

# Building Children's Futures Child Rights Impact Assessment Training



Funded by  
the European Union

# Introduction

This project is funded by the EU Commission.

- It is being led by the Children's Rights Alliance in partnership with the Department of Children Equality Disability Integration and Youth, Tusla, Ireland's Child and Family Agency and Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSC), Eurochild, UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre University of Galway, and Foróige.
- Using Ireland as a case study, the project's overall aim is to explore how a child rights-based approach, utilising Child Rights Impact Assessments (CRIAs), can be embedded in decision-making in times of emergency.
  - [Building Children's Futures: Using Children's Rights to Recover from the Global Pandemic- The Children's Report](#)
  - Child Rights Impact Assessment Training Video
  - Child Rights Impact Assessment Research Report



# Aims and Objectives of Training



Provide an overview of Children's Rights in Ireland



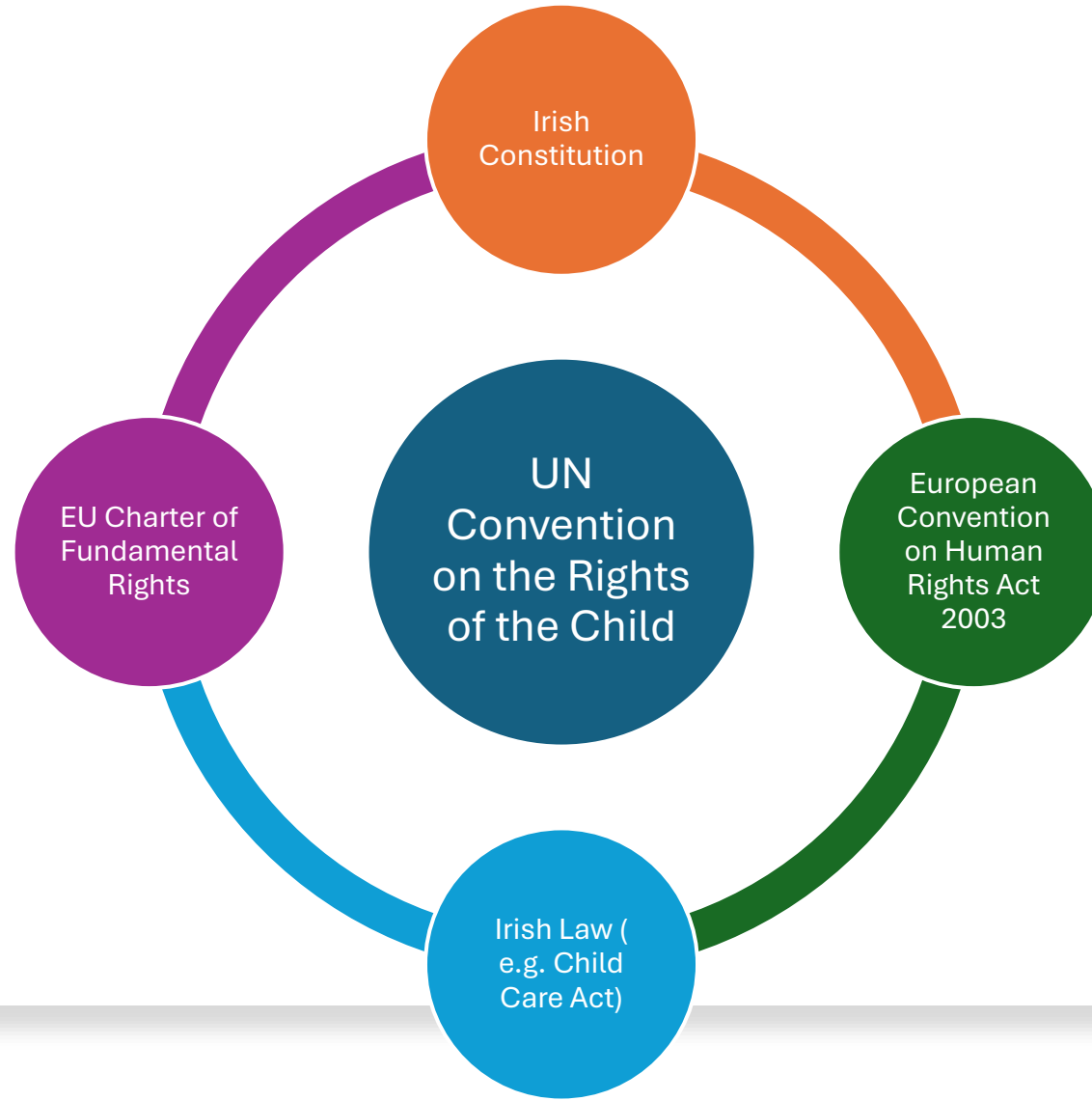
Provide an in-depth knowledge of Children's Rights Impact Assessments (CRIAs)



