

Convention on the Rights of the Child in 5 minutes

What is it?

The 'Convention on the Rights of the Child' is an agreement drawn up by the United Nations all about what rights children and young people have. It's sometimes called the 'CRC' or the 'Children's Convention'. We're going to call it 'CRC' for short.

What does it say?

The CRC sets out more than 40 rights you are entitled to as a child or young person. The rights are called 'Articles'. They include:

- The right to express your views and have them taken into account on all matters that affect you (Article 12)
- The right to be free from all forms of violence (Article 19)
- The right to healthcare (Article 24)
- The right to play, rest and leisure (Article 31)

The CRC says that when decisions are being made that affect children and young people, what is best for them should be a top priority.

Is it for me?

All children and young people below the age of 18 have all the rights in the CRC. Some groups of young people have additional rights to make sure they are treated fairly and their needs are met. For example, children living away from home, disabled young people, those that have had to leave their country, or those in trouble with the law.

Why is it only for people under 18?

All humans have rights and there are lots of other agreements that have been made to protect the rights of everyone. The CRC is just for children and young people. This means anyone under the age of 18. This is because childhood is a time when we do a lot of growing and when children and young people have some different needs to adults. It's also important to make sure children and young people have the support, knowledge and understanding to get help when they are mistreated or made vulnerable.

Is the CRC law?

In 1991 the UK promised it would do its very best to make sure the rights in the CRC are respected for children and young people here. Now 194 countries have agreed to do the same, making it the most popular human rights agreement in the world!

So, the CRC is part of international law. It is not currently part of our law here in the UK.

Does this mean people who don't respect my rights are breaking the law?

Not always. UK law protects some of the rights in the CRC. For example, teachers can't hit pupils and social workers have to take the wishes and views of young people seriously. Also, some of the rights in the CRC are also protected in UK law by the Human Rights Act, such as the right to life, to be free from serious abuse and harm, the right to family life, to express yourself and not to be discriminated against because you are a young person. When the Government, public officials or courts are thinking about a child's rights under the Human Rights Act they can use what the CRC says to help them work out what to do. For more information about this see our factsheet on the 'CRC in the UK' [\[insert title/link\]](#).

Can't children's rights just be ignored, if it's not breaking the law?

No, the CRC can't just be ignored. Every 5 years the Government has to report back to a United Nations Committee who will check how well it is doing on respecting and protecting children's rights. For more information about this see our factsheet on the CRC Committee [\[insert title/link\]](#).

Although it's not part of UK law, it is a legal document that the UK government have promised to respect. Courts and other officials often use the CRC to help them make decisions affecting children and young people. Organisations providing services to children and young people, such as schools, care and health services, can also use the CRC to help them provide the best services they can.

Why do I need it?

It's a human rights agreement just for children and young people! It sets out the things that you are entitled to and what kind of treatment you should be able to expect. You can also get involved in work to check how well the Government is doing on children's rights. For more information about this see our factsheet on Getting Involved [\[insert title/link\]](#).