



# TAKE CARE TOOLKIT



Save the Children



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This toolkit was written by Kelsey Smith, Laurie Gayle and Becca Lawson.

Creating this resource would not have been possible without the invaluable input, feedback and support from colleagues at Save the Children UK and from the schools, community members and especially the children involved in the Take Care project.

Thank you to our staff team for their work and support in the delivery of, and learning from, this project: Alpa Lad-OConnell, Amanda Maz, Anna Rahilly, Becca Lawson, Caroline Schofield, Charlie Chapman, Emmet Norris, Graham Clarke, Heather Markin, Jamie Hilton, Lissa Bridge, Melanie Simmonds, Paula Newcombe, Rebecca Thomas and Stefanie Keir.

We would like to give special thanks to Virginia Howells and Rona Blackwood for their support in the setup of this project. Our thanks also go to our consortium partners in the CUIDAR group. And thanks to Sarah Emberson and all at the Wildfire Collective for the production of the report including graphics.

# INTRODUCTION



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## OVERVIEW: WHAT'S THE STORY?

### Emergencies affect communities and children across the UK

Save the Children has global experience in supporting children in emergency contexts, and during 2016-2017 we have been working with children in the UK to:

- help build children's resilience to disasters
- help children realise their right to be heard in decisions made that affect them
- help emergency planners and responders meet children and young people's needs more effectively, and have more robust emergency plans in place

**DISASTER MANAGEMENT SIMPLY CANNOT BE MEANINGFUL OR EFFECTIVE WITHOUT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S VOICES BEING HEARD.**

All too frequently in emergencies, children experience missed school; poor academic performance; delayed progress; failure to complete education; destruction of school buildings; loss of vital records; and a disrupted home environment. The pressures on children, young people and schools are often significant, yet infrequently addressed. Take Care is a European-wide project aiming to enhance the resilience of children and young people to disasters, and enable disaster responders to meet children and young people's needs more effectively.

### Collaborating with children builds their resilience

Collaborating with children and communities will help build children's resilience and ensure emergency plans are more **robust, inclusive, and fit for purpose in a localised context**. A growing body of evidence suggests that when children are given the opportunity to share their opinions and thoughts, it can significantly contribute to reducing their vulnerability before, during and after disasters. Evidence tells us:

- Evidence shows that there are mental health and wellbeing benefits arising from this involvement (Peek 2008; Anderson 2005; Mitchell, Tanner & Haynes 2009).
- Children introduce fresh and new ideas (Bolton & Neuwelt, 2014) and perceptions of the surrounding world. They can have a sophisticated understanding about disasters (Harwood et al. 2014).
- Children can be key players in designing and creating resources for their peers, such as educational tools, a disaster management school curriculum (including a school emergency response plan), disseminating warnings, preparedness measures and reaction capacities, and planning for the protection of the environment to their parents and the wider community (Ronan et al. 2015; Bolton & Neuwelt, 2014; Finnis et al. 2010).
- They are also good at analysing and communicating risk (Mitchell et al. 2008), sharing and contextualizing knowledge, building credibility and trust and persuading others to act (using media, theatre, concerts). Children and young people are excellent social networkers and community-builders: they are good at mobilizing people and resources (Geiselhart et al. 2008),
- Children and young people can also play an active role as informant first responders, engaging in search and rescue, providing food, participating in emergency activities (Sunal & Coleman, 2013; Fernández & Shaw, 2015).
- Children's participation can also be beneficial at recovery and rebuilding phases (Bartlett, 2008; Pine et al. 2015). Children's accounts have proved to be important to raise subtle and unconsidered questions and dimensions about the impact of disasters, such as who is actually affected by the disaster and how vulnerability is produced during the recovery process (Walker et al. 2012).

### Supporting children to find their voice

When we give children and young people the space to find their voice and the tools to amplify their opinions to an audience that includes decision-makers, we enable them to claim their rights and influence matters that affect their lives. This is what Take Care aims to achieve.

# TAKE CARE: A TOOLKIT



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## ABOUT TAKE CARE

### Background

Beginning in July 2015, this three-year project is a collaboration between Save the Children UK, Save the Children Italy, Lancaster University, the University of Thessaly, the Open University of Catalonia, and the University of Lisbon. It is funded by the European Union's H2020 fund. The project is designed to put children's voices and perspectives at the heart of emergency planning and disaster response in order to simultaneously build children's resilience to disasters and build a more robust framework for emergency planning and response.

In the UK, Save the Children worked with children aged 9-11 years across 8 sites and they completed a series of workshops about child rights, risks, global and local disasters, and what they and others should do in an emergency. In each project, the children created a communications tool that helped them share their knowledge and their feedback with local authorities, emergency services and community members. Children advised adults about how they feel and what they might need in an emergency, helping them to realise the children's knowledge, potential and their agency in emergencies. Save the Children then held a national event drawing out the conclusions and examples of good practice from the project thus far. In doing so, participants shared their learning with decision-makers and hoped to encourage others to take up more collaborative and participative approach in emergency planning and response in the UK. In 2018, the project concludes with the creation of an advisory framework that incorporates the learning from all partners in the project and establishes EU-wide best practice in this field.



### Programme roll out

Save the Children ran the Take Care programme in 2016-7 with 270 children aged 9-11 years. We worked mostly in primary school settings with group sizes of 15-34 pupils, and worked in all four nations of the UK. Each site delivered between 6-15 workshops, thus 18-24 hours of work with children per site. Sessions were held once or twice weekly. Many sites added extra sessions to prepare for learning exchanges or go on trips and visits.

