

Children's Rights Now

CHILDREN'S
RIGHTS
ALLIANCE
Uniting Voices For Children

2021 Quarter 3 Newsletter



Dear Members and Friends,

Welcome to our latest newsletter outlining our activities during the summer period and into the new academic year.

I'm able to report a number of achievements over these past weeks with the Government finally publishing its **Guidelines on Reduced Timetables** and an **additional €52.6m for its new CLASS Scheme**. Both are good first steps in addressing the challenges the pandemic has presented to children already experiencing disadvantage and most negatively impacted over the past 18 months.

We have long called for both interventions and seeing these come to fruition with **#ChildrensFuturesIRL Campaign** members by our side has been wonderful.

But we've a way to travel yet. We need to see a longer-term Roadmap for Educational Reform as part of a child-centred Covid-19 Recovery Plan to address the negative impact of the pandemic and the systemic and pre-existing inequalities embedded in our education system.

Our **123 Online Safety campaign** continues to build momentum. Again, we are working with our members and making great strides in securing brand new online safety legislation and a dedicated Online Safety Commissioner.

We are now readying ourselves for **Budget 2022** with an eye to the commitments outlined in the **EU Child Guarantee**. We will soon consult on our upcoming **Report Card 2022**. We will also hold another **Tusla dialogue** for members and scope out a national pilot service to support parents with children in care - more on these soon!

Finally, we're reviewing the way we communicate with you and redeveloping this newsletter. We would kindly ask you to complete this short [survey](#).

We are, as ever, happy to hear from you and keen to help or support you in any way we can to vindicate the rights of children.

Warmest regards,



Tanya Ward

Chief Executive

Children's Rights Alliance News

Children's Rights Alliance Helpline: Opening Hours

We know these past 18 months have been an uncertain time for children, young people and their families. Our Helpline is open three days a week and you can email the team **anytime** at help@childrensrights.ie

Monday 10am – 2pm

Wednesday 2pm – 7pm

Friday 10am – 12 noon

Future of Education - post-AGM event

As reported in our last newsletter, we had a productive Annual General Meeting

(AGM) in July. Following the AGM, we held a panel discussion on the Future of Education with Gary Gannon TD (Social Democrats); Donnchadh Ó Laoghaire TD (Sinn Féin); Senator Fíona O'Loughlin (Fianna Fáil); Senator Pauline O'Reilly (Green Party); Aodhán Ó Riordáin (Labour) and Senator Mary Seery-Kearney (Fine Gael).

Attended by over 100 members, it was one of the first political debates since schools opened in April and we were delighted that young people from member organisations posed questions. *The Irish Times* published an [opinion piece](#)



organisations posed questions. *The Irish Times* published an [opinion piece](#) by Tanya Ward.

[Helpline Report Launch](#)

In July, we launched our [Helpline and Legal Advice Clinics Annual Report](#) and our new partnership with Eversheds Sutherland Solicitors who will lead on our new legal advice clinics. Tanya Ward and Eoin McAodha, Partner with Eversheds Sutherland and other legal experts discussed the impact of the pandemic on immigration law, childcare law, family law and education law. The report received widespread media [coverage](#) with education overtaking family law queries as callers' top concern.



[Community and Voluntary Pillar](#)

We are one of 17 organisations representing children and young people on the Community and Voluntary Pillar, and in May 2021 took on the rotating role of Secretariat. In July we met with Taoiseach Micheál Martin TD, Tánaiste Leo Varadkar TD and Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications, Eamon Ryan TD, to discuss strengthening social dialogue.

[Research on Family Support Approach for Families Seeking International Protection](#)

We have long called for the development of tailored family support for refugee parents as they readjust to parenting in a new context. Together with Tusla, we will soon start a research study into current family support practices so as to develop an integrated family support approach for families living in the international protection accommodation system.

[Programme Board on White Paper to End Direct Provision](#)

Tanya Ward, CEO, has been appointed by Minister Roderic O'Gorman as a member of the new Programme Board that will oversee the implementation of the White Paper to End Direct Provision. The inaugural Board meeting took place in July. Learn more [here](#).

[Work on Child Poverty](#)

In July, the Alliance supported the National Advisory Council on Children and Young People in compiling needed actions to produce a national action plan on child poverty, enshrining EU Child Guarantee commitments. The paper was submitted as advice to Minister Roderic O'Gorman in August.

[Working Group on Food Poverty](#)

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In July, the Alliance was invited to join the Working Group on Food Poverty established by Minister Joe O'Brien TD as outlined in the Roadmap for Social Inclusion. We've presented to the Group, together with members Society of St. Vincent de Paul and Crosscare, who also sit on the interdepartmental group.

[Irish Youth Justice Steering Group](#)

The Alliance is working with the Youth Justice Advisory Group to support the implementation of the [Youth Justice Strategy 2021-2021](#). Chaired by Minister James Browne TD, it will act as key forum of engagement for community and expert stakeholders; the first meeting is in October.

[Childminding National Steering Group](#)

In September, the Alliance attended the Steering Group for the National Action Plan for Childminding, which will drive and monitor implementation of the [National Action Plan for Childminding 2021-28](#) in relation to regulation, training and much more.

[Family Justice Oversight Group](#)

The Alliance now takes part in a voluntary sector advisory group to feed into the work of the Family Justice Oversight Group, made up of government officials, the Courts Service, the Legal Aid Board and members of the judiciary. It seeks to modernise and improve family justice and people's experience of the system.

