

Children
at the Table



Campaign Pack

Young People's Campaign
Engagement Pack



What is children at the table?

- **Committing to an ambitious cross-government strategy and outcomes framework to drive improvements for babies, children and young people.**
- **A new approach to decision-making that places children's needs, wishes and outcomes at its heart, involving children and young people every step of the way.**
- **Investing more of our national wealth in improving the lives of babies, children and young people and spending strategically on early intervention and prevention.**



What is children at the table?

The upcoming general election and a new incoming Government present a key opportunity to address the urgent issues facing babies, children and young people today. With coordinated prioritisation across Government, a commitment to listen to the voices of children, and the right policy interventions and investment, all children can have the chance to thrive.



Activity 1.1

YOUR VOICE IN THE CAMPAIGN



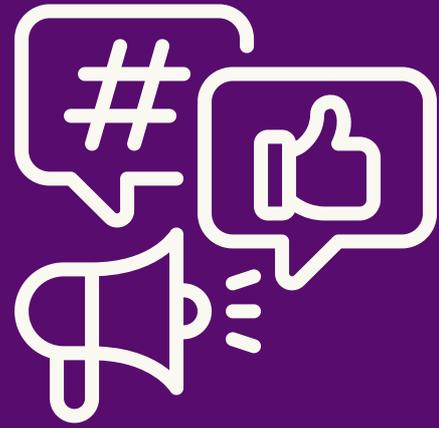
On a separate piece of paper (or you can use the template below) make your handprint - you could draw around your hand and colour it in, use paint, or any other material of your choice.

Inside your handprint, write or draw a message to the government, saying why it's so important to listen to children and young people. This will be added to our giant tablecloth that will be seen by MPs.



Activity 1.2

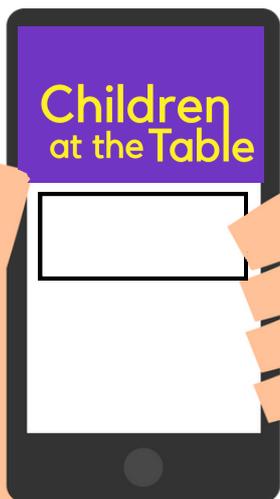
YOUR VOICE IN THE CAMPAIGN



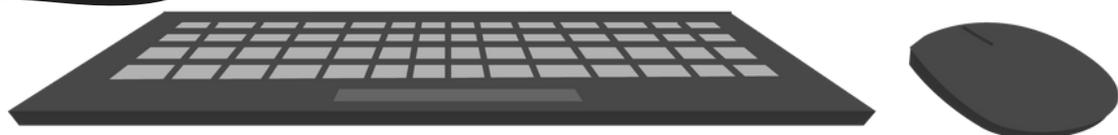
We want your voice to be at the heart of the campaign.

If you want to get involved on social media, post your thoughts and hopes for the campaign using the hashtag

#ChildrenAtTheTable



Why not take to social media using #ChildrenAtTheTable and create a 30 second - 1 min video that shares why you think it's so important for politicians to listen to young people and include them in decision making"



Activity 2.1

What's Important to you?



Think about things that are important to you. In the box below, write, draw, or represent them in whatever way works for you.

Activity 2.2

Conversation starters



Cut out the cards below and put them in a hat or bag. In a group, take it in turns to pull a card out of the bag and have a conversation about the topic. Use some of the suggested questions if you are struggling. Have someone make notes while you talk to capture the conversation.

Mental Health

What are the barriers to young people accessing mental health support?

What impacts young peoples mental health in a positive/ negative way?

Do you think young people learn enough about mental health to be able to identify early signs they might be struggling?

Poverty

Why might young people worry about money?

Does money create disadvantages to accessing future opportunities?

How is the cost of living crisis impacting young people?

Social Care

Do you think young people know where to get help from social care for themselves or their family? Would they feel confident that they would get the support they need?

What are the barriers to accessing social care support?

Education & Employment

Are there enough opportunities for young people to gain employment?

What are the barriers to getting a good education?

Activity 2.3

A young person's journey



Read the story below of Kelly's journey, consider what interventions may have helped her and what the government could do to better support other young people in situations like Kelly's.

Kelly's Mum was 16 when she was born. She had no support from her family and therefore could not work because she could not afford child care.

