

**Children's Rights Alliance**  
for England

**Children's rights and equality in the newspapers**

**May 2009**

## About the Children's Rights Alliance for England

The Children's Rights Alliance for England seeks the full implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in England. Our vision is of a society where the human rights of all children are recognised and realised.

The Children's Rights Alliance for England protects the human rights of children by lobbying government and others who hold power, by bringing or supporting test cases and by using national, regional and international human rights mechanisms. We provide free legal information and advice, raise awareness of children's human rights, and undertake research about children's access to their rights. We mobilise others, including children and young people, to take action to promote and protect children's human rights. Each year, we publish a review of the state of children's rights in England.

## About the Equality and Human Rights Commission

The Equality and Human Rights Commission is the independent advocate for equality and human rights in Britain, and aims to reduce inequality, eliminate discrimination, strengthen good relations between people, and promote and protect human rights. The Equality and Human Rights Commission began its work on 1 October 2007.

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## Children's rights and equality in the newspapers

### Introduction

In 2008, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) funded the Children's Rights Alliance for England (CRAE) to look at how to promote positive messages about children's rights and equality in the media. The programme of work included the publication of *Another perspective*, CRAE's guidelines for journalists on reporting on children's rights and equality, in March 2009, and this newspaper review, which aimed to determine the prevalence and tenor of reporting on children's rights and children's equality.

The review of national newspapers was carried out by CRAE's policy team in November 2008. The objectives of the review were to discover to what extent children's human rights and equality are covered in the national print media, how they are covered, and whether the information provided about children's rights and equality is accurate. The review also made note of how many articles featured a child or young person (those aged 0 to 17) as the main subject, and what topics these articles covered, in order to compare the coverage of stories about children generally with that of stories about children's rights and equality, providing a wider view of representations of children in the media.

The review focused on the period between 1 October 2007 and 31 March 2008 – the first six months of operation of the EHRC – and looked at all weekday editions of 10 national newspapers (including supplements) for the first week of each month during this six month period. The following newspapers were reviewed: the *Daily Express*, *Daily Mail*, *Daily Mirror*, *Daily Star*, *Daily Telegraph*, *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, *The Sun*, and *The Times*, along with children's newspaper *First News*.

### Key findings

During the course of the newspaper review, CRAE's policy team identified 2,642 articles in national newspapers about children, and within these, 48 articles that explicitly covered children's rights and children's equality.

We discovered that different newspapers gave a very different impression of the reality, achievements, challenges and dangers of childhood and adolescence, focusing disproportionately in some cases on particular themes (such as child death in the tabloids and the quality of education in the broadsheets). We also found that:

- Articles about children's rights and equality made up only 1.8% of all articles about children.
- The majority of articles about children (57.6%) appeared in the tabloids.
- 62.5% of articles about children's rights and equality appeared in the broadsheets.
- Tabloids were most likely to cover "emotive" stories, while broadsheets appeared to have a higher concentration of factual, measured stories.

- *The Sun* covered the most stories about children, while *The Guardian* and *The Times* reported most frequently about children's rights and equality.
- Articles about child death / accident featured disproportionately highly, making up 17.9% of the entire sample; other emotive articles about the child or young person as "victim", for example those covering themes of child abduction / abandonment, physical health, and crimes against children, also dominated coverage of children.
- Articles about anti-social behaviour made up 7.4% of tabloid coverage of children yet only 2.9% of broadsheet coverage.
- 60% of articles about children's rights and equality were positive about children's rights.
- Where articles were accurate about children's rights and equality, they were more likely to present children's rights and equality in a positive light.
- Articles about discrimination and having a say were much more likely to appear within the children's rights and equality sample (at 25% and 14.9% of articles respectively) than in the sample as a whole (at 1.2% and 1.7%).
- Photographs of children were much more commonly used (in 953 or 36.3% of articles) than direct quotes from children (in 256 or 9.7% of articles) in articles about children and young people.

### **Methodology**

The newspaper review considered articles featured in all parts of each newspaper, including supplements, editorials, comment pieces and letters. It did not consider job or commercial advertisements. Articles were only counted as "about children" if children were the main focus of the article.

In order to ensure consistency, CRAE developed an audit form to identify and categorise all articles about children and young people and those articles explicitly about children's rights and equality. The audit form was tested through undertaking a pilot review, which considered articles about children in one tabloid and one broadsheet newspaper over three weekdays. As a result of this pilot, certain categories for determining the primary focus of each article were expanded – for example, health was divided into physical health and emotional and sexual health; and others were contracted – children in prison and children in immigration removal centres became one category, children in detention.

Using the final audit form, CRAE's policy and public affairs team recorded the length of each article about children that appeared in the designated newspapers, the article's placement in the newspaper, the words used in the headline, the key topics covered by the article and, for children's rights and equality articles, the accuracy of the piece in terms of human rights and equality. They also made judgments on whether articles about children's rights and equality gave a positive or negative view of children's rights and

equality. To enable progressive analysis of each article, the provenance, word count and key topics were recorded first; an informed assessment was then made of whether the article explicitly focused on children's rights and equality. The audit form is reproduced in Appendix 1.

For the purposes of the analysis, newspapers were categorised as either tabloids (the *Daily Express*, *Daily Mail*, *Daily Mirror*, *Daily Star*, *First News* and *The Sun*) or broadsheets (the *Daily Telegraph*, *The Guardian*, *The Independent* and *The Times*).

