

Student number: 2204546

Introduction

- Introduce myself and refer to the question: Outlining UNCRC for young people and their families and the role of Youth workers as advocates for young people to ensure they can access their rights and have their voices heard.
- Topics I am covering: Background of UNCRC and Advocacy

Background, What is UNCRC and its purpose?

- UNCRC stands for The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- grants everyone under the age of 18 a set of rights that they entitled too. The UNCRC was introduced in 1989 and came into force in 1992 (GOV.UK, 15/03/2010, np).
- The purpose of UNCRC is to avoid any form discrimination relating to children. Every child should be recognised, respected, and protected as a rights holder.
- There are 54 articles which are the rights that make up this convention.
- All rights are seen as a whole, not one right is more important than the other. Articles 1 – 42 outline the rights specifically to those children, Articles 43 – 54 outlines how governments and international organisations give children those rights and protect them. (UNICEF, 07/05/2023, np)

4 Main points of UNCRC (Wate and Boulton, 2015, pg 16)

- There are four main points that form the core of the UNCRC all which include articles from the UNCRC.

- Non-discrimination (Article 2) All children have rights no matter what their race, colour, gender, religion, language or disability. Youth workers will always give each young person equal opportunities.
- Best interests (Article 3) The child's best interests are prioritised. Youth workers always consider the young person's best interests in any decision that affects them.
- Life, survival, and development (Article 6) All children have the right to life, to survive and to develop to their full potential whether that be physically or mentally.
- Respect for the views of the child (Article 12) Children have the right to express their views. Youth workers will always take a young person's thoughts, feelings and views seriously so that they can understand what's affecting them and the best ways to support them.
- Above points are supported by the National Occupational Standards (CLD Standards Council Scotland, 2019, p.6) (NOS, CLDSCS) where it shows a summary map outlining the key functions to uphold the values of Youth work. One of which include "Demonstrate commitment to inclusion, equity and young people's interests and health and well-being" - based on promoting the rights of young people and respecting the value of diversity.

To show the Impact of the UNCRC: (how the Government has adapted and introduced new laws/policies)

- The Welsh Government (Gov.Wales, 2008, np) introduced Seven Core Aims in 2002 based on the UNCRC. The Welsh Government had used the information from the UNCRC to design policies for the decisions and objectives for all the Welsh Government's work around well-being of children. All articles.

- The government published the Every Child Matter Green Paper (2003 cited in HM Government 2010) which was developed from UNCRC which set out 5 key outcomes for the well-being of children and young people
- Due to these 5 outcomes The Children Act (2004) became law with the governments role to improve children's lives

What is advocacy and why is it used?

- 'Advocacy' means getting support from another person to help an individual express their views, wishes, and help them stand up for their rights. A person who helps you in this way to get your voice heard is your advocate. The role of an advocate depends on the situation and the support a child needs/wants. However, an advocate will always support that person's choices (Mind, np, 2023).
- Based on Article 12 of the UNCRC.

To Show the importance of advocacy:

- Tros Gynnal Plant – service that provides advocacy through projects across Wales. They aim to promote children's rights, listen to them and keep them safe.
- Ricio Cifuentes's: Children's commissioner for Wales since April 2022. Supports the UNCRC as her role is to promote and protect children's rights in Wales and advocate for their views/interests.

How are Youth workers advocates/How is advocacy used in Youth work?

- Definition/the purpose of Youth work: "facilitate their personal, social and educational development and enable them to gain a voice, influence and a place in society" (NOS, CLDSCS, 2019, np)

- Ingram and Harris (2001, p.16) “They often work with difficult young people whom nobody wants to work with”
- Youth work is always changing/developing. Youth workers need to be socially aware to understand what they are advocating young people for. For example, young people losing, their rights. Youth workers will always advocate for them to get their voices heard.

What are the different types of advocacies?

- There are many different types of advocacies. Main focus = Youth Advocacy
- Youth advocacy (Teachable, nd, np) - “empower young people in their everyday lives”. To promote Youth advocacy, Youth workers aim to provide support in every area that affects a young person. A few examples of this: housing, health, employment and building relationships.
- Youth advocacy gives a young person an insight into the world of decision making and gain an understanding of authority: helps the young person to make their own choices in their everyday life.
- By advocating for young people, Youth workers can empower them to take on responsibility for their own safety and well-being.

What can Youth advocates do? (Mind, 2023, np)

- 1) Listen to the child’s views and concerns. For example, if a young person mentions any problems at home, expect a phone call from us.
- 2) Help a child explore their options and rights without pressuring them by providing them information to help them make decisions. Example, from placement – young. Person with anxiety.

- 3) Reassure them how to access their rights. Young people have the same rights as adults, and we will not make any assumptions about the level of their understanding. For example, we could show them all of the rights of the UNCRC so they will know what rights they are entitled to and can access. Article 17 explains those under the age of 18 should be able to access any information that they want to receive. Youth workers would advocate for them to get that information.
- Aim is to ensure that they know we are on their side. Push them to stand up for their rights.

How advocacy solves dilemmas?

