

Get ready for Geneva project update June 2008

Reporting to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

On June 11, the Get ready for Geneva delegation visited the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in Geneva, Switzerland, to present the evidence from our children's rights investigation. Nathan and Imogen opened the formal session with the Committee with a short presentation about the human rights issues that worry children and young people in England.

Later on in the day, the other delegation members had a private meeting with the Committee, where they gave a presentation on our recommendations, and answered lots of questions from the Committee members on things such as exam stress, bullying, mental health in schools, and discrimination against particular groups of children.

If you haven't read our report yet, you can download it from www.getreadyforgeneva.org.uk.

Our delegation:

Adam Roberts, 15
Alex White, 17
Dominic King, 14
Imogen Walsh, 17
Jackson Powell, 14
Jessica Timperley, 12
Laura Partoon, 17
Lucy Mace, 9
Nathan Giles, 12
Parham Aslani, 15
Shamila Arif, 15
Usman Ali, 15



The delegation in Geneva!

Meeting with Children's Minister

The day before the delegation went to Geneva some young people went to meet Beverley Hughes, Minister for Children, to talk about the Get ready for Geneva report to the UN:

On 9 June 2008 4 members of the Get Ready for Geneva and one of the new members (of the delegation that went to Geneva) met Beverly Hughes, the children's minister in Westminster; these were Natalie (steering group), Cory (children's rights investigator), Jules (children's rights investigator) and Kathryn (website and communications team). We explained the UN report, the different sections, mostly looking upon the recommendations. It was hard job but I think it went well. It was a very important meeting and I think we held out well and got our views across. It was a really good day and an exciting opportunity.

By Kathryn Terry

So what happens now?

The UN has sent a list of questions to the Government based on the things it heard from children's charities and others on June 11. The Government must answer these questions in August. Senior people from the Government will then travel to Geneva on September 23 for the UK Government examination. The UN Committee will then publish its concluding observations (recommendations) about where the Government needs to do more to protect children's human rights.

In the meantime, we'll be working hard with all of you to develop our own campaigns – to change the things children and young people told us needed changing!

Something else that needs to change

As we've now been to Geneva and can't 'get ready' for it any more, we need to change the name of the project. The name we've come up with is **Get ready for change!** Tell us what you think by e-mailing info@getreadyforgeneva.org.uk.

Media coverage

There was loads of coverage of the delegation's trip to Geneva in the local and national media. Follow this link to find out more...

http://www.getreadyforgeneva.org.uk/news/article/get_ready_for_geneva_publicity/.

The children's rights investigation

Ciara has been busy analysing the results of our children's rights investigation. Here's a sneak preview of some of the findings about family and friends:

- Children said that they should not be hit, criticised or embarrassed at home
- Lots of children said that more support should be given to families. Some children said that there should be counsellors available for children, so that they have someone to talk to about their problems
- Children should be able to make their own choices about religion and belief
- Children who were lesbian, gay and bisexual thought that having a counselling service could help their parents and other family members come to terms with the news that they were homosexual.
- More mental health support needs to be made available to young people living in hostels or who are homeless
- Not all children in care get asked their views about where they want to live or having contact with their families. Children in care also said that social workers should be more closely checked to make sure the best interests of children are at the centre of all decisions
- Children felt that it was really important to have a family life and somewhere they could call 'home'.

The main report from the children's rights investigation will be published in November 2008. Until then, watch this space to find out what children have been saying about their rights!

Spreading the word

This month Krishna and Ciara delivered a workshop on children's rights at the Ryes School in Suffolk. The group learned about children's rights and thought of ways to make their school council more effective.

Have you been spreading the word? Our campaign pack has lots of activities you can run in your school, youth group or local area to help you get the word out about children's rights.

We are also running an Informed and Influential training day in Cornwall on August 20. If you live in the South West of England and would like to attend, please download an application form here:

http://www.getreadyforgeneva.org.uk/images/uploads/II_Cornwall_final_flyer.pdf

Meeting my MP

John, a champion from the North West, set up a meeting with his local MP, Hazel Blears. Have a look at what John got up to by clicking on the link below: http://www.getreadyforgeneva.org.uk/take_action/near_where_you_live/region/North%20West/

At the end of the meeting, John asked his local MP to attend a training day about children's rights – and she agreed! Encourage a decision-maker to make to pledge for children here:

http://www.getreadyforgeneva.org.uk/take_action/pledge_entry



John and David with Hazel Blears MP

Get ready for Geneva advisers

We had 14 excellent applications for the Get ready for Geneva advisers posts. Two members of the steering group (Natalie and Rachael) have been involved in the selection process and we will be making our final decision in early July. You will be able to read about what the advisers get up to over the summer in the next monthly update.

Change to the project update

The project update is going to go out every two months from now on. The next update will be sent out at the end of August. You can still send in articles and pictures by e-mail to Carla, cgarnelas@crae.org.uk.

Dates you don't want to miss in 2008

19 and 20 July ... steering group meeting in Nottingham

7 August ... meeting for the web team and children's rights investigators

20 August ... Informed and Influential in Cornwall

27 and 28 October ... Get ready for Geneva residential for the steering group, web team, investigators and champions!

30 October ... Informed and Influential in North London

20 November ... CRAE's annual conference – launching the Get ready for Geneva research report

29 November ... Informed and Influential in Rochdale