

HOW TO CHANGE THE WORLD

A guide to social action for pupils in Cardiff

This is Gwenno, she's a children's rights champion and wants to make Cardiff a better place to grow up. In this guide we'll follow her social action journey!



There are over 50,000 children in Cardiff, you all have rights and you are all important. In Wales, all the adults in your school, the council, and the government have a responsibility make sure your rights are met.

Your thoughts, ideas, and voices matter. We made this guide so you can use your voice to make your community, country, and the world a better place. By sharing your ideas and speaking to the right people, you can make big changes locally and globally.

If you to make your school fairer, your community cleaner, make a change for pupils in Wales, or spread a message worldwide you have what it takes to make things better.

Here's how we're going to do it:

1. Figure out what needs to change
2. Ensure that as many people as possible are aware of the problems you're tackling.
3. Find out who the decision-makers are and take action
4. Tell the team at [Child Friendly Cardiff](#) about everything you're doing!

TEACHER NOTE

This guide has been designed to sit alongside and enhance [UNICEF's youth advocacy toolkit](#) through a local context. This colour yellow will highlight direct links to exercises in the youth advocacy toolkit.



SPACE

We want to encourage you to express your voice more

VOICE

You'll learn new ways to express your ideas

INFLUENCE

We'll help you get the appropriate response from adults

AUDIENCE

Find out who are the people with the power to make change

Hello it's the Child Friendly Cardiff team here! it's our job to put childrens rights at the heart of our city. We're here to help you and want to know about everything that you're doing!

Keep us in the loop by tagging us [#childfriendlycardiff](#) or send us an email at childfriendlycardiff@cardiff.gov.uk

Step 1: Build your story

Every big change starts with a small idea. In this part, we'll help you build your story. What changes do you want to see? What ideas do you have? It's your story, and it's time to tell it!

What's the Problem?

Look around you — what isn't working well? What could be better? Think about where your rights might be in danger. It might be something at school, in your neighbourhood, or a place you visit often. Maybe your pupil voice groups can help. Feel free to ask your friends.

UNICEF Toolkit Exercise - explore

This section will help you to figure out what you want to campaign to change, you'll need to explore a problem or issue affecting you or young people in your community.

EXAMPLE

Gwenno is growing up in a world that's getting hotter and hotter, everywhere she looks is pollution and rubbish. The adults in her life mean well but she can't see change!

Imagine a better world

Now, imagine how things could be better. In an ideal world, this problem might not exist... why? Sometimes problems can be simple, sometimes more difficult. What are the causes that have led to this? Think about everyone involved.

UNICEF Toolkit Exercise - think

This section will help you create a simple plan to reach your goals by setting clear steps, identifying who can help, turning problems into solutions, and ensuring your actions align with your vision.

Gwenno wants to see a cleaner community, with less rubbish, less cars, and less waste. She wants to look after nature and for adults to care about the future they are passing on.

What's the Plan?

Great ideas can start small but think big! Whether it's a chat with a friend or a big project to change your community, every action counts. We recommend using the [Advocacy Plan from UNICEF](#) and [sending it to us](#) when complete!

Can it be done?: Look at your ideas think about what feels right for you. Are they big or small? Do they cost money, or are they free? What can you start doing today, and what might take a bit more time?

Think About Impact: Every idea has potential. Whether you're raising awareness with a creative project or talking directly to decision-makers, think about how your actions can make a difference.

Who Can Help?: You're not in this alone. Whether it's your teacher, [Child Friendly Cardiff](#), or your local councillor, there are people ready to support your efforts. Sometimes, just starting a conversation can be a powerful step towards change.

Toolkit Exercise - Act

This section will teach you how to take action for your campaign. You'll learn how to create clear messages, choose the best ways to share your ideas, and handle any challenges. You'll discover different tactics like using social media, writing letters, and organising events to make people aware of your cause and gain their support. This way, you can effectively spread your message and achieve your goals.

Gwenno has lots of creative ideas to make her voice heard, with support from adults in her school and community she can be a champion for change! On the next page we'll look at some of her ideas.



Write to your local councillor:
No matter what you're doing, your local councillor should want to hear about it. Start a conversation get them involved, they represent you!



"if we need help we can write to child friendly cardiff"



Organise a Litter Pick with parents
Direct action to clean up local areas, raises environmental awareness.

Ask for Vegan School Lunches
They reduce environmental impact of our school meals

Leaflet Campaign in Local Shops
partner with businesses to spread awareness on how to look after our environment

Letter to local councillor asking for more bike storage
Promotes active travel and reduces carbon footprint

Step 2: Bring it to Life

Now that you have your story and some ideas on how to make a change, it's time to bring those ideas to life! In this part, we'll follow Gwenno and look at different actions she and her classmates came up with. Remember, these are just examples you can choose any topic and actions you like.

