

Children's Rights Alliance for England

Issue 43

Dear CRAE member

Don't forget to renew your membership of CRAE

Thank you for your membership of the Alliance during 2009/10 - your support makes a big difference to our work. It has been a busy year for CRAE, with significant threats and opportunities for children's rights and many successful campaigns and events. We hope that you found the opportunity to become involved in our work in some way, whether through active engagement or by following our activities through these bulletins.

It is now time to renew your membership to support us in the coming year. **The membership year ends on 31 March 2010 so if you do not renew now, this might be the last e-bulletin you receive.** Renewal is quick and easy - e-mail hbarrett@crae.org.uk with *Renewal Form* in the subject line.

Take Action

If you have 5 minutes... have your say on the Council of Europe guidelines on child friendly justice

The Council of Europe's guidelines on child friendly justice have been opened to consultation with children and young people across Europe. The guidelines cover a range of administrative, civil and criminal justice matters, looking at children in contact and divorce proceedings, children in custody, children appearing in court, and the availability of accessible complaints procedures for children. The guidelines aim to ensure that all justice systems guarantee the effective implementation of children's rights. CRAE has been working closely with the Council of Europe to develop an online survey to enable children and young people to share their views and experiences of the justice system, and to comment on the guidelines.

Please encourage those children and young people you work with to have their say by visiting <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=sS0SeaHC4TwVcuUfjqoWSmAmW0belE4pSV2Wdv0qGQ4%3d> to complete the survey. The closing date is **31 March**.

Find out more about the Council of Europe's guidelines on child friendly justice:

http://www.coe.int/t/dgh/standardsetting/childjustice/default_en.asp

NGOs can still comment on the fourth draft of the guidelines by e-mailing cj-s-ch@coe.int

If you have 30 minutes... support children to respond to the duty to invite and consider children's views in school

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) is consulting on new regulations on student participation in schools. The *Considering pupils' views* consultation asks which functions of a school governing body should be included in regulations governing the new duty to invite and consider students' views. The duty will be implemented from 1 September 2010. The Government is proposing that schools must consult students on school equalities policies, the timings of the school day and the school curriculum policy. While CRAE welcomes this, we believe that this list is inadequate: we would expect students to be consulted on a much wider range of issues including the delivery of the curriculum, behaviour, the uniform, school food, health and safety, and sustainability. We urge all CRAE members to respond to the consultation to emphasise the need to incorporate children's views in all aspects of school life.

Responses can be submitted to DCSF at pupilsviews.consultation@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk until Monday 29 March.

E-mail Tom Burke to receive a short guide to support children and young people to respond to this consultation: tburke@crae.org.uk

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www.crae.org.uk

www.getreadyforchange.org.uk

For advice on children's rights and equality law in England email **You've got the Right** at advice@crae.org.uk

The Children's Rights Alliance for England (CRAE) seeks the full implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in England.

News

Government assesses its progress on incorporating children's rights into law

Last week, the Department for Children, Schools and Families published a 237 page document outlining how the Government believes it is implementing international law as it applies to children's rights. This report has been produced for the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights as a Children's Rights Bill prepares for its Second Reading in the House of Lords.

CRAE very much welcomes the report, which shows serious engagement with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on the part of Government. We will be scrutinising the report over the next few days to see whether it adds up to a Government strategy for implementing the CRC, as recommended by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in 1995, 2002 and 2008. We will also be looking for any indications of new rights and protections for children. On first assessment, we are delighted to see Government plans to include the Convention on the Rights of the Child in statutory guidance and regulations relating to Children's Trust Boards. CRAE lobbied for this during the passage of the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009. This significant announcement should firmly establish the role of local service providers in making sure the rights of every child are recognised and upheld.

Children's Rights Bill (Private Members' Bill) Second Reading update

Baroness Walmsley's Children's Rights Bill was due to receive its second reading in the House of Lords on 5 March, but unfortunately this didn't go ahead due to a lack of time. The ROCK coalition is hopeful that it will be rescheduled for another date later this month. The Bill would make the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) part of UK law and ensure all policy and practice is made in the best interests of all children.

