

2017-2020 UNICEF UK CHILD RIGHTS PARTNERS BRIEFING FOR BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL

1. ABOUT UNICEF

Unicef is the world's leading organisation for children, working in over 190 countries to advance children's rights and promote child well-being. All of Unicef's work is guided by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and we are the only organisation mentioned in the text of the UNCRC as a source of advice and technical assistance in supporting governments to respect, protect and promote the rights of every child.

Unicef UK, a registered UK charity, runs programmes to protect and promote the rights of children and young people in the UK, working with national and local government and institutions to implement and advocate for lasting change. We also raise funds for Unicef's emergency and development work to improve the lives of children everywhere.

2. ABOUT THE CHILD RIGHTS PARTNERS PROGRAMME

Our Child Rights Partners programme builds on and is a part of the **Child Friendly Cities Initiative**, an international programme aiming to translate Unicef's mission into practical commitments and action at the local level.

Child Rights Partners (CRP) brings Unicef UK and local authorities together to put children's rights at the heart of public services and ensure all children have the same opportunity to flourish. During the course of a three year pilot, launched in November 2013, Unicef UK has been supporting 5 local authorities to use the UNCRC as a framework to transform local policy and practice in a range of areas, from developing area-wide children and families' plans, to training elected members to embedding a child rights-based approach in corporate parenting strategies. Our pilot has demonstrated that using the UNCRC in this way can practically support local authorities to:

- understand their local CYP population better
- make services more child-centred, user-friendly, outcomes-focused and tailored to the specific needs of children and young people
- Improve multi-agency working
- increase staff confidence in working directly with and involving children and young people while creating a feedback loop that drives ongoing service improvement
- Drive innovation
- Improve outcomes for children and young people

How we work

Our approach is strengths-based, collaborative, contextual and sustainable: We work with local authorities to identify and build on existing good practice and identify gaps; we collaborate with local authority staff, partners and children to understand the particular needs and context of the community and co-design a suitable plan of action; we build the capacity of local authorities and local partners to take the work forward independently over time.

Our CRP team is led by staff who have expertise in human rights, public policy and social research, as well as extensive senior experience of leading community and organisational development programmes, systems change and the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

3. LOOKING AHEAD

In 2017, Unicef UK is incorporating learning from the pilot into a developed programme model and is inviting up to 5 local authorities to join the **programme**.

2017 – onwards: Over the course of 3 – 5 years, Unicef UK will support Local Authorities to achieve six ‘badges’ demonstrating sustainable progress towards embedding child rights across the city or community. The badges will recognise the authority’s progress and development in key areas such as political commitment to children’s rights, workforce knowledge and understanding of children’s rights, meaningful participation, and child rights innovation. These key areas will be identified by the local authority – with support from Unicef UK - at the outset of the programme, and in line with the local authority’s particular needs and context.

Assessment of the ‘badges’ will be done annually by an independent panel of experts in human rights, child well-being and public services. Local authority progress will be celebrated at an annual event focused on child rights in practice.

Ultimately, local authorities will have the opportunity to work towards international recognition as a Unicef Child Friendly City or Community.

3. WHAT WE OFFER

The support package offered to local authorities and their partners includes a tried and tested combination of collaborative activities and approaches that can be tailored to each partner’s needs. This includes:

- 40 days of Unicef staff time (50% face to face & 50% back office)
 - Access to CPD accredited training
 - Technical assistance
 - Project management support
 - Mentoring
- Access to resources
- Access to local authority networks
- Recognition of progress
- Participation in annual conference/knowledge exchange seminar
- Seat on the Unicef Child Rights in Practice Forum
- Participation in virtual National Working Groups

- Eventual recognition as a 'Unicef Child Friendly City/Community' (progress dependent)

In addition, partner local authorities gain access to:

- Guided use of Unicef partnership logo
- Being part of a global Unicef Child Friendly Cities movement

The participation fee is £25,000 per annum.

4. WHO WE WANT TO WORK WITH

Based on our experience from the pilot, we have a clear understanding of what is required for local authorities to effectively and sustainably embed a child rights-based approach into local policies and practice. We would ask interested partners to confirm their:

- **Ability to cover direct and indirect costs**

Unicef UK is a registered charity operating on a not-for-profit basis and all income raised will go towards cost recovery. Local authorities will be expected to pay an annual fee and allow for indirect costs such as releasing staff for training and planning, providing training venues and ensuring there is capacity to co-ordinate and oversee the programme locally. .

- **Commitment at all levels and cross-council buy-in**

This involves cabinet-level endorsement to participate in the programme and the nomination of local programme champions, including a political champion, to drive and sustain local ownership and commitment.

- **Area-based outlook**

We are looking for local authorities committed to driving change through strong, local, multi-agency partnerships spanning statutory, voluntary and private sector agencies and providers.

- **Governance**

We would ask local authority partners to establish a local governance structure that links clearly with designated local champions and is accountable to the council and its partners. This could be an existing partnership board.

- **Local vision for children and young people and a commitment to children and young people's participation**

We are looking for partners committed to advancing children and young people's participation through the creation of meaningful participation opportunities for all, including the most vulnerable.

- **Commitment to learning and reflection**

We plan to collect evidence and measure the impact the programme is having on outcomes for children. We are looking for local authorities open to learning and ready to participate in ongoing data collection and monitoring.