- Snowflake generation – It's hard being a young person now because they are viewed as less resilient and are more likely to take offence compared to older generations.
(CollinsDictionary, 2023, np)
- Things a Youth worker won't do when advocating for young people:
 - 1) Give their personal opinion on a situation that affects the child.
 - 2) Make decisions for the child.
 - 3) Make judgements about the child. (MInd, 2023, np)
- Grande (2004) presented the empowerment/advocacy theory. Grande explains that when someone advocates for someone else, they will feel empowered to defeat their barriers and reach their goals. Supported by the 5 Pillars of Youth Work (YOUTH WORK IN WALES: Principles and Purposes, 2022, p.8). The purpose of the 5 pillars is that it shows how Youth workers offer young people learning opportunities.
- Empowerment – based on equipping young people with an understanding on their rights and encouraging them to engage in the issues that affect their lives.

- Solve dilemmas through different approaches. For example, a person-centred approach – purpose is to put young people at the centre of any planning and decisions that affect them. Benefit = when they are meaningfully involved, their attitude, behaviour and learning can change, and they will be able to work better with adults to bring about that positive change that they want/need in their lives.

How does advocacy have an impact on young people and their families?

- 1) Creates a more responsible society for them. For example, it can be used to raise awareness about what is best for them and help them find the information they need to make the right decision.
- 2) Useful for young people to learn to advocate for themselves as they go through adolescence – transition from childhood into adulthood. Can be a tough time for them as their bodies go through physical and emotional changes. Youth workers are aware of those changes and can help teenagers understand how their actions can have an impact on others around them.
- 3) Reassurance for parents that they know that their child's voice is getting heard and are respected.

Conclusion

- Recap of the topics I'm covering:
 - 1) Background of UNCRC and Its purpose
 - 2) How advocacy is used in Youth work and reassure families how we would advocate for their children in our Youth centre,

Reference List

Aesimpact (2023). *An Advocate and Ally For All Vulnerable California Young People*. Available at: <https://aesimpact.org/what-is-youth-advocacy-and-why-do-we-need-it/#:~:text=Youth%20advocacy%20is%20important%20because,their%20opinions%20are%20still%20forming> (Accessed: 13/05/2023)

Anon, (2009). *Empowerment/Advocacy theory*. Available at: <https://fmensahjourney.weebly.com/empowermentadvocacy-theory.html> (Accessed 16/05/2023)

Children's Commissioner for Wales (2023). *Rocio Cifuentes – The Children's Commissioner For Wales*. Available at: <https://www.childcomwales.org.uk/about-us/the-commissioner-rocioCIFUENTES/#:~:text=Rocio%20Cifuentes%2D%20The%20Children's%20Commissioner%20for%20Wales> (Accessed: 13/05/2023)

CLD Standards Council Scotland (2019). *Youth Work National Occupational Standards*. Available at: <https://cldstandardscouncil.org.uk/wpcontent/uploads/YouthWorkNOS2019Intro.pdf> (Accessed: 06/05/2023)

Collinsdictionary (2023). *Snowflake generation definition and meaning | Collins English Dictionary*. Available at: <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/snowflake-generation> (Accessed: 17/05/2023)

Education Workforce Council (2022). *Youth Work In Wales: Principles and Purposes*. Available at: <https://www.cwvys.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/YOUTH-WORK-IN-WALES-2022-ENGLISH.pdf> (Accessed 17/05/2023)

GOV.UK (2010). *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC): How legislation underpins implementation in England*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/united-nations-convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child-uncrc-how-legislation-underpins-implementation-in-england#:~:text=The%20United%20Nations%20Convention%20on,a%20comprehensive%20set%20of%20rights> (Accessed 03/05/2023)

HM Government (2010). *Working together to safeguard children : a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children*. London: TSO (Accessed: 17/05/2023)

Ingram, G. and Harris, J. (2001) *Delivering good Youth Work : a working guide to surviving and thriving*. Lyme Regis: Russell House. (Accessed: 08/05/2023)

Mind (2023). *Advocacy in mental health*. Available at: <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/advocacy/what-is-advocacy/#:~:text=Advocacy%20means%20getting%20support%20from,way%20is%20called%20your%20advocate.> (Accessed 07/05/2023)

Teachable. *Advocacy for Youth Work*. Available at: <https://inyous.teachable.com/courses/560031/lectures/11571784> (Accessed 04/05/2023)

Tgpcymru (2023) *What we do TGP Cymru*. Available at: <https://www.tgpcymru.org.uk/what-we-do/> (Accessed: 18/05/2023)

Tgpcymru (2023) *What we do TGP Cymru*. Available at: <https://www.tgpcymru.org.uk/what-we-do/> (Accessed: 18/05/2023)

Tower Hamlets (2015). *Person centred planning with children and young people The Tower Hamlets model*. Available at: https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/Documents/Children-and-families-services/Early-Years/TH_PCP_Model.pdf (Accessed: 17/05/2023)

UNICEF (2017). *A Summary of The Un Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2017/01/Summary-of-the-UNCRC.pdf> (Accessed: 02/05/2023)

UNICEF (2023). *How we protect children's rights*. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/> (Accessed: 07/05/2023)

Wate, R. and Boulton, N. (2015) *Multi-agency safeguarding in a public protection world: a handbook for protecting children and vulnerable adults*. Hove, UK: Pavilion. (Accessed 06/05/2023)

Welsh Assembly Government (2008). *Children and young people's well-being monitor for Wales*. Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2019-07/081117-children-young-people-well-being-monitor-2008-summary-en.pdf> (Accessed: 13/05/2023)