61 categories were used to identify the key topics (the primary focus) within each article. These categories covered a wide range of issues including anti-social behaviour by children, bullying, childcare, emotional health, physical health, child pornography, race discrimination, education standards, having a say in the community, children in custody, and paedophilia. Up to three categories could be chosen for each article. The full list of categories can be found in the audit form in Appendix 1.<sup>1</sup>

The determination of which topics were covered by an article was based on the angle taken by each newspaper. For example, an article that may have touched upon a children's rights issue (i.e. a child protection story) was not recorded as a children's rights article unless the children's rights focus was explicit. The same applied to equality stories. Taking this approach enabled us to look at how different newspapers represented the same story: one newspaper may have reported a story about a missing child as child abduction but another may have reported the same story as alleged child murder. In addition, where one newspaper ran one particular story over an extended period of time, the categories for that story changed to reflect the different angles taken in each article.

The 61 categories were amalgamated into wider themes during the analysis in order to allow the identification of trends in the newspaper coverage of children and young people. These themes included child offending, child poverty, child safety, crimes against children, discrimination, education standards, having a say, and child death / accident. The comprehensive list of wider themes can be found in Appendix 2.

While much of this review is based on quantitative data such as the length of the article and the prevalence of photographs and comments, judgment calls were made when determining the key topics covered by each article and the accuracy and tone of the children's rights and equality articles.

The analysis that follows looks first at **all** the articles that were about children and young people; it then goes on to consider in more detail the articles within that sample that had an explicit focus on children's human rights or children's equality.

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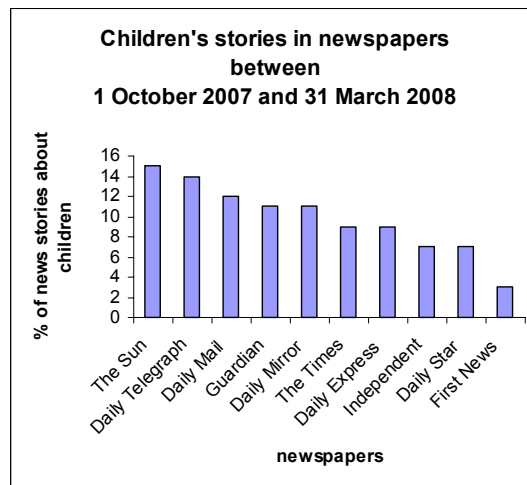
<sup>1</sup> Topics such as abortion or IVF were not classed as stories about children (and therefore not subject to analysis) because they covered children pre-birth. The review only considered articles about children as defined by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child – those aged 0 to 17.

## Part 1: Analysis of articles about children

2,642 articles about children and young people appeared in weekday editions of 10 national newspapers during the first week of each month between 1 October 2007 and 31 March 2008. Only 48 of these articles (1.8%) focused explicitly on children's human rights and children's equality.

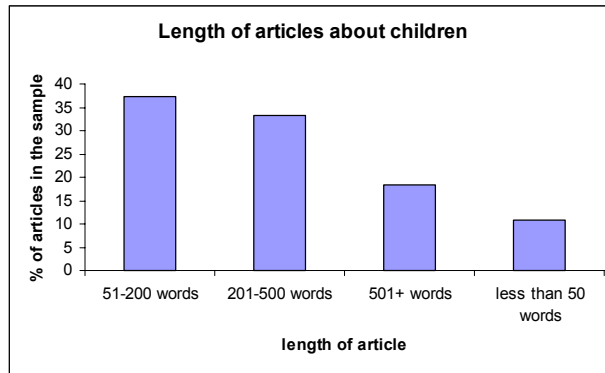
### Where articles appeared

The majority of stories about children (57.6%) appeared in the tabloids, with 1,520 articles in the period under review compared to 1,120 articles in the broadsheets. The frequency with which articles about children and young people appeared differed considerably between different newspapers:



*The Sun* featured by far the highest number of articles about children (409 articles); other tabloids, such as the *Daily Mail* (326 articles) and the *Daily Mirror* (298 articles) also reported frequently about children. Children's stories were also covered frequently by some of the broadsheets, with the *Daily Telegraph* (375 articles) and *The Guardian* (307 articles) both containing over 300 articles about children in the period of the review. *The Independent* and the *Daily Star* contained comparatively few articles about children. Somewhat surprisingly, children's newspaper *First News* contained the least articles about children, although this may reflect its aim of bringing wider news to children and young people.

Most articles about children were between 51 and 200 words (37.4%) or 201 to 500 words (33.1%) in length. Very few contained less than 50 words (10.9%), and only 18.5% of articles were more than 501 words long.



### Headlines used

To gain an impression of the tone in which children and young people are referred to in the national print media, we monitored the prevalence of words used to describe children in the headlines of each article identified. Most commonly, headlines featured words such as children, kids, girls, boys, babies and teens. Unsurprisingly, the word 'child' or 'children' appeared most often (in 257 or 18.5% of articles), with 'kids' used much less frequently (in 121 or 8.7% of articles). We found that broadsheets were more likely to refer to 'children' (28.6% of articles) than tabloids (10.5% of articles). Tabloids clearly preferred the term 'kids' (used in 14.5% of articles), which could be indicative of a less respectful approach towards children and young people in the tabloids as compared to the broadsheets.