Read more here about the Bill and the ROCK coalition, and write to Ed Balls expressing your support for the Bill:

<http://www.crae.org.uk/protecting/uk-law.html>

Read young activist Kathryn Terry's article about the Bill in last week's First News:

www.firstnews.co.uk

Read an interview with Baroness Walmsley in Children and Young People Now:

<http://www.cypnow.co.uk/inDepth/ByDiscipline/Social-Care/987273/Interview-Baroness-Walmsley-Liberal-Democrat-spokeswoman-House-Lords/>

CRAE urges rights-based definition of well-being

The extensive Ministry of Justice consultation on the Bill of Rights and Responsibilities Green Paper finally closed at the end of last month, following a series of consultation events with key stakeholder groups including children and young people (see issue 42) and written interventions from NGOs and others. In its response, CRAE welcomes the central place of children in the proposed Bill of Rights, as well as the Government's assurances that it has no intention of diluting the Human Rights Act. We advocate the full incorporation of children's rights, including economic and social rights, into the Bill of Rights, and underline the importance of giving children an effective remedy through the courts. We do not believe that this will result in a significant increase in litigation; we do believe it is necessary to bring about the cultural shift that is required within public services and wider society to put children and their rights genuinely at the heart of all we do. This shift must be supporting by using the CRC and other human rights instruments to shape the legal definition of child well-being. We now call on Government to take the obvious next step and begin a national debate about the values, principles and detailed legal obligations of the CRC - and how these can be developed within a British constitution.

For a copy of CRAE's response, contact Sam Dimmock at sdimmock@crae.org.uk.

Get ready for action: over to you

'Learning more about our rights has really helped me stand up for myself and others.'

31 March will see the end of CRAE's Get ready for change! project, funded by the Big Lottery Fund from 2007-10 and engaging over 3,800 children and young people in its activities. Following a large-scale children's rights investigation in 2007, and meetings with the UN Committee of the Rights of the Child in 2008, children in England made a significant impact on the CRC reporting process, seeing all 14 of their recommendations included in the Committee's concluding observations. They also contributed, through two national conferences for children, to the development of the Government's action plan to implement the concluding observations. Passionate about taking direct action, our young campaigners have spent the last year working on campaigns focusing on the right to education for refugee children, privacy rights and respect for children and young people in the media, and the quality of mental health support in schools. On 2 February, they launched their campaigns report, *Get ready for action!*, at a reception in Parliament attended by children and young people, Peers, MPs, the Children's Minister, the Children's Commissioner for England and the Children's Rights Director among others.

The recommendations for Government action made by children and young people in *Get ready for action!* have been endorsed by a wide range of organisations and individuals, including Bail for Immigration Detainees, the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, The Children's Society, the Child Rights Information Network (CRIN), the Institute for Global Ethics, Student Action for Refugees (STAR) and YoungMinds. Children and young people have requested a written response from the Government, and are calling on NGOs and other children and young people to continue pushing for change for children's rights in these important areas. With over 250 children and young people of all ages and backgrounds committed to furthering children's human rights, CRAE is now establishing a young activists network to support children to learn about their human rights and to engage in their own advocacy and activism.

Download copies of the reports from the Get ready project: <http://www.getreadyforchange.org.uk/campaigns/reports>

Watch a clip of the Get ready for change! film: <http://tiny.cc/AF9yk>

To find out more about CRAE's young activists network, contact Sam Dimmock at sdimmock@crae.org.uk.

Children's Commissioner deems Britain one of the most child-unfriendly countries

In an interview in *The Independent* marking the end of his tenure as Children's Commissioner for England, Professor Sir Al Aynsley Green said that Britain was one of the most child-unfriendly countries in the world. He criticised public attitudes and high levels of intolerance towards children and young people, citing the mosquito device as a '*powerful symbol of what I see as a deep malaise in our society and our views towards children and especially young people*'. He said that negative views about children and young people had made his job as Children's Commissioner particularly difficult.

In its most recent concluding observations on the UK, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed concern '*at the general climate of intolerance and negative public attitudes towards children, especially adolescents*' and called for urgent Government action to address the situation. Despite this, recent research published by CRAE has found that negative attitudes and discrimination towards the young persist, with significant numbers of children reporting being discriminated against because of their age in shops, on public transport, when using sports and leisure facilities, and when in cafes and restaurants.