When Kelly went to school her Mum still struggled to find work because of her lack of experience. They struggled to afford food and Kelly often went to school hungry, so she struggled to concentrate in her lessons.

As she got older, Kelly began being bullied because she did not have nice clothes and didn't always look clean and tidy because they often did not have hot water at home.

Kelly started skipping school to avoid the bullies, and instead found ways to make money for her and her Mum.

Because she had missed so much school, Kelly failed most of her GCSEs. She therefore did not go on to college at 16.

Kelly struggled to find work due to her lack of qualifications but could not claim benefits due to her age. Her Mum could no longer afford to look after her so asked her to leave.

Kelly moved in with her boyfriend and shortly afterwards fell pregnant. She received no support from her Mum and continued to struggle for money since she could not work while caring for her newborn son.

Activity 2.4

Three things



If you could change any 3 things about the way the UK runs, what would you do?

Think about people who might need more support, or systems that you don't think work very well at the moment. Consider some of the issues you might see in your local area.

1

2

3

UK politics

Learn more about UK politics and find some further resources



The UK Parliament is made up of three parts:

- the House of Commons
- the House of Lords
- the Monarch (AKA King Charles)

Parliament represents our interests and makes sure they are considered by the Government.

The House of Commons is where Members of Parliament (MPs) meet. There are 650 MPs and they are elected by us, the people.

Each MP represents a different part of the country, called a constituency. A constituency can be a town, part of a large city or a large rural area. To make it fair, constituencies are designed to have about the same number of people in each one, so that MPs each represent around the same number of people.

MPs represent a political party.

General elections usually take place every five years, although the Government can decide to hold an early election if they feel it is necessary, and as long as two thirds of MPs agree. (The next election will be some time this year.)

Before an election, parties publish a manifesto to let voters know what they stand for.

Scan here to read more about UK politics



Scan here to watch a video



UK politics

Learn more about UK politics and find some further resources



The UK, like many other countries, is a **democracy**.

This means we can vote for who makes the laws and runs the country.

The House of Commons is made up of the MPs we vote for in general elections, which usually take place every five years.

MPs represent their constituents – the people in the area where they were elected – in the UK Parliament.

The leader of the party with the most MPs usually becomes the Prime Minister after a general election.

MPs represent all the people in their constituency, even the ones who voted for a different candidate.

The Prime Minister chooses the other members of the Government.

The Government makes decisions about new laws and about how the country should be run.

MPs are elected by the voters in their constituency, to represent their interests and concerns in the House of Commons.

MPs raise issues affecting their constituents by making speeches, questioning government ministers, or by openly supporting and highlighting particular campaigns which their constituents feel strongly about.

Ministers are members of government who are in charge of a certain department (e.g. the Department of Education, the Department of Health, or the Ministry of Defence).



Activity 3.1

Design your perfect political party



In a team or by yourself, design your ideal political party. Use some of the prompts below or get creative and freestyle. You could design posters, badges, even write your own manifesto!

It could be anything, check out some of the existing political parties for inspiration on what to do (or what not to do!)

Party name: _____

A catchy slogan: _____

Logo:

What does your party stand for?

What are your main aims, focusses, and missions?

