



NORTHERN IRELAND COMMISSIONER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

**GENERAL
INFORMATION**



KOULLA YIASOUMA

Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY).

THE COMMISSIONER

Koulla Yiasouma is the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY). She took up appointment in March 2015.

THE COMMISSIONER'S ROLE

It is NICCY's role to safeguard and promote the rights and best interests of children and young people.

'Children and Young People' refers to anyone up to the age of 18, or up to 21 if you have a disability, or have been or are in care.

UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (UNCRC)

When promoting the rights of children and young people, we use the UNCRC to guide our work. The UNCRC is a set of promises that the government has made to children and young people. It is made up of a list of 42 rights, which every child and young person in Northern Ireland should have.

All of NICCY's work is focused on making sure children and young people know about, and have access to these rights in their day-to-day lives, so they have the best opportunity to reach their full potential.

HOW NICCY WORKS

The Government and 'relevant authorities' (including health, education and justice agencies) provide services for children and young people. One of NICCY's jobs is to check they do this in a way that is in the best interests of young people.

We do this by:

- ▶ **Advising government** – Advising government and all its agencies on the policies, legislation (laws), and services it provides for children, young people and their families.
- ▶ **Monitoring** – Checking what government does for children and young, to make sure that they do what is best.

- ▶ **Holding government to account** – When NICCY finds out that not enough is being done for children and young people, it challenges government to do better.

You can find out more about NICCY's work on its website, e-zine and social media sites.

HOW NICCY DECIDES WHAT TO DO

It is very important that NICCY is aware of, and understands the issues that affect children and young people. It has different ways of finding this out:

- ▶ **Listening to children and young people** – The UNCRC is very clear that children's views must be heard, and inform decisions which affect their lives. NICCY asks children and young people what they think is important, and what they would like to see changed. The Commissioner has a group of young people (Youth Panel) who help with specific pieces of work. This includes advising on the best ways to communicate with children and young people;
- ▶ **Listening to other adults** – We also listen to parents, carers, teachers, social workers and other professionals who care for or work with children and young people;
- ▶ **Evidence** – NICCY carries out or commissions research, and talks to experts to find out more about the issues that affect children and young people. This allows it to recommend how things can be made better.

The Commissioner has identified key priority areas of work for her time in office, you can read and find out more about these at www.niccy.org

HOW NICCY CAN HELP

We have a Legal and Investigations service for children, young people and their families, if they feel they are not being treated fairly, or have a complaint about the services they receive, or are meant to receive. Our Legal and Investigations team can also go to court for children and young people in certain circumstances.



HOW THE OFFICE WORKS

To help NICCY decide what it should do for children and young people, it produces a Corporate Plan every three years, and an annual Business Plan setting out what it will do each year.

Before agreeing its corporate plan NICCY speaks to a range of people who know about children's lives, especially children and young people themselves, and they advise on areas that they wish to see included.

You can read NICCY's current corporate plan and annual business plans on its website.



CONTACTING NICCY:

You can phone on: 028 9031 1616

You can email at: info@niccy.org

You can find out more about what NICCY does at: www.niccy.org

Or you can write to NICCY at:
NICCY, Equality House,
7-9 Shaftesbury Square, Belfast. BT2 7DP

You can follow NICCY on Twitter at:
www.twitter.com/nichildcom

You can subscribe to NICCY's Ezine at:
www.niccy.org

or email communications@niccy.org

You can find out more on Facebook at:
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