

KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS: THE VIEWS OF LOOKED AFTER AND CARE EXPERIENCED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Report for the Tower Hamlets Corporate Parenting Steering Group, December 2016

1. Introduction

1.1. Unicef UK – L.B. Tower Hamlets partnership

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH) has been working in partnership with Unicef for the past three years as part of the Child Rights Partners (CRP) programme. The goal of the programme is to place children's rights – as enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (the Convention) – at the centre of public services to ensure all children have the same opportunity to flourish.

One of the areas LBTH chose to embed children's rights in is corporate parenting. Principles of a child rights-based approach (appendix 1) have been used to frame and underpin the Children Looked After Strategy (2015-2018) and inform the commissioning of the Children's Rights Advocacy Service.

1.2. Purpose of the report

The LBTH Children Looked After Strategy recognises children and young people as inherent rights holders and the local authority as the principal duty bearer responsible for protecting, promoting and fulfilling children's rights. The Strategy also explicitly recognises the importance of listening to children and young people and translating their views and experiences into improved service planning and provision.

This report is the third in the 'Views of Looked After Children' series and focuses on children and young people's knowledge and understanding of rights as enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, with a view to identifying existing good practice and any gaps that should be addressed. The report additionally shares some insights into children and young people's views and experiences of local services, including the Children in Care Council.

The report puts forward a number of recommendations for the Corporate Parenting Steering Group's consideration.

2. Methodology

2.1. Primary data

In order to build young people's knowledge and understanding of their rights and gather their views in relation to their experiences in Tower Hamlets, Unicef UK met with the Children in Care Council (CiCC) three times. All sessions took place in November 2016.

Two, 2-hour sessions were held with the older CiCC group (18+). The first session was dedicated entirely to capacity building and a range of interactive activities were facilitated to increase young people's knowledge and understanding of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The second session focused on eliciting and capturing young people's views through individual questionnaires, group activities and group discussions.

The younger CiCC group (12-17 year olds) participated in a single, 1-hour session (this group meets once a month). Participatory activities were planned in a way that allowed for both capacity building and participatory consultation to take place at the same time.

No. of children and young people who participated:

	Male	Female	Total
CiCC 12-17 year olds	2	3	5
CiCC 18+			
Training session:	3	2	5
Participatory consultation:	4	3	7

Additionally, to offer an insight into professional knowledge and understanding of the Convention by staff supporting looked after and care experienced children and young people, evidence from Unicef UK-run child rights training is also briefly presented.

2.2. Secondary data

To set the findings in a broader context, a summary of key messages from secondary research has also been included in this report. The literature review focused on child rights-specific publications, such as the annual 'State of Children's Rights in England' report (CRAE) and evidence submissions to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. The most recent 'Concluding Observations' – a report by the Committee on the Rights of the Child assessing progress and bottlenecks in relation to UK's implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child - were also examined.

3. Findings

3.1. Messages from secondary research

Research indicates that availability and accessibility of good quality information about children's rights remains poor. Children and young people, both in and out of mainstream education, face a number of barriers to learning about and understanding their rights.

Human rights and international law are part of the Key Stage 4 (secondary school) "Citizenship" curriculum. However, as noted by the Children's Rights Alliance for England (CRAE) in a 2015 submission to the Committee on the Rights of the Child¹, this only applies to some state funded schools. Private schools (including those for disabled children), free schools and academies are not obliged to teach pupils about the Convention, nor is it part of any primary school curriculum requirement. Younger children have no right to learn about their human rights under the curriculum.²

A consultation with children and young people in England carried out by CRAE in preparation for UK's examination by the Committee on the Rights of the Child, highlighted a number of concerns in relation to knowledge and awareness of rights as well as children and young people's enjoyment of participation rights.³

- Of 819 children who answered the question "have you heard of the CRC?" 46% said they had not heard of it and a further 10% were not sure. When asked "how much do you know about the CRC?", only 1 in 5 said "a lot". The majority of children (56%) said they only knew "a little".
- Even when children reported that they had been taught about rights they were still unclear about what they really mean, and didn't have full and detailed information.
- Of the children who had a social worker, only 40% thought they were listened to and taken seriously. Of the children who have a Reviewing Officer, only 25% thought they were listened to and taken seriously.

