



CHILD  
FRIENDLY  
CITIES &  
COMMUNITIES

unicef   
UNITED KINGDOM

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# CHILD FRIENDLY CITIES & COMMUNITIES

**PROSPECTUS**



# CHILD FRIENDLY CITIES & COMMUNITIES IS A UK COMMITTEE FOR UNICEF (UNICEF UK) PROGRAMME THAT WORKS WITH COUNCILS TO PUT CHILDREN'S RIGHTS INTO PRACTICE.

The programme aims to create cities and communities in the UK where all children – whether they are living in care, using a children's centre, or simply visiting their local library – have a meaningful say in, and truly benefit from, the local decisions, services and spaces that shape their lives.

The programme is part of **Child Friendly Cities** – a global UNICEF initiative launched in 1996 that reaches more than 30 million children in close to 50 countries.

In the UK, we provide training based on the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child** and support councils, their partners, and children and young people, as they work together on an ambitious three-to-five-year journey towards international recognition as a UNICEF UK Child Friendly City or Community.

For more information visit [unicef.org.uk/cfc](https://unicef.org.uk/cfc)

PART OF UNICEF'S GLOBAL



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**CFC IS PART OF THE CHILD FRIENDLY CITIES INITIATIVE – A GLOBAL UNICEF PROGRAMME THAT REACHES MORE THAN 30 MILLION CHILDREN IN CLOSE TO 50 COUNTRIES**



# 1 WHO WE ARE



## Child Friendly Cities & Communities (CFC) is a UNICEF UK programme that works with councils to put children's rights into practice.

Every child has the right to grow up in an environment where they feel safe to play, learn and grow. A place where they have access to public services and where their voice is heard and matters.

- **We support local politicians** to incorporate children's rights into their decision-making, so that the people who make decisions in cities are listening to the children who live there.
- **We train council professionals** who work with children every day – social workers, youth workers etc. – providing the tools they need to put children's rights into practice. We do the same for others who might not realise just how much their decisions affect children's lives – planning or housing officers, comms teams etc.
- **We champion the voices of children and young people** by ensuring their views are given equal weight to adults when decisions are made about the communities they grow up in.
- **And we support councils to engage more meaningfully with children**, especially those who might not usually have their voices heard, so that they can share their priorities for making the city more child-friendly and hold the council to account when it promises change.
- **It's not just councils we work with.** We support councils to bring together their local partners – from the police, fire and health services, community organisations, volunteers, and even transport providers – to work with UNICEF UK, raising awareness of children's rights more widely and putting rights into practice across the entire community.

### ABOUT US

The CFC team is led by staff with expertise in human rights, public policy, public administration, social research and extensive senior experience of leading community and organisational development programmes, systems change and the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## 2 HOW WE WORK



We partner with councils in the UK who wish to work towards international recognition as a **UNICEF UK Child Friendly City or Community**.

Over the course of three to five years, we support them to achieve measurable progress in embedding children's rights across the city or community - building on existing good practice and identifying gaps.

We ask that they make a political and strategic commitment to upholding children's rights and we train their elected members, council staff, and voluntary and statutory partners in a **child rights-based approach** – a practical tool that can be used to weave children's rights into practice and policy.

We support councils to set realistic and focused goals through the **CFC badge framework**, which allows children and young people to codetermine where a council's attention should be directed.

And, as they embark on their **CFC journey**, trained in a child rights-based approach and with a strong understanding of the priorities for local children and young people, we're there to guide, challenge and champion at every stage.

### 9 CITIES AND COMMUNITIES TAKING PART

We are currently working with Aberdeen, Cardiff, Derry & Strabane, Lambeth (London), Liverpool, Nottingham, Redbridge (London), Southampton and Wokingham

2,000+

### PROFESSIONALS TRAINED

Highly interactive and customised training courses are delivered by UNICEF UK child rights and local government experts. Courses are tailored to elected members, professionals, and children and young people, and range from how to put children's rights into practice to carrying out Child Rights Impact Assessments. All courses are currently delivered online.

20+

### YEARS PUTTING CHILDREN'S RIGHTS INTO PRACTICE AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

Our UK programme is based on over 20 years' experience of embedding children's rights into policies, laws, programmes and budgets through the global Child Friendly Cities Initiative.

