

# Children's Charter

## Introduction and Background

Focus Ireland is committed to listening to children and young people, offering support and advocating for their rights. We believe it's important to hear their voices when making decisions which affect them.

Focus Ireland asks children how they feel about their lives and includes them in any process which affects them. We ask for their opinion in an age-appropriate manner. This approach is in line with our values and with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.<sup>1</sup>

This approach is vital as we are working with more children and young people than ever before as the homelessness crisis has grown.

Focus Ireland has developed a Children's Charter to provide a central framework to ensure children's rights are recognised and respected. It can be the case that children can be forgotten in a family unit – especially if the family is going through a stressful experience such as homelessness.

Since 2015, Focus Ireland child support workers have asked children and young people to give their input to help develop our Children's Charter.

In 2017, drama and art workshops were held which encouraged discussion of children's rights and how we could ensure these rights were supported. The young people voiced their opinions and shared their thoughts on their situation through role play, small group discussions and art. Children reluctant to join in discussions could express themselves through one-to-one interactions and drawing.

All these views were collected and used to inform and develop this charter which provides a framework which ensures that children's rights are always at the forefront of Focus Ireland's policies and procedures.

<sup>1</sup> [www.unicef.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/UNCRC\\_summary-1.pdf](http://www.unicef.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/UNCRC_summary-1.pdf)

**FOCUS**  
Ireland

**Challenging Homelessness. Changing Lives.**

**Focus  
Ireland  
Children's  
Charter**

# Focus Ireland Children's Charter

**We as children have a right to expect that Focus Ireland staff:**

Respect us and our family

Provide comfortable spaces for us to talk

Protect us from harm and keep us safe

Talk and listen to us

Understand our need for play

Help us understand the information given to us

Share our information only when needed

Look at the positive aspects of our lives and help us work through the negatives

Promote and support us

Accept our differences

**Focus Ireland staff commit to:**

Respect you and your family at all times

Meet you in an appropriate place where you feel comfortable

Support your best interests

Include you and listen to your opinions

Build trusting, caring and positive relationships with you

Find extra supports for you when needed

Communicate clearly with you about who we are and what we do in a way you understand

Only share your information when needed

Promote the rights of the child

Accept everybody's differences