

The Convention on the Rights of the Child in the UK

In 1991 the UK Government made an international promise to the United Nations to respect and protect the Children's Rights Convention (or 'CRC' for short) in the UK. The CRC contains over 40 rights and protections for all children and young people (aged under 18). For more info about the CRC check out our factsheet [\[insert title/link\]](#).

The CRC is part of international law. It is not currently part of UK law, so it works a bit differently to other UK laws you may know about. For example you cannot take a case to court if your rights under the CRC have not been protected. But make sure you check out the section below called "The CRC and the Human Rights Act" to see how the CRC works in courts in the UK.

Key ways the CRC works in UK

The Government has promised to respect and protect the rights in the CRC. This means it should be thinking about your rights when it is making decisions like making new laws and policies.

[In a box/government graphic/bubble: What the UK Government says

When the current Government started its work in 2010 they issued a statement on the CRC which said they are "committed to its implementation" and promised to "closely scrutinise new legislation and key policies that directly affect children and young people to ensure we act on this commitment." **End box]**

Every 5 years the Government has to report to a United Nations Committee of experts that checks whether the rights in the CRC are being respected and protected here in the UK. For more information about this process see our factsheet [\[insert title/link\]](#).

You can send your own views to the Committee about how well you think the Government is doing to protect children's rights in general. For more information about this see our factsheet [\[insert title/link\]](#).

[In a box: Wait! Things in Wales are a bit different

Devolution means there are differences in the ways the CRC works in England and Wales. In 2011 the Welsh Assembly passed the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure. This Measure places a duty on certain

officials like Welsh Ministers to have “due regard to” (or to think carefully about) the CRC in all their work. This does not give you any new rights in UK law or allow you to take cases about CRC rights to court. But it is an important step forward in making sure CRC rights are respected and protected in Wales. If you’re interested in the CRC in Scotland and Northern Ireland check out our online library [INSERT LINK]. **End box**

The CRC and the Human Rights Act

In the UK, we have the Human Rights Act which is part of our law. The Human Rights Act (HRA) is about everyone’s rights, including children and young people. It sets out 16 basic rights that belong to all people in the UK. These rights include lots of the rights in the CRC like the right to life, to education, to family life, etc. The HRA rights also contain important principles that you find in the CRC like the right to participate in decisions that affect you.

The HRA rights are not as detailed as the CRC rights. But because the HRA is part of UK law it means that all public officials like police officers, teachers, social workers, and the Government and courts have a legal duty to respect your human rights. When these officials and courts are working out how to apply children’s rights under the Human Rights Act they can use the CRC to help them decide what to do.

[In a box: In real life: The CRC and the Human Rights Act protecting children’s rights]

The UK courts looked at a decision by the Home Office to remove a child’s mum to another country because she was not a UK citizen. The family’s lawyers said this would not protect the child’s right to respect for family life in the Human Rights Act. When the courts were thinking about what this right means they looked at rights in the CRC, and especially the right that says that the best interests of the child should be considered. The courts decided that the Home Office decision was not in the child’s best interest and that her right to respect for family life should be protected. Her mum was not sent to another country.

(This is a court case called *ZH v Home Secretary* from 2011) **End box**