Each action has its own impact, and together, they can create a big difference.



Peaceful Protest for Climate Action
Draws public and media attention to climate issues, maybe we could ask other schools to join us



Plan a climate themed school fair
This could teach students and parents about sustainability in a fun way

School energy saving programme
Reduces energy use, saves the school money and teaches good habits

"would the leader of the council come?"

Write and perform a play about climate change
Educate and inspire action through creativity.

Make a sculpture from plastic bottles
More creative way to share our message that we're worried about litter.

Start a Senedd petition to ban single-use plastic
reduces plastic waste.

Tree planting project
Start local then try to get the government involved!

"We should invite local decision makers and community leaders"



"Maybe a local business will help display our art?"



Be Flexible: Your plan might change as you learn more, and that's okay! The best plans adapt. Keep thinking about what works, what doesn't, and how you can move forward.

Action Comes in Many Forms: Whether it's a poster, a poem, a presentation, or a petition, your voice is powerful. Use it in the way that feels right for you, and don't be afraid to try different or multiple approaches.

Share Your Projects: Ask your teacher post pictures or videos on your school's social media. When you post it, use #ChildFriendlyCardiff so we can share your great work! Also, mention your local councillor in your post!

Step 3: Meet local Decision makers and take action!

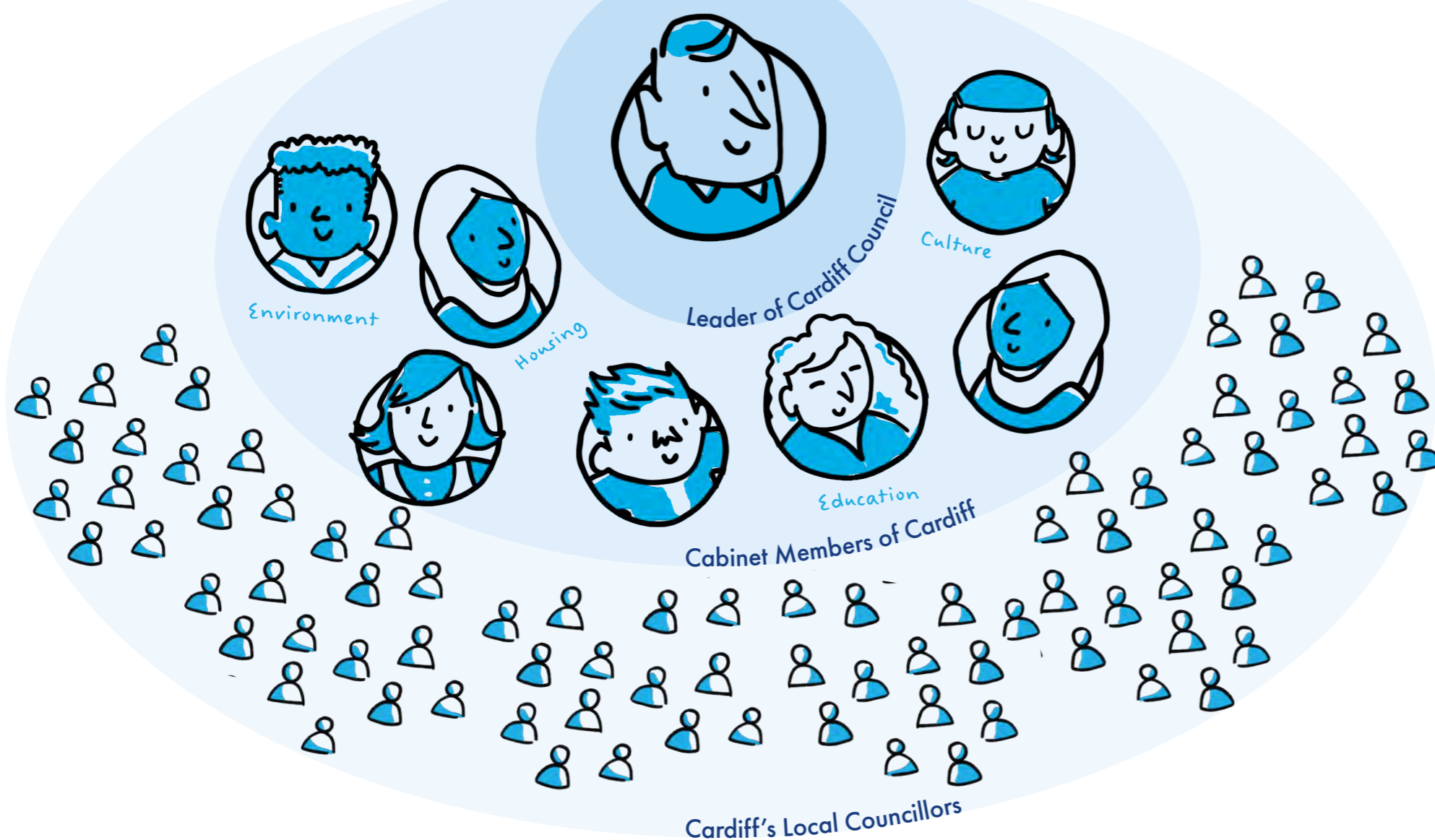
In Cardiff, there are many adults with important jobs that help make decisions affecting our lives. This part of our guide will introduce you to these people and explain a little bit about what they do.

