



Children's Report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

Ireland will submit its State report on progress in achieving the rights of the child to the UN Committee at the end of 2021. Alternative reports from NGOs and human rights bodies, including the Ombudsman for Children's Office (OCO), will also be submitted this year.

In parallel, the OCO is leading on the production of a Children's Report to the Committee, to be submitted in early January 2022. This report will be a result of widespread consultation with children in Ireland. The Children's Rights Alliance and UNICEF Ireland, who prepared the last Children's Report to the Committee, are supporting us in this work.

As with the previous report, consultation with children will involve two main phases and approaches. The first will be a short online survey to gather the views of as many children as possible about being a child in Ireland (to be issued in late April). The second phase of the consultation will be a number of focus groups with children to explore the main themes that emerge from the survey. These focus groups will have a focus on gathering the views of children from vulnerable groups as identified by the UN Committee.

The OCO has recently re-established a Youth Advisory Panel (YAP) comprised of 20 young people from a wide variety of backgrounds. This group of young people will act as a steering group for this work.

What the OCO is asking from the CRA Members

The OCO is asking the CRA members for help in reaching as many children in Ireland as possible, including vulnerable groups the many of the members work with. This involves two things:

- i. The dissemination through their members of the online survey. This will involve sending a link to members, asking them to complete or have their child complete the survey, which will then be returned to a central point (either the OCO or a data analytics company). This survey will not ask or collect any identifying information.
- ii. Organise a focus group(s) with children to further explore key themes or rights emerging from the survey. These can be facilitated by the members themselves, by the OCO or be co-facilitated by both. The OCO, with help from the CRA and UNICEF, will develop resources to support these focus groups.

We understand that organisations are busy with their day-to-day work and that this represents an additional ask of them. However, we hope that some will be in a position to help us make the most of this important opportunity for children to have their voices heard. We are happy to provide more detail at the CRA members briefing on 1st April and to provide participating members with as much support as possible in helping us with this work.