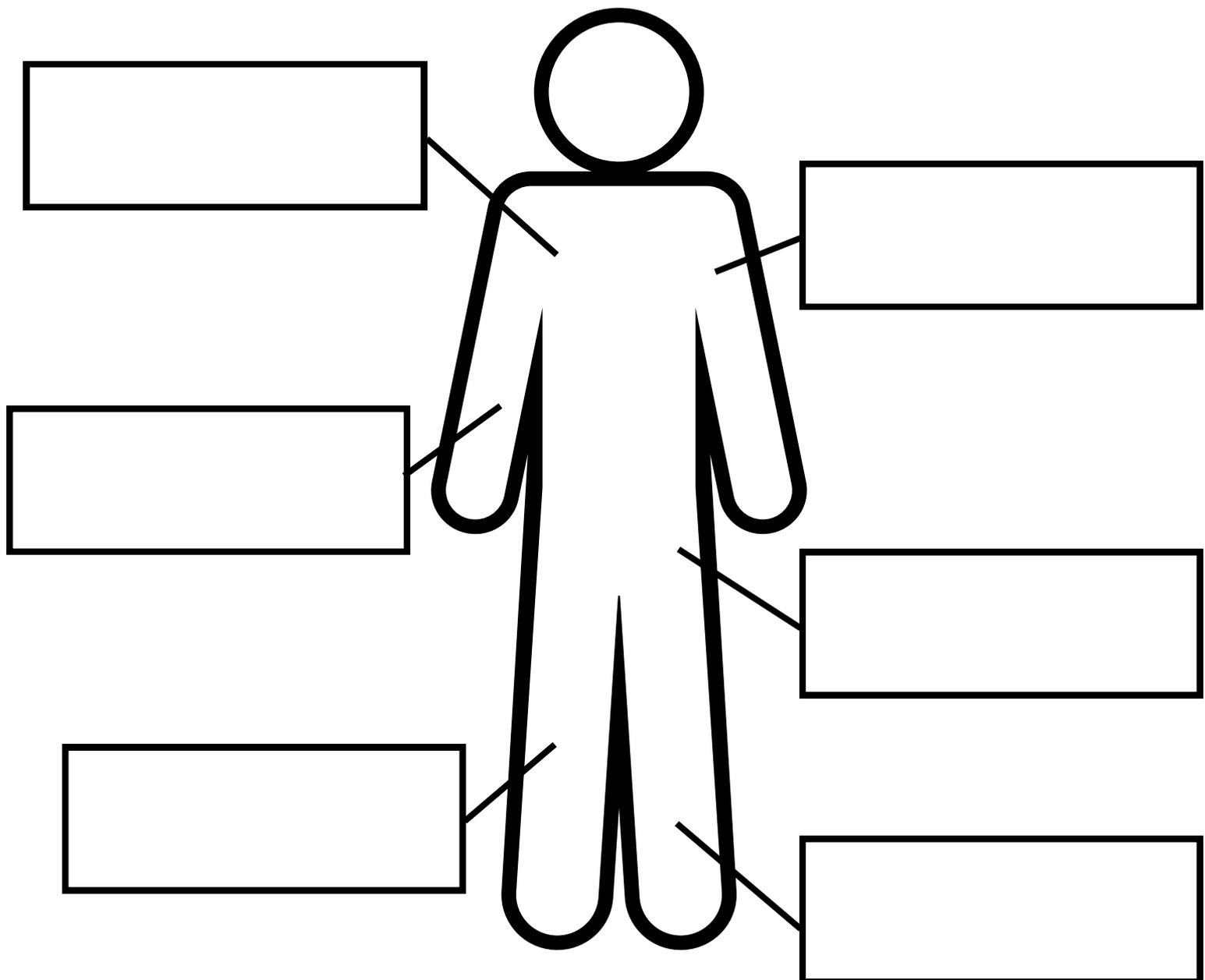
Activity 3.2

Design your MP



Who's going to be your MP? They could be based on you, someone you know, or you could make up a whole new person.

Your MP represents you. What should they be like? You could use the template below to draw and label them, or draw your own person. Tell us what they're like, what do they believe in, what are their strengths?