# THE CFC JOURNEY

It takes between three to five years for a candidate city or community to be eligible for recognition.

Once accepted onto the programme, councils move through a four-stage process as set out in the image below.

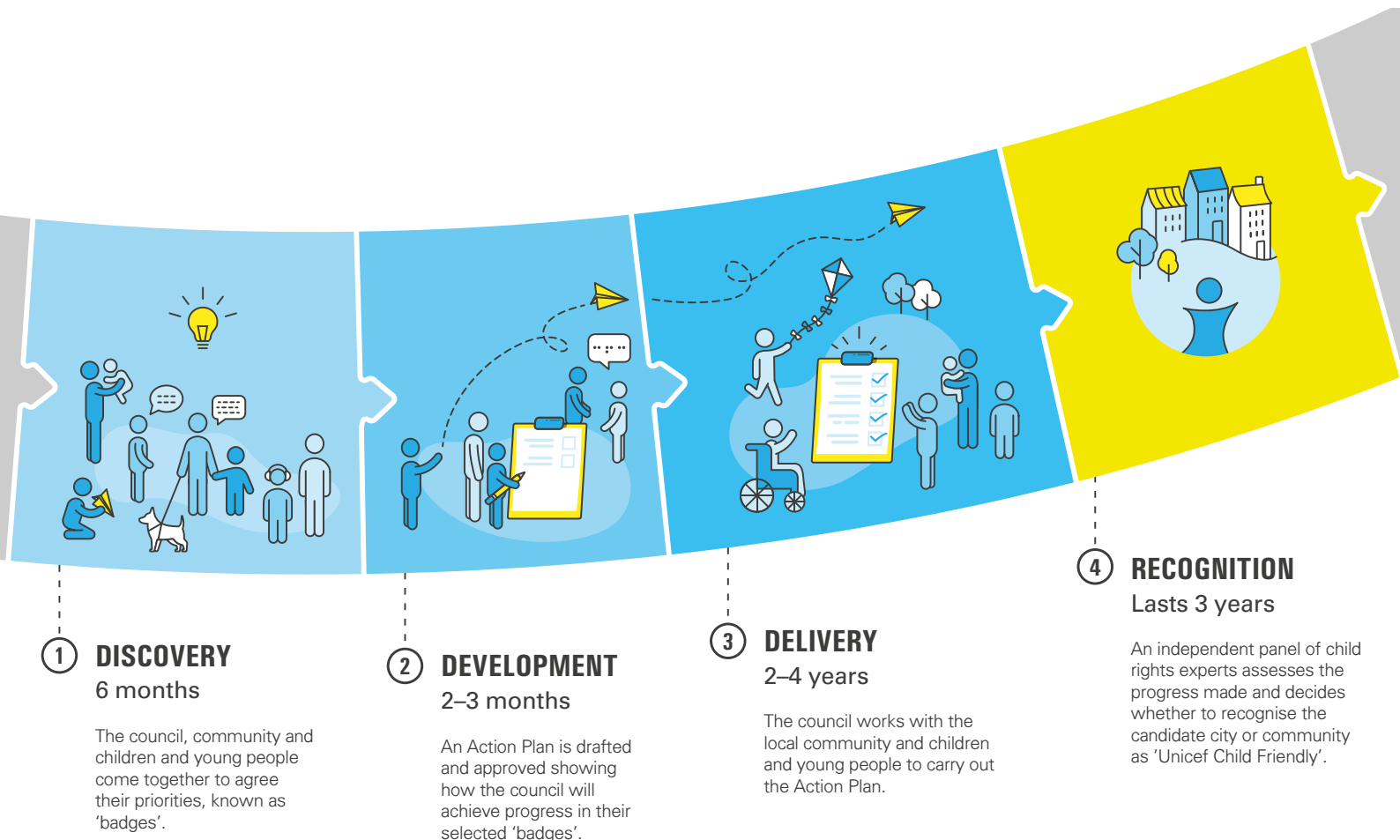
The first is the **Discovery Phase**, during which UNICEF UK begins to deliver expert training in children's rights to local politicians, council staff, partners such as the police, health services, commissioned services, voluntary organisations, and children and young people.

The council also comes together with the local community, including children and young people, at a 'Discovery Day' to see where things are going well for children and where things need to change.