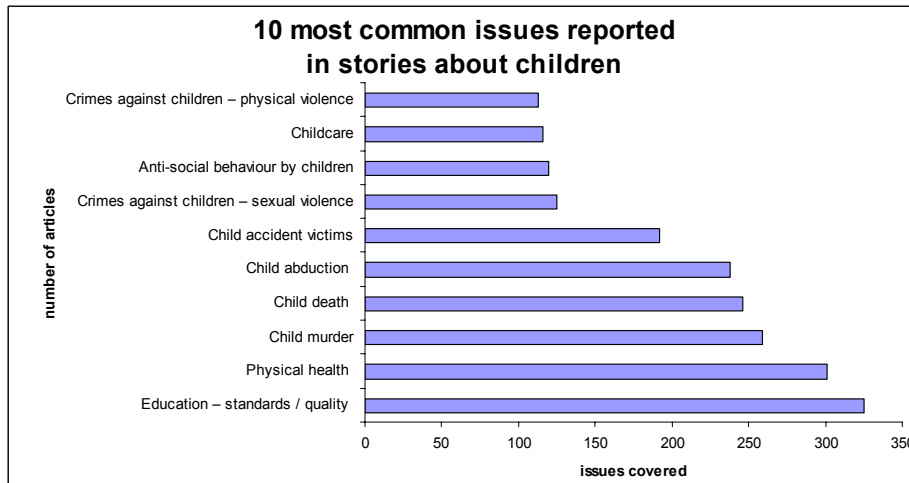
Interestingly, the term 'yob' was not much used by newspapers in headlines referring to children and young people, making up only 1.1% of the sample. 'Yob' however, was 14 times more likely to appear in a tabloid than in a broadsheet, and was used more often within headlines to describe young people than either 'youth' (0.8%) or 'young person' (0.3%). A gender bias also emerged when looking at the terms used within headlines, with 'girls' appearing much more commonly (in 170 or 12.3% of articles) than 'boys' (in 102 or 7.4% of articles).

### Topics covered

We were interested to discover what topics were most likely to be covered in articles about children, and whether any trends would become obvious as a result of monitoring this. 61 categories covering a range of topics were used to classify the primary focus of each article about children, including anti-social behaviour by children, bullying, childcare, physical health, gender discrimination, having a say in the family, and paedophilia. The determination of which topics were covered (up to three per article) was based on the specific angle taken by the newspaper for each particular article.

Standards in or quality of education was the most common individual topic for articles about children, at 8.2% of the sample (325 articles); 7.6% of articles covered physical health, 6.5% murder or attempted murder, 6.2% child death, and 6% child abduction.

The chart below shows the 10 most common topics covered by newspaper articles about children and young people:

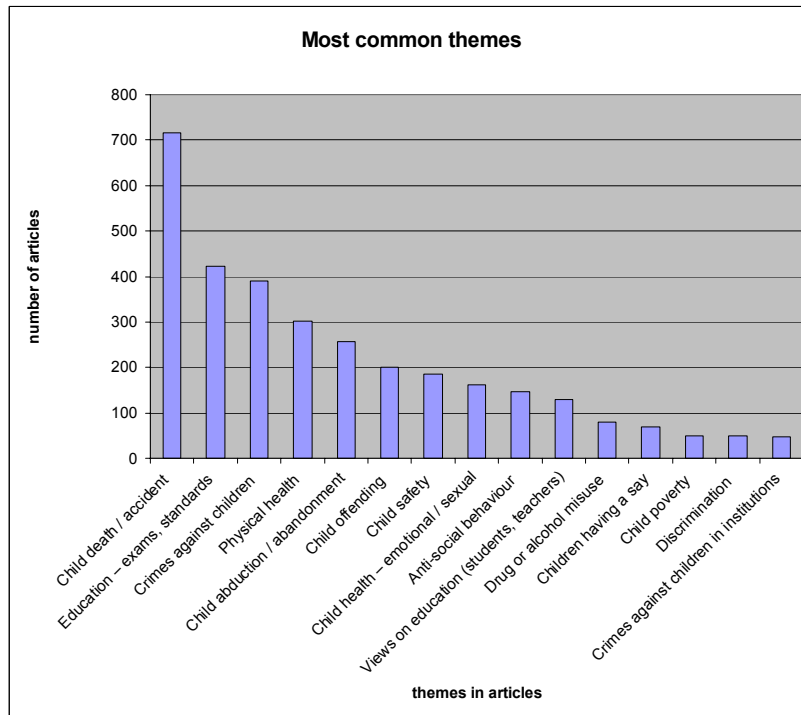


Surprisingly, only 2.3% of articles about children covered the issue of paedophilia, despite anecdotal evidence prior to the review that sensational stories about children as victims tend to dominate press coverage. However, given the dominance of stories on the theme of child death / accident (see below), it may be that the number of stories about paedophilia would significantly increase if a particular case came to light.

Articles about discrimination against children (on the grounds of sexual orientation, disability, age or gender), racial harassment, bullying by teachers, child pornography, having a say, children as victims of theft, and truancy (all at less than 0.2% of the sample) were the least common topics covered by articles about children and young people. The paucity of articles about discrimination is interesting given their dominance in the children’s rights and equality sample (see page 13).