Our work took place in areas of high deprivation, covering urban and coastal contexts with some sites including migrant children and children with English as an additional language. Some sites had experience of flooding, fires, or civil unrest. Some did not, but engaged equally with the project.

Most of our sites were delivered by one or two Save the Children staff who have specific facilitation backgrounds, supported by teachers and sometimes teaching assistants. We also had one example of delivery via school teachers and one by a youth worker.



# CUIDAR

Cultures of Disaster Resilience  
among children and young people



# TAKE CARE: A TOOLKIT



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## WHAT IS THIS TOOLKIT FOR?

- To provide **resources** to allow others to either carry out the Take Care programme, or adapt the programme to different contexts
- To provide **guidance** around participation and child-led work
- To **support** planners, responders and policy makers in creating robust, inclusive, effective emergency plans that include and value the voices of children.

This toolkit will set out the Take Care programme and will include teaching and learning materials such as lesson plans, activities, links to online resources etc. From this toolkit, we intend that the user can “pick and mix” an approach that will suit their purpose and context.

This programme can be used specifically to support children in disaster-prone areas or as a general method of building children’s confidence, resilience, and agency to effect change in their communities. In basing the work in child rights, the Take Care programme helps to build young people’s belief in their ability to change the circumstances around them, as well as boosting their skills to research, critically evaluate and advocate.

Save the Children ran the Take Care project with primary school aged children. Across the European project, partners also worked with teenagers, youth groups and children with disabilities. This toolkit is based on the work done by Save the Children UK. However, more information on partners’ work and experience of Take Care (also called CUIDAR in Europe due to translation) can be found on the CUIDAR project website: [www.lancaster.ac.uk/cuidar](http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/cuidar)

## WHO IS THIS TOOLKIT FOR?

Primary schools\*



National and local charities



Local authorities



Community groups



Emergency responders



Youth groups



*\*Take Care can be adapted to work with older children*



Take Care is designed to be used as a framework that can be adapted to be used in a wide-range of circumstances with a diverse group of young people. Children, teachers, community members or service providers can utilise the structure, tools and tips in this toolkit and build a piece of work to enhance the resilience in their communities. This kit is not a comprehensive guide to practice change and child resilience, moreover it is meant as a useful and practicable guide to help begin developing, or further develop, stronger communities.

The Take Care tools can be adapted to the length, space, support, and resources you have available for your group. Bear in mind however that true child-led activities take time to prepare, deliver and evaluate. The programme will not work effectively to raise resilience or improve local plans unless sufficient time, expertise and effort are afforded to allowing the process to be child-led and participatory.

## PLEASE CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING POINTS BEFORE BEGINNING THE TAKE CARE PROJECT

1. Allow time to familiarise yourself with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and particularly Article 12 - the right to be heard. This concept is central to Take Care.
2. Children are incredibly powerful agents of change: activities should be empowering and if possible, child-led.
3. Adapt the suggested workshop plans to your own context, considering time and budget available, and the specific needs of the children you will be working with.

# PROGRAMME OUTLINE: TAKE CARE CONTINUUM



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## PROGRAMME OUTLINE: THE 'TAKE CARE' CONTINUUM

### CHILD-LED WORKSHOPS

- Begin with introducing child rights and definitions of risk and resilience
- Introduce disasters: from global to local
- Examine different roles and responsibilities in emergencies, especially children's roles
- Identify practices and processes involved in emergency planning and response, and any gaps that affect children
- Children choose and create a communications tool about an issue or challenge they identify



### LEARNING EXCHANGE

- Children plan local event, bringing together relevant stakeholders, to discuss ideas and issues and co-create plans and/or solutions
- Before the event, children and/or adults work to sensitise attendees to working with children, and children to working with adults
- Children present their learning, communications tool and key questions. Children present any requests of the adults
- Children and adults agree to post-meeting actions to follow up on changes/decisions taken



### WIDER CHANGE

- Building on workshops and the community event, children design and deliver a national advocacy effort.



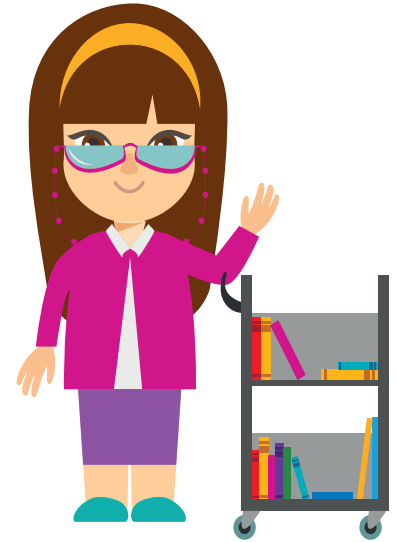




## THE WORKSHOPS

### What do the workshops seek to achieve?

- Children are informed about – and understand – their rights. They will have the confidence to use their voice to directly advocate to decision-makers
- Children will increase their understanding of risks, hazards, vulnerability, and resilience. Children will highlight their unique perspectives through child-led identification of risks and their effects
- Children identify all the people involved in an emergency and what their roles are.
- Children map out gaps they can fill, and define their own roles.
- Children identify changes in current provisions and think creatively about potential solutions
- Children create a communications tool to demonstrate their learning or their expectations of local stakeholders. Examples include a drama, a video, a leaflet, poster/art exhibitions, an app or webpage, a song, a rap, a story, a poem etc.
- Children communicate their perceptions of risk and can produce an event for other children, teachers, family, and community in preparation for their learning exchange event
- Children keep learning journals, filled in at the end of each session



Ideally, the workshops are best suited for children aged nine and above. Some of the subject matter is complex, so materials should be tailored to fit the unique learning needs of the group.

### Before you