¹ [UK implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; Civil Society Alternative Report 2015 to the UN Committee – 2015](#), CRAE

² [State of Children's Rights in England 2014](#), Children's Rights Alliance for England

³ [See it, Say it, Change it; Submission to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child from children in England](#), CRAE

- Whilst just over half of the children who completed the CRAE survey said they had heard at least something about children’s rights and the Convention, some children said they did not know anything about children’s rights and didn’t think others did either. Certain groups of children in difficult circumstances felt that at key times they did not have the necessary knowledge about rights that they needed.




Earlier this year, the Committee on the Rights of the Child raised a number of concerns in relation to children’s enjoyment of rights in the UK. These included the failure to systematically hear children’s views in policymaking, including on issues that affect them. The Committee was also concerned that many children in the UK feel that they are not listened to by their social workers, reviewing officers, paid carers, judges, personnel working with children in conflict with the law or other professionals in matters affecting them, including in family proceedings.⁴

3.2. Messages from children and young people in Tower Hamlets

3.2.1. Messages from young people in the 17+ age group

ACTIVITY 1: Questionnaire

Following the initial capacity building workshop, young people were asked to complete a short, anonymous questionnaire to gauge their views and experiences in relation to their enjoyment of rights such as participation, access to information and knowledge of rights.

	 AGREE / YES	 NOT SURE / SO-SO	 DISAGREE NO
I feel my social worker listens to me & considers my feelings and wishes	4	3	
I feel my reviewing officer listens to me & considers my feelings and wishes	5	2	
I feel respected and treated with dignity by staff at all times	4	3	
I understand and I am able to explain who my Corporate Parents are in Tower Hamlets	3	1	3
I can influence key decisions about me and my life, for instance about health, education, housing, relationships	5	2	
I can influence local policies relating to children and young people, for instance about services for young people	4	3	
I think local decision makers understand the concerns and issues affecting children and young people in Tower Hamlets	2	5	
I know where to access information about my rights *	7		
I know how and where to complain if I feel my rights are being breached or disrespected by a member of staff **	7		
I think there is enough information out there for children and young people in Tower Hamlets to learn about their rights	3	3	1

*The sources of information about rights cited by young people were: *Google, online, Unicef, IRO, social work, children’s rights officer.*

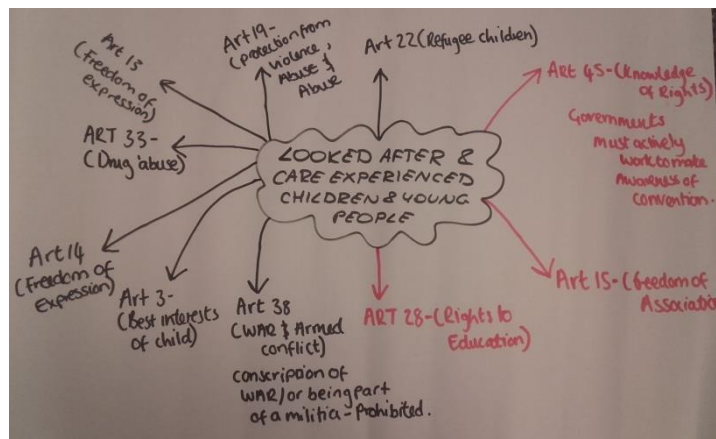
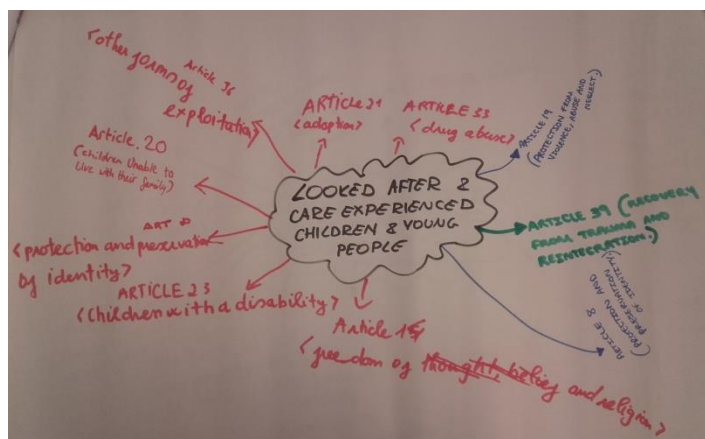
**In terms of knowing where to complain or raise concerns, the following individuals and agencies were identified: *Citizens Advice Bureau, Angie Treby, the Children’s Advocate*

