

Children’s Rights Alliance Guidelines for Member Consultations

Context: The Children’s Rights Alliance, working together with our valued members, aims to increase awareness and understanding of children's rights, to identify problems for children and young people and to develop solutions.

We are in a unique position to advocate on behalf of our members and as such, we always strive to listen to and be informed by our members on the key issues affecting children and young people so that we can inform senior decision makers, influence policy and effect change. As a member informed Alliance, it is the Board of Directors of the Children’s Rights Alliance that makes the strategic decisions for the organisation.

Recommended Approach for Dealing with Member Consultations

Type of Consultation	Output(s)	Process	Recommendation
Standing Topic Consultation	Report Card	We send all members a written template asking for information and updates under different themes. In the case of Report Card, the team usually follows up directly with members who have inputted by email or phone, or where no member has provided on a particular issue, we follow-up with relevant members working in the area. Members who have expertise in a particular area also receive a draft version of the section to peer review and provide further feedback and to ensure that their input has been represented correctly or to verify that information received from the State is accurate.	Includes extensive consultation and interaction with members. This should continue to be the case. A standard written template, tailored to the process is sent to all member organisations and feedback is collated and included where possible.

		<p><u>Where feedback is not taken on board and is varied, the team communicate back to the members the reasons why. Submissions indicate who inputted into the paper.</u></p>	
<p>Standing Topic Consultation</p>	<p>Parallel UNCRC report or other UN Reporting mechanisms</p>	<p>We an email to all members asking for information and updates. Again, we follow up with members who contribute for further information or with members working in key areas if we have not received any information on a particular issue. The feedback is collated and used where possible.</p> <p>We hold a number of consultation events. There will usually be an overarching consultation but in some cases it is useful to hold thematic consultations with a smaller group of members.</p> <p>Members get to comment on a draft of the report. Particular sections may be sent to members working on a particular issue for sense-checking, further information or to verify information received from the State.</p> <p><u>Where feedback is not taken on board and is varied, the team communicate back to the members the reasons why. Submissions indicate who inputted into the paper.</u></p> <p>The final submission is put on the website and circulated to all members.</p>	<p>Includes extensive consultation and interaction with members. This should continue to be the case. The use of webinars and online consultations will prove useful in reaching members not located in Dublin.</p>

<p>Core Topic Consultations</p>	<p>These include foreseeable Bills or government policies core to Alliance strategic priorities and current agenda. These are usually identified during annual work-planning and time is allocated to consult with members on these key issues.</p>	<p>We often set up a standing working group or advisory group of members on a particular Bill or policy. All members are invited to join the group. This works well as it results in a smaller group of members who are interested in a particular policy or legislative issue. It makes it easier to consult on a submission given that the working group members are already aware of the issue, usually are working directly on it and have indicated that they want to input.</p> <p>Any written draft submissions are circulated to the group for feedback within a given timeframe. In some cases it is more effective to hold a meeting and collate feedback that way.</p> <p><u>Where feedback is not taken on board and is varied, the team communicate back to the members the reasons why. Submissions indicate who inputted into the paper.</u></p> <p>The final submission is put on the website and circulated to members.</p>	<p>Continue to set up working groups of members on particular legislative or policy priorities. Members self-select so it means that these are the ones most interested in an issue. This makes it easier to consult with members and engage meaningfully.</p>
<p>One-Off Topic Consultations</p>	<p>This includes other policy or legislative issues that arise from time to time (not fully foreseeable), and upon which the Alliance Team decide to run a formal Consultation. These are often responses to requests from Joint</p>	<p>We often make submissions to Joint Oireachtas Committees or government departments asking for submissions or inputs. Often there is a quick turnaround time for these.</p> <p>We usually only input into consultations like this where it aligns with our strategic goals or where a member has asked for support in the area.</p>	<p>These submissions can sometimes be the most difficult to consult on given both time constraints and set wordcounts.</p> <p>We propose that where we have existing material from Report Card, the UNCRC report or other submissions where members have already been consulted and we have</p>

	<p>Oireachtas Committees to make a submission on a particular theme or from a government department on a draft strategy or policy position.</p>	<p><u>Where feedback is not taken on board and is varied, the team communicate back to the members the reasons why. Submissions indicate who inputted into the paper.</u></p> <p>Usually we send a draft of the submission to all members for feedback and try to incorporate any feedback into the final document. We might follow up with specific members and ask them to share their submissions to align messaging where possible.</p> <p>The final submission is put on the website and circulated to all members.</p>	<p>an agreed policy position, then the team should be able to make a submission without having to consult the full membership. This is from a time and capacity point of view.</p> <p>If it is an entirely new policy position or issue or an issue that is not informed or covered in the UNCRC, then the team should consult with the full membership.</p>
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Last approved by the Board on 22 June 2021.