Provide practical step by step guidance on how CRIAs can be used in everyday work



# Sources of Children's Rights



# What Rights are Contained in the UNCRC



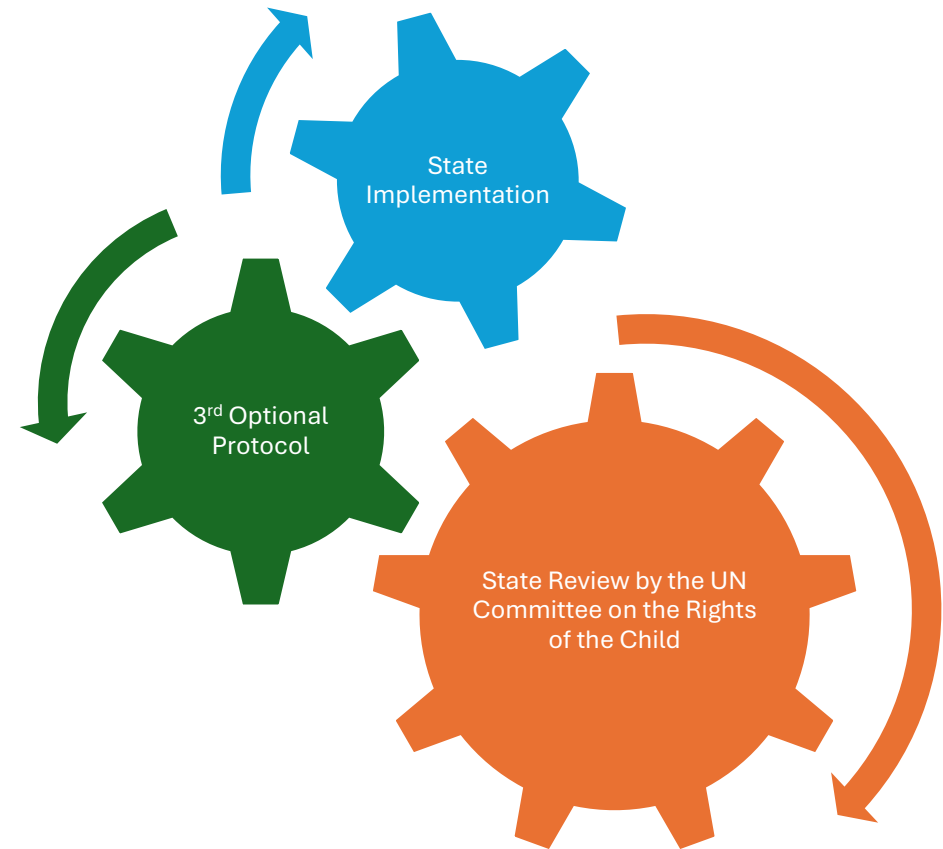


# General Principles of the UNCRC



# Implementation of the UNCRC

- By ratifying the Convention, Ireland became a 'State Party' to the Convention.
- It thereby made a formal commitment to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of children set out in the Convention.
- Ireland is a dualist legal system. As such an Act of the Oireachtas has to be passed in order for an International treaty to form part of our domestic law.