⁴ [Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland](#), Committee on the Rights of the Child, 12 July 2016

ACTIVITY 2: Placing rights in the context of the experiences of looked after and care experienced children and young people

Young People worked in two groups (3 YP in each group) and mapped out the articles of the Convention they felt were particularly relevant to looked after and care experienced children and young people. This was an opportunity to explore the Convention in more depth, as well as reflect more specifically on how it applies to looked after and care experienced children and young people. Both groups identified a range of articles, covering protective rights (e.g. Art.19, 36), civil and political rights (e.g. Art.8, 13, 15) and economic, cultural and social rights (e.g. Art.28).

One young person said: **“Basically, you could put the whole Convention here.”**



- Art 8: Protection and preservation of identity
- Art 14: Freedom of thought, belief and religion
- Art 20: Children unable to live with their family
- Art 21: Adoption
- Art 23: Children with a disability
- Art 33: Protection from drug abuse
- Art 36: Protection from exploitation
- Art 39: Recovery from trauma and reintegration

- Art 3: Best interests of the child
- Art 13: Freedom of expression
- Art 14: Freedom of thought, belief and religion
- Art 15: Freedom of association
- Art 19: Protection from violence, abuse and neglect
- Art 22: Refugee children
- Art 28: Right to education
- Art 33: Protection from drug abuse
- Art 38: Special care for children affected by war and armed conflicts
- Art 42: Knowledge of rights

During an activity that young people participated in as part of the initial training session (a week before the participatory data collection workshop), they were asked to identify 3-5 issues they would like to highlight as causing them particular concern when thinking about the difficulties faced by young people in Tower Hamlets.

The issues young people highlighted were:

- Privacy
- Having a say in matters that affect them and freedom of expression
- Accommodation – both in terms of access to affordable housing and the quality of housing
- Access to opportunities - educational, work and leisure
- Freedom of religion and belief, in particular in the context of concerns related to discrimination and the negative media coverage of Muslim communities.

ACTIVITY 3: Group discussion about art. 42 of the Convention

“State Parties undertake to make the principles and provisions of the Convention widely known, by appropriate and active means, to adults and children alike.”

Art. 42 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child

Context: the importance and relevance of Art. 42 of the Convention

Rights are of little use to people unless they are aware of them. Article 42 confirms States Parties’ obligation to make the Convention on the Rights of the Child known “by appropriate and active means” to adults and children. The Committee on the Rights of the Child has underlined the importance of disseminating the Convention’s principles and provisions to all sectors of the population. In addition, it has suggested that the Convention should be incorporated into school curricula and into the training of all those who work with or for children. The Committee has emphasized that dissemination of child rights information, including the text of the Convention, can achieve a variety of purposes, including:

- ensuring the visibility of children;
- enhancing respect for children;
- reaffirming the value of children’s fundamental rights;
- enhancing democratic institutions;
- encouraging the protection of the rights of children belonging to minority groups;
- changing negative attitudes towards children;
- combating and eradicating existing prejudices against vulnerable groups of children and harmful cultural practices⁵