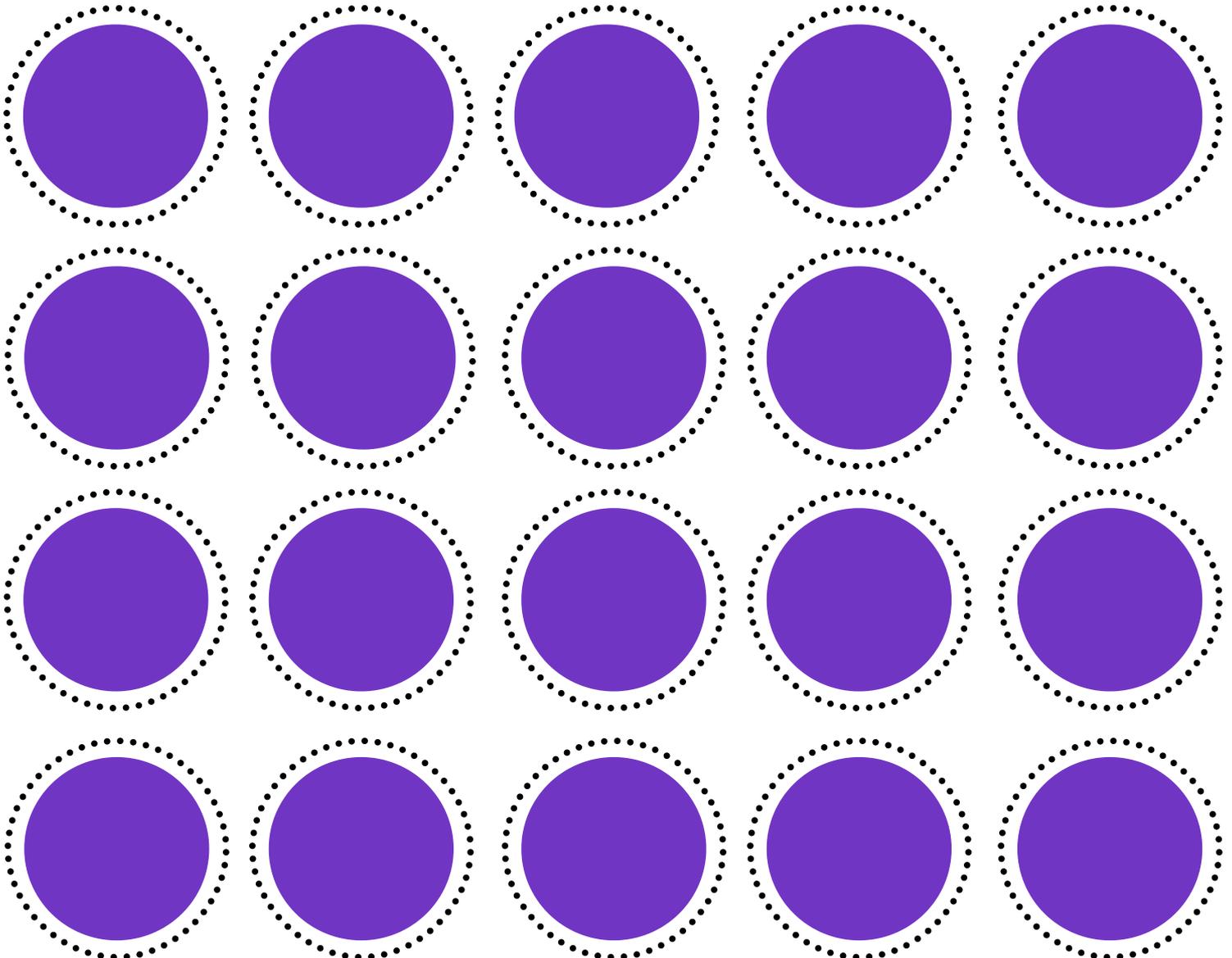
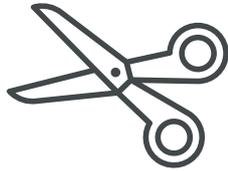


Activity 3.4

Allocate your budget



Now your party is in power, it's time to allocate your budget. Cut out the counters below (or find some you already have). Each counter represents a percentage of your budget. On the next page you will find a list of areas, you must choose how much of your budget you will allocate to each one. However, each one must have at least one counter allocated to it.



Pensions & Benefits

Money for older people and people who need extra help.

Homelessness & Social Housing

Homes for people who have nowhere to live.

Social Care

Help for people who need care or a bit of extra support for many reasons.

Defence

The people and groups who keep our country safe.

Culture, Media, and Sport

Things people enjoy; news, stories, tv, football, etc.

Education

Schools, colleges, universities, and other places people go to learn.

Emergency Services

Ambulances, police, and fire fighters.

Overseas Aid

Money for people in other countries who need help because of war or natural disasters like earthquakes.

Health Care

Hospitals, doctors, nurses and all the people who take care of our health.

Public Transport

Buses, trains and trams for us all to get around.

Science, Innovation, & Technology

People who make new technology and learn about the world.

Home Office & Immigration

People who make sure things are safe and fair, including who comes to live in the UK.



Activity 4.1

Find your MP



Find your MP - MPs and Lords - UK Parliament

Enter your postcode, location, MPs name or job title to find the name and contact details of your local MP.

parliament.uk

Click on the picture above or scan the QR code to find out who your local MP is.

