



# OUTRIGHT

Speak out on children's rights

## RESOURCES FOR FACILITATORS WORKING WITH CHILDREN

Hand in paw with Paddington™, learn how children's mental health connects to their rights and how they can speak up for change



United Kingdom Committee for UNICEF (UNICEF UK),  
Registered Charity No. 1072612 (England & Wales), SC043677 (Scotland).

## HELLO AND WELCOME TO OUTRIGHT!

We are so delighted and grateful you're joining us to raise awareness about the importance of children's mental health. It doesn't matter who we are, what we do or where we live, we all have mental health and it's just as important as our physical health.

The last 18 months have been hard for everyone and our lives have changed a lot because of the COVID-19 pandemic. It's made us think about what's most important to us and how we all need to look after our mental health and wellbeing.

By taking part in OutRight, the UK Committee for UNICEF (UNICEF UK)'s annual youth campaign, this year children will be able to:

- Learn about mental health, and why it's as important as physical health.
- Learn why we need to challenge the stigma and discrimination that exists around mental health and talking about it.
- Understand how mental health is linked to children's rights.
- Think about how they can look after their own mental health and wellbeing.
- Find out what to do if they're concerned about someone else's mental health in their life.
- Use their voices to take action on their right to good mental health (Article 24) and advocate for change with decision-makers.

We want to empower and inspire children to think about and share their views on children's rights in their local communities and more widely too, with the support of our campaign champions – Paddington Bear and Cel Spellman.

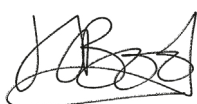
If you are a UNICEF UK Rights Respecting School or College, all the activities in the pack will help you to achieve the outcomes described in Strand C of the Rights Respecting Schools Award, which focuses on participation, empowerment and action.

Like last year, we will be in touch with regular emails, sharing resources as they become available, highlighting new opportunities and letting you know how things are going. We'll be hosting workshops again on Microsoft Teams so you can ask questions and share ideas.

Don't hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions and to share the progress the children you work with are making. We can't wait to see how you get on!

Thank you so much for championing the campaign and empowering children to use their voices.

All the best,



**Jess Bool**  
Strategic Lead  
– Youth Engagement



**Frances Bestley**  
Director – Rights Respecting  
Schools Award



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## STILL TO COME

The regular emails we send you will include links to download everything else you need, including:

- All learning activities
- Campaign actions
- Invitations to join our online events

## GET YOUR OUTRIGHT CERTIFICATE

Taking our key campaign actions, sharing evidence of your participation, and taking part in our feedback survey at the end of the campaign, will mean your school or organisation is entitled to receive the OutRight 2021/22 certificate.

If you're a Rights Respecting School, all activities in this pack will help your school meet Strand C outcomes at Silver and Gold. You can use the OutRight certificate as evidence for Strand C.

Contact us with any queries:  
[outright@unicef.org.uk](mailto:outright@unicef.org.uk)



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# INTRODUCTION TO OUTRIGHT

## EXPLAINING OUTRIGHT TO COLLEAGUES AND CHILDREN

We know that the last 18 months has been really difficult for children. During this time, many children have felt that their voices and views weren't being heard by decision-makers.

OutRight is a great way for us, as adult allies, to show children that their voices do matter. Every year we work hard to empower children to speak out about the importance of children's rights. This year we'll explore mental health through a children's rights lens.

Through the activities and resources we'll be sharing, children will have the opportunity to:

- Learn about mental health and why it's as important as physical health.
- Learn why we need to challenge the stigma and discrimination that exists around mental health and talking about it.
- Think about how they can look after their own mental health and wellbeing.
- Find out what to do if they're concerned about someone else in their life.
- Use their voices to raise awareness and share their work with decision-makers.