Download CRAE's new evidence of age discrimination: <http://www.crae.org.uk/news-and-events/news/discrimination-against-the-young-is-widespread-and-damaging-to-family-life.html>

Government responds to Youth Citizenship Commission

In February, the Minister for Youth Citizenship and Engagement Dawn Butler MP published the Government's formal response to the Youth Citizenship Commission (YCC) report of July 2009. The YCC report made a series of recommendations to Government for reforms to strengthen and enable the development of citizenship among young people. The Government's response makes few new policy commitments. The Department for Communities and Local Government has committed to undertaking a feasibility study to consider the addition of a young people's module (for 11 to 15 year-olds) to the Citizenship Survey to track young people's civic activity. The Government is also working with the UK Youth Parliament to establish a panel of representative young people that will advise the Government on topical issues of interest to young citizens. However, without wider engagement of all young people, this is unlikely to result in the step change needed. Sadly, the Government's response is near-silent on the issue of votes at 16, simply noting that this remains a question on which there is not universal agreement.

Download the Government's response: <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/333826/youthengagement.pdf>

CRAE opposes watering down of PSHE

During the Commons debates on the Children, Schools and Families Bill, CRAE wrote to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights (JCHR) expressing concern over a recent Government amendment to the Bill, which waters down the duties of faith schools to have regard to equality, diversity and respect for human rights in the teaching of Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education. PSHE includes sex and relationships education (SRE). In its initial scrutiny of the Bill, the JCHR had criticised provisions allowing parental withdrawal from SRE until a child reaches 15, and outlined the risk of rights violations in allowing SRE to be delivered in a way that is appropriate to the religious and cultural backgrounds of school students. CRAE feels this new amendment could make matters worse.

The new amendment has drawn criticism from many NGOs, including the British Humanist Association. CRAE believes that the amendment is unnecessary as there is already adequate protection for the religious views of students in the Bill; furthermore we believe it may lead to discriminatory teaching for certain groups of children. We have asked the JCHR to scrutinise the new provisions and how they will affect children's enjoyment of their human rights. We have also called for the right of parental withdrawal of a child from SRE to be removed.

<http://www.crae.org.uk/news-and-events/news/crae-writes-to-parliamentary-human-rights-committee-on-government-sex-ed-u-turn.html>

Attorney-General resists pressure to refer Edlington brothers' sentences to the Court of Appeal

In a move welcomed by children's rights organisations, the Attorney-General has resisted pressure to refer to the Court of Appeal the sentences received by the 11 and 12 year-old brothers who had pleaded guilty to grave attacks on two boys in Edlington in April 2009. The boys received an indeterminate sentence for public protection with minimum terms of five years. The Attorney-General announced on 16 February that she did not find the sentences *'unduly lenient'*. CRAE believes the imposition of the minimum five-year term may violate the CRC requirements for custody to be a genuine last resort and only to be used for the shortest possible period of time, and for rehabilitation to be the priority when dealing with child offenders. The boys are to remain anonymous after the sentencing judge refused a media application to lift reporting restrictions. CRAE submitted a statement to the court which set out why the naming of the boys would contravene international law, and drew attention to the wide public consensus opposing the lifting of restrictions.

Read the Attorney-General's decision:

<http://tinyurl.com/3y7taxu>

Read more about the case:

<http://www.crae.org.uk/news-and-events/news/edlington-brothers-receive-indefinite-sentence-but-will-not-be-named.html>

The Fear Factory: where policy flies in the face of evidence

The first of March saw the first screening of The Fear Factory, a new documentary exposing the history, mechanics and extent of fear-mongering that has led to a crisis in the UK juvenile justice system. Minister for Prisons Maria Eagle MP, Liberal Democrat Shadow Justice Secretary David Howarth MP and Professor Rod Morgan (former head of the Youth Justice Board) all participated in a Q and A panel to discuss issues raised by the film. The Fear Factory is supported by a coalition of charities, campaigning together with Spirit Level Film to take action to halt what the coalition calls the *'political arms race on law and order'* and to depoliticise juvenile justice. CRAE is a member of the Fear Factory coalition, which includes organisations such as the Howard League for Penal Reform, Kids Company, Action for Children, The Children's Society, the Prison Reform Trust and the Children's Legal Centre. Of the initiative, Sam Dimmock, CRAE's head of policy and public affairs said: *'This coalition is a much needed call to all parties to leave politics at the door and focus on children and young people's best interests. A radical and comprehensive overhaul of the juvenile justice system is long past due - children are children first, and only by recognising this can we fulfil our legal and moral obligations to children and ensure they live in a society in which they have a chance to develop to their full potential'*. To find out more about The Fear Factory, visit <http://www.thefearfactory.co.uk/>.