You could do some research into their background and try to find out what their main interests/focuses are.



Activity 4.2

Write to your MP



You are your Member of Parliament's 'constituents' and it is their job to represent you in Parliament. Most MPs are very interested in what young people have to say. They depend on constituents like you to tell them about issues and what is important to you. Your letter could have a real impact and may well be the most interesting one that they receive! You could send this as an email, or a physical letter. You should find your MPs address/email online.

Below is a suggested structure for your letter along with key points to include in your letter. The points are a guide but it is important that you use your own words. MPs and their staff receive a large number of letters every day. An original letter sent by a passionate young person is far more powerful than a template letter that is 'copied and pasted'.

How to address your MP

The way to address an MP in a letter (often called the 'salutation') for most 'backbench' MPs is simply Mrs/Ms/Mr. In your letter's 'sign-off' you can use 'Yours sincerely'.

Introduce yourself

Introduce yourself as a young person that works with whichever charity supports you (you could mention which school/ college you attend) and mention you are based in the MP's constituency

Say that you have been getting involved with the 'children at the table' campaign and you are passionate about putting children and young people at the heart of the next government.

Write to your MP



Tell your MP about the situation and why you care about it

Points you could include (please see key points page for more).

- Around 4.2 million children in the UK today are growing up in poverty. One million children are living in extreme poverty.
- 1.4 million children are estimated to have a mental health condition in England, of which only 48% received at least one appointment with NHS children and young people mental health services.

What to ask your MP

These are three suggestions of questions you could ask in your letter.

1. Raise a written or oral question in Parliament.

Example: With rising numbers of children living in extreme poverty will the government invest more of our national wealth in improving the lives of babies, children and young people and spending strategically on early intervention and prevention.

1. To support and share the campaign on social media.
2. To meet with your youth group/service to discuss the campaign further.

Activity 4.2 (CONT.)

Write to your MP



If you're struggling you could use this template as a guide...

(Type your Parliamentary Candidate's address here).

(Type your Home Address here). (Type the date)

Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss (Insert MPs name),

My name is *(Insert your name here)*, **and I am a young person living in** *(insert your town)*. **I am a part of** *(insert name of your group or school)* **and have been working with them as part of the Children at The Table campaign.**

Currently in the UK, 4.2 million children are living in poverty *(here you could say how you feel about this, or how it is affecting you personally)*. Include some more points you feel passionate about from the following page.

I would appreciate your support with this campaign and would ask that you *(insert one of the suggestions from above or something else.)*

Yours sincerely,
(Type your name here).

Activity 4.3

Arrange a meeting with your MP



If you are feeling particularly confident, you could try to arrange a meeting with your MP to discuss the campaign/your experiences of being a young person in your area.

You could use the template below to write to them. If you're successful in setting up a meeting, ask your parent/guardian/youth worker or any other trusted adult to help you prepare for the meeting and plan what you might talk about.

(Type your Parliamentary Candidate's address here).

(Type your Home Address here). (Type the date)

Dear *(Insert your Parliamentary Candidate name here),*

My name is *(Insert your name here), and I am a young person living in (insert your town). I'm writing to you to ask if I could arrange a meeting with yourself to discuss a number of issues that I and other young people feel passionately about.*

I would like to meet to discuss the Children at The Table campaign. This campaign calls for children to be put at the heart of the next government.

One of the topics that I am particularly interested in discussing with you is *(insert here).*

I would appreciate any time that you have available to discuss these issues.

Yours sincerely,
(Type your name here).

Activity 4.3 (CONT.)

Arrange a meeting with your MP



You may wish to discuss some of the following questions during your meeting...

How do you support young people in your area?

How do you listen to children and young people?

How do you ensure representation within the people you are speaking to?

How do you make sure that children and young people with additional needs are part of the conversation?

Do you support lowering the voting age to 16? Why?

If you could make one change today, what would it be?

What aspirations do you have for children and young people?

What made a difference for you growing up?

Minimum wage for young people.

Key findings

From the report



You may also wish to include some of these points in your letter or discuss them in a meeting with your MP.