We'll direct you to all the additional resources you need via our regular emails, but if there's anything you want to ask in the meantime, please do get in touch at [outright@unicef.org.uk](mailto:outright@unicef.org.uk)

Actor and presenter Cel Spellman has recorded a great welcome video and we've put together a short PowerPoint presentation that should be useful in helping you to start the conversation about mental health and children's rights with the children you work with. You can download both from here: [unicef.uk/outright-resources](https://www.unicef.uk/outright-resources)



### World Mental Health Day

This year, on World Mental Health Day, UNICEF will publish the *State of the World's Children* report – on children and young people's mental health.

World Mental Health Day takes place on 10 October and we encourage you to have a focus on children's mental health and wellbeing on this day if you can. It would be a great day for groups to really get stuck into all the resources.

## FACILITATING OUTRIGHT BOTH IN PERSON AND ONLINE

As always, the OutRight activities will develop children's knowledge of an issue within a rights-based context and lead them through a progression of activities that will encourage them to use their voices.

Last year we made the OutRight campaign more flexible – providing them in a combination of PowerPoint, video and PDF formats, so that an exciting, relevant and empowering series of work could be facilitated online or face to face. We realise that the context facilitators deliver their work in could continue to vary over the course of this year's OutRight campaign, so we will be following a similar format again this year.

We will send you, or the person who initially signed up to OutRight, regular emails that contain links to download each set of materials.

Each set will include a PowerPoint pack and a PDF facilitator guide. The PowerPoint pack will contain slides explaining the activities that you, as the facilitator, can deliver in a way that will work best for you.

We also plan to provide a live session around World Children's Day with experts at UNICEF UK, to inspire children to be involved in normalising the conversation about mental health.

**In a face-to-face setting**, we envisage that the PowerPoint pack can be used on a whiteboard, or other projector with an adult or older young person facilitating the session using the PDF facilitator notes.

**For virtual settings** we hope you'll be able to share the PowerPoint pack with children to use at home, with direction and guidance provided by you, using the PDF facilitator guide. If you are a Rights Respecting School, you will recognise this approach from Article of the Week: [unicef.uk/AoW](https://www.unicef.uk/AoW)



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### World Children's Day

If you've been taking part in OutRight for a while you'll know that World Children's Day is a day by children, for children.

In preparation for World Children's Day on 20 November, encourage children to take the lead and:

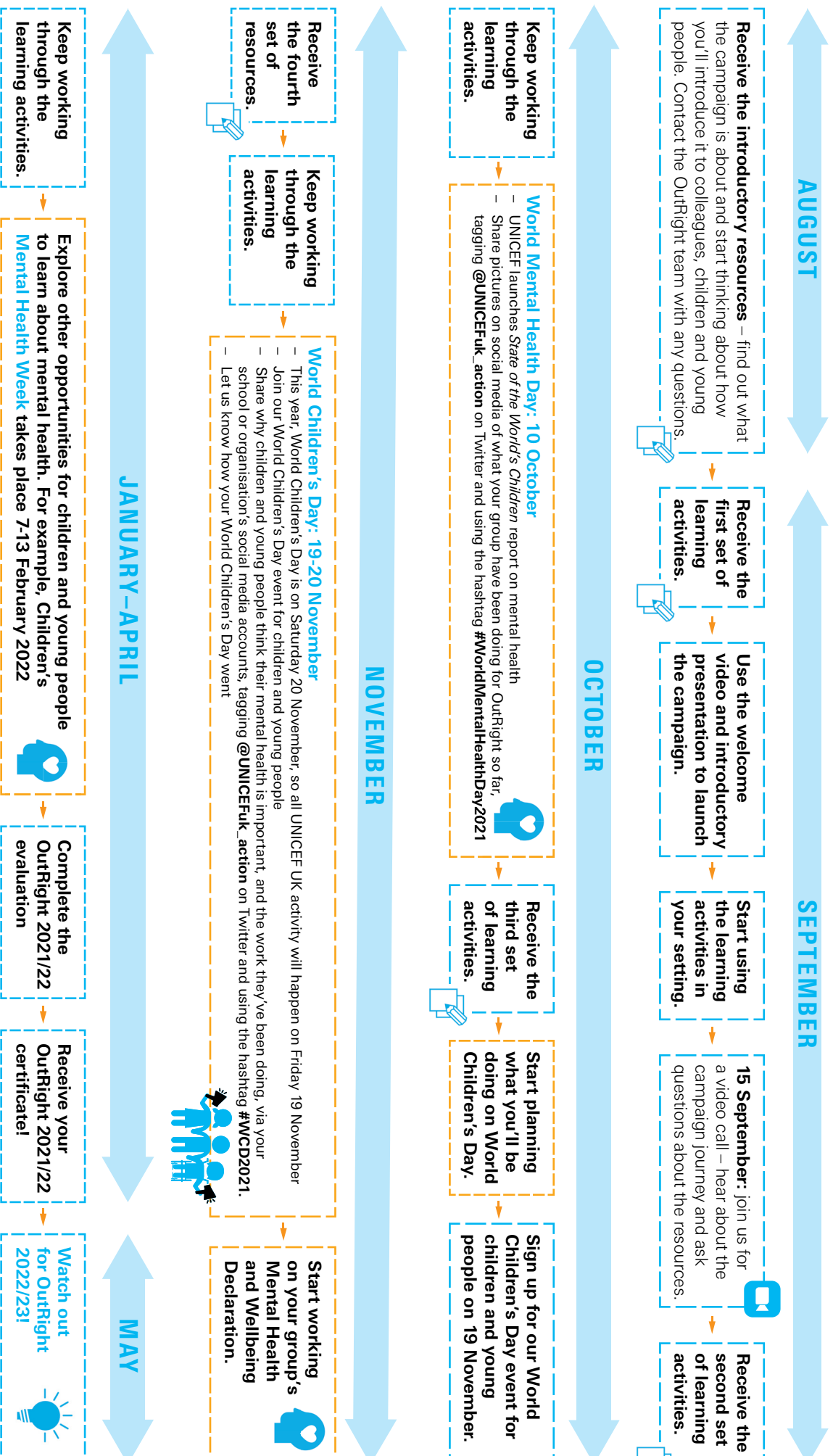
- plan a Takeover Day where they're in charge;
- share the work they've created and what they have learned;
- let other children know what they can do to speak up.

Please record and share content on the day if you can and encourage children to think about how they can involve the local press, Member of Parliament (MP), Member of Scottish Parliament (MSP), Member of the Northern Ireland Assembly (MLA), or member of the Welsh Assembly (AM), parents, local businesses, the Chair of the PTA or other local decision-makers, to really make sure their voices are heard.

If you hear back from your MP, MSP, MLA or AM, please let us know so we can offer additional support, if needed.

# TIMELINE

THIS SUGGESTED TIMELINE CAN HELP YOU STRUCTURE YOUR CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES



## OUTRIGHT

Speak out on children's rights

FOR EVERY CHILD

# BACKGROUND READING



As stated in Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), all children are entitled to the best health care possible; and they should have information about how to stay safe and healthy. This includes both a child's physical and mental health.

**Being able to take care of your mental health is both important on its own, and as a part of supporting physical health. It's key to remember that when we say 'mental health' that does not mean mental illness.**

We all have 'mental health': it's a continuum stretching from good mental health at one end through to different mental health conditions and mental illnesses, some of which can have a profound impact on a person's life, at the other. When children can take care of their mental health, they are better able to take charge of who they are and who they want to be: identifying and pursuing their hopes and dreams. Everyone sits somewhere on the continuum, and many people, if not most, move along it at different stages of their lives.

Mental health refers to our emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing. It affects how we think, feel and act. It determines our ability to



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handle stress, build and manage relationships, and make choices that affect our health.

