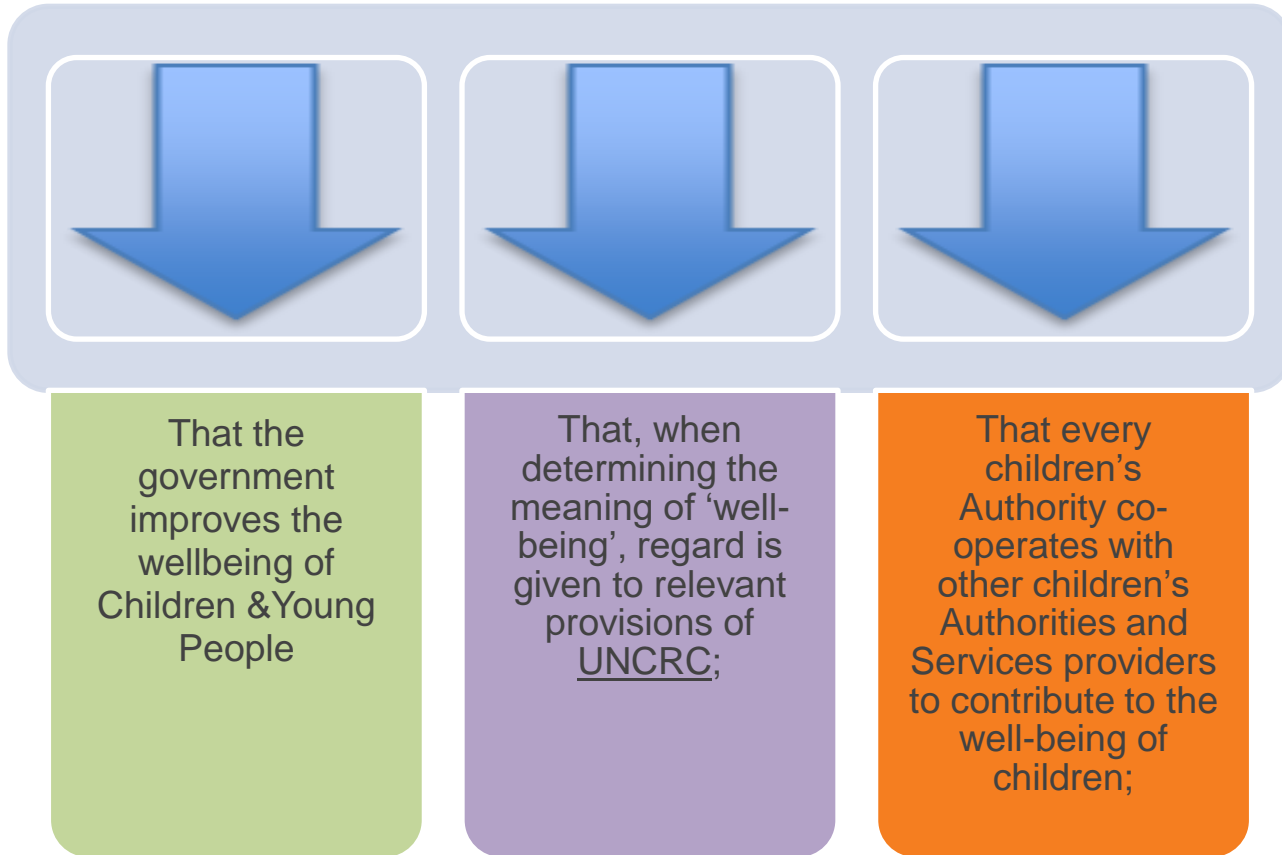
# Concluding Observations & Recommendations UN Committee [CRC] 2016

And especially  
children in  
vulnerable  
situations  
such as:



# The Children's Services Co-operation Act 2015

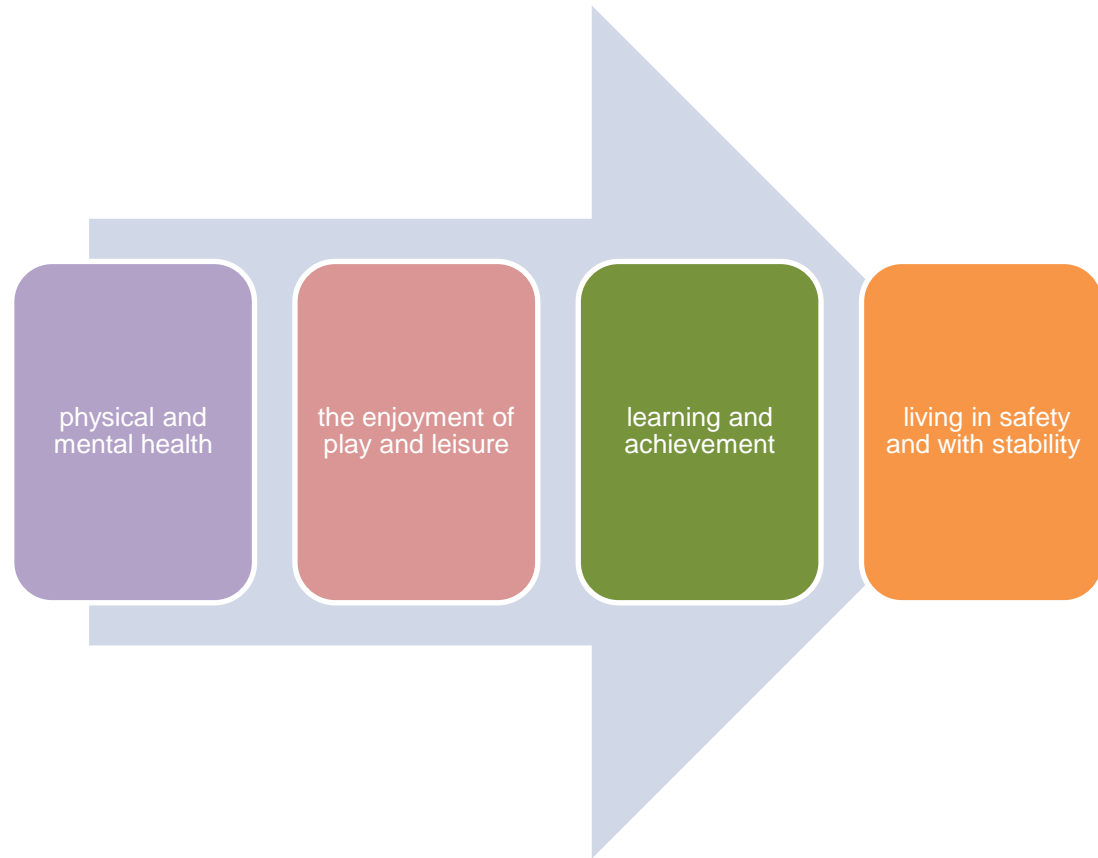
## Requires:





# The Children's Services Co-operation Act 2015

Defines well-being  
as..



# The Children's Services Co-operation Act 2015

Defines well-being  
as..

making a  
positive  
contribution to  
society

living in a  
society which  
respects their  
rights

living in a society  
in which equality  
of opportunity  
and good  
relations are  
promoted  
between persons  
who share a  
relevant  
characteristic and  
persons who do  
not

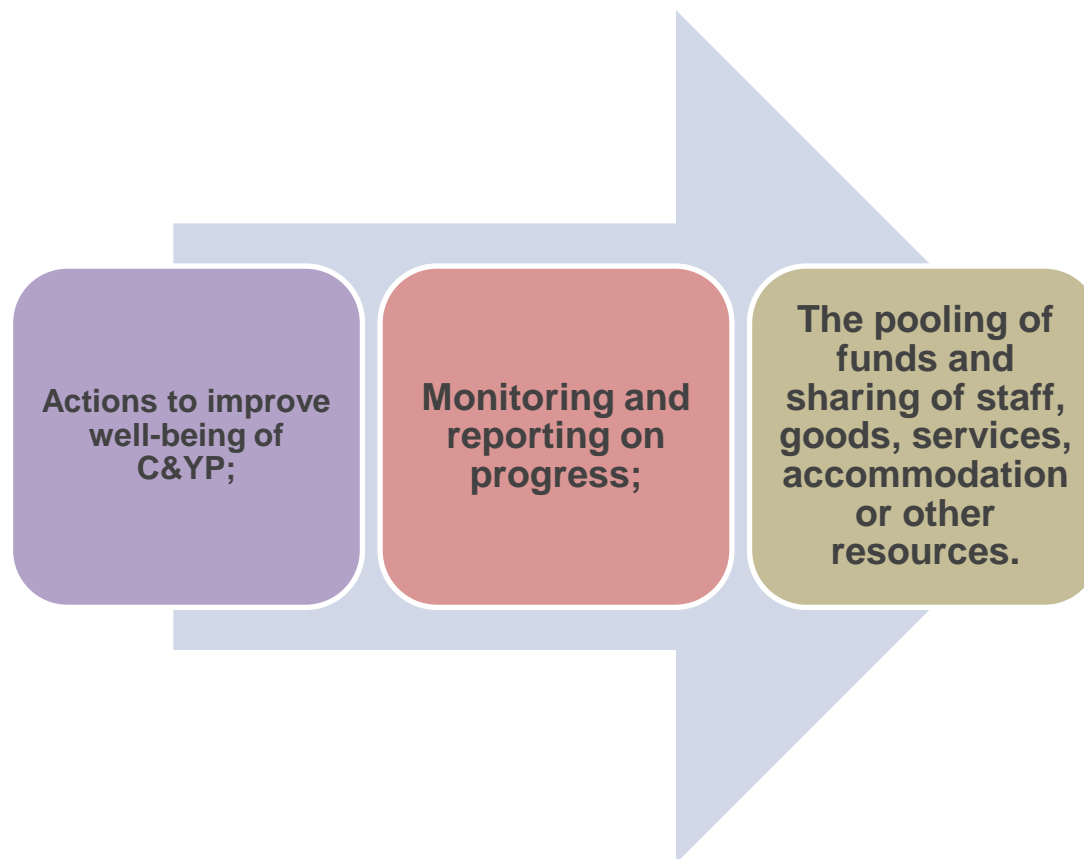
economic and  
environmental  
well-being

# The Children's & Young People's Strategy

It also requires that there is publication of the:

## Children's & Young Person's Strategy

'NI Executive Action Plan for C&YP'  
(GC no. 5) [outlining:](#)



# NI Programme for Government [PfG]

- Currently out for consultation
- 14 Outcomes
- 42 Indicators
- Outcomes based accountability – Making a Difference!
- **Should include the Children's and Young People's Strategy**

"There is no trust more sacred than the one (we) hold with (all) our children. There is no duty more important than ensuring that their rights are respected, that their welfare is protected, that their lives are free from fear and want and that they can grow up in peace."

"No one is born a good citizen; .... Rather, (there are) processes that continue to evolve over a lifetime. Young people must be included from birth. A society that cuts off from its youth severs its lifeline."

Kofi Annan

*7th UN Secretary-General  
2001 Nobel Peace Prize Winner  
2003 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought*

I am a citizen of the world!

Sylvia Beach

“The most important thing an institution does is not to prepare a student for a career but for a life as a citizen.”

Frank Newman

Happy Citizens' Day!