### Emerging themes

To enable a more meaningful look at emerging themes, we grouped the 61 issues into a smaller number of categories. This brought up some differences in relation to the most common themes of newspaper coverage. Child death / accident featured disproportionately highly, making up 17.9% of the sample; other emotive articles about the child or young person as “victim”, for example those on crimes against children (9.8%), physical health (7.6%), and child abduction / abandonment (6.4%), also dominated.



Despite relatively frequent articles covering child offending, both violent and non-violent (at 200 articles or 5% of the sample), very few focused on the other element of child offending – children in custody (with only 37 articles, or 0.9% of the sample).

The breakdown of the individual topics within each thematic category can be found in Appendix 2.

**Themes in the tabloids and the broadsheets**

It soon became clear that the topics covered by broadsheet and tabloid newspapers often differed quite considerably. Tabloids were more likely to cover “emotive” stories, while broadsheets had a much higher concentration of factual, measured stories, especially those about education:

- Tabloids seemed significantly less interested in education stories, particularly those relating to examinations, standards and the quality of education – 7.8% of tabloid coverage compared to 27.9% of broadsheet coverage.
- Articles about child abduction or abandonment made up 14.2% of tabloid coverage (216 articles) but only 3.5% of broadsheet coverage (39 articles) – this may be a reflection of the tendency towards more sensationalist coverage in tabloid newspapers. This was somewhat mirrored in the balance of articles in the child death / accident category, being 21% of broadsheet coverage and 31.6% of tabloid coverage.

- Articles about crimes against children were much more likely to dominate the tabloids, with 17.2% of tabloid articles on this theme compared to 11.6% of broadsheet articles.
- Articles about anti-social behaviour made up 7.4% (113 articles) of tabloid coverage of children and only 2.9% (83 articles) of broadsheet coverage.
- The extent of coverage of child health issues (physical, sexual and emotional), discrimination, and having a say was broadly similar in both tabloids and broadsheets.

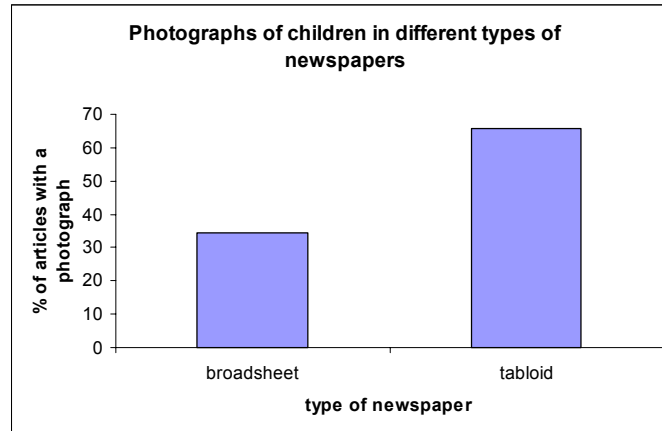
The most common topics for articles under 50 words in tabloid newspapers were child death / accident (most probably a result of updates on or continuations of other articles) and crimes against children; in broadsheets, child death / accident also figured highly, as did short articles about physical health. The most common topics for longer articles (over 501 words) in the tabloids were child death / accident (22.8%) and physical health (20%); in the broadsheets, education standards (29.5%) and child death / accident (15.8%) figured most prominently in longer articles. The prevalence of longer education stories may be a result of the likelihood of articles on this theme to appear in a supplement (with education stories making up 38.3% of the articles about children in supplements). We found that, in general, articles about education tended to be longer than articles about child death / accident. This is probably a reflection of the average length of articles in tabloids and broadsheets rather than of the importance attached by the newspaper to each of these themes.

Taken individually, newspapers gave a very different impression of the reality, achievements, challenges and dangers of childhood. Coverage of particular themes varied extensively, perhaps reflecting the interests of a newspaper's readership, or its particular political leanings. For example, the *Daily Express* and the *Daily Mirror* focused disproportionately on child death / accident, at 38.6% and 41.2% respectively of their articles about children. Almost half of the coverage about children in the *Daily Star* (49.1%) focused on child death / accident. This preoccupation with a single "theme" in some newspapers was also reflected in the broadsheets, but here the focus was on examinations and the quality and standard of education. 36.3% of articles about children in *The Independent* covered this theme, along with 30.6% of articles in *The Guardian* and over a quarter (26.9%) in the *Daily Telegraph*.

### **Photographs of children**

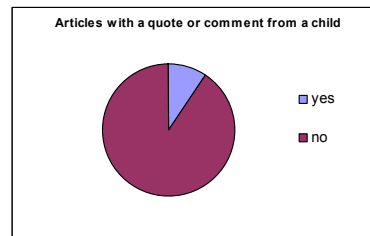
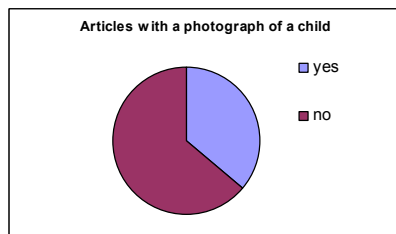
36.3% (953) of articles about children contained a photograph of a child or young person. Articles about child death / accident were disproportionately likely to have photographs, making up 37.3% of articles with images. Also common within articles with images were stories about child abduction / abandonment (14.3%), physical health (13.9%), and examination results and education standards (10.2%). One in four (25%) of articles about children's rights and children's equality were accompanied by a photograph. Those less likely to feature photographs, somewhat understandably given difficulties of access, were articles about crimes against children in institutions, and about children in some form of custody (prison or immigration detention).