[Tusla Training](#)

The Alliance continues to train Tusla staff in children's rights, based on our [Know Your Rights](#) guide, with six sessions to take place by Christmas. Most participants are from Tusla's Prevention, Partnership and Family Support Programme and the Child Protection and Welfare Programme.

Member Spotlight



Cork Life Centre

sharing the vision of Edmund Rice

'Being a member of the Alliance means more than having your name on a list. It provides meaningful opportunities to engage on a range of issues that impact the young people we support. As members, we can rely on the Alliance to bring issues in relation to the right to education to the fore, including shining a much-needed light on the need for alternatives to mainstream education.'

A very warm welcome to our eight newest member organisations, [Aoibhneas](#), [Children's Grief Centre](#), [Clarecare](#), [Crann](#), [Cycle Against Suicide](#), [Equality for Children](#), [Galway Traveller Movement](#) and [Parents Plus](#). We are looking forward to working with you!

Become a member! If you would like to join our membership please contact our Membership Officer, [Edel](#).

Legal and Policy Developments

[UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)

The State's examination has been delayed until autumn 2022 due to a backlog at the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. The new timetable is as follows:

- Feb 2022: Deadline - State Party Report
- May 2022: Deadline - Written inputs to the State Report
- Jun 2022: 92nd Pre-session and children's meeting with the Committee.
- Sept 2022: 91st session - Dialogue between CRC Committee and State party.

[Reduced Timetables Guidelines](#)

We held a successful national conference on 14 September on 'Ending the Misuse of Reduced Timetables in Ireland and the Future of Alternative Education', with a pre-recorded address from **Minister Josepha Madigan TD** and two panel discussions with **Educate Together; Irish Traveller Movement; AsIAM; TU Dublin; UCD; UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, NUIG; iScoil; Cork Life Centre**. Contributions were also made by young people from the Cork Life Centre.



Two days prior to the event, the Department of Education informed us that [Guidelines on Reduced Timetables](#) were to be published imminently, which happened on 16 September. We are proud of this result, which addresses one of the most serious children's rights issues in education in Ireland, and disproportionately impacts certain groups of children. Watch back [here](#) or read our [press release](#) and Conor's Story [here](#).

[Children's Futures Campaign](#)

The #ChildrensFuturesIRL Campaign has been putting a spotlight on educational disadvantage and the need for wellbeing supports in school through a series of events in September for our Education Awareness Month. Read all about these [here](#).

On 8 September, Minister Foley announced a further €52.6 million towards CLASS (Covid Learning and Support Scheme) to mitigate the impact to student's learning and wellbeing of school closures during the Covid-19 pandemic. Read our joint statement [here](#).

[Online Safety Campaign](#)



The Children's Rights Alliance is spearheading the [1,2,3 of Online Safety](#) campaign

which comprises 16 members. On 13 July, its formal launch took place with a webinar on the General Scheme for the Online Safety and Media Regulation Bill. We called for a dedicated online safety commissioner and individual complaints mechanism. It received widespread [media coverage](#); see [visual guide](#) too.

It was gratifying to see how these interventions already benefit children and young people in Australia during the 20 July Joint Committee on Tourism, Culture, Arts, Sport and Media. Read our submissions to the Joint Oireachtas Committee [here](#) and the Joint Committee on Education [here](#). Revised legislation will be before the Oireachtas this upcoming quarter.

[Children's Rights on the Island of Ireland: Responding to the Uncertainty of Brexit and Beyond.](#)

This significant project sees the Alliance partner with the Children's Law Centre in Belfast to ensure children's rights and their voices are heard in discussions currently underway on the future of the island of Ireland, particularly in the post-Brexit era.

[EU Child Rights Strategy and the EU Child Guarantee](#)

At the end of quarter two, the European Commission officially adopted the EU Child Guarantee which aims to prevent and combat child poverty and social exclusion across the EU. Read our FAQ [here](#). We will next review the child poverty national action plan due for submission to the European Commission by March 2022.

[First Years, First Priority Campaign](#)

In July the [#FirstYearsFirstPriority](#) campaign launched its cross-country analysis of state performance in Early Childhood Development across nine countries. We worked with them to produce Ireland's country profile [here](#).

Jobs and Opportunities

Jobs

Children's Rights Alliance – [Catherine McGuinness Fellow \(Part-Time\)](#)

MyMind - [Mental Health Professional](#)

UNICEF Ireland - [Major Donor + Foundation Fundraising Manager](#)

TASC - [Senior Researcher](#)

Women's Aid - [Policy Officer](#)

Inclusion Ireland - [Various](#)

Irish Refugee Council - [Fundraising Co-ordinator](#)

Amnesty International Ireland - [Fundraising Manager](#)

Training, Events and Other

NYCI - [E-Learning Online Safety + Awareness in Youth Work](#)

AsIAm - [Bridge Forward](#)

Research and Resources

Non-Governmental

[Irish Penal Reform Trust Annual Report](#)

[Barnardos Back to School Survey](#)

[Enabling an inclusive and equitable education for all](#) - Rethink Ireland/NUIG report

Governmental

[The Use of Reduced School Days: Guidelines for schools on recording and](#)

[notification of the use of Reduced School days.](#)

[Circular Letter 0045/2021 Covid Learning and Support Scheme](#)

[Covid-19 Learning and Support Scheme \(CLASS\) Guidance for Primary and Special Schools.](#)

[Covid-19 Learning and Support Scheme \(CLASS\) Guidance for Post Primary Schools.](#)

[Report on School Bullying and the Impact on Mental Health](#)

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