# State Reporting under the UNCRC





# UNCRC and Child Rights Impact Assessments

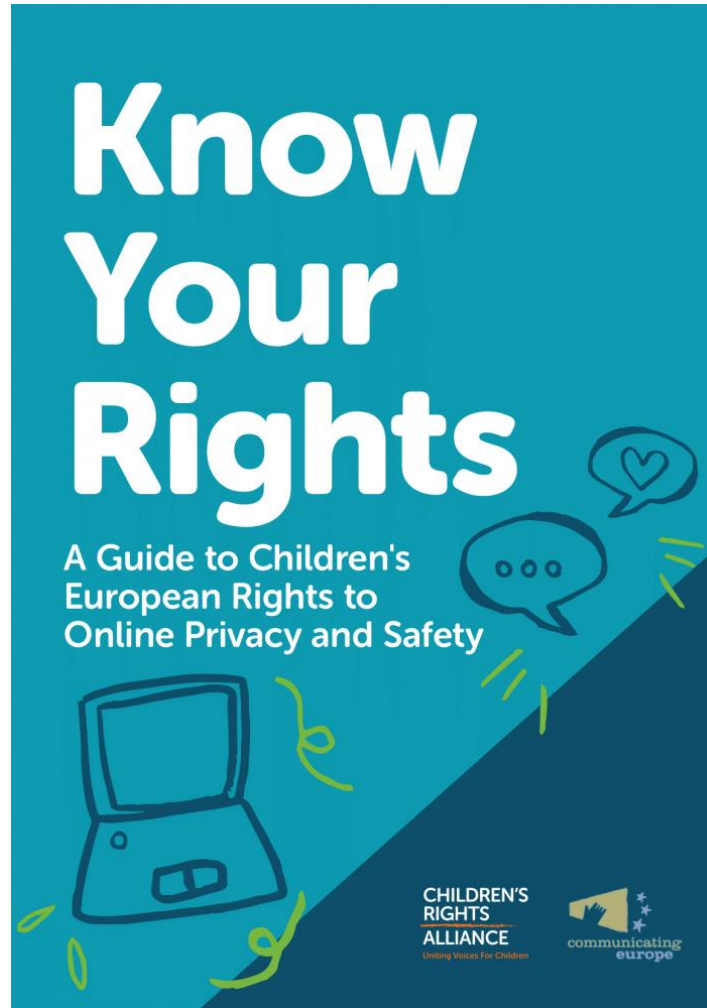
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- Article 4 of the UNCRC sets out that ‘implementation is the process whereby States parties take action to ensure the realisation of all rights in the Convention for all children in their jurisdiction.’
- Ireland was last examined by the Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2023. In its Concluding Observations the Committee recommended that:

“the State party fully incorporate the Convention into national legislation, conduct a comprehensive review of all its legislation to align it with the Convention and address any inconsistencies, and develop systematic child-rights impact assessment procedures for national and subnational legislation and policies relevant to children.”



# Know Your Rights Series



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# Know Your Rights Guide

Plain English guide of children's legal rights written in Q & A style on a range of topics:

- My right to be treated equally, be included and make my own decisions
- My right to education
- My right to health
- My right to protection from harm
- My rights in the family
- My rights as a migrant or refugee
- My rights in dealing with criminal law and the Gardaí (Irish police)
- My rights online
- My right to shelter
- Where can I go for help?



As a child or young person, you have a right to equal treatment. Depending on your age and some legal restrictions, you also have the right to take part in the life of your community, in employment, and to make independent choices about things that concern you.

In this section, we explain some of these rights. We also give a table showing some of the things you can do at different ages.

## 1.1 Equal treatment

What is equality or equal treatment?

Equal treatment is about recognising that everyone has the same worth and should be treated with dignity.

Discrimination happens when you are treated differently or less favourably than someone else in the same situation because of:

**Your gender:** if, for example, you identify yourself as a boy or a girl.

Discrimination can be based on your gender identity which is your deeply felt internal identity as female, male, or another identity such as non-binary. It can also be based on your gender expression which is how you show your gender through clothes, hair or voice.

**Your marital or civil status:** whether or not you are married or in a civil partnership.

**Your family status:** if for example you are:

- pregnant
- a parent of a child
- the carer for someone with a disability
- someone without a family.

**Your sexual orientation:** whether or not, for example, you are heterosexual (straight), gay, lesbian or bisexual.

**Your religion,** or lack of religious beliefs.

**Your age** (this generally only applies to those 18 years or older).

**Your disability** – if you have a disability, you should receive equal treatment.

**Your race,** ethnic background, nationality or colour.

**Whether or not you are a member** of the Traveller community.



# Know Your Rights



# What Are CRIAs

A Child Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) is:

- a framework that helps decision makers understand how children's rights, may be affected by a proposal to change law, policy service or decision.
- a framework for considering actions that you can take to mitigate any potential negative impacts of a decision
- a tool for aiding transparency in decision making
- a tool to encourage hearing directly from children and young people when making decisions that effect them.
- a tool to help encourage better data collection and reporting.



# When could a CRIA be used?

A CRIA could be conducted to inform any decision being made that could affect children and young people. This could include:

- The development of a new local play policy
- Decisions about whether to close or merge local services
- Decisions about how to provide services in a new premises
- Development of new legislation or policy at national level





## INVOLVING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE: COUNCIL PROPOSAL TO CLOSE LOCAL LIBRARIES

As part of a package of local spending cuts, a council announced it would close 35% of its public library network, reduce opening hours in the remaining branches and introduce self-service branches with no staff on site. It also proposed barring children under 16 from using those self-service branches.