It became clear that photographs of children and young people were much more likely to appear in the tabloids (in 626 articles) than in the broadsheets (in 327 articles), reflecting the more emotive approach and visual style of the tabloid.



### From the perspective of a child

Photographs were much more prevalent in articles about children than comments from children themselves. Less than one in five of the articles with a photograph of a child also contained a comment from a child or young person (185 articles, or 19.4%), and overall only 9.7% (256) of the overall sample of articles about children contained a direct quote from a child or young person.

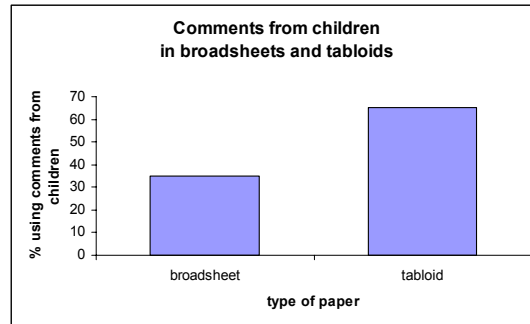


Quotes were also significantly less common than photographs in reporting on children's rights and equality – with quotes found in only three of 48 articles.

Those articles most likely to contain a comment from a child or young person were those reporting on child death / accident (13.6%) or crimes against children (9.9%).<sup>2</sup> The majority of the comment appearing in the child death / accident category appeared in articles about child death or murder. Articles about physical health (6.4%), crime committed by children (7.4%) and children having a say (6.7%) were also likely to contain comments from children and young people.

<sup>2</sup> The majority of comments within articles on the theme of child death / accident appeared in the individual categories of child death and alleged child murder.

Interestingly, tabloid articles contained comments from children much more often than broadsheet articles, with 65.2% of articles (167) including quotes being from the tabloids (compared to 34.8% or 89 articles from the broadsheets).



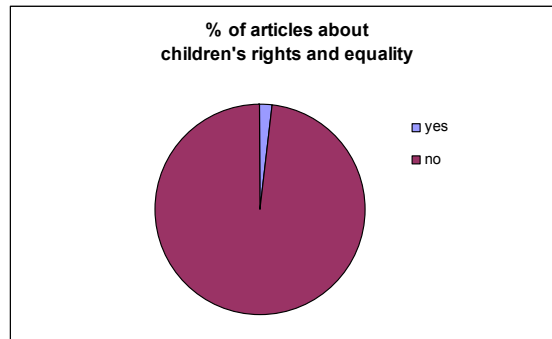
The lack of direct quotes from children in the overall sample may be an indicator of the level of importance attached to presenting the perspective of children and young people in stories about them. However, it may also be a reflection of the difficulties sometimes inherent in sourcing quotes from children and young people. For example, where articles reported on crimes against children in institutions (in children’s homes, schools or hospitals), quotes were extremely unlikely to appear. This was also reflected in stories about children in custody – where no quotes were found. This may indicate that these particular children are rarely viewed as expert commentators, or perhaps that children in general are not deemed able to engage with adults on such serious issues. Despite this however, articles about physical and sexual crimes about children *did* contain comments from children and young people.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> CRAE recognises that in some cases it may not have been appropriate or possible to include the direct perspective of a child or young person, for example if the article was about the death of a child, or about a baby.

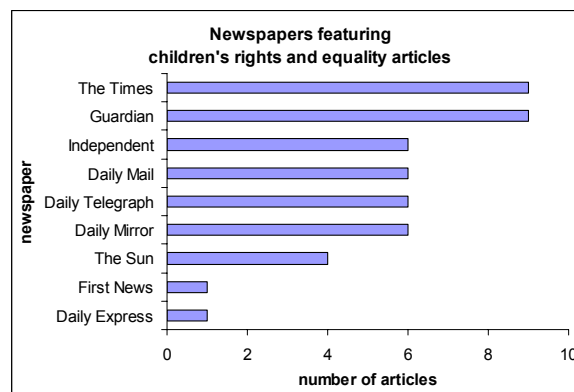
## Part 2: Analysis of children’s rights and children’s equality articles

The main purpose of this review was to consider how frequently, and how accurately, children’s human rights and equality stories appeared in the national print media. As illustrated in the chart below, CRAE found that only 1.8% of articles in the entire sample (48 articles out of 2,642) focused explicitly on children’s rights and equality.



### Where articles appeared

30 of these articles (62.5%) appeared in the broadsheets, while 18 (37.5%) appeared in the tabloids. *The Guardian* and *The Times* featured the most children’s rights articles, with nine each (18.8%). Six (12.5%) appeared in the *Daily Mail*, the *Daily Mirror*, the *Daily Telegraph* and *The Independent*; continuing with tabloids, four (8.3%) appeared in *The Sun* and one in the *Daily Express*. Children’s newspaper *First News* also featured only one article about children’s rights and equality. The *Daily Star* contained none.



The majority of articles on children’s rights and equality tended to be longer, with 41% between 201 and 500 words, and 28.3% over 501 words. The majority of these longer articles (22 out of 32) were found in the broadsheets. This tendency towards longer articles for children’s rights and equality stories may be because they are most likely to appear as features rather than current or ongoing news stories. Only three of the 48 articles were less than 50 words long, all of which were found in tabloid newspapers.

