



Will Quince MP

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families

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19 November 2021

Dear all children and young people in England,

I write this letter to you as the Minister for Children and Families, ahead of World Children's Day. This is a hugely important day that allows us to reflect on your achievements as young people throughout the last year. I am enormously proud to have taken on this job in government because it gives me the opportunity to meet young people like you all the time and speak with you about your hopes, your fears, your interests.

I've been able to talk to some of you already about how much your education means to you, how important your hobbies and friendships are, and I want to be a champion for you in government, because your opinions matter! I recognise the disruption you have faced since the pandemic began and I have been inspired by your community spirit, determination and strength during this challenging period.

World Children's Day is celebrated on 20th November each year to promote awareness of children's rights worldwide. On this day, in 1959, the United Nations General Assembly agreed to a document called the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which sets out your rights as children, no matter where you live or who you are. This includes things like your right to education and your right to be heard. Over time, it became known as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, or the UNCRC. It is important because it reminds us that not every child in the world automatically has these rights – but we believe that they should.

Almost every country across the world has agreed to the UNCRC because we recognise how important it is that young people are protected. The UK adopted the UNCRC 30 years ago, and every five years, the UK government reports on how we are meeting our commitments to a group of experts at the United Nations (UN). The Department for Education is currently working on the report and will share it with the UN next summer. At the same time, we will publish a version of the report written especially for young people, which I encourage you to read to help you understand what you are entitled to.

As a Minister in the UK government, one of my main priorities is to listen and learn from you. What I hear will help contribute to our report to the UN. Part of this work will involve sending out surveys to children's charities, and running open conversations on a range of topics, such as climate change, access to education

and children's rights. I know these issues are hugely important to you, especially given your responses to the [Children's Commissioner](#) for England's Big Ask survey. So far, my team at the Department for Education has held focus groups with children with disabilities, UK Youth Parliament, as well as young people who have experience of family law proceedings. Over the next year, we will continue working with other groups of children and young people, and your responses will influence the outcome of the report.

Once we send the report to the UN, representatives from the UK government will meet in Geneva, to answer questions on our report. The process is a great opportunity for decision makers to discuss how we are respecting your rights as young people. We will specifically outline your experiences at school, in hospital, the online world, and during the pandemic. After this, the UN will make recommendations for actions to take forward, which I will then consider with other colleagues in government.

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for all that you have done to get through this difficult time as best you can. Everyone has an important part to play in making sure World Children's Day is recognised across nations, societies, and communities. I look forward to working more closely with you and meeting as many of you as possible, so that your voices and experiences help to shape the future.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Will". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Will Quince MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families