The CRIA found that the proposals were discriminatory (Article 2), failed to evidence consideration of the best interests of local children (Article 3) and could have a negative impact on their educational and social development (Article 6).

The proposals also risked undermining children's education rights (Articles 28 & 29) and their right to access information (Article 17).

The CRIA recommended that the council improve its decision-making processes by consulting with local children, their parents/ carers, and teachers.

In response, the council delayed its decision; set up an online survey aimed at children and young people to explain what was being proposed and why; and asked

how they used the local library service, what their views were on the proposed cuts, and whether they had alternative suggestions that would help children continue to access local library services within a reduced budget.

It also contacted all local schools and colleges to ensure the survey was widely circulated and promoted.

This resulted in amendments to the original proposals: weekly late-night openings at each of the remaining library branches as well as weekends to facilitate out-of-school hours access, and reconsideration of age restrictions on the use of the self-service branches.

The council also agreed a programme of monitoring and review of the changes to the service which would involve children and young people along with other local residents.

UK Example – for more see [here](#)





## GATHERING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S VIEWS: SUBSTANCE MISUSE SERVICE

### VOICE AND EVIDENCE

An inner London borough decided to recommission their young people's substance misuse service. To inform this process they conducted a CRIA on the existing service to assess it from a child's rights-based perspective and to better understand the low take-up of the provision despite the high levels of need in the area.

As part of the CRIA process, young people who accessed the service and young people in the community more broadly were invited to take part in various child-centred consultations. Several young people who historically accessed the service were invited to take part in structured interviews and these interviews also became an optional part of case closure conversations.

Young people accessing the service were invited to take part in a child-friendly survey which collated data on young people's views and experiences of the service as well as suggestions for improvement. Additionally, several focus groups were set up in child-friendly spaces such as youth centres and schools where young people could find out more about the service, share views and ask questions.

Findings from the youth consultations highlighted that there was a lack of awareness about the existence of the service and what it offered. There was also a sense of stigma attached to accessing the provision as it was clearly signposted as a service for young people struggling with substance misuse and was located near a cultural centre where young people may have encountered community members. The centre was also difficult to access by public transport.

Through a participative process young people were directly involved in redesigning the service, from deciding on a new name and logo, to informing the new service model which included an outreach provision so that young people could access support provision in safe and accessible locations around the community such as schools and libraries.

The new service model was based on child rights principles and informed by young people's feedback. Staff and young people accessing the service were taught about children's rights and clear and transparent mechanisms were put in place for young people to feed back, ask a question or make a complaint.

This participatory approach to recommissioning the substance misuse service transformed young people's engagement with the service and resulted in better, more holistic service provision for children and young people.



UK Example – for more see [here](#)



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## INDIRECT IMPACT: CHILDREN'S VISIBILITY IN LOCAL HOUSING POLICY

Following discussion of a five-year refresh of its 20-year housing strategy, a local authority commissioned a CRIA in order to 'child-proof' the revised version.

The CRIA raised a number of issues regarding the relative invisibility of children in the original document which risked being replicated in the refreshed strategy:

- A lack of reliable demographic data on the number, age and ethnicity of children living in different household types, with information limited to 'known' numbers of homeless 16 to 18-year-olds, and disabled children requiring housing adaptations.
- A lack of evidence on children's views and experiences of housing and environmental issues, including housing precariousness, housing quality, energy efficiency, overcrowding, location, distance from school/college, access to public transport, neighbourhood safety, access to playgrounds, community and green spaces, and high-speed broadband connection.

- A failure to consult local children and young people on their views on future local development planning.

Each of these omissions made it difficult for the CRIA to evidence its assessment of the proposed priorities and actions.

The CRIA recommended that, in the short term, the council undertake a wide consultation exercise with children and young people, and their parents/carers to inform the refresh and, in the longer term, develop a research strategy including regular engagement with children to ensure the next full strategy would reflect their views and incorporate a more strategic response to their needs.