### **Headlines used**

The 48 children's rights and equality articles covered a wide range of issues; some of the headlines are below:

**A FIGHT FOR WHAT IS RIGHT: THE LIVES OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN BRITAIN ARE TO COME UNDER UNITED NATIONS SCRUTINY** (*The Guardian*)

**ADMISSIONS UNDER THREAT BY JEWISH RACE ROW GIRL** (*Daily Telegraph*)

**BUSH VETOES CHILD HEALTH COVER** (*The Guardian*)

**CHILDREN OF 15 GROOMED TO CARRY OUT TERRORIST ACTS, SAYS MI5 HEAD** (*The Times*)

**DON'T GO BACK TO 1970S-STYLE POLICE RACISM** (*Daily Telegraph*)

**JUDGES BACK TWO BRITISH BOYS WHO REFUSE TO LIVE IN FRANCE** (*The Times*)

**KEEP EUR DABS OFF OUR DNA** (*The Sun*)

**MPS URGE CURB ON RESTRAINT TECHNIQUES IN CHILD JAILS** (*The Guardian*)

**MUSLIM PUPILS WON'T FACE OUTRIGHT BAN ON WEARING THE VEIL** (*Daily Mail*)

**MY CURE FOR ANARCHY IN THE UK? SLUG A HOODY** (*The Sun*)

**PUPIL, 14, SUSPENDED OVER SIKH BANGLE** (*The Times*)

**TORY PLANS TO MAKE PORTS CHILD FRIENDLY** (*Daily Telegraph*)

**TRAUMATISED AND NEGLECTED: HOW BRITAIN FAILS CHILD ASYLUM SEEKERS** (*The Independent*)

**WELFARE'S IN A STATE** (*Daily Mirror*)

**WHO'D TEACH TODAY?** (*Daily Mail*)

The full list of headlines for all the children's rights and equality articles can be found in Appendix 3.

### **Topics covered**

We found that articles about discrimination were the most likely to have an explicit rights focus, making up 25% (or 12 out of 48) of articles about children's rights and equality. The focus tended to be on discrimination on the grounds of religion or gender. The participation of children and young people, particularly in the family but also in the community, was a popular topic too, with 14.6% of children's rights articles (or seven out of 48) covering children having a say. This was despite both these issues making up an extremely small percentage of all the articles about children. Unsurprisingly, given the

preponderance of articles about child death / accident in the sample as a whole, articles on this topic also featured highly in the children's rights sample (eight out of 48 articles).

### **Explaining the context of rights and equality**

Only one in four (25% or 12 out of 48) of the children's rights articles contained any explanation of the human rights or equality law relating to the story. Equality legislation was the most likely area to be explained in more detail, particularly when in connection with the Human Rights Act (or human rights more generally).

Of the 12 articles:

- One contained an explanation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- One contained an explanation of the European Convention on Human Rights and the Human Rights Act
- Three explained sections of equality law (two of these also contained additional explanations of particular human rights)
- Three looked at human rights more generally
- Three articles contained further explanation of legal rights
- One explained legal rights in the context of the Human Rights Act.

It is impossible to tell whether the lack of contextual explanation contained within children's rights and equality articles, particularly with regard to children's rights, is the result of a lack of knowledge on the part of the journalist, an assumption made by the journalist that the reader will be familiar with the legal and policy context of the article, or the result of an editorial decision in relation to the length and style of the article. Whatever the reason, it was striking that articles relating to equality law were much more likely to contain explanations than those relating solely to children's rights, perhaps reflecting the wider awareness about and longer history of equality legislation.

### **Accuracy of articles about children's rights and equality**

Newspapers and other forms of media have a significant influence over society's perceptions of children and young people, and as such can be a useful marker for determining the status of a particular group in society. We therefore felt that it was important to determine whether articles about children's rights and equality presented an accurate picture of, and whether they took a positive, negative or ambivalent position on, children's rights and equality.

Only 20 of the 48 articles about children's rights and equality (41.6%) were deemed long enough to determine the position of the journalist or newspaper on the issues they were covering. Of these, nine were articles that contained explanations of human rights or equality law. We found that seven articles were accurate about equality, whereas only five were accurate about children's rights. Only three were accurate about both children's rights and equality. Only one article was inaccurate about equality, yet three were inaccurate about children's rights. This suggests a much better understanding of equality among journalists.

Twelve out of 48 articles were positive about children's rights; 12 were positive about equality. Nine of the articles that were positive about equality were also positive about children's rights; the remaining three were ambivalent. A more negative attitude was evident towards children's rights, at least in the context of the 20 articles under consideration: four were negative about children's rights whereas only one was negative about equality. Nine of the articles that were positive about equality were also positive about children's rights. Interestingly, we found that if articles had been accurate about children's rights, they tended to present children's rights in a positive light. This reflects CRAE's experience when undertaking awareness-raising work about children's rights with practitioners, the public and parents, and shows the importance of supporting journalists to understand the spirit and detail of children's rights and equality when they are reporting on these issues.

We also found that, where articles were negative about children's rights, they were also likely to present a negative view of children and young people. Encouragingly however, 11 of the 20 articles were positive about children and young people, and only three explicitly negative. The remaining six were ambivalent. We did not undertake this assessment for all the articles about children and young people.

### **Conclusion**

An expanding body of research and commentary on the media portrayal of children and childhood is giving new depth to our understanding of its impact on society's perceptions of children and young people. In an unusual move, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child has laid some of the responsibility for the growing intolerance of children and young people in British society at the door of the media, recognising the concerns and research of children and young people themselves.