Poor mental health in childhood and adolescence can prevent children from realising their rights and reaching their true potential. Yet, mental health remains stigmatised and underfunded in almost every country. While awareness has improved immensely over the past few years, there is still a great deal of stigma and discrimination related to mental health. This often stems from a lack of understanding, and can prevent children from seeking help and support.

As such, mental health is central to children's overall health: it is just as important as their physical health. There are many reasons for children to feel their mental health and wellbeing are being impacted, and many different kinds of mental health condition. We won't be covering any of these in great detail because we recognise that UNICEF UK isn't a mental health charity. However, we know that things like the COVID-19 pandemic and climate crisis have affected and continue to affect children's mental health and wellbeing.

Through this year's OutRight campaign, UNICEF UK will provide resources to support the children you work with to understand what mental health is, feel comfortable talking about it, know how to seek support, and speak out on the topic. The CRC underpins the resources, rooting the learning in the relevant articles, which cover children's rights to health, to have their views respected, to use their voice, to education, and to not be discriminated against, and which are all crucial to children's mental health.



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## THE PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic has shone a spotlight on mental health and wellbeing: and children's lives have changed a great deal over this time. In a **survey** by Young Minds of nearly 2,500 young people at the start of 2021, two thirds said they believed that the pandemic would have a long-term negative effect on their mental health.

While measures such as social distancing and lockdowns have been instrumental in protecting public health, the disruption to routines, education, and not seeing friends and family for long periods have had a big impact on us all. It's showed us how, when difficult things are happening in the outside world, our resilience and mental health are tested.

The pandemic may have been the first time a child has experienced the death of a loved one and had to start the grieving process during this time. They might not have had access to the usual support that helps us to cope when someone dies. They might not have even attended the person's funeral.

Grief Encounter is an organisation set up to ensure every child and young person has access to the best possible support following the death of someone close. It has put together information and signposting for anyone working with children who have been bereaved during the pandemic: [unicef.uk/grief-encounter](https://www.unicef.uk/grief-encounter)



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## CLIMATE ANXIETY

While the physical dangers posed by climate change have been widely reported, the potential impact on people's mental health has not had as much attention until recently. A BBC Newsround survey last year showed that children were 'losing sleep' over climate change and the environment. Nearly three quarters (73 per cent) said they were worried about the state of the planet right now – including 22 per cent who said they were very worried. When asked about their futures, almost three in five children (58 per cent) said they were worried about the impact that climate change will have on their lives. You can read more about this, as well as tips for children for feeling less worried about the climate crisis, [here](#).



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# SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN



We know that many schools and organisations already prioritise children’s mental health and wellbeing and that the OutRight campaign will be one of many ways they ensure children have a safe space to share their thoughts and feelings, and speak up about the support they might need.

At UNICEF, we believe talking about thoughts, feelings, mental health and wellbeing is something everyone should feel safe to do.

It’s possible that through this work, a child you’re working with might say or do something that gives you cause for concern. If so, refer to your safeguarding lead and safeguarding policy.

You may also want to refer to one of the following organisations, which can provide further tailored safeguarding advice:

**ChildLine** is a service provided by the NSPCC that includes a 24-hour helpline for children (under 18) on **0800 1111**. Full details on the support and information it offers can be found at: [childline.org.uk](https://childline.org.uk)

**YoungMinds** runs a text messenger service to support children in crisis, which is free on most networks. The organisation also runs a parents’ and carers’ helpline. [youngminds.org.uk/contact-us/](https://youngminds.org.uk/contact-us/)