Research has identified additional benefits of child rights education (CRE) for children: they become informed of their rights and the nature of the rights; they develop the attitudes and values underpinning democracy and global citizenship; and they become empowered to take positive action to protect the rights of others. CRE facilitates children’s participation in their near environments (school and community) where their opinions and decisions can be properly acknowledged and taken into account. CRE also assists children to understand the national and global environments and provides them with the knowledge and skills to act at a broader level.⁶

Discussion:

Young people participated in a discussion about what Art. 42 means and how it should be protected and realised by duty bearers, i.e. central and local government. The conversation was recorded and subsequently transcribed.

Only 2 out of 6 participating young people knew about the Convention prior to attending the training session run by Unicef at the Care Leaving Service.

When asked about general thoughts in relation to Art. 42, the following remarks were made by young people:

“I think the local authority should put more emphasis in terms of distributing this information to people and young people, like children in care. They need to find effective methods of delivering this messages, whether that be on the internet or somehow else. Billboards is a perfect place to capture this – billboards around the borough of Tower Hamlets. Obviously

⁵ [Implementation Handbook for the Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), Unicef

⁶ [Child Rights Education Toolkit: Rooting Child Rights in Early Childhood Education, Primary and Secondary Schools](#), Unicef

brochures, leaflets in places where young people would go – youth clubs, after school clubs, one stop shop, leaving care service.” (2 young people speaking together)

“A local authority should also enforce this kind of knowledge upon social workers and I think local authority should also liaise with other people [the wider community] to increase their awareness of Article 42.”

Young people were then asked to think about reaching children and young people who may find it difficult to access information from mainstream sources and in standard formats, e.g. children who do not attend youth clubs, who are not in contact with services or who may struggle to speak or read English.

“They would hear from their social worker or personal advisor; many people don’t come here (the LCS) – they’d only come for events, like Christmas events or ‘Just for you’ events; If they are out of care then it’s to do with the PA. But saying that, each PA is assigned to 30 young people so they are not going to be available to speak to every young person, or they may be dealing with an emergency. So it’s about balancing that and making the time for other young people who don’t socialise, don’t come here, don’t interact for whatever reason.”

“People might not be able to read English so maybe having it in Bengali (in Tower Hamlets) would be another option. Also, some people don’t really like reading. Like I don’t like reading. Once I’ve reached the end of this paragraph, the other one is out the other ear. Maybe videos, something we can actually see, so it’s not just writing or reading.”

“Also maybe drama and acting, yeah, that would be better. That would also be good because a lot of people haven’t got the confidence to interact and stuff like that. Like you’ll find that some people who come here, for example, they sit in the corner by themselves. So I think if we do this drama piece then a lot of people can open up.”

“The school (should play a part). Put posters in their classrooms. That would make them aware.”

“School yes but there’s a particular time when they’re not doing curriculum activities while at school – the assembly – so why don’t we enforce during that time of the day awareness of rights.”

“Yes, the head teacher can say at the assembly – know your rights.”

Young people were also asked to think about their personal preferences, feelings and wishes in relation to how they would like to be able to access information about rights and support to understand their rights. They shared the following thoughts:

“Memorising it. Spending time with it (i.e. the Convention). And not just one leaflet but different information from different places (i.e. variety of sources and formats).”

“It needs to appeal to an audience. In terms of language, it shouldn’t be too sophisticated. Nor should it be too informal. It needs to be neutral, I think the key thing is how you deliver this message.”

“For me, I need to look at this (i.e. the Convention), read and then for someone to talk to me.”

“Talking to somebody would be best for me.”

“Maybe, also, they could do one-to-ones. Someone from Unicef could talk to the young person on a one-to-one basis so they can get more knowledge and understanding. Because we are doing it as a group now, some people may feel they have questions that they don’t want to ask in front of the whole group. In a one-to-one they can get a better understanding instead of just sitting there, not understanding and not asking.”