This newspaper review has shown that children and young people are very much present in newspaper coverage, and that the challenges and opportunities facing them are articulately covered in many ways. Their unique perspectives do, at times, form part of the commentary on their lives. Yet the picture presented is often a distorted one, coloured by sensationalist issues, decisions about "newsworthy" copy and a preference for stories of the child as either "victim" or "high achiever". Children's human rights and children's equality remain very low on the editorial agenda, rarely regarded as either adding value to a story or indeed as being relevant at all. This is a situation that must change.

## Appendix 1: Newspaper audit form

<b>Basic details</b>			
(a) Newspaper			
Daily Express	<input type="checkbox"/>	Daily Mail	<input type="checkbox"/>
Daily Mirror	<input type="checkbox"/>	Daily Star	<input type="checkbox"/>
Daily Telegraph	<input type="checkbox"/>	First News	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guardian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Independent	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Sun	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Times	<input type="checkbox"/>
(b) Issue date (dd/mm/yyyy) .....			
(c) Main section or supplement?			
Main section	<input type="checkbox"/>	Page no.	<input type="text"/>
Supplement	<input type="checkbox"/>	Page no.	<input type="text"/>
(d) Please tick:			
The article is about children generally	<input type="checkbox"/>	(go to question 1)	
The article is about children's equality and/or human rights issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	(go to (e))	
(e) Please indicate whether the article was about children's equality and/or human rights issues:			
In the UK	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Abroad	<input type="checkbox"/>		

### 1. How big is the piece?

- Less than 50 words
- 51-200 words
- 201-500 words
- 501+ words

**2. Does the headline include any of the following words (please tick)?**

- 1. Activist or activists.....
- 2. Baby or babies.....
- 3. Boy or boys.....
- 4. Brave.....
- 5. Child, children or children's.....
- 6. Children's rights.....
- 7. Convention on the Rights of the Child.....
- 8. Council of Europe.....
- 9. Equal or equality.....
- 10. Equality tsar / human rights tsar.....
- 11. Europe.....
- 12. European Court.....
- 13. Gay / lesbian.....
- 14. Girl or girls.....
- 15. Human Rights.....
- 16. Human Rights Act.....
- 17. Independent body / independent watchdog.....
- 18. Kid or kids.....
- 19. Knife or knives.....
- 20. Lad or lads.....
- 21. Lass or lasses.....
- 22. Muslim.....
- 23. Paedophile or paedo.....
- 24. Parliament.....
- 25. Porn.....
- 26. Protect / protection.....
- 27. Protestor.....
- 28. Pupil.....
- 29. Rape.....
- 30. School.....
- 31. School boy.....
- 32. School girl.....
- 33. Sex.....
- 34. Teen or teenager.....
- 35. Thug.....
- 36. Toddler or toddlers.....
- 37. Tot or tots.....
- 38. UN or United Nations.....
- 39. Victim.....
- 40. Violent or violence.....
- 41. Yob.....
- 42. Young person or young people.....
- 43. Youngster or youngsters.....
- 44. Youth.....

Write out headline in full.....  
(headline = anything in big type, including 'sub-headline')

### 3. What are the main issues covered by the piece (tick up to 3)?

1. Anti-social behaviour against children and young people .....
2. Anti-social behaviour by children and young people .....
3. Bullying or harassment in school by children and young people .....
4. Bullying or harassment in school by teachers .....
5. Child abandonment .....
6. Child abduction .....
7. Child accident victims .....
8. Child consumer issues .....
9. Child death .....
10. Child health – emotional .....
11. Child health – physical .....
12. Child health – sexual .....
13. Child health – other .....
14. Child murder victims (including alleged) .....
15. Child offending – guns .....
16. Child offending – knives .....
17. Child offending – other violence .....
18. Child offending – other non-violence .....
19. Child pornography .....
20. Child poverty – international .....
21. Child poverty – UK .....
22. Child safety – community .....
23. Child safety – Internet .....
24. Child safety – school or other educational settings .....
25. Child safety – within the family .....
26. Child suicide .....
27. Childcare .....
28. Children having a say – community .....
29. Children having a say – family .....
30. Children having a say – in care (children's homes, foster care) .....
31. Children having a say – national politics / democracy .....
32. Children having a say – school .....
33. Crimes against children in children's homes .....
34. Crimes against children in hospitals .....
35. Crimes against children in schools .....
36. Crimes against children – emotional violence .....
37. Crimes against children – physical violence .....
38. Crimes against children – sexual violence .....
39. Crimes against children – other violence .....
40. Crimes against children – racial harassment (inc. Roma / travellers) .....
41. Crimes against children – theft .....
42. Crimes against children – other .....
43. Curfews or dispersals .....
44. Discrimination - age .....
45. Discrimination – disability .....
46. Discrimination - gender .....
47. Discrimination - race .....
48. Discrimination – religion and belief .....
49. Discrimination – sexual orientation .....
50. Drug or alcohol misuse by children and young people .....
51. Education – children's views .....
52. Education – exam results .....
53. Education – standards / quality .....
54. Education – teacher views .....
55. Locked up children – immigration detention .....
56. Locked up children – prison or other custody .....
57. Mosquito devices .....
58. Non-violent crimes against children .....
59. Paedophilia .....
60. School exam and coursework pressure .....
61. Social networking sites .....
62. Teacher / head teacher concerns (inc. teacher unions) .....
63. Truancy .....
64. None of the above .....