Violations of rights at Yarl's Wood

Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre has been in the news again in recent weeks. On 5 February, over 20 women at the centre began a hunger strike in protest at the treatment and conditions that women and children are subject to. Reports suggest that the strike has now entered its fourth week. On 1 March, *The Guardian* reported that lawyers will launch a legal challenge on behalf of four women and three children at the centre, on the grounds that their ongoing detention breaches their human rights. In response to the hunger strike, an Early Day Motion has been tabled by John McDonnell MP calling for an immediate, independent investigation into reports of violence, mistreatment and abuse.

On 17 February, the Children's Commissioner for England published a follow up to his 2009 report on the arrest and detention of children subject to immigration control. The new report focuses on children's experiences and while it acknowledges some improvement from the previous year, it also makes several significant recommendations to protect the rights of children. The new recommendations include a call on the UK Border Agency to commission an independent review to establish why some children remain in detention for long periods; the introduction of independent advocates to support all children to make a complaint; for a review of the concerns expressed by children in Yarl's Wood to be undertaken; and for reviews of health care and safeguarding systems in the centre to take place. CRAE calls on the Government to comply with its legal obligations to children under the CRC and to cease the detention of children and young people for the purposes of immigration.

Download the 11 MILLION report: http://www.11million.org.uk/content/publications/content_393

Read EDM 919: <http://edmi.parliament.uk/EDMi/EDMDetails.aspx?EDMID=40528&SESSION=903>

Guardian article on legal challenge: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2010/mar/01/yarls-wood-legal-challenge>

US campaign for ratification gathers pace...but faces stiff opposition

The campaign to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the US has been developing at speed. President Barack Obama has publicly spoken in favour of ratification, strengthened by Hilary Clinton's background as a child rights advocate. Coupled with Somalia's recent ratification, all eyes are on the US as the only UN Member State to have signed but not ratified the CRC. Campaign groups have been co-ordinating children's rights activists across the US and widely disseminating materials about children's rights. Yet misrepresentation continues. In certain US states, critics of children's rights oppose the CRC on a number of

grounds, fearing that it will compromise parental rights and, in one extreme example, '...override a state's right to impose the death penalty for murders committed by minors'. We await further progress with interest.

Find out more: <http://www.childrightscampaign.org/>

Legal Advocacy

Court of Appeal rejects school exclusion unfair trial claim^[1]

'LG', the mother of a boy, 'VG', appealed against the dismissal of her claim for judicial review challenging the decision of the Independent Appeal Panel for Tom Hood School permanently to exclude VG from the school. VG, then aged 14, was excluded in 2007 on the basis of an allegation - denied by him - that he was in possession of a knife at school and threatened a teacher with it. The Panel concluded 'on the balance of probabilities' that the allegations were true, and therefore excluded him.

Lawyers for LG argued that the Panel hearing determined VG's civil right not to be permanently excluded from the school without good reason, and that he was therefore entitled to a fair hearing as required by article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights. They argued that because the disputed allegations - if true - would amount to a criminal offence, in order for the hearing to be fair under article 6 the Panel's findings about the allegations should have been based on a criminal standard of proof - i.e. 'beyond reasonable doubt'.

The Court dismissed the appeal, finding (amongst other things) that VG did not have a 'civil right' to continue to be educated at Tom Hood School and therefore article 6 did not apply. The Court found that, even if article 6 had applied, the Panel would not have been required to apply a criminal standard of proof.

^[1] R (LG) v The Independent Appeal Panel for Tom Hood School & Secretary of State for the Department of Children, Schools and Families [2010] ECWA civ 142

Parliament

Bills

Children, Schools and Families Bill

The Government has confirmed that organisations representing the interests of students and parents should be consulted in the development of pupil and parent guarantees. We welcome the introduction of compulsory Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education, which includes sex and relationships education (SRE), for primary and secondary school students. CRAE has been lobbying for the removal of the parental right to withdraw their child from SRE, and recognises the Government's small step in lowering the age at which parents can withdraw their children from SRE from 19 to 15. We remain deeply concerned by recent Government amendments to allow faith schools to teach PSHE in a way that reflects the school's religious character; CRAE's national co-ordinator has written to the Joint Committee on Human Rights to ask them to re-examine the Bill's compatibility with human rights legislation (see *News* section).