Subsequently, young people were asked to reflect on their ideas and proposals for improving access to rights and assess the degree to which rights knowledge is accessible to them and their peers at the moment. They were asked to think about availability and accessibility of information as well as the degree to which they felt staff could support them to understand their rights. They shared the following comments:

“I don’t think it’s that easy. I mean back in my time, when I was in care, most of the active stuff, like drama and performances, were just on events such as ‘Just for you event’ and Christmas event. Angie [the children’s rights advocate], she comes on those event but that’s only like once a year so not everyone gets to meet her and understand what she’s about or to even get to trust her to want to speak to her. The (care) review meetings are only once every 6 months so by the time that comes around the children aren’t even bothered. I wasn’t bothered when I was in care.”

At that point all participants were asked to indicate whether they knew the children’s rights advocate. Half responded affirmatively and half said they were not aware of the service.

Young people also raised the idea of having a dedicated helpline for children and young people in care, somewhere they could call at any time, day or night, to seek help and advice quickly. Some young people were familiar with Childline but felt a Tower Hamlets specific service would be better. Difficulties with foster families were mentioned as an example of a situation when a child or a young person might want to reach out to someone for help or advice immediately.

ACTIVITY 4: Young people's messages to Corporate Parents in Tower Hamlets

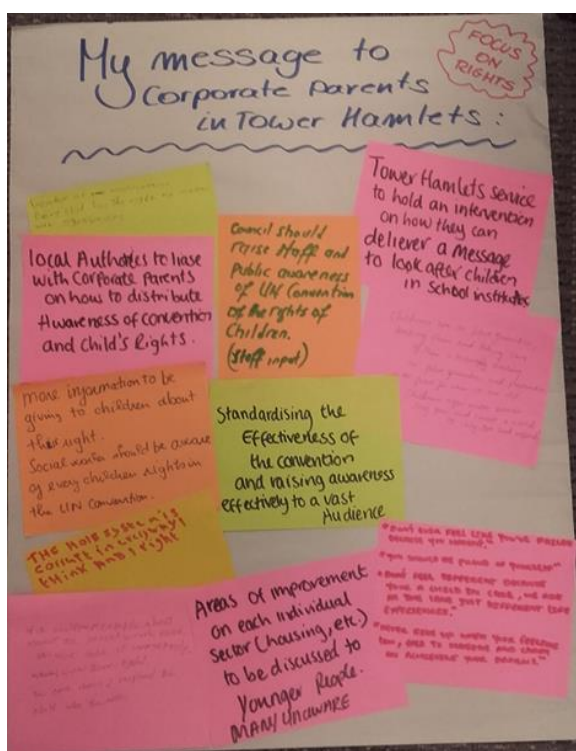
At the end of the session, young people were asked to reflect on both the initial training session and the discussions that took place during the participatory data collection session and write messages to Corporate Parents in Tower Hamlets.

My message to Corporate Parents in Tower Hamlets

"More information to be given to children about their rights. Social workers should be aware of every children's right in the UN convention."

"Freedom of association – every child has the right to meet with organisations."

"Children are our future generation, teaching them and taking care of them is technically teaching our future generation and preparation for our future for when we are old. Children's rights matter because they grow and create a world of unity, love and respect."



"Areas of improvement on each individual sector (housing, etc.) to be discussed to younger people... Many unaware."

"Standardising the effectiveness of the convention and raising awareness effectively to a vast audience."

"Council should raise staff and public awareness of UN convention of the rights of children."

"If children complain about something the social worker [should] make sure [to] take it seriously - know their rights. The carer should respect the child."

"The whole system is corrupt in every way, I think, and I (am) right."

"Tower Hamlets service to hold an intervention on how they can deliver a message to looked after children in school institutions."

