

WE ARE
SANDWELL!



Child Friendly Sandwell



Child Friendly Sandwell

On Wednesday 17 January 2024, Cabinet confirmed it would submit an expression of interest for Sandwell to become a **UNICEF Child Friendly Borough**.

A child friendly borough is one that respects and promotes the rights of children and young people and provides them with opportunities to participate in its social, cultural, political and economic life. Developing a child friendly borough involves engaging with children and young people as active citizens, ensuring their safety and well-being, and creating inclusive and accessible spaces and services for them.

We were accepted onto the UNICEF UK programme September 2024.

Our application to UNICEF demonstrates our commitment to improving the lives of children by realising their rights as articulated in the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child** (1989).



Vision

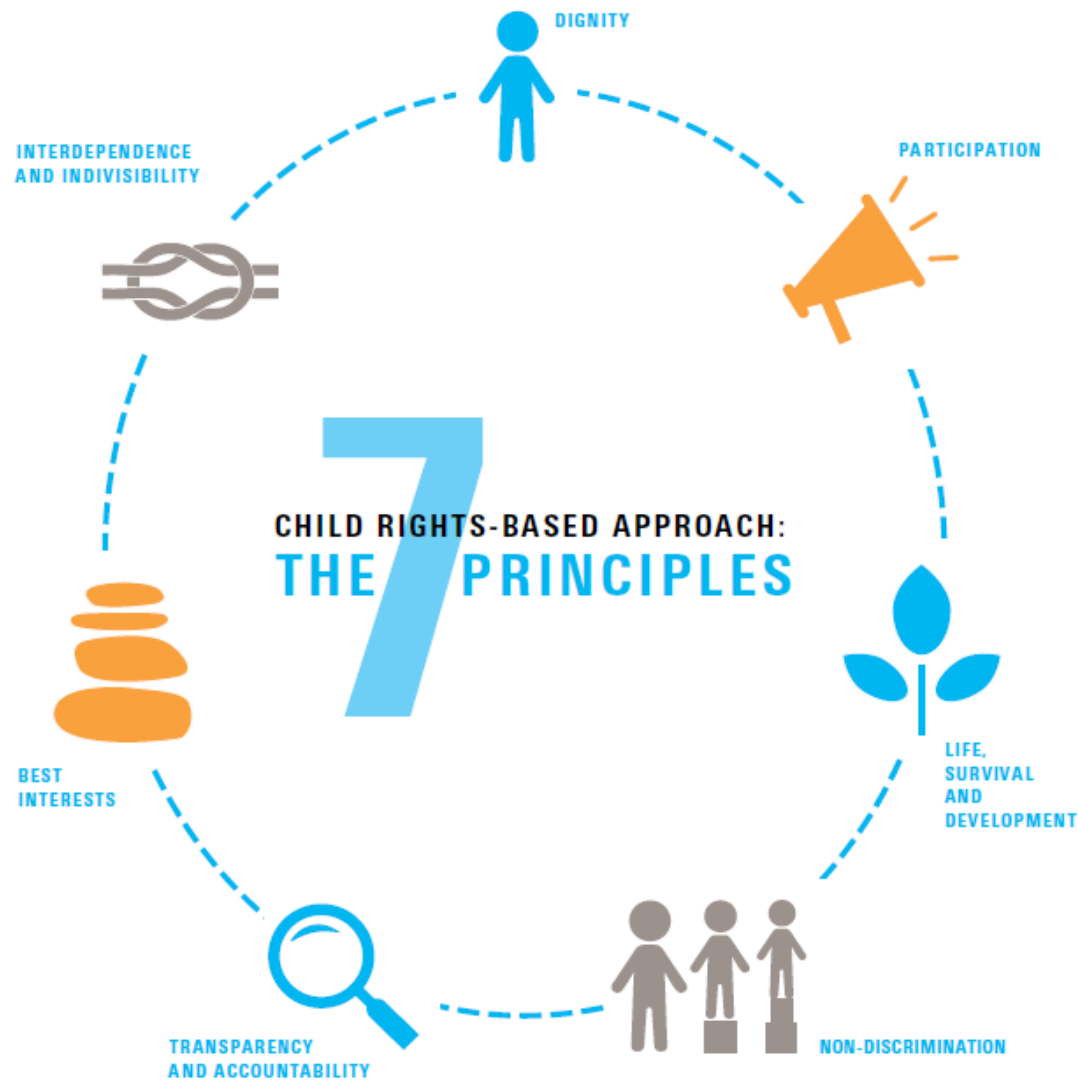
Our vision is to achieve UNICEF accredited Child Friendly Borough status within 3 years.