CRAE continues to seek reassurances on how children's rights to privacy and confidentiality will be maintained in enhanced information sharing processes for Local Safeguarding Children Boards. CRAE is also a member of the Interdisciplinary Alliance for Children, which has serious concerns about the opening up of the family courts to the media and will continue to lobby on this issue during the Bill's passage through the Lords.

During debates on the Bill, Children's Secretary Ed Balls indicated that he favours a tightening of the law on the use of physical punishment by non-parents; he noted that the Government is awaiting Sir Roger Singleton's report on the matter at the end of March before putting forward any proposals for reform.

Follow the Bill's progress through Parliament: <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2009-10/childrenschoolsandfamilies.html>

Children's Rights Bill (Private Members' Bill)

As a member of the Rights of the Child UK (ROCK) coalition, CRAE is supporting the Children's Rights Bill introduced by Baroness Walmsley. The Bill was due to receive its second reading in the House of Lords on 5 March, but unfortunately this did not go ahead due to a lack of time. The ROCK coalition remains hopeful that the second reading will be rescheduled for another date later this month. If enacted, the Bill will make the CRC part of UK law, and ensure all legislation, policy and practice is made in the best interests of all children.

Find out more about the Bill and the ROCK coalition: <http://www.crae.org.uk/protecting/uk-law.html>

Follow the Bill's progress through Parliament: <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2009-10/childrensrights.html>

Crime and Security Bill

CRAE is working on this Bill through the Standing Committee for Youth Justice (SCYJ). CRAE has several concerns regarding the Crime and Security Bill including the proposed reduction in reporting requirements for stop and search; the collection and retention of children's details on the National DNA Database; and the extension of injunctions for gang-related violence to young people over the age of 14. Following pressure from SCYJ, the Government has introduced further checks to be carried out before detention orders are issued for breach of gang injunctions. Opposition MPs have also tabled an amendment for hearings for breach of gang injunctions to be held in youth courts.

Follow the Bill's progress through Parliament: http://rs6.net/tn.jsp?et=1102887074290&s=9&e=001jHSFdg2ycJHibV_TtS-KcOe3CAsoLJYMEcf2dxoyEAKYTUYD2Fu-0_TCYgl-RzcNrBJH1dO0pW5PE8oZNxSK9neSMqfprAw0yyDBA3j7Zsuwxm0D-ePGiR5hmX2wmTFKSfye33Ymed-ZTNtwFHW_CUSHeR6f_ZR2QAz9elCEBw=

Equality Bill

CRAE is co-ordinating the Young Equals coalition on age discrimination against children and young people. Young Equals has secured a commitment from the Government that guidance to support the implementation of the public sector equality duty will include information on how the provisions on age apply to children. At Lords Report stage, Peers asked for a review to be carried out one year after the duty commences to look at how the duty has affected negative treatment of children. The Government rejected the proposal, indicating that there are existing mechanisms in place to review public bodies' compliance with equality duties. The Government continues to resist pressure to remove the exclusion of under-18s from age discrimination protection in services and public functions.

Third Reading in the Lords: Date to be announced

Follow the Bill's progress through Parliament:

http://rs6.net/tn.jsp?et=1102887074290&s=9&e=001jHSFdg2ycJEvjVKykeEZMd4JmyilsKwVau44d7UTE8TKkgCVqPZrvZdAD0d-exl7jIR-OI_W9hV1J0R5vy8m0UemgKjYYWXc06My1uPxYrOyLgp5CcsbzmUeve-AwuGpkEyeFPpfscViY70PO7rcqpDyVgzRbMRjM

Early Day Motions

The full list of Early Day Motions can be found at:

<http://edmi.parliament.uk/EDMi/Default.aspx>

Please ask your MP to sign the following Early Day Motion:

EDM 616 - Stop and search Andrew Pelling MP

That this House welcomes the European Court of Human Rights ruling that stop and search without suspicion, as exercised under section 44 of the Terrorism Act, is illegal under Clause 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, the right to a private and family life; notes the comments of Lord Carlile, the Government's independent reviewer of anti-terrorist legislation, that the stop and search powers under section 44 are 'being used far too often on a random basis without any reasoning behind their use'; further notes that individuals should not feel shackled by laws designed to ensure their safety and liberty, but recognises that a power to stop and search which does not infringe the rights of the individual is necessary in the defence of the realm; and believes that, while the Government undertakes its appeal, stop and search powers should be used with more discretion.

