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## Post date

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How many of you have heard of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)? How many of you can name at least five of the articles and why they are important for children and young people with health conditions?

RCPCH &Us member, Scott

RCPCH &Us is our network for children, young people, parents and carers. We actively seek and share their views to shape policy and practice.

We ask Scott's questions, above, of all health workers who take part in RCPCH &Us sessions. We want them to know about children and young people's rights, and explore how they can help protect these rights in health and all parts of life.

## About the UNCRC

The UNCRC is a set of 45 rules, called articles, which helps countries, organisations and individuals know what needs to happen to give all children and young people the best start possible. It was written in 1989, and the UK made it into law in 1992. All UN member states - except the United States - have signed it.

The articles help children and young people be safe from harm, have chances to learn and develop, become an individual and get the support needed to thrive. You can download [Unicef's poster summary of the articles \(PDF\)](#) or [see them in pictures from the Children and Young People's Commissioner for Scotland \(PDF\)](#).

Rights are like pancakes – each right is important, but when you layer them up they make something strong which protects all children and young people

RCPCH &Us young person

In each UK nation, a Children's Commissioner makes sure that children and young people's rights are being supported. You can find out more in our external links at the bottom of this page.

## Rights and Us

The UNCRC helps us keep children and young people at the centre of everything we do through our RCPCH &Us network. We're proud to help protect and promote children's rights, and enable more than 2,000 children and young people each year to participate through our projects and events.

RCPCH &Us children and young people have looked at the UNCRC. They picked five articles that they think are the most important to remember and tell others about. (They also said that all the rights are important so they are not forgetting about the other ones!)

- **Article 12** – The right to be involved in decisions that affect you, from individual care decisions through to shaping health services that you might use
- **Article 23** – Infants, children and young people with disabilities have the right to be involved, which includes having appropriate communication support within health care appointments and engagement work
- **Article 24** – The right to the best health care possible, thinking here about child and youth friendly health services
- **Article 28** – The right to education, thinking about while they are an inpatient, or structuring services to avoid missing school due to medical appointments or supporting engagement sessions in evening and weekends/school holidays
- **Article 31** – The right to rest, relax and play, which in a health context also needs to include support for parents of children with complex health needs to think about how to engage in social activities, and for health care services to acknowledge their role in providing services that do not prevent infants, children and young people from socialising with their peers (eg clinic times)

The rights all make sense – most of them are common sense and should happen anyway

RCPCH &Us young person



In September and October 2019, 1,791 children and young people across the UK shared their views. They participated by voting for ideas (article 12) on what makes the best health provision/service (article 24).

Here's how they voted:

- 28% - more help from adults on making positive life choices that keep them healthy, happy and well
- 26% - more help to understand health conditions like epilepsy, asthma, diabetes, sickle cell and others so that they are more aware and support their friends or be supported
- 23% - important to have access to youth friendly services who are aware of children and young people's needs and identities

## How well is the UK doing on children's rights?

The UNCRC's 54 articles were written in 1989 and concern the survival and wellbeing of children, their development, protection, and participation in social life. The UK signed the Convention in 1990 and ratified it in 1991, and it came law in 1992.

In 2022, the UK will be assessed by the United Nations on how well it is protecting children and young people's rights. Organisations across the UK are currently preparing statements on what needs to be investigated as part of the assessment. You can [see the process](#), which is the same across the UK.

According to the [Kids Rights Index](#), the UK sits - as of November 2019 - at 170 out of 181 rated countries for upholding children's rights. (Iceland is number 1.) This rating is based on the right to education, life, health, protection and enabling environment for child rights.

## Get some resources

Our resource booklet, [Recipes for Rights](#), published in September 2020, takes you through the UNCRC and the five articles that RCPCH &Us have said are important to their healthcare. The 'recipes' include; starter activities to break the ice; patient view finders for one-to-one work; and quality improvement activities to support groups of children, young people and their families to inform your work and service planning.

You might also be interested in [Recipes for Engagement](#), our 2018 booklet, with ideas to practically and creatively engage children and young people (in particular, check out recipes 13, 17 and 21).

You might also like to see our [Facing the Future superhero](#), a video, online game and young people-led resources explore children's rights to care at the "right place, right time, right people". As mentioned above, our [Stay at Home activity pack](#) includes a children's rights quiz! .

Plus, the NHS England Youth Forum has [Your Rights in Health Care posters](#) (JPG), which are created by young people for young people.

Need more resources or support? Just contact us on [and\\_us@rcpch.ac.uk](mailto:and_us@rcpch.ac.uk)

## External links

[Unicef UK: How we protect children's rights](#)

[Children Right's Alliance for England: State of children's rights 2018](#)

[Kids Right Index](#)

[Children's Commissioner for England](#)

[Children's Commissioner for Wales](#)

[Children and Young People's Commissioner for Scotland](#)

[Northern Ireland Children and Young People's Commissioner](#)

## Downloads

[Rights Matter and UNCRC - colouring poster \(2019\)](#) 1.2 MB

[Rights Matter and UNCRC - colouring sheets \(2019\)](#) 1.12 MB

[Recipes for Rights - RCPCH and Us \(September 2020\)](#) 1.19 MB

[Origami dog - part of 'Starter Activity' - Recipes for Rights, RCPCH and Us](#) 332.21 KB

[Recipes for Engagement - RCPCH and Us \(2018\)](#) 1.89 MB