

Children's Rights in Action - Impact Studies

The 'Children's Rights in Action' narratives included in this document are not individual real-life case studies. They are anonymised, composite impact studies developed from observations, engagement, and evidence gathered through Child Friendly Cardiff's work with children and young people. Each narrative brings together shared experiences, themes, and outcomes to reflect the collective impact of rights-based practice across different settings and priority areas. Names and identifying details are fictional, but the experiences described are grounded in real work taking place in Cardiff and are intended to illustrate how children and young people experience the city's children's rights approach in practice

Children's Rights in Action Rights Respecting Schools Award

Amara

When Amara joined her new school in Cardiff, she was nervous about starting somewhere unfamiliar. In the country she lived before, she had never learned about children's rights and felt her voice didn't matter.

From her first day, things were different. A welcoming group of pupils — some speaking her first language — made her feel safe and at home. She quickly learned about her rights in lessons, assemblies, and across school life.

Encouraged to use her voice, Amara joined pupil groups, took part in staff interviews, and helped shape school policies through a rights lens. Over time, she also began to speak up for others — especially new arrivals — and shared ideas with the council on how to make the city more welcoming for young people.

Within a year, Amara's confidence had flourished. She felt a strong sense of belonging in a school community built on respect and equality, where her views were valued and she had the power to shape her school, her city, and her education.



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Place - Urban Planning & Design

Amina

Amina often felt unsafe in her local park. The space was dominated by boys playing football, and there was little shelter or seating for others.

She joined a focus group run by Cardiff University and Child Friendly Cardiff, sharing her experiences and ideas. She helped co-design improvements like better lighting, inclusive play areas, and sheltered spaces.

Amina now feels proud seeing her ideas reflected in park plans. She feels heard, valued, and empowered—knowing she is helping make Cardiff more welcoming for girls like her.



Mia

When Mia, a 15-year-old secondary school student, first heard about the Local Development Plan, she thought it was “just for politicians.” In her workshop, she realised the plan would decide how her city looked and felt by the time she was an adult. Mia spoke passionately about bus services: how expensive tickets stop her and her friends from getting to after-school activities. She also highlighted the lack of safe cycle routes in her neighbourhood.

For the first time, she felt decision-makers were really listening. After the session, Mia said: “It feels like we’ve actually got the power to make Cardiff better for us and for the kids who come after us.”

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Participation

El

El joined Cardiff Youth Council at 13. At first, they weren't very confident and found it hard to speak up. But through workshops, training, and encouragement from other young people, they gradually began to take part in debates and projects.

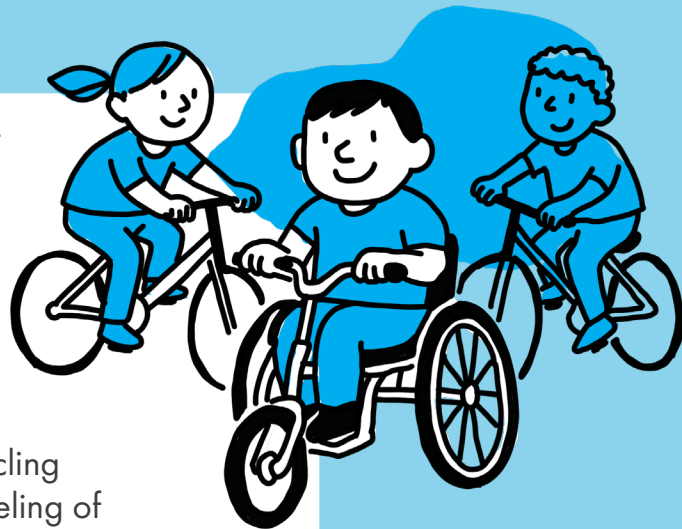
By 16, El had developed a real passion for the environment. They built confidence through subgroup work, public speaking, and projects tackling climate change and plastic pollution. They also joined scrutiny meetings, the Young Interviewers and Young Inspectors programmes, and represented Cardiff at a national environmental summit, where they co-led discussions with scientists.

Over time, El became one of CYC's most dedicated volunteers, contributing hundreds of hours and showing how participation can transform a shy teenager into a confident leader and advocate for children's rights.

Idris

Idris has a physical disability and worried he wouldn't be able to join in cycle training at school. When he explained this to the road safety team, they worked with Pedal Power to provide an adapted trike and ensured staff were trained to support his needs.

Taking part alongside his classmates was a turning point for Idris. He was no longer watching from the sidelines but learning the same skills as his friends. Cycling with them gave him independence, freedom, and a feeling of belonging. For Idris, the experience showed that when services listen and adapt to children's needs, inclusion becomes possible.



Sara

Sara has additional learning needs and sometimes felt left out when adults made decisions about the services she used. When the council advertised for a new manager in the Independent Travel Training team, Sara and a group of pupils who had completed the training were invited to help with the recruitment.

She listened to presentations, asked questions, and filled in candidate evaluation forms after each interview. For Sara, this was the first time she had taken part in such an important decision. She felt her opinion genuinely mattered. Knowing that her input helped to select the person who would support future pupils gave her pride and a new sense of confidence in her own voice.



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Equal & Included

Sian

Sian used to find some school lessons uncomfortable. Jokes and comments from boys in her class often went unchallenged, and she felt frustrated that girls weren't always treated with respect. This year things changed. Her school introduced classroom discussions on gender equity and positive masculinity, and boys from her year group took part in a workshop led by Matt Brown, founder of *She Is Not Your Rehab*.



Sian noticed an immediate difference. Male teachers began challenging disrespectful behaviour when it happened, and boys in her class spoke with more thought and understanding. Sian feels her school is serious about equality. She now feels more confident in lessons, enjoys better relationships with her peers, and sees her male classmates as allies in making the school a more respectful place for everyone.

Aled

Aled always wanted to cycle to school with his friends, but his family couldn't afford a bike. During cycle training at school, he shared this with the instructors, who fed it back to the council team. Soon after, Aled received a bike through the ReCYCLE scheme, which provides refurbished bikes to young people who need them.

Now, Aled rides to school most days, gaining independence and confidence. He feels proud that his voice - a simple comment during training - helped spark a solution that has supported over 100 children across the city. For Aled, being listened to meant not only getting a bike, but also being part of a city where young people's ideas can lead to real change.



Sita

Sita often found public spaces overwhelming. Visiting the library with her family could be stressful - she never knew what the space would be like, and sometimes the noise and bustle made her anxious.

Things began to change when the library introduced sensory nooks and borrowed backpacks designed with neurodivergent young people. Sita used a sensory backpack on her visits, which gave her tools to stay calm and focused. Before her first trip back, she also explored the new virtual tour online, so she knew exactly what to expect when she arrived.

Now, Sita looks forward to her library visits. She enjoys choosing books in a calmer, more welcoming environment, and her family no longer worries that the experience will be overwhelming. For Sita, these small changes have made a big difference - turning the library into a place where she feels included, safe, and able to thrive.



Mohammad

Before joining the Take Your Place leadership programme, Mohammad didn't see himself as a leader. He rarely saw role models who looked like him in positions of influence and wasn't sure how he could make his voice heard.

Through the programme, run by Common Wealth Theatre, Mohammad developed new skills in communication and leadership. He built friendships, found confidence in speaking up, and met role models from his own community who inspired him to believe that leadership was possible.

Since completing the course, Mohammad has become involved in two new community projects — a youth-led campaign on climate action and a local cultural festival. These opportunities have given him a platform to contribute and to see himself as part of Cardiff's future.