"Local Authorities to liaise with corporate parents on how to distribute awareness of convention and child's rights."

One young person chose to share some quotes to illustrate the messages young people with experience of care should hear from the Corporate Parents:

"Don't ever feel like you've failed because you haven't."

"You should be proud of yourself."

"Don't feel different because you're a child in care, we are all the same just different life experiences."

"Never give up when you're feeling low, talk to someone and carry on achieving your dreams"

3.2.2. Messages from children and young people in the 12-17 age group

ACTIVITY 1: Exploring children's rights and their meaning

At the start of the session, young people were given two charts containing a broad selection of rights. They were asked to work in two groups, examining each chart in turn, and identify

- the rights they thought appear in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and therefore they all should enjoy
- and the rights they believed have been made up for the purpose of the exercise.

They were asked to stick green and blue dots on the charts, with blue marking 'false rights'. This allowed the group to start exploring the content of the Convention and the meaning of children's rights. It also helped shed light on existing misconceptions relating to children's rights and areas where more awareness raising is needed.

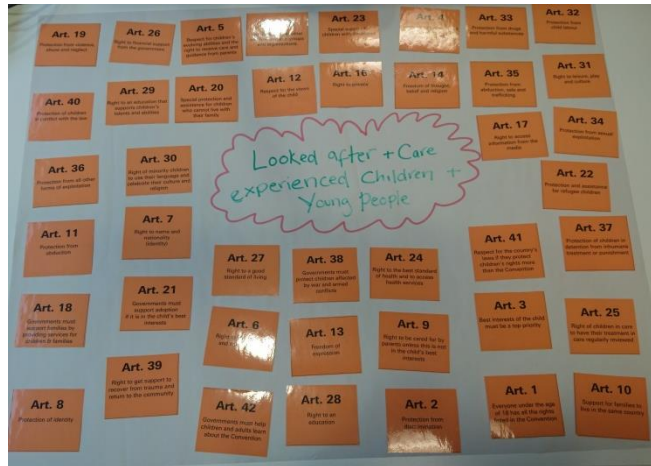
Every child has the right to know and understand their rights	Every child has the right to freedom of expression	Every child has the right to an identity	Every child has the right to join groups and organisations
Every child has the right to privacy	Every child has the right to love	Every child has the right to access information from diverse sources	Every child has the right to be protected from degrading treatment or punishment
Every child has the right to receive financial support from the government	Every child has the right to a good standard of living	Every child has the right to be protected from abuse and neglect	Every child has the right to an education that develops their personality and talents
Every child has the right to make mistakes	Every child has the right to rest and leisure	Every child has the right to receive special support if they can't live with their family	Every child in conflict with the law has the right to be treated with dignity and respect
Every child has the right to receive support to recover from trauma	Every child has the right to practice their religion	Every child has the right to access health services	Every child has the right to friendships
Every child with special needs has the right to receive additional support	Every child has the right to use their mother tongue	Every child has the right to have a pet	Every child has the right to have a say about issues that affect them

As shown above, certain rights enshrined in the Convention were thought by some young people to be 'false'. These included: the right to join groups and organisations (Art 15), the right to access information from diverse sources (Art 17) and the right to use one's mother tongue (Art 30).

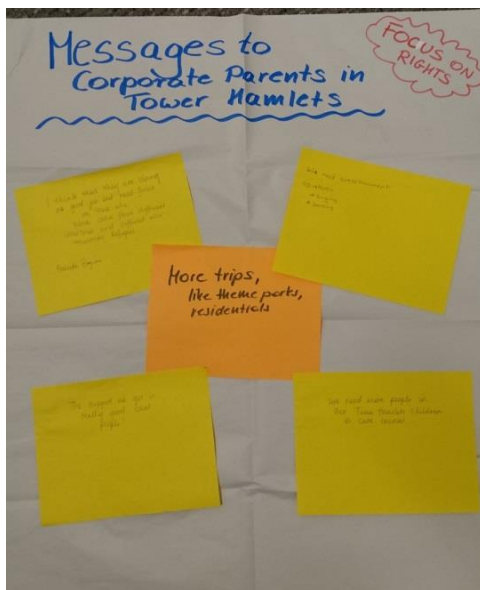
It is also worth noting that none of the young people who participated in this session were familiar with or were able to explain the term 'corporate parenting' or 'corporate parent/s'.