Cardiff Council a big team of thousands of people that takes care of our city, Cardiff. Just like your school has teachers and staff who help make sure everything runs smoothly, Cardiff Council does that for our whole city. They cover lots of areas, including, culture, education, housing, transport, helping families, and the environment.

The council is run by thousands of employees but led by "councillors" these councillors are normal people elected by the public. They choose the direction and make the important decisions.

If your problem is about things going on in Cardiff, then contacting a councillor is a good idea! But which ones...

Cardiff Council Structure



Sometimes it's good to write to your local councillor AND the relevant cabinet member, because change that's good for your community is probably good for other communities in Cardiff

The Leader and Cabinet Members:

The Leader of the council is elected by all councillors. The leader then chooses a group of other councillors to look after important things like climate change, education and transport - they are 'the cabinet'. They help shape the councils plans and aims that affect the whole city.

Find out who they are here!

If your problem is about something that affects all children in Cardiff then writing to the right cabinet member might help bring about change!

Cardiff's Local Councillors:

These are the people who help look after our local areas. They have been chosen by local residents during local elections and are the first person to contact with local problems and concerns. In Wales, councillors vote on important council plans - the council is led by them. Find out who your local councillors are, write to them and invite them to your school!

If the problem is smaller and mainly affects people in your area writing to your local councillor might be a good place to start!

Other Important Decision Makers

There are some people in Cardiff whose job is to represent the views of our city in both Wales and across the whole UK. These decision makers work in the Welsh Parliament (Senedd) and the UK Parliament. They help make big decisions that affect not just Cardiff, but all of Wales or even the entire United Kingdom.

What is the Senedd?

The Senedd is the Welsh Parliament. It is made of a group of people called Members of the Senedd, or MSs, who are elected to make decisions and create laws for Wales. The Senedd takes care of important things that affect all of Wales, such as schools, healthcare, and the environment. They make laws in Wales that can change how things are done in your community and across the country.



If your problem affects children across all of Wales, like rules about schools or health services, a Member of the Senedd (MS) can help. They work on big decisions that affect everyone in Wales, not just Cardiff.

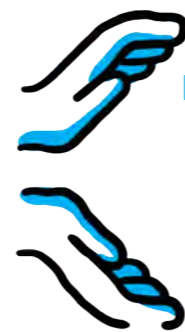
What is the UK Parliament?

The UK Parliament is the place where decisions are made for the whole of the United Kingdom, which includes Wales, England, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. It's made up of elected people called Members of Parliament (MPs), who help create laws and decide how to spend money on important things like health, defence, and the environment.



If your problem is about something that affects all parts of the UK, such as laws about pollution, transport, and safety. Find out who your local MP is and get in touch!

Take Direct Action!



Remember, talking to decision makers isn't the only way to make a difference:

Make Changes Yourself: Start a project, clean up your park, or plant trees.

Work with Local Businesses and Community Groups: Sometimes, the support you need is just around the corner. Partner with local businesses or join community groups to for extra help.



Feedback from adults...

When you share your ideas with decision makers like local councillors, Members of the Senedd, or Members of Parliament, it's important to remember that they may not always be able to help or agree with your suggestions. Sometimes, they have to make decisions based on other information or responsibilities.

But don't be discouraged! Even if they can't help or don't agree, they will still listen to your voice. The most important thing is that you took the time to speak up and share your ideas. Every time you do, you're helping to make a difference. It's all part of how democracy works—different people have different opinions, and sometimes it takes time to find the best solutions.

Step 4: Tell us all about it!

Child Friendly Cardiff are here to support you! Tell us about what you have planned so we can share it with everyone! If you want help we can connect you with the right decision-makers and help make your voice louder.

Figure out who to speak to: If you're not sure who can help we'll point you in the right direction.

Children's Rights Advocacy: We use the power of children's rights to support your initiatives and ensure decision-makers listen to what you need.

Share Your Actions: Let us know what you're doing. Whether it's a social project or a small initiative, we can help share your story. This can inspire other pupils, together you are part of a childrens rights movement for change! Tag us with #childfriendlycardiff, send us a message, or include us in emails using childfriendlycardiff@cardiff.gov.uk