- Our focus is on improving outcomes for Children and Young People (0-19, SEND: aged up to 25). Every child has the right to grow up in an environment where they feel safe and secure, have access to basic services and clean air and water, can play, learn and grow and where their voice is heard and matters.
- The UNICEF programme will require us to be brave in our aspirations and support a cultural change within the council, as well as among our partners and stakeholders, to ensure that children's rights, needs and voices are respected and prioritised in all decisions that affect them.
- Our child friendly approach has the potential to unite a range of progressive agendas including health and wellbeing, school readiness, sustainability, resilience and safety and act as a catalyst for urban regeneration and innovation.
- The status would not only benefit for children and young people, but also the whole community, as it fosters social cohesion, diversity, and innovation.



Child
Friendly
Cities
Initiative

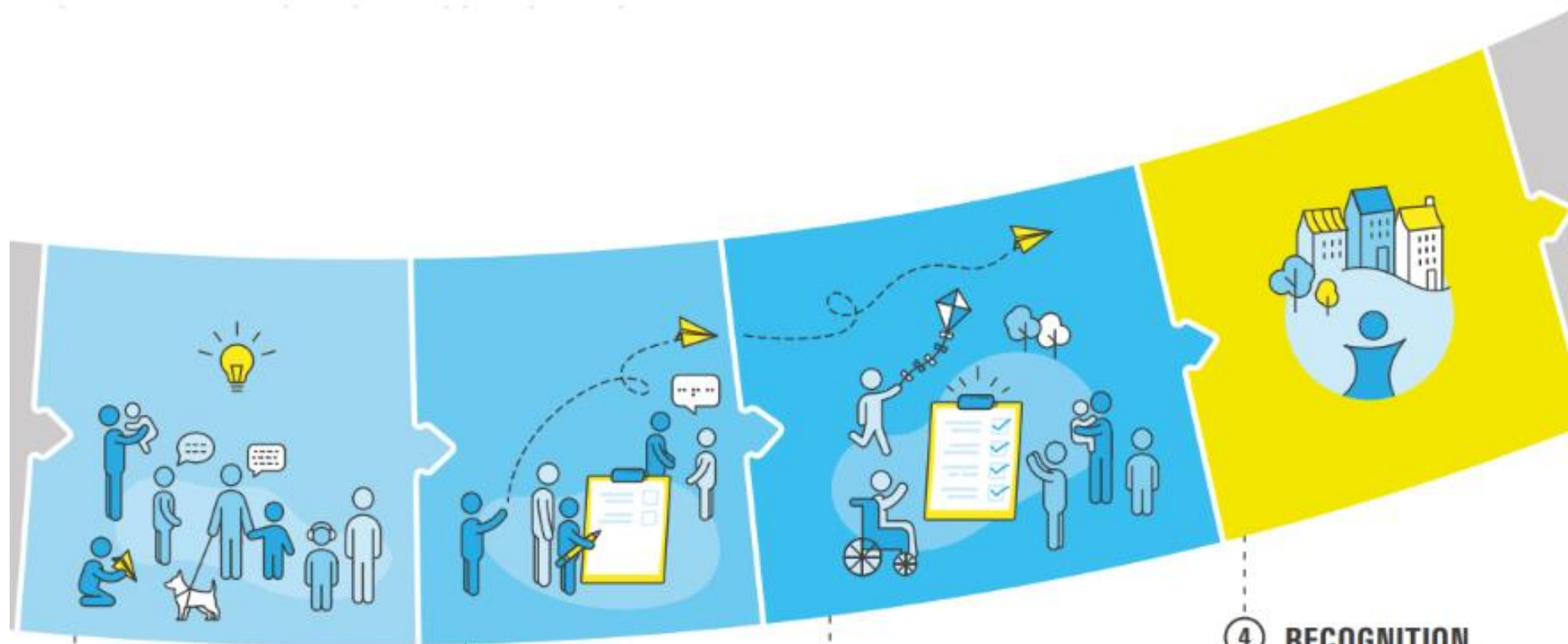
unicef 
for every child



- At its core is the concept of human **dignity** – the principle that each child is a unique person with intrinsic worth who should be respected and valued in all circumstances.
- Rights are **interdependent**, so the fulfilment of one right often depends on the fulfilment of other rights
- Rights are **indivisible**, so each child enjoys all rights enshrined in the UNCRC, whatever their circumstances.
- As duty bearers, local government and its partners need to be **transparent and accountable** to children and young people. Having dependable, open and accountable relationships and dialogue between local government, communities, families and children and young people is essential in the collective goal of securing children’s rights.