ACTIVITY 2: Placing rights in the context of the experiences of looked after and care experienced children and young people

During this activity, young people were given a flipchart and 'rights cards' – individual articles of the Convention printed on small cards (42 in total). Working as a group, they examined each article one by one and stuck the ones they considered of relevance to looked after and care experienced children and young people. Ultimately, young people pinned all 42 articles to the flipchart.



ACTIVITY 3: Young people's messages to Corporate Parents in Tower Hamlets



My message to Corporate Parents in Tower Hamlets

"We need entertainment, e.g. music, singing, dancing."

"We need more people in our Tower Hamlets Children in Care Council."

"The support we get is really good. Great people!"

"More trips, like theme parks, residential."

"I think that they (corporate parents) are doing a good job but need focus on those who have come from different countries and suffered war traumas. Refugees."

3.3. Knowledge and awareness of child rights among social care professionals and Corporate Parents – messages from Unicef UK

During the discussions held with the CiCC, the role of staff in supporting children and young people to know about and understand their rights was seen as crucial. Children and young people identified staff as a key source of information and advice in relation to their rights and entitlements. It is therefore important to understand the degree to which members of the children’s workforce are aware of and understand the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

It is worth noting that there is no current requirement for social workers or senior Corporate Parents to complete any level of child rights education, and knowledge and awareness of the UNCRC is not incorporated into social work training.

While not enough data is available from staff in Tower Hamlets’ services, we can share evidence gathered by Unicef elsewhere in the UK.

Unicef UK has been delivering child rights training to local authority staff and councillors for the last three years. Our experience tells us the need for child rights training amongst the children’s workforce, including specialist LAC and leaving care staff and senior Corporate Parents, is significant. Our experience also shows that structured, face-to-face child rights training supports reflective practice and provides staff with practical tools and ideas for advocating for and supporting children and young people more effectively.

For example, an analysis of three training sessions delivered in two local authorities exclusively to LAC/leaving care staff and senior Corporate Parents (75 individuals in total) shows the following:

How relevant do you think the topic of child rights and a child rights-based approach is to your current role?			
Not at all	Somewhat	Very	Extremely
1%	7%	48%	44%

Please rate your knowledge of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and a child rights-based approach:				
	No knowledge	Some knowledge	A good level	A high level
Before training	20%	65%	15%	0%
After training	0%	16%	65%	19%

Please rate your confidence when dealing with this subject in practice:				
	Not very confident, I would require guidance much of the time	Fairly confident, I would require guidance some of the time	Confident, I would require guidance in more complex situations	Confident and able not only to deal with this subject but also to offer peer support
Before training	43%	44%	11%	2%
After training	0%	32%	54%	14%

As a result of child rights training, do you plan to do anything differently in your work with/for children and young people?		
No	To some extent	Yes
7%	35%	58%

4. Recommendations

The below recommendations have been developed based on the content of this report. Some originate directly from the CiCC and others draw on the report's general findings.

1. Improving children and young people's knowledge and understanding of 'corporate parenting'

- 1.1. In partnership with the CiCC, develop accessible, young person-friendly information about the meaning of 'corporate parenting' and the structure and remit of the LBTH Corporate Parenting Steering Group (CPSG).
- 1.2. In partnership with the CiCC, develop a dissemination strategy for cascading information about the role and remit of the CPSG to looked after and care experienced children and young people in Tower Hamlets.
- 1.3. Provide an opportunity for children and young people to influence or define the themes of future 'Views of Looked After Children' reports to ensure issues of importance to members of the CiCC are reflected in the Steering Group's agenda.
- 1.4. In agreement with children and young people, establish a structured feedback loop between the CiCC and the CPSG to ensure meaningful participation, transparency and accountability.

