

Girls' Rights Champion

[Plan International UK has called for a new and urgent focus on girls and their lives through a Girls' Rights Champion in local authorities.](#)

Background

Plan International UK's report 'The State of Girls' Rights in the UK' shines a spotlight on girls rights here at home, showing us that being young and female in the United Kingdom comes with specific challenges – challenges that today seem greater than ever.

We discover that a girl's location is critical: Middlesbrough is named the worst place in England and Wales to be a girl, whilst Waverly, Surrey is ranked as the best- as somewhere girls are likelier to fully enjoy their rights based on life expectancy, child poverty, reproductive health and educational outcomes.

In London, our data shows us that Barking and Dagenham is the worst place to be a girl whilst Richmond upon Thames is the best place. In Wales, the data says, Cardiff and Merthyr Tydfil are the worst places to be a girl whilst Monmouthshire is the best.

Why create a Girls' Rights Champion?

We know this conversation must be led by girls. They are the experts in their own lives, and so must have the chance to work with politicians, parents, schools and policymakers to bring about the changes they wish to see in the local area they live in. Our research shines a light on the daily discrimination, harassment, violence and unfair expectations girls live with. The people making decisions that impact girls' daily lives, their education, health, skills and services, are in local authorities. They are best placed to make positive change for girls.

Creating a Girls' Rights Champion would shed light on the current work the council is undertaking to better the situation for women and girls in the local area. It would also provide better thinking and ideas of dealing with the challenges by bringing the voices of local women and young girls into policy making in a formal setting.

Making History

The Girls' Rights Champion role is a historic one of a kind position.



2018 is a truly historical year as we celebrate 100 years of women's suffrage. What better way to mark this momentous occasion than to put future women voters, girls, at the heart of every local authority. This has yet to be widely taken up at elected level, nationally, regionally or locally. We are calling on elected members across the UK, to create their first Girls' Rights Champion role for their local area, using this concept note.

On the 8th of March 2018 Islington Council became the first UK Local Authority in history to announce the creation of a Women and Girls' Rights Champion at the Local Authority level, based on this concept note. Islington Council has understood the need to create change for young women and girls, by bringing their voices into the policy making process.

Role Purpose

Plan International UK is calling for Local authorities to create Girls' Rights Champions to promote girls' rights, ensure girls are listened to and their needs are taken into account.

Champions are needed to scrutinise budgets and data at a local level to make sure local authorities are delivering the services girls need. The purpose of the Girls' Rights Champion is to act as a positive focus for the local community at elected Member level on the impact of Government decisions, both local and national, on young women and girls who were born, live and work in the Local Authority Area.

1. The Champion will work with Executive Members, existing structures, and bodies within the council to bring about a new focus on women and girls, bringing in local community organisations, residents and women and girls themselves so their voices in policy that impacts their lives can be heard.
2. The Champion will publicly drive decisions and activities of the Local Council on women and girls in the Local Authority area.
3. The Champion will feed their learning and calls for action into the work of their local MP
4. The Champion will take an active part in the Girls' Rights Champions Network (GRCN)



Three steps to get Girls' Rights on the agenda locally

We are calling for Girls' Rights Champions to:

1. **Support the implementation of a local Violence Against Women and Girls strategy**, if there isn't one in place. Where there is a strategy in place, support cross departmental working on it. Most importantly, ensure it looks at age and gender so it focusses on girls. Are girls reporting violence and harassment? Girls told us they don't feel safe on the streets, in the classroom or online. Does your strategy reflect this and listen to girls?
2. **Encourage the implementation of better data collection** on issues impacting girls at Local Authority level.
3. **Create a Girls' Committee**, where alongside policy makers and local organisations, girls can tell their local authority and Champion what works for them in the local area.

Cost effective

The position is designed to be filled by an elected member to the Local Authority at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) by fellow elected members. **Therefore, there is no cost to the Council.** Local Authorities could also look to support the activities of the Champion by applying to [The Women's Vote Centenary Grant Scheme](#), which is a £1.5 million government fund that will support local and community groups across England in celebrating the centenary of women gaining the right to vote.

Girls' Rights Champions Network

Once an elected member has been appointed and Plan International UK has been informed. Local Authorities will then be invited to join the first of a kind Girls' Rights Champions Network (GRCN), which is chaired by Plan International UK. It will bring together Girls' Rights Champions from across the country, to discuss ways of working together and best practice.

Contact

For more Information and support in appointing a Girls' Rights Champion contact us [here](#).