A CRBA also incorporates the **four general principles of the UNCRC**. These are not only rights in themselves, but underpin every other right in the Convention:

- For rights to be applied without discrimination (**Article 2**)
- For the best interests of the child to be a primary consideration (**Article 3**)
- The right to life, survival and development (**Article 6**)
- The right to express a view and have that view respected (**Article 12**).



1 DISCOVERY
6 months

The council, community and children and young people come together to agree their priorities, known as 'badges'.

2 DEVELOPMENT
2-3 months

An Action Plan is drafted and approved showing how the council will achieve progress in their selected 'badges'.

3 DELIVERY
2-4 years

The council works with the local community and children and young people to carry out the Action Plan.

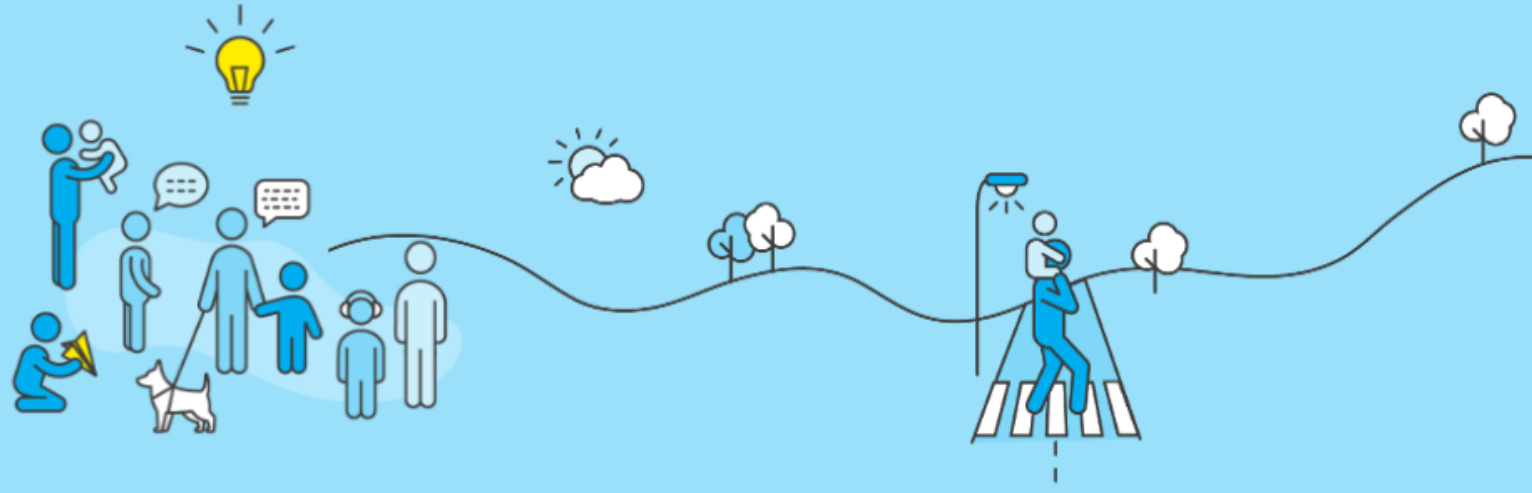
4 RECOGNITION
Lasts 3 years

An independent panel of child rights experts assesses the progress made and decides whether to recognise the candidate city or community as 'Unicef Child Friendly'.

