



Newsbrief

International Play Association
England, Wales and Northern Ireland

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Promoting the Child's Right to Play

Strategic successes

The IPA now has a strategic plan that asks branches to raise the profile of the organisation within their countries and to promote Article 31 of the UNCRC at a national level. England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and Scotland have succeeded in gaining a place on the *Children's Play Policy Forum* alongside national play organisations and leading play agencies.

The IPA EWNI Council also determined to engage with the Children's Commissioners for the UK, among whom Keith Towler, Commissioner for Wales, takes the lead on play rights. So, Jackie Dorrian (Chair), Gill Evans (Co-ordinator, 2011 IPA Conference) and Mike Greenaway (member of the IPA international board) all went to Swansea to meet Keith at the end of November, taking with them a number of requests.

First of all we asked for support with the Article 31 consultation project that is outlined later in this newsbrief, and support for IPA international seeking a day of discussion on Article 31 in the UN. He gave us some interesting insights into the workings of the UN, having taken part in the reporting process to the *Committee on the Rights of the Child* in October. He had this to say:

“This year, for the first time, the four UK Children's Commissioners decided to write a joint report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on the state of children's rights across the country. In June, I headed to Geneva to discuss the findings of our report with members of the Committee and I led on five topics, including our recommendations on how to address the barriers to children's right to play.

“So many of the children who I meet every day want to discuss issues around play – one little girl from Ceredigion even asked me whether it was illegal for her to play outside her house. These worrying accounts have made me realise that I must place the topic of play high on my list of priorities to help ensure every child and young person living in Wales can exercise their right to play and relax and join in a wide range of activities.”

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We also invited Keith to speak at the **2011 World IPA conference** in Cardiff (he said yes) and requested a meeting of the five Commissioners (UK and Eire) to take place at the conference (which is to be confirmed). Our approach was met very positively and we look forward to a fruitful working relationship in the future.

Monitoring Children's Rights

In October the *Committee on the Rights of the Child* (the body of independent experts that monitors the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child by its State parties) reported on the situation of children in the UK. It was concerned with the general climate of intolerance and negative public attitudes towards children, especially adolescents, which appeared to exist in the United Kingdom, particularly in the media. A further concern was the restriction imposed on the freedom of movement and peaceful assembly of children by anti-social behaviour orders, as well as by the use of the so-called "mosquito devices".

Article 31 Project: World Consultation Series

A series of consultations is being planned by IPA to raise awareness of the importance of Article 31 within the UN Convention. The aims of the consultations are:

- To mobilise a worldwide network of article 31 advocates and to harness their expertise to raise awareness of the importance of play in children's lives.
- To gather specific material demonstrating the infringement of the child's right to play throughout the world which can inform the development of a general comment.
- To formulate practical recommendations for governments with regard to compliance with article 31.

A pilot event was held in Rotterdam, Netherlands, in November. Watch this space for news of an event in the UK.

If you would like to join IPA EWNI, an organisation devoted to promoting and protecting the child's right to play please visit

www.ipa-ewni.org.uk/members.html and download an application pack.

IPA EWNI is a registered charity no. 1094980

If you are an IPA EWNI member and would like to contribute to future issues of this newsbrief please contact the editor:

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