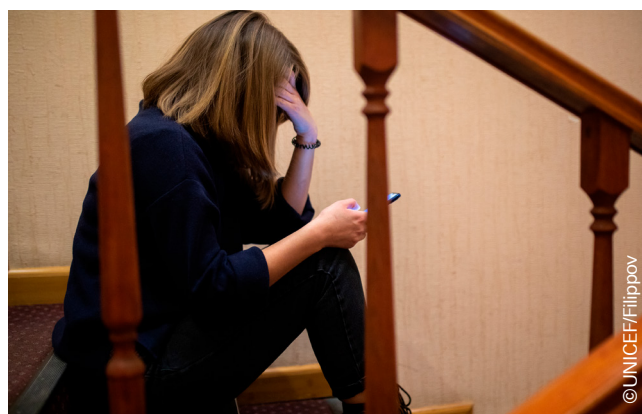
More support providers can be found on the **Children and Young People’s Mental Health Coalition** website: [cypmhc.org.uk/](https://cypmhc.org.uk/)

## LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF AND YOUR WELLBEING TOO

Facilitating sensitive conversations with children about their mental health and wellbeing can take a lot of emotional energy and may even tap into something you weren’t expecting, for yourself. If this happens, there’s support available for you too.

If you’re having a difficult time, or you’re worried about someone else, **Samaritans** provides a 24-hour confidential listening service on 116 123 or you can email [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

**Mind** provides advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem. It campaigns to improve services, raise awareness and promote understanding. Contact **0300 123 3393**, Monday-Friday 9am-6pm, except on Bank Holidays, or email [info@mind.org.uk](mailto:info@mind.org.uk)



# HOW CAN CHILDREN USE THEIR VOICES?

Under the CRC, governments are duty-bearers who must fulfil the obligations set out in the convention so that the rights of children and young people are met. As rights holders, it's important that children and young people are supported to speak out on the issues that affect them, and are heard by key decision-makers at every level. While it is the responsibility of the duty bearers to make sure that children's rights are met, children and young people can promote their rights themselves as well, for example by raising their voice to ask for change, including through the activities in this pack.

OutRight empowers children to speak out about their rights, inspiring them to stand up for the rights of themselves and other children, both here in the UK and around the world, and strengthen their knowledge and understanding of children's rights.

For further information on the CRC, see the video produced by Queen's University Belfast and the child-friendly version of the CRC designed by UNICEF UK:

[unicef.uk/QUB-CRC](https://www.unicef.uk/QUB-CRC)

[unicef.uk/child-uncrc](https://www.unicef.uk/child-uncrc)



## SHARE WHAT THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE TAKING PART IN OUTRIGHT ARE DOING

We are always really excited to see and hear how you and the children you work with get involved with our campaigns! It really helps us to fulfill our mission to promote children's voices and there are lots of ways to do this:

- You can e-mail us at [outright@unicef.org.uk](mailto:outright@unicef.org.uk)
- If your policies permit you to do so, record consent and then share photos and posts on social media, tagging [@UNICEFuk\\_action](#) on Twitter or [@UNICEF\\_UK](#) on Instagram, using the hashtag [#OutRightMentalHealth](#)



OutRight resources, including guidance on image consent, can be found at [unicef.uk/outright-resources](https://www.unicef.uk/outright-resources)

# WHAT IS CAMPAIGNING?

Campaigning, activism, advocacy, speaking up, using your voice, protesting, raising awareness and making an impact in your community...

These are all about change and how, together, we can achieve the changes we want to see in our local communities, our country or across the world.

In one sentence: Campaigning is about taking specific and organised actions (like taking part in OutRight!) to bring about positive change on an issue, and influence those in power to act.

## WHY CAMPAIGN?

Children have an important role to play in campaigning to create change. Their voices matter and they have the right to say what they think.

Campaigning on issues that affect them can make a real difference to children and young people in the UK and around the world. By signing petitions, making videos, writing blogs, speaking to their local representatives and local newspaper(s), children can show those in power just how much they care about children's rights here and around the world.



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## SPREAD THE WORD

Word of mouth is a very powerful tool: why not try one of these effective actions?

- **Tell five others:** Challenge the children you work with to tell five others about what they've learned about mental health and how it affects everyone. Telling cousins, siblings or friends who go to different schools or live in different areas is a great way to raise awareness.
- **Present your work:** Create a short presentation about the work you're doing in your school/organisation on mental health to share with other schools or youth groups in your area. Your group could even invite local businesses, local councillors or your local decision-makers too.