DISCOVERY

6 months

Activities can be carried out in **any order**, as long as they are all completed by the end of the Discovery Phase



MOU in place



Safeguarding

Robust and clear **safeguarding** arrangements are in place:

- Review CFC's safeguarding guidance and share with relevant staff
- Complete and return the CFC safeguarding checklist
- Nominate Designated Safeguarding Persons (DSPs)
- Host a UNICEF UK-facilitated briefing for DSPs



Baseline Study

A **baseline study** is completed against which impact will be monitored and evaluated, by, for example:

- Disseminating a survey to children, young people and professionals
- Speaking to children and young people at workshops or focus groups
- Looking at existing data



Communications

The partnership with UNICEF UK has been announced and a **communications** plan is in place to increase local knowledge of the programme:

- Include CFC in the council's annual communications plan
- Draft and submit a standalone CFC communications plan
- Publicly launch the programme
- Offer opportunities for communications staff to join UNICEF UK training sessions

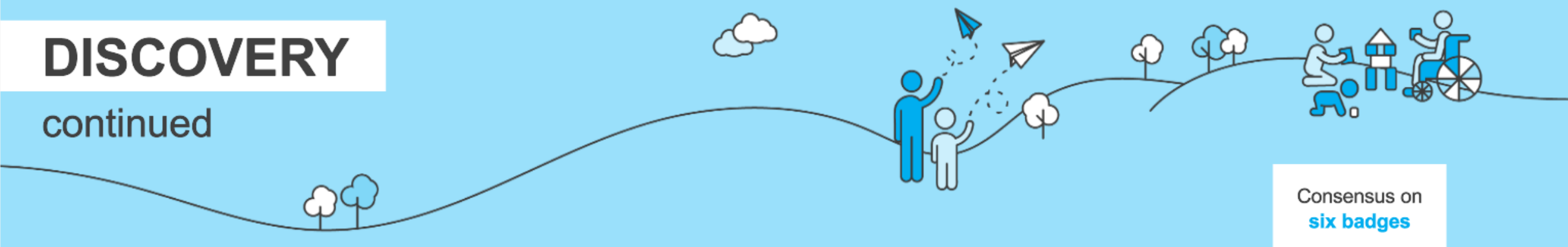


CHILD FRIENDLY
CITIES &
COMMUNITIES



DISCOVERY

continued



Consensus on
six badges



Participation

Local **participation and engagement** teams understand the programme and opportunities are in place for children and young people to influence its development:

- Host UNICEF UK training sessions for participation and engagement teams
- Map existing local participation structures and explore alternative models of youth participation
- Support a group/structure/network of children and young people to influence decision-making



Governance

A committed and informed **governance structure** is in place, including Child Friendly City or Community Champions:

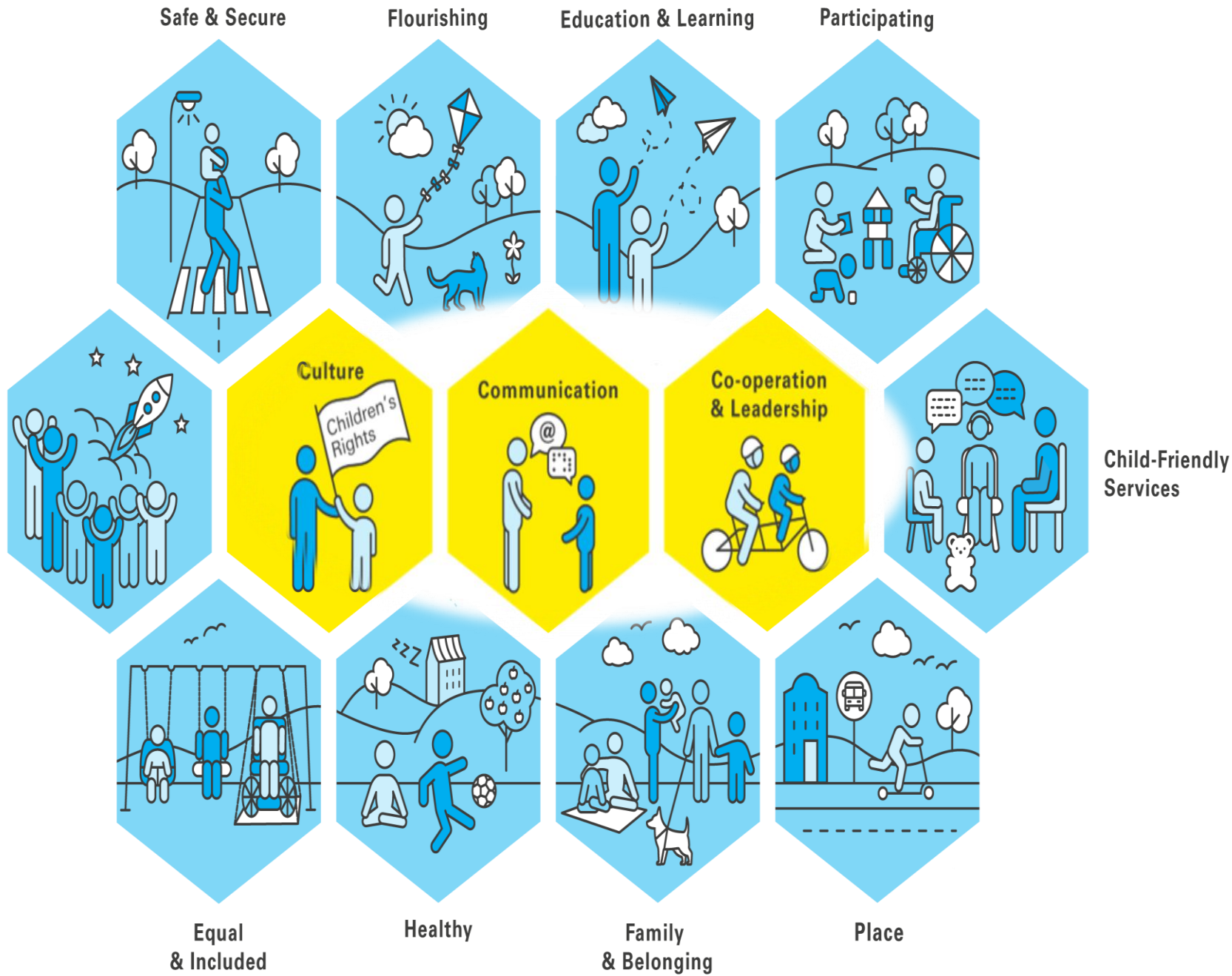
- Review the governance and coordination structure submitted at the Expression of Interest stage
- Ensure governance groups receive UNICEF UK child rights training
- Provide regular briefings for CFC Champions