**4. Does the piece include a quote / comment from a child or young person?**

YES  NO

**5. Does the piece include a photograph of a child or young person?**

YES  NO

Complete remaining questions ONLY if the article is about children's equality and/or human rights issues.

**6. Does the piece cover any of the following taking positive action to protect children's rights (please tick)?**

- 1. UN .....
- 2. Council of Europe.....
- 3. European Court.....
- 4. Domestic Court.....
- 5. Government.....
- 6. Parliamentarians .....
- 7. Police / criminal justice agencies.....
- 8. Social services .....
- 9. Other statutory agency.....
- 10. EHRC .....
- 11. NGOs .....
- 12. Parents .....
- 13. Children and young people .....
- 14. Other members of the public.....

**7. Does the piece explain anything about (please tick)...**

- 1. Convention on the Rights of the Child.....
- 2. European Convention on Human Rights.....
- 3. Equality legislation (Britain).....
- 4. Human Rights Act .....
- 5. Other human rights.....
- 6. Other legal rights .....

**8. Was there enough information to make an assessment of the article's stance on rights or equality?**

YES  NO

**9. If yes, would you judge that (please circle)...**

a. The piece is generally positive about children's rights

YES NO AMBIVALENT UNSURE

b. The piece is generally positive about equality

YES NO AMBIVALENT UNSURE

c. The piece is generally accurate about children's rights

YES NO AMBIVALENT UNSURE

d. The piece is generally accurate about equality

YES            NO            AMBIVALENT            UNSURE

e. The piece is generally positive about children and young people

YES            NO            AMBIVALENT            UNSURE

## Appendix 2: Themes of newspaper coverage

We amalgamated the 61 topics in the audit form in Appendix 1 into wider themes during our analysis in order to allow us to identify trends in the newspaper coverage of children and young people. These themes are listed below along with the individual topics that made up each theme.

<b>Wider theme</b>	<b>Topics included</b>
Anti-social behaviour	Anti-social behaviour against / by children and young people
Anti-social behaviour measures	Mosquito device, curfews, dispersals
Bullying or harassment	In school, by students or by teachers
Child abduction / abandonment	Abduction, abandonment
Child death / accident	Accident, death, suicide, murder (and alleged murder) victims
Children in custody	Children in prison, children in immigration detention, children in other custody
Child offending	Gun crime, knife crime, other violence, non-violent crimes
Child poverty	In the UK; international child poverty
Child safety	In the community, online, in school or other educational setting, in the family
Children having a say	Community, family, in care, national politics / democracy, in school
Crimes against children	Emotional, physical, sexual, paedophilia, child pornography, theft, racial harassment, non-violent, other
Crimes against children in institutions	Crimes against children in children's homes, in hospitals, in schools
Discrimination	Discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation
Education	Children's views, teachers' views, concerns of headteachers and teaching unions
Education standards and quality	Standards, quality, examination results and examination pressure
Health	Emotional, sexual, other
Health	Physical
Other	Childcare, truancy, school networking sites, consumer issues
Substance abuse	Drug or alcohol misuse by children and young people

### **Appendix 3: Headlines from children's rights and equality articles**

€1,500 bonus to raise a daughter

A fight for what is right: The lives of young people in Britain are to come under United Nations scrutiny

Action on poverty leaving women and girls behind – report

Admissions under threat by Jewish race row girl

Allowed to live...the dog who did this to our girl

Beware of banning braids – it could be classed as racist, heads are told

Boy killed by teacher for doodling in a book

Boys win Brit battle

Boys win French league

British Asians aborting unwanted girls

Bush vetoes – child health cover

Children of 15 groomed to carry out terrorist acts, says MI5 head

Don't go back to 1970s-style police racism

Fathers' rights protestors are cleared of imprisoning Hodge

Girl, 10, is tied up by father before tackling 3 hour swim

Jailed killer has right to father a child, European Court rules

Jenna Bush quits partying to promote 'Ana's story'

Judge backs two British boys who refuse to live in France

Keep EUR dabs off our DNA

MPs urge curb on restraint techniques in child jails

Muslim pupils won't face outright ban on wearing the veil

My cure for anarchy in the UK? Slug a hoody

No gloss on abduction cameraman required

Nurseries 'put children at serious risk'

One brave woman and an affront to justice

Pre-EU order unenforceable law report – Court of Appeal

Pupil, 14, suspended over Sikh bangle

Refugee and asylum seekers

School sacked father unfairly over domestic row with his daughter

School sends girl, 14, home for wearing a Sikh bracelet

Sexual politics and religion

Should a man be told he's a dad?

Sikh band ban

Sun sport

Talkative students and bullets: The lecturer's woes

Tamil paramilitary held over immigration offences

The changing face of the family

The five minute interview – Matthew Wright

Tory plans to make ports child friendly

Tragedy of a religion that lets people die

Traumatised and neglected: How Britain fails child asylum seekers

Tug of love: coping with a custody battle

Victims of abuse test 6 year limit for going over assault

We've got a thing about girl embryos

Welfare's in a state

When ignorance is never bliss

Who'd teach today?

You ask the questions...Professor Sir Al Aynsley-Green, Children's Commissioner for England