<http://edmi.parliament.uk/EDMi/EDMDetails.aspx?EDMID=40196&SESSION=903>

More information

To find out more about CRAE's work in Parliament, contact Catherine Hodder, CRAE's parliamentary adviser, at chodder@crae.org.uk

Consultations

The following list of consultations provide a non-exhaustive list of open consultations that raise opportunities for and threats to the full implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in England.

Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), Transition to adulthood for looked after children

Closing date: 19 March 2010

<http://leavingcareconsultation.dcsf.gov.uk/>

DCSF, Draft School Admissions (Co-ordination of Admissions Arrangements) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010

Closing date: 25 March 2010

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/index.cfm?action=consultationDetails&consultationId=1703&external=no&menu=1>

DCSF, Considering pupils' views

Closing date: 29 March 2010

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/index.cfm?action=consultationDetails&consultationId=1618&external=no&menu=1>

Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), Draft Codes of Practice on Employment, Equal Pay, and Services, Public Functions and Associations

Closing date: 2 April 2010

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/legislative-framework/equality-bill/equality-bill-codes-of-practice-consultation/>

DCSF, Introduction of pupil and parent guarantees

Closing date: 6 April 2010

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/index.cfm?action=consultationDetails&consultationId=1692&external=no&menu=1>

EHRC, Non-statutory guidance on Employment, Services and Public Functions, and Education

Closing date: 16 April 2010

<http://ehrc-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal>

DCSF, Sex and relationships guidance

Closing date: 19 April 2010

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/index.cfm?action=consultationDetails&consultationId=1637&external=no&menu=1>

Support for all: Families and relationships green paper

Closing date: 21 April 2010

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/index.cfm?action=consultationDetails&consultationId=1685&external=no&menu=1>

DCSF, Draft Regulations and Associated Statutory Guidance for local authorities to provide short breaks to carers of disabled children and young people

Closing date: 26 April 2010

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/index.cfm?action=consultationDetails&consultationId=1688&external=no&menu=1>

DCSF, Consultation on notifications to be sent by Ofsted to local authorities about children's social care providers

Closing date: 10 May 2010

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/index.cfm?action=consultationDetails&consultationId=1686&external=no&menu=1>

Ofsted, Inspection of private fostering arrangements

Closing date: 19 May 2010

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Consultations>

DCSF, Teenage Pregnancy Strategy: Beyond 2010

Closing date: 20 May 2010

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/index.cfm?action=consultationDetails&consultationId=1708&external=no&menu=1>

DCSF / Department for International Development, Global Learning Strategy for Schools

Closing date: 31 May 2010

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/index.cfm?action=consultationDetails&consultationId=1706&external=no&menu=1>

Publications

Coercion and punishment of children counterproductive

A briefing from the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies has found that there is little or no benefit in incarceration and other forms of strict control for children and young people who break the law. *Comparing coercive and non-coercive interventions* argues that the expectation that the problem of offending by children and young people can be solved by coercion and control is essentially illusory. In the briefing, the author Professor James McGuire notes that:

- More children and young people in England and Wales are locked up than in any other EU country; and that we have one of the highest rates of imprisonment of under-18s in the world
- An overview of research on the outcomes of different types of work with children who have broken the law repeatedly shows that those that have received harsher treatment tend to commit further crime, whereas less punitive interventions are more effective
- Punitive interventions do not generally have the positive impact they are purported to have despite their widespread acceptance.

The briefing also considers ways to bridge the gap between research, policy and practice. CRAE believes that alternative measures to custody need to be further developed and strengthened as a matter of urgency, in order to ensure that the rights of all children in conflict with the law are protected, and that custody is only ever used as a genuine last resort.