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RESPECT FOR CHILDREN'S VIEWS

### UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: Article 12

Every child has the right to say what they think in all matters affecting them, and to have their views taken seriously.

**OUTRIGHT**

Speak out on children's rights

FOR EVERY CHILD



# CONTACTING DECISION-MAKERS

## Members of Parliament

The UK is split into 650 areas, or constituencies. Each constituency is represented by a Member of Parliament (MP). An MP's job is to represent the people in their constituency (constituents) in Parliament on both national and local issues.

## Members of the Scottish Parliament, Northern Ireland Assembly and Welsh Assembly

If you are in Scotland, Northern Ireland or Wales, then your group should also contact your Member of the Scottish Parliament (MSP), Member of the Northern Ireland Assembly (MLA) or Member of the Welsh Assembly (AM). Many issues affecting children's rights are devolved, which means that the respective governments can change policies and take action themselves.

## Local councillors

Your group can also contact the local decision-makers who represent you at your local council. Local councillors are elected to represent their communities on a range of local issues and can play an important role in ensuring services (things like health care, education, policing, transport) that support you and your local community.

## HOW DO WE FIND OUT WHO THEY ARE AND GET IN TOUCH?

Once your group has decided the most appropriate level of representative to contact, they can find and contact your MP, MSP, AM, MLA and local councillors in two easy steps:

**1 To find out who your MP, MSP, AM, MLA or local councillor is, simply type your school or organisation's postcode into the search box on the following websites:**

- MPs – [unicef.uk/FindMP](https://www.unicef.uk/FindMP)
- MSPs – [unicef.uk/FindYourMSP](https://www.unicef.uk/FindYourMSP)
- AMs – [unicef.uk/FindYourAM](https://www.unicef.uk/FindYourAM)
- MLAs – [unicef.uk/FindYourMLA](https://www.unicef.uk/FindYourMLA)
- Local councillors – [unicef.uk/Councillors](https://www.unicef.uk/Councillors) or visit your local council's website, which is easily done through any search engine.



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**2 Your group can then decide how it wants to contact your local decision-maker.**

Why not invite them to see the work you've been doing or send them a letter or email to highlight the work the group has been doing?

Although members of your group won't be able to vote if they are under 18 years old, it is your local representatives' job to listen to what young constituents have to say and address the concerns they raise. Age is even likely to be an advantage: decision-makers are often really impressed and inspired when they see young people seeking to make the world a better place.

**Before you contact your local decision-maker, it is important for the group to think carefully about what it is asking for:**

- Politicians like it when people come to them with a clear plan of action for what they would like them to do. It's great to be passionate about an issue but your group also needs to have an idea of what the solution to the problem is and how the decision-maker can help achieve that solution.
- For example, your group might want your local decision-maker to raise the profile of children and young people's mental health. They could do this by raising the issue with a government minister or by speaking in a debate. Your group might want a politician to spark change. This could mean actively seeking to change the law, change their personal views, or change their political party's approach to an issue.

## CONTACTING YOUR DECISION-MAKER

### Step 1: Write a letter or email to your decision-maker explaining your request.

Your group might want to invite them to visit your school / organisation and see the work you have been doing in person, or via video call. As part of this, the group should include why this issue or visit is important. The group should make it clear that your organisation / school is in the constituency. It is also really helpful to try and make the request as local as possible – remember, it's the decision-maker's job to represent the concerns of local people. It might also be a good idea to mention the ages of the group, or class year; children have powerful voices and decision-makers are often inspired and encouraged to hear from them! Remember, when your group contacts your local decision-makers, it's always best to address them as Mr or Ms.

### Step 2: Arranging the meeting.

Decision-makers are often very busy and the receive a lot of emails, calls and letters so the group might have to wait a little while for a response. If your group hasn't heard back within three weeks, you might want to call their office to follow-up and arrange a time for the visit or meeting.