Based on this training and analysis, the city or community chooses six priority areas – or 'badges' (see next page) – and, with support from UNICEF UK, drafts a realistic Action Plan during the **Development Phase**, setting out how they will work towards achieving progress in their badges over the following two to four years.

Councils must show sustainable progress in all six of their badges during the **Delivery Phase** to gain **Recognition** as a UNICEF UK Child Friendly City or Community.

Recognition lasts for three years.



# THE CFC BADGES

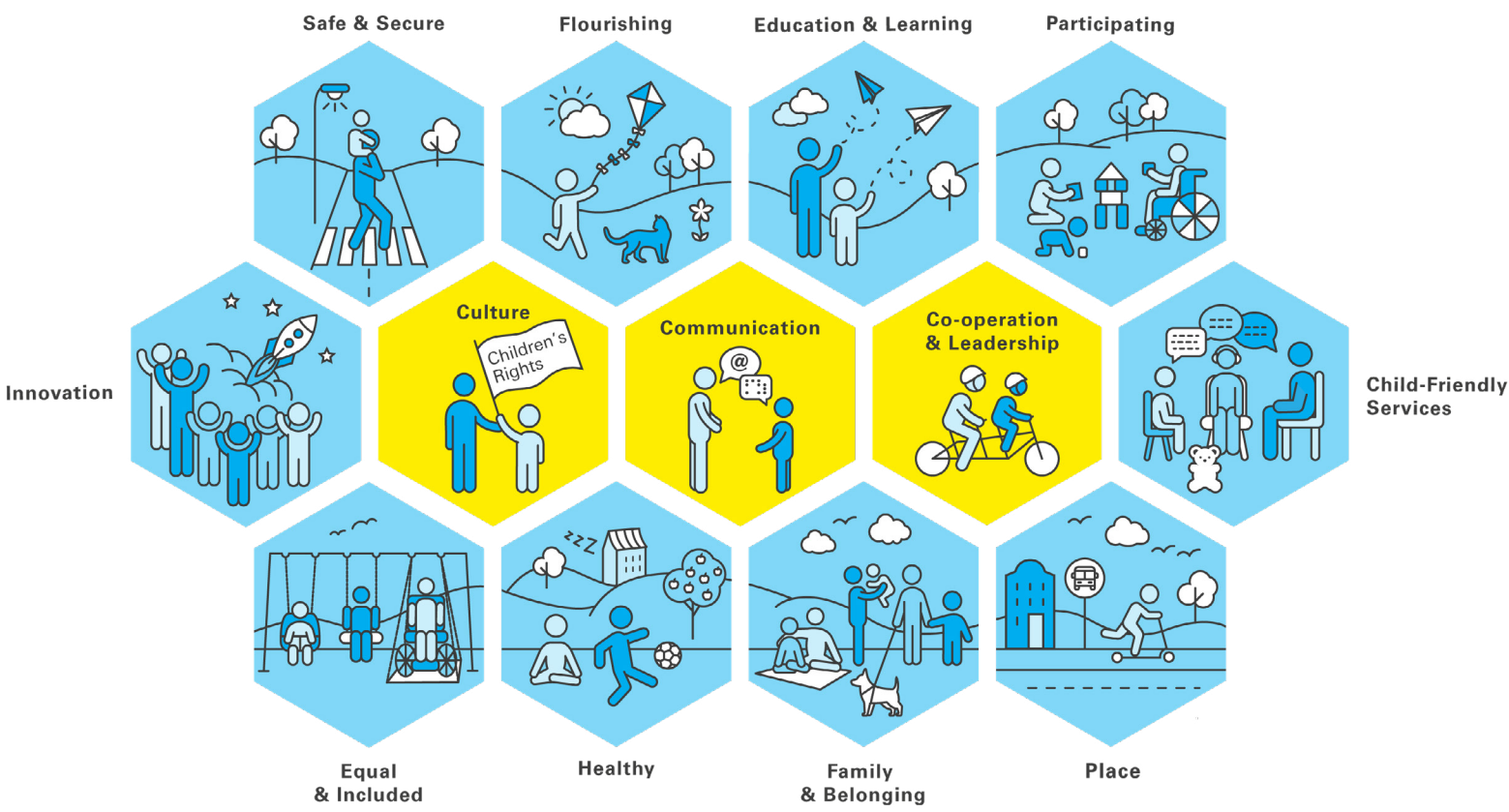
Given the extraordinary breadth of children’s rights as set out in the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**, as well as the wide-ranging responsibilities of local authorities, the CFC programme employs a badge framework which allows councils to focus on defined areas of work during their partnership with UNICEF UK.

