

Appendix 9: Additional notes on Human Rights

- ⇒ Human rights are the basic things that all human beings are entitled to in order to survive, and develop to their full potential. These include things such as food, shelter, education, freedom from abuse and to be looked after if they get sick. Human Rights are guarantees that protect individuals and groups from actions that affect their freedom and human dignity. Human rights are things that you are entitled to by simply being a person the Government has a responsibility to make sure that people's rights are respected. Human rights are:
 - Universal – the same for everyone.
 - Indivisible – equally important
 - Inalienable – all humans have them and they cannot be taken away
- ⇒ Children and young people have lots of rights. These rights are set out in a number of international and European treaties (normally called "conventions") and in laws. The UNCRC brings together children's human rights into one international convention. The Government have a responsibility to ensure that all people understand and respect Children's Rights – this includes parents, guardians, teachers, and young people respecting each other's rights.
- ⇒ Children and young people need special rights because they are relatively more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation compared to adults.
- ⇒ We sometimes call people 'rights holders' to emphasise that they have rights. All adults and children and young people are rights holders. However, when we are enjoying our own rights, we need to make sure that we do so in a way that doesn't deny other people theirs.
- ⇒ Rights do not come with responsibilities, they are unconditional. Rights are what we are entitled to, needs are what we require. Governments do not have a duty to meet needs but they do have a duty to respect rights and help everyone know about them and claim them. Rights are associated with being, whereas needs are associated with having.
- ⇒ The other side of this equation to 'rights holders' is 'duty bearers'. The UNCRC sets out things that Governments need to do to support children and young people to enjoy their rights. These include making sure that as many people as possible know and understand about rights and support children and young people to have their voices heard when decisions are being made that affect them.
- ⇒ Taking education as an example, if the right is education then the child claims this right from a number of different duty bearers, including the government, the school and their family. In addition, other children can also be duty bearers and have a responsibility to make sure that they do not disturb or upset other children when they are trying to learn.
- ⇒ Other rights also impact on specific rights – for example, the right to health may impact of the right to education– this is referred to as indivisibility