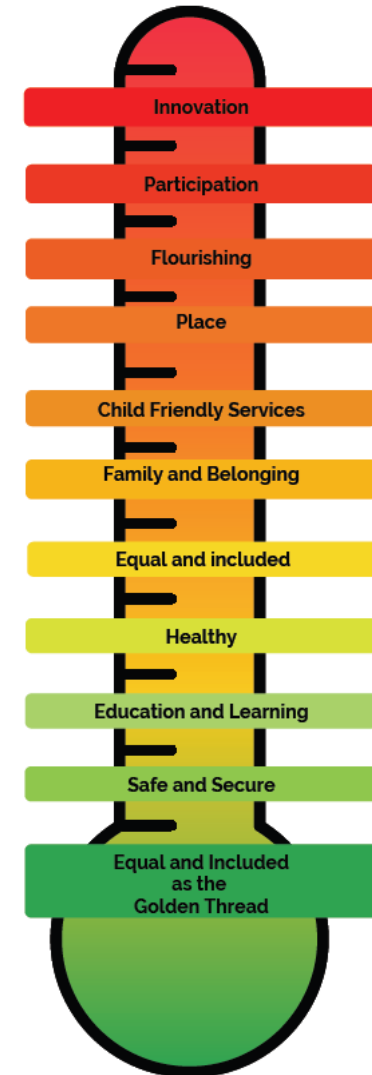
Badges

There is a clear, evidence-based understanding of the existing situation for children and their priorities, and agreement on which three thematic **badges** to focus on during the programme:

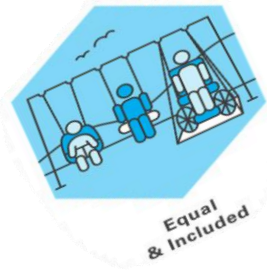
- Review existing local data
- Host UNICEF UK-facilitated Youth and Community Discovery Days
- Consult more widely to close any gaps
- Draft and submit a badge summary



BADGE TEMPERATURE CHECK



Adapted from Joseph Wolpe (1969). *The Practice of Behavior Therapy*



All CYP regardless of their background, culture, ability

- Feel welcome in the community
- Have the same opportunities to grow, learn, explore and have fun
- Are protected from discrimination

Education & Learning



Children and young people

- Are able to learn about the world around them in a safe, welcoming and respectful place.

(this includes children and young people who are not able to attend school)



Child-Friendly Services

Across Sandwell

- Libraries, leisure facilities, parks, health clinics and other services respect, welcome and support children and young people.
- Decisions about how to make services better at the design, commissioning and delivery stage are made with CYP



Children and young people

- Feel safe in their homes, neighbourhood and community
- Are able to trust the police, teachers and other adults.
- Can share ideas about improving safety in the community and speak out if they feel worried or unsafe.