There are three **foundational badges (yellow)** that all councils must work towards and three **thematic badges (blue)** that are chosen from a choice of ten. The thematic badge choices are heavily influenced by the views of local children and young people gathered during the **Discovery Phase** of the programme, and so represent their priorities for making the city or community more child-friendly.

**A CHILD RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH TO THE BADGES**

Because all cities and communities are different – and all choose their own badges – no two UNICEF UK Child Friendly Cities or Communities will look the same. Some may prioritise creating free or affordable safe spaces where children can play, while others may focus on tackling mental health and ensuring local health services are child-friendly.

Yet all UNICEF UK Child Friendly Cities or Communities, no matter which badges they choose, take a **child rights-based approach** to their work (see next page).



# A CHILD RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

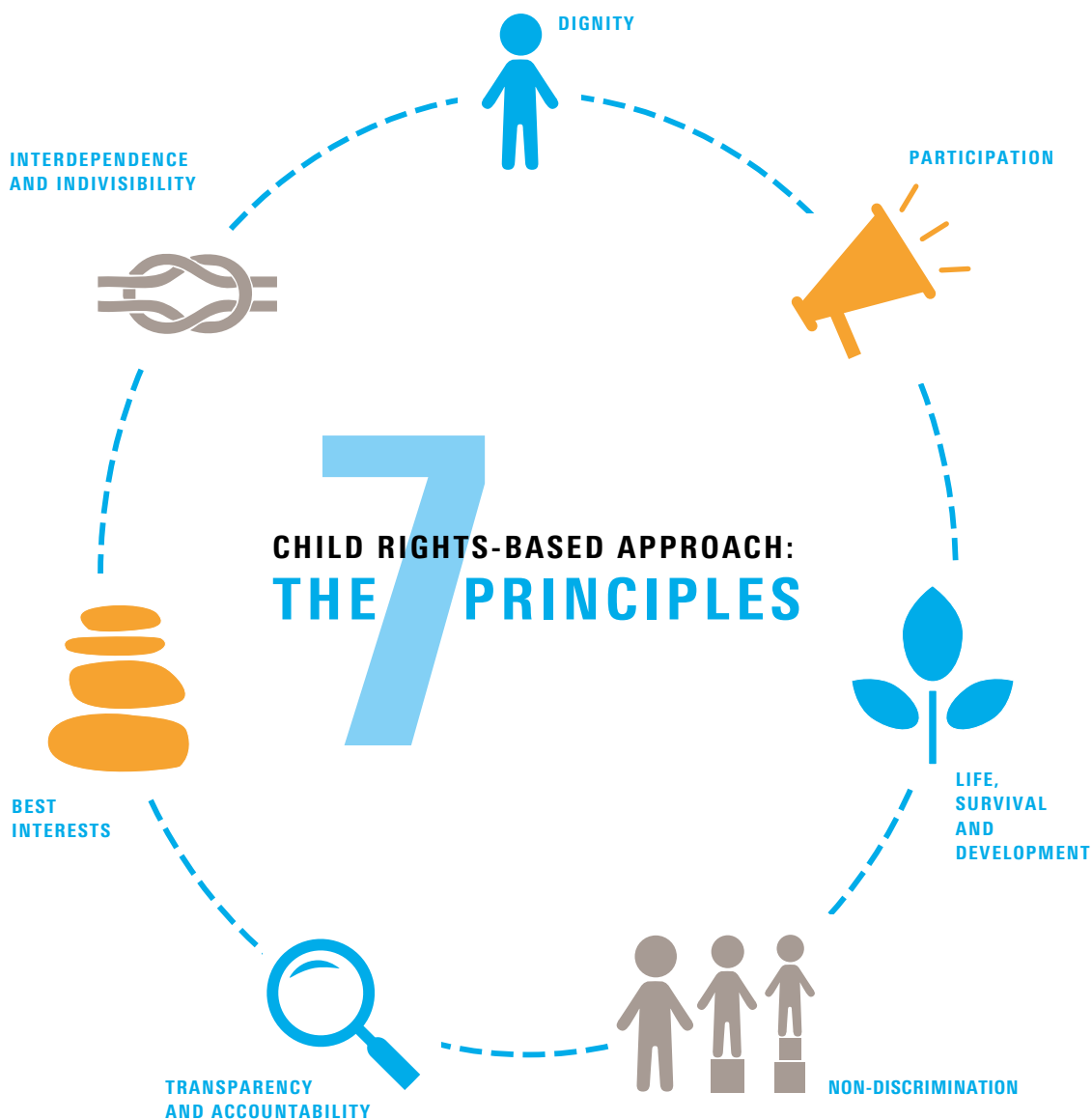
A **child rights-based approach** sits at the heart of the CFC programme and is a practical tool that can be used by anyone making decisions that directly or indirectly impact children – from where to build a playground to deciding on budgets or a child’s care.

