

A ChildLine Information Sheet

Rights of Children and Young People

“The wellbeing of children requires political action at the highest level. We are determined to take that action. We make a solemn commitment to give high priority to the rights of children.”

The World Summit for Children in 1990

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child has been signed by 197 countries including the UK:

Most parents make sure that their children grow up with care and support. Most schools do everything they can to make school a good experience.

Some children, especially those phoning ChildLine, say that they feel they have no control at home and in school. ChildLine counsellors listen, support and help these children and young people to have the rights given to them by the United Nations Convention

What rights do children and young

1. *The right to LIFE and the best chance to develop fully.*

*** Article 6 of the UN Convention**

2. *Standard of living*

Every child has the right to a fair standard of living. Parents should provide this. In cases where parents cannot provide an adequate standard the Government must provide help.

*** Article 27 of the UN Convention**

3. *Education*

Children have the right to a free education. Different kinds of education should be available for those with special needs.

Higher education should be available for those with ability.

Children have the right to be educated without fear.

Schools should have a bullying policy and each pupil should be informed of what to do if they find themselves being bullied.

*** Article 28 of the UN Convention**

Sophie talked with a ChildLine counsellor of her years at school constantly being bullied. The counsellor explained to Sophie that it was her RIGHT to be educated without fear. Sophie, accompanied by a friend, went to talk to the head of her year about her rights.

4. *Health*

Children have the right to be as healthy as possible. If they are ill they must be given good health care to enable them to become well again.

*** Article 24 of the UN Convention**

Ahmed, 14, phoned ChildLine saying he had visited his GP about a health problem. Although he questioned his doctor he did not feel he was being given enough information.

Ahmed lived with his mother who did not understand English.

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ChildLine was able to put Ahmed in touch with an advocate to represent his rights.

Children have the right to consent or refuse consent to dental, medical or surgical treatment if they can prove they understand what will happen as a result of their decision.

5. **Environment**

It is a child's RIGHT to live in a safe, healthy, unpolluted environment.

Children have the right to safe, nutritious food and water.

*** Article 24 of the UN Convention**

6. **Protection**

The Government MUST protect children from:

Doing work which could be dangerous or which could harm their health.

Doing work which interferes with their education.

*** Article 32 of the UN Convention**

Children must be protected from dangerous drugs.

*** Article 33 of the UN Convention**

Children must be protected from sexual abuse.

*** Article 34 of the UN Convention**

Saira, 16, called ChildLine to say she was sexually abused by her stepdad. Saira wanted the abuse to stop, but was scared of telling her mum.

After the ChildLine counsellor had discussed Saira's options with her, she decided she could talk to her mum. The counsellor

also offered Saira ongoing support from ChildLine.

Children must be protected from being abducted or sold.

*** Article 35 of the UN Convention**

7. **Separation**

Children may be separated from parents/carers ONLY if it is in the child's best interests. If children are separated from their families, or the place they usually live, the child, their parents or anyone else who is important to the child has the RIGHT to go to court and ask to have their case heard.

If separated, for example in care (looked after), the child has the RIGHT to keep in regular touch with their parents and siblings unless it would be harmful to do so.

*** Article 9 of the UN Convention**

Adam, 12, told ChildLine that he was living in a children's home a long way from his brother and sister and had not seen them for a long period of time. He had heard that his brother was now in a young offenders institution near where Adam now lived. His social workers kept changing and Adam did not know the name of his key worker.

With Adam's permission ChildLine spoke to the manager of the children's home, who said he would make sure Adam knew the name of his key worker and was given information about his brother and sister. Adam remained in contact with ChildLine through The Line service for young people living away from home.

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How ChildLine can help

ChildLine takes children's and young people's problems seriously, giving them a chance to talk in confidence about their concerns or worries, however large or small. ChildLine counsellors can also put young people in touch with helpful adults and further information, including local sources of help and advice. ChildLine is free and available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Further information and advice

ChildLine

Freephone: **0800 1111**

or

ChildLine,
Freepost NATN1111
London E1 6BR

or

ChildLine Minicom: **0800 400 222**
Monday to Friday 9.30am - 9.30pm
Saturday to Sunday 9.30am - 8.00pm

Other sources of help

National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS)

Egerton House, Tower Road,
Birkenhead,
Wirral, CH41 1FN
Freephone: **0800 616101**
Fax: **0151 649 8701**
Website: **www.nyas.net**

Children's Legal Centre

University of Essex
Wivenhoe Park,
Colchester CO4 3SQ
Telephone: **01206 872466**
Website: **www.childrenslegalcentre.com**

Unicef

Africa House,
64-78 Kingsway,
London WC2B 6NB
Telephone: **020 7405 5592**
Website: **www.unicef.org.uk**

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ChildLine is a service provided by the NSPCC.

Registered charity numbers 216401 and SC037717.

Please note – all names and identifying details have been changed to protect young people's identities.

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CONTACTING CHILDLINE

Children can call ChildLine on **0800 1111** (all calls are free of charge, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year).

Or write to us at ChildLine, Freepost NATN1111, London E1 6BR; or visit www.childline.org.uk

Children who are deaf or find using a regular phone difficult can try our textphone service on **0800 400 222**.
Monday to Friday 9.30am to 9.30pm
Saturday to Sunday 9.30am to 8.00pm

We have a special helpline for children and young people living away from home in places such as refuges, boarding schools and young offenders' institutions called The Line on **0800 88 4444**.

Monday to Friday 3.30pm to 9.30pm
Saturday to Sunday 2.00pm to 8.00pm

ChildLine in Partnership with Schools (CHIPS) helps schools set up schemes to encourage children and young people to support each other. For more information call **020 7650 3230**.