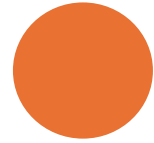
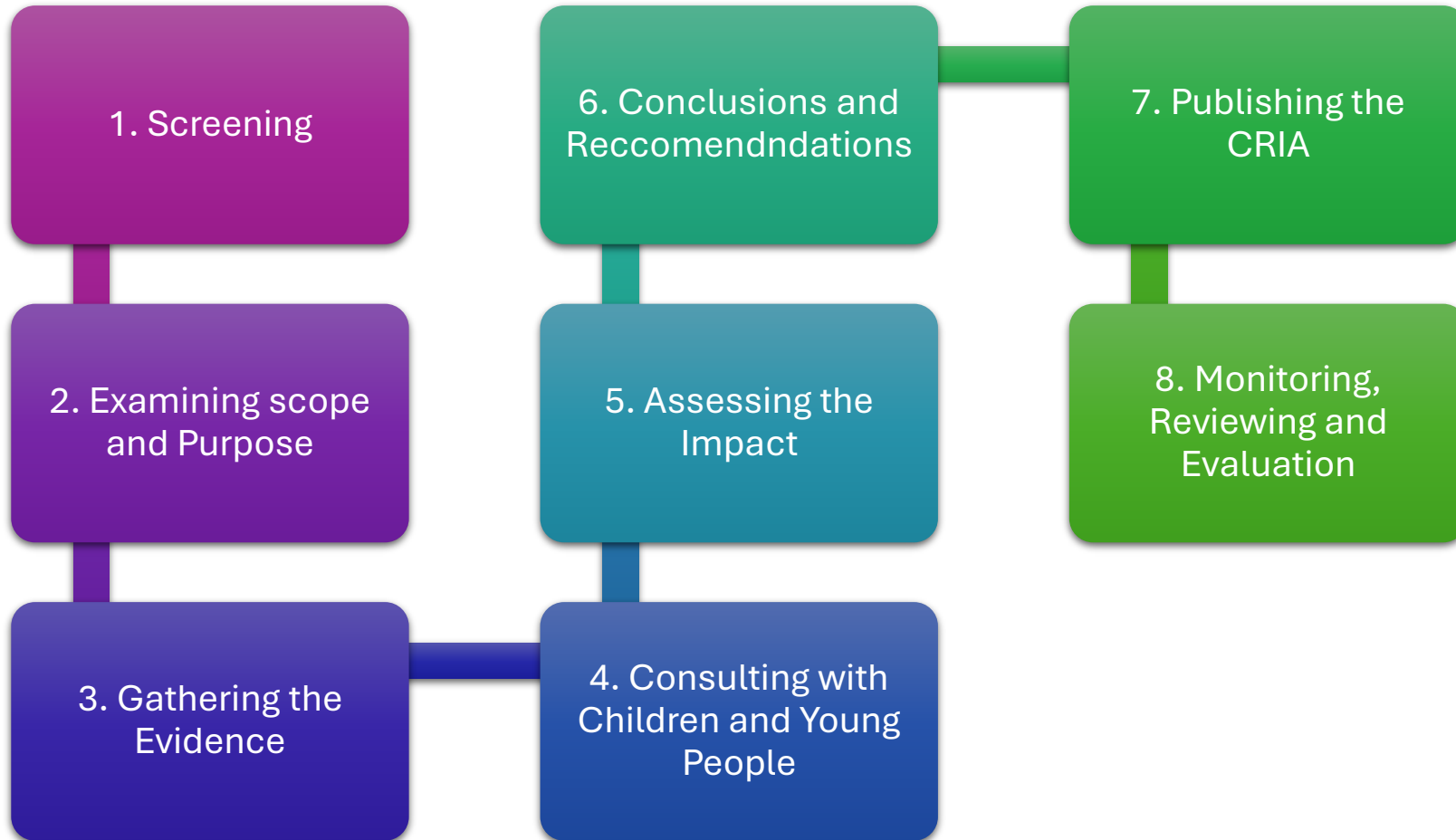
# International Examples

## Scotland

- List of Published CRIWAs [here](#)
- Example: [Young Patients Family Fund](#)



# How to Conduct a CRIA



# Scenario

The Covid 26 pandemic has hit Ireland. The medical professionals have said that this variant does not spread among children under the age of 8 but spreads quickly among children over the age of 15 and can have serious medical consequences for this group. It is also deadly for people over the age of 60.

- Group 1: You are a community early years' service and need to decide whether or not to close.
- Group 2: You are a youth service for children in inner city Dublin and you need to decide do you open, close or change how you deliver your service.
- Group 3: You are in the Department of Education and need to decide the policy should primary school stay open.
- Group 4: You are the Government and you are considering should social distancing and restrictions on movement be introduced.



**THANK  
YOU**