It brings together the four general principles of the **UNCRC** (best interests; life, survival and development; non-discrimination; participation) and three general human rights principles (dignity; interdependence and

indivisibility; transparency and accountability).

Throughout their CFC journey, politicians, council staff, commissioned services and local partners receive expert UNICEF UK training on a child rights-based approach: what it means and how they can apply it to their work.

Using this approach is how councils and local partners can ensure decisions are guided by children’s rights, leading to better outcomes for children and young people.





## CASE STUDY

“Children’s rights are giving these communities a universal language and an exciting, new, whole-city approach to policy and planning.”

### A CHILD-RIGHTS BASED APPROACH TO POLICY

**UNICEF UK training in Cardiff has led to a radical new approach to drafting its Children and Young People’s Plan.**

Children’s rights are the building blocks of this new policy document – with children not just benefiting from the stated vision and ambitions, but driving them.

Children and young people have been supported to voice their frustrations, needs and priorities; encouraged to set the goals and targets of their local plan; and given the tools they need to hold their council to account.

And local partners have been brought on board at the earliest stage – the police, health services, community organisations, volunteers etc. – to understand their role in actioning the Children and Young People’s Plan and embedding children’s rights across the community.

Children’s rights are giving Cardiff a universal language and an exciting, new, whole-city approach to policy and planning – one that brings everyone together to determine and achieve the best interests of every child.

# 3 WHY PARTNER WITH US

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**Joining this structured, supported and strengths-based programme presents a unique opportunity to work towards international recognition as a UNICEF UK Child Friendly City or Community.**

**It represents a bold commitment to a new, transformative approach – one in which children’s rights become the main organising framework for policy, programmes and practice.**

Across our candidate CFC cities and communities, a child rights-based approach has:

- Helped to identify and protect the most vulnerable.
- Placed children at the decision-making table, with evidence pointing to a direct correlation between positive outcomes for children and young people and the degree to which their views and experiences are known and taken into account.
- Provided compelling guidance for action when funding pressures or competing interests were at play.
- Offered a universal language for conversations across council, statutory, voluntary and community-based organisations.

**Now more than ever, this is an exciting opportunity to break new ground, reimagine and build back better not just for, but with, children and young people.**

We will underpin your journey with a package of support, tailored to the particular needs and context of your city or community.

This includes:

- UNICEF UK staff time
- High-quality training and capacity building - including in how to mainstream a child rights-based approach independently over time
- Project management support and facilitation
- Technical assistance in the development of plans, policies and strategies
- Mentoring
- Recognition of progress
- Guided use of the CFC logo
- Access to digital and printed resources
- Access to a global UNICEF Child Friendly Cities movement

## CASE STUDY

“Offering child-friendly communications and resources as standard, not an afterthought, has become the norm for councils involved in the CFC programme.”

### RESPONDING TO COVID-19

**The Covid-19 pandemic has forced councils to rethink the way they deliver services and communicate with residents under extreme circumstances.**

Despite these challenges and the urgency to respond, the response to Covid-19 has been notably sensitive to children’s rights in the cities and communities working with UNICEF UK.

In Liverpool, the Director of Children’s Services, Director of Public Health, and the Cabinet Member for Education, Employment and Skills have held regular virtual Q&As with young people, answering

their questions about lockdown, recovery plans and returning to school.