### Step 3: Meeting your decision-maker.

Help the group prepare in advance so you all have a clear plan of how you want the visit or meeting to go. It's also important to remember to be personal and polite – explain clearly why the group feels strongly about this issue and, even if the group disagrees with your decision-maker's approach, it is important to remain calm so group members can explain their position clearly and ensure their voices are heard. If the group asks the decision-maker questions about their work and their views too, this might help build a good relationship. And finally, make sure to say thank you for their time at the end of the visit or meeting. The group might also want to take a picture with the decision-maker and use this to remind them of the actions they may have promised to take. If it's an online meeting, the group could take a screenshot instead.

### Who has the power to change the issue you are campaigning on?

The UK Government has the power to put children's rights at the heart of all its work. Your group can share its views with the Government to help make sure that children's voices are listened to and acted upon. By meeting their local MP, MSP, MLA or AM and telling them about their concerns regarding issues that affect them, children can help us build support to ensure the Government prioritises children's rights here in the UK and around the world.

### TOP TIPS

- MPs like to receive invitations in plenty of time, so planning is key.
- A visit or meeting will usually take place on a Friday: before the pandemic that's when MPs would go back to their local areas. Whether they visit in-person, or over a video call, your group can tell them personally what issues are important to them:
- Ask your MP to continue to support the group's campaign by speaking about it in a debate in Parliament, or by asking a question of the Prime Minister and relevant Ministers.
- You can learn more about how to engage political decision-makers here: [unicef.uk/YouthAdvocacyToolkit](https://www.unicef.uk/YouthAdvocacyToolkit)



## CONTACTING YOUR DECISION-MAKER

**Sometimes, it's a business practice that you might want to influence...**

UNICEF has worked with governments and many organisations over the years to build better business for children – businesses that are committed to respecting and supporting the rights of children and young people. We do this by working in partnership with businesses, and other stakeholders, to drive positive social impact and change for children.

Children's rights are affected by current business operations but also by the legacy of past activities and potential future harm too.

Respect for children's rights is the minimum required of business. If the young people you're working with identify an issue affecting children and young people's mental health, that they feel is being caused or affected by business or industry, we'd encourage them to think about how they can raise their concerns with the businesses in question as well as with political decision-makers.



# TOP TIPS

Businesses can and must change their own practices to ensure respect for children's rights and they have the power to influence other businesses to do the same. Businesses can also make their voices heard with the UK Government and support it to put children's rights at the heart of its action in the UK and globally.

If the young people you're working with have identified a business they want to talk to about mental health and child rights, they can reach out to that business to make their views heard.

- Businesses that have websites and are large in size will likely have a page dedicate to 'Sustainability' or 'Corporate Responsibility' or 'Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)'. This is where you can find information about what they are doing in relation to mental health and ways to contact them about this work. You can also write to businesses individually, via a letter or email.
- They can also contact an industry association, which is a network of businesses working in the same area. For example, the British Retail Consortium is the association of businesses working in the retail sector. [brc.org.uk](http://brc.org.uk)
- Children can also contact your local Chamber of Commerce or check whether there is a local business network or group that brings together companies working in your community. [unicef.uk/BCC](http://unicef.uk/BCC)
- Businesses often receive a lot of communications and requests. If your group do not receive a response, you can try to send your message again or ask your friends or colleagues to also send the same message.
- Businesses are sensitive to their public image. Sharing your letter through social media and tagging the company, may help get a response. If they do reply then share that too to help promote positive action and hold them to account for their promises.



When talking to businesses about children's rights and mental health, young people might want to explain:

- why this is important to them and how it affects their rights;
- the reasons they want the business to take action and the role they think it plays;
- what they want the business to do: this could be about the business doing something differently, supporting their advocacy or talking to other businesses so they can also change the way they act;
- how other companies or organisations are acting as a positive example to follow.