2. Child rights awareness-raising for children and young people

- 2.1. Working collaboratively with members of the CiCC, disseminate the summary text of the Convention to relevant settings and services; consider developing additional child rights material (e.g. leaflets, posters) to increase knowledge of children's right.
- 2.2. Consider translating the summary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child into Bengali to improve the wider community's access to child rights awareness.

3. Child rights capacity building for the children's workforce

- 3.1. Consider a baseline study (e.g. a structured, thematic survey) to establish staff knowledge and understanding of the Convention and the meaning of a child rights-based approach.
- 3.2. Support staff in key services, e.g. the Kitcat Terrace LCS, to access training and information to learn about and understand the Convention and a child rights-based approach.

4. Increasing awareness of the Child Rights Service

- 4.1. Support all children and young people who are looked after or care experienced to know about, and access, the Tower Hamlets Child Rights Advocacy Service.

5. Increasing the membership and reviewing the format of the CiCC 12-17 meetings

- 5.1. In partnership with the current members of the 12-17 CiCC, scope opportunities and strategies for increasing the membership of the group.
- 5.2. In partnership with the current and any new members of the group, review the format of the meetings to action young people's wishes about having music and entertainment as part of the meetings.

5. Next steps

In line with the principles of a child rights-based approach, meaningful participation requires feedback, follow-up and an opportunity for children and young people to ask questions and understand which recommendations can and which cannot be actioned and why.

Young people were asked about their preferences in relation to the feedback loop and the general view was that a representative (or a group of representatives) from the Corporate Parenting Steering Group should attend a future CiCC meeting to discuss the findings and any actions taken as a result of this report. This could be organised at the LCS via one of the LCS staff.

6. Appendix: principles of a child rights-based approach



DIGNITY: Every child and young person, like each adult, has inner dignity and worth that should be valued, respected and nurtured. Respecting children’s dignity means that all children should be treated with care and respect in all circumstances – in schools, hospitals, police stations, public spaces or children’s homes.



INTERDEPENDENCE AND INDIVISIBILITY: All children and young people should enjoy all of their rights all of the time because all rights are equally important. Rights cannot be ‘cherry-picked’ depending on circumstances. Children and young people’s rights to a good standard of living or to be protected from abuse, neglect and violence are as important as the right to get together with their peers or the right to freedom of expression.



BEST INTERESTS: The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children and young people. Decisions can relate to individual children, for example about adoption, or groups of children and young people, for instance when designing play spaces. In all cases, children and young people should be involved in deciding what is best for them.



PARTICIPATION: All children and young people have the right to have a say in matters that affect them and to have their views taken seriously. In order to participate meaningfully in the lives of their family, community and the wider society, children and young people need support and opportunities for involvement. They need information, a space to express their views and feelings and opportunities to ask questions.



NON-DISCRIMINATION: Every child and young person should be treated fairly and protected from discrimination, whatever their age, gender, ethnicity, religion, language, family background or any other status. Having access to equal opportunities and best possible outcomes doesn’t mean being treated identically; some children and young people need more support than others to overcome barriers and difficulties.



TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY: Open dialogue and strong relationships between children and young people, professionals and local politicians are key to making rights a reality. For this to happen, everyone needs to be supported to learn about and understand rights. Knowledge of rights also allows children and young people to hold to account the people responsible for ensuring their rights are protected and realised.



LIFE, SURVIVAL AND DEVELOPMENT: Every child has a right to life and each child and young person should enjoy the same opportunities to flourish so to be safe, healthy, grow and develop. From birth to adulthood, children and young people develop in many different ways – physically, emotionally, socially, spiritually and educationally – and different professionals should work together to help make this happen.