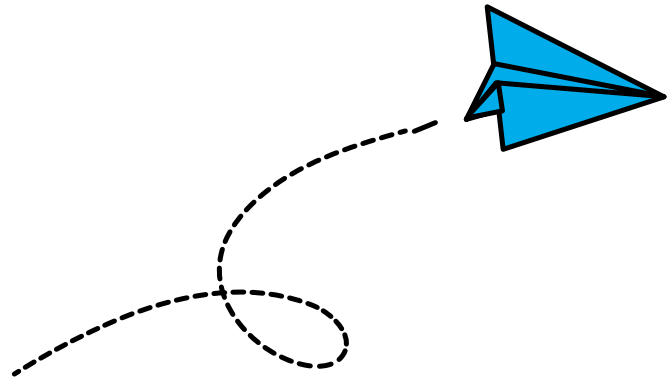
In Cardiff, a child-friendly version of the council’s recovery strategy – using clear terms, images and available in multiple languages – was published to ensure children and young people were receiving the same timely information as adults.

Offering child-friendly communications and resources as standard, not an afterthought, has become the norm for councils involved in the CFC programme, positively impacting the way children hear about and access services.

# 4 NEXT STEPS



We're looking to work with councils who are ambitious in their local vision for children and young people and ready to join a high-profile partnership with UNICEF UK for a minimum of three years.



Following initial discussions with the CFC team, interested councils are invited to submit an Expression of Interest outlining how they meet UNICEF UK's 12 participation criteria (see next page).

There is an annual fee for councils wishing to join the programme. This fee is calculated on a sliding scale according to a range of factors including the local authority budget, youth population size etc.

UNICEF UK is a registered charity operating on a not-for-profit basis and all income raised through the annual fee goes directly back into resourcing the programme.

Annual programme costs	
Tier 1	£25,000
Tier 2	£30,000
Tier 3	£35,000
Tier 4	£45,000

**CONTACT US**

To request an Expression of Interest form, or if you have any questions, please contact us and a member of the team will get back to you.

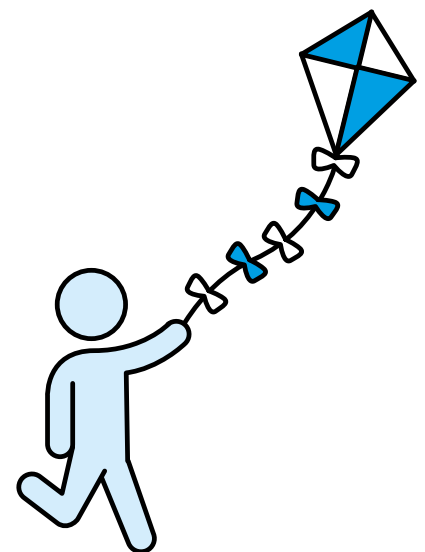
[cfc@unicef.org.uk](mailto:cfc@unicef.org.uk)  
[unicef.uk/cfc](http://unicef.uk/cfc)

# PARTICIPATION CRITERIA

Before joining the programme it is important that both UNICEF UK and the council are confident that the city or community is ready to implement this ambitious child rights programme of change.

We therefore ask interested councils to confirm the following:

- 1** Is this the right time for your council and the wider city/community to join the programme?
- 2** Do you have a clear vision of what you hope to achieve for children and young people through participation in the programme?
- 3** Can you build on a pre-existing commitment to child rights and child-centred practice?
- 4** Are you committed to enabling children's ongoing, meaningful participation and forging new ways of supporting children and young people's involvement in local decision-making?
- 5** Are you prepared to take part in a learning programme which requires reflection, experimentation and ongoing data collection and monitoring?
- 6** Is there political commitment to the programme as well as commitment from across the wider council?
- 7** Will there be a robust, transparent and accountable local governance and coordination structure in place to implement the programme?
- 8** Will you take an inclusive, collaborative, community-wide approach in your delivery of the programme?
- 9** Can you commit to paying the direct programme fees and ensure there are adequate resources available locally to implement the programme over a minimum three years?
- 10** Can you explain how joining the programme will contribute to improving local standards and outcomes?
- 11** Can you identify what support you might need from UNICEF UK to ensure success in the programme?
- 12** Can you describe how your city/community has understood and responded to the needs of children and young people during the covid-19 pandemic?



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