Babies, children and young people have been overlooked by policy makers for too long and the impact is clear: more children are living in poverty, they face a growing mental health crisis, and are waiting too long to receive urgently needed support. There are rising numbers of children persistently absent from school, more children being impacted by abuse, exploitation and online harm, and a greater number of children being taken into care due to reaching a crisis point in their lives. Children facing disadvantage are falling further behind their peers in education, health and wellbeing outcomes.

Key findings

From the report



more than
80,000
children were looked
after by local
authorities

1 in 6
children aged 7-
16 has a
probable mental
health disorder

32%
of children referred
for mental health
support were turned
away.

4.2
million
children are
growing up in
poverty.

In 2023, the UK spent
8.57%
of its GDP on babies,
children and young
people

Children from
Black, Asian,
and minority
ethnic groups
make up
48%

Each year, child poverty
costs the UK
£39
billion

more than children were
640 referred to
thousand children's social
care in 2023

Young people from families on
the lowest incomes are
4 1/2 times more likely
to experience severe mental
health problems.

The most deprived 10% of
children are nearly
twice as likely
to die as the most advantaged 10%
of children.

HOW TO FORM AN ARGUMENT



Here are some ideas to consider to form an impactful argument and get your message across adequately.

Know your purpose

Before you start writing or speaking, you need to have a clear idea of what you want to achieve with your message. What is your main goal? Who is your target audience? What action do you want them to take? How do you want them to feel?

Having a clear purpose will help you focus your message and avoid unnecessary or irrelevant information.

Use the inverted pyramid

The inverted pyramid is a classic technique for organizing your message in a way that captures attention and delivers value.

It means that you start with the most important information, followed by the supporting details, and end with the least important or optional information. This way, you can ensure that your audience gets the main point quickly.

Be concise and simple

One of the biggest challenges in communication is to avoid clutter and confusion. Too many words, jargon, acronyms, or complex sentences can make your message hard to understand and remember.

To be concise and simple, you need to use plain language, short sentences, active voice, and clear transitions. You also need to edit and proofread your message to eliminate any errors or redundancies.

HOW TO FORM AN ARGUMENT



Use stories and examples

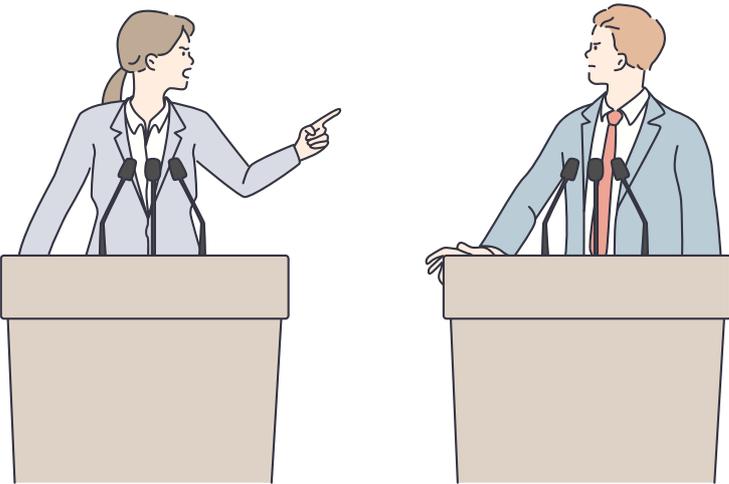
Stories and examples are powerful tools to make your message more engaging, memorable, and persuasive. They can help you illustrate your points, connect with your audience, and appeal to their emotions.

Stories and examples should be relevant, specific, and credible. They should also be brief and focused on the main message.

Get feedback and revise

The final step in making your message clear and compelling is to get feedback and revise it. Feedback can help you identify any gaps, errors, or misunderstandings in your message. It can also help you improve your tone, style, and delivery.

You can get feedback from friends, family, teachers or youth workers who can offer constructive and honest opinions. You could also test your message on a sample of your target audience and measure its impact and effectiveness.



SEND US YOUR WORK!



We'd love to see the activities you complete, you can share copies of worksheets, or photos of you completing the activities to with any of the charities on social media, using the hashtag #ChildrenAtTheTable



@actnforchildren



@actionforchildrenuk



@barnardos



@barnardos_uk



@ncbtweets



@national_childrens_bureau



@NSPCC



@nspcc_official



@childrensociety



@thechildrenssociety



Or, send your work to



childrenatthetable@gmail.com