Innovation

- The council finds new, different and creative ways to make sure all children in Sandwell enjoy their rights.



Place

Children and young people

- Can move freely in their neighbourhood and community
- Feel welcome in public spaces, shops and high streets.
- Feel connected to their neighbourhood and community.



Children and young people

- Can explore and spend time in parks, woodland and other open spaces.
- Are free to develop their interests, hobbies and talents.
- Can spend time with their friends.



Participating

Children and young people

- Can share their views and influence decisions that affect them.
- Can come together to discuss issues that matter to them.
- Can communicate their concerns and wishes to local leaders and other adults.



Healthy

Children and young people

- Have good physical, mental and emotional health
- Are supported if they have additional needs.
- Know how to stay healthy.



Family & Belonging

Families of all shapes and sizes

- Are supported to be together
- Can get help if they are struggling
- Can enjoy activities and have fun in Sandwell.

DISCOVERY PHASE - UPDATES

OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DEC / JAN	FEBRUARY
New Officer Steering Group meet and greet ✓	UK Parliament Week - Range of activities at Sandwell Council House and remotely (18 -22 Nov) ✓	Evaluation: analysis / review of emerging evidence ✓	Disseminate UNICEF survey to children and young people via schools and alternative provision
Safeguarding: Review CFC guidance and share, complete and return CFC checklist and nominate designated safeguarding persons (DSPs). Once nominated, hold a facilitated UNICEF UK briefing for DSPs ✓	Children & Young Persons Discovery Day - facilitated by UNICEF UK (19 Nov) CANCELLED DUE TO WEATHER ✗	Training: organise and host UNICEF UK supported training - children's rights in practice for children and young people and wider elected members ✗	Agree on robust youth governance framework and complete desk top analysis of participation mapping exercise.
Baseline study: Review existing data (Public Health to be part of this analysis) ✓	Disseminate UNICEF survey to children and young people via schools and alternative provision ✗	Participation: Map existing local youth participation governance ✓	Remote Discovery Packs distributed across schools and partners - including wider discovery activity for under-represented groups
Disseminate UNICEF survey to staff to understand current awareness of children's rights CHALLENGE - Limited response ✓	Child Rights Impact Assessment Briefing (5 Nov) Learning from UNICEF UK experts and Nottingham focused on equality, diversity and inclusion ✓	Badges: Review existing local data and consult more widely to close any gaps ✓	Development of communication plan
Play Sufficiency Assessment – data analysis with Ludicology (9-10 Oct) DECISION - Dissemination of emerging themes ✓	Agree on Partnership Steering Group to inform development and delivery stage. ✗		
Partner & Community Launch event 'Discovery Day' (18 Oct) UNICEF UK facilitated badge discussion ✓	Governance: Prepare reports for Health and Wellbeing Accountable Board (4 Dec) and Reporting Board - Children and Families Strategic Partnership (12 Dec) DECISION- move sign off to June Cabinet ✗		
Disseminate partners survey CHALLENGE - Limited response ✓	Training: Organise UNICEF UK supported training – children's rights in practice for Senior Officers associated in policy and strategy development, Members Working Group, Officer Steering Group and Project Team ✓		

CHILD FRIENDLY SANDWELL - DISCOVERY PHASE



MARCH	APRIL
Rescheduled Schools Discovery Day	Reach consensus on Badges - strong evidence-based reasoning for decisions linked to consultation with children and young people.
Baseline study: Review existing data (Public Health to be part of this analysis)	Recommendations to Officer Steering Group, Member Working Group, Leadership Team, CAFSP, Health and Wellbeing Board, and Cabinet.
Disseminate UNICEF survey to staff to understand current awareness of children's rights	Agree on Partnership Steering Group to inform development and delivery stage. Identify partners to support development of action plans
Governance: Present update report for Children's Scrutiny 24 March 2025 and CaFSP Board	Reach consensus on Badges - strong evidence-based reasoning for decisions linked to consultation with children and young people.
Training: organise and host UNICEF UK supported training - children's rights in practice for children and young people and wider elected members	Planning: Complete Project Plan for Development Phase

CHILD FRIENDLY SANDWELL - DISCOVERY PHASE