Tells us 4

A summary of the results of the Tellus4 survey, gathering the views of 253,755 children in years 6, 8 and 10 on different aspects of their lives, schools and local areas, has been published by DCSF. The summary reveals details relating to local authority measures on emotional health and well-being, children's experiences of bullying, participation in positive activities, use of drugs and alcohol, and levels of satisfaction with parks and play areas. Key findings include:

- Only 15% rate their local parks and play areas as 'very good'
- Almost a quarter of children (23%) feel unsafe on public transport
- Only 10% say that their ideas about school are listened to 'a lot'
- Almost a quarter of children say they are unable to participate in activities because of lack of money
- Over half of respondents say they often worry about exams and school work
- Nearly a third of children do not have an adult (apart from a parent) who they can talk to if something was worrying them.

The results show that while many children report being well supported at home and school, there are still stark contrasts between children's lives. Many children and young people continue to be prevented from developing to their full potential as a result of poverty, a lack of safe places to play, and being unable to have a say in matters that affect them. CRAE will be analysing the full results from Tellus4 following their publication later in the year.

Tellus4 website: <https://tellus.forvusdev.co.uk/Default.aspx>

Our Parliament, Our Vision: The BYC manifesto

Young people across the UK are challenging politicians to make five changes to improve their lives. Through a General Election Manifesto created by the British Youth Council (BYC), young people in the UK aim to tell MPs and Prospective Parliamentary Candidates what they want, and show society they can make their voices heard. *Our Parliament, Our Vision* sets out the five priority actions for BYC members:

- Lowering the voting age to 16
- Supporting a national youth transport card, giving young people a third off public transport
- Creating an equal national minimum wage
- Ending child poverty by 2020
- Investing in comprehensive mental health services for young people.

Find out more about the manifesto at: <http://www.byc.org.uk/gec>

Events

Speaker's School Council Awards

Applications are open for the Speaker's School Council Awards. The Awards have been set up by John Bercow MP, Speaker of the House of Commons, to 'acknowledge and recognise the most inspiring and engaging achievements of school councils across the UK'. Every primary school, secondary school and college in the UK is eligible to enter, and school councils can nominate themselves for an award. The deadline for schools to submit an expression of interest is 17 March 2010.

Find out more: <http://www.parliament.uk/education/about/special-events/speakers-school-council.htm>

Human Rights Law Centre Summer School

From 28 June to 2 July, Nottingham University will be running its Human Rights Law Summer School. This year's theme is *Protecting human rights through United Nations mechanisms*. The summer school is open to professionals working in NGOs, national human rights institutions, government, international governmental organisations, field operations, and interested

academics and students.

To find out more, visit <http://tinyurl.com/yc8wyqj>

Bog Standard Campaign: a call for action

The national charity ERIC (Education and Resources for Improving Childhood Continence) is calling for action on its Bog Standard campaign. ERIC is highlighting the inadequate provision, accessibility and maintenance of primary and secondary school toilets, and the link of these conditions to the high number of children suffering from constipation and toilet related health issues. Toilets in the workplace for adults are generally much better because they are governed by health and safety legislation - which does not apply to children and young people in schools. ERIC is currently in renewed talks with the Government to create minimum standards to support students in schools.

To find out more about the campaign, visit <http://www.bog-standard.org> or e-mail nickie@brander.org.uk. Children and parents can also call the ERIC Helpline on 0845 370 8008 (open weekdays from 10am to 4pm).

Axe the Act: traveller children petition the Scottish Parliament for their rights

Reflecting concerns about the rights of traveller children in England, a group of young Scottish gypsies and travellers working with Article 12 in Scotland are petitioning the Scottish Government to remove guidance that enables local authorities to move on gypsy and traveller communities from temporary sites. The young campaigners believe that this practice contravenes Article 30 of the CRC, giving children a right *'to learn and use the language and customs of their families, whether or not these are shared by the majority of people in the country in which they live'*, and may breach Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights. In its response to the concluding observations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Scottish Government has committed to reviewing its guidance on site management for local authorities.

The petition is open for signature at http://epetitions.scottish.parliament.uk/view_petition.asp?PetitionID=378

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The Children's Rights Alliance for England (CRAE) seeks the full implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in England. Our vision is of a society where the human rights of all children are recognised and realised.

The views, opinions and information given in this bulletin do not constitute legal advice and are NOT to be solely relied upon. ALWAYS seek appropriate legal advice.

The Children's Rights Alliance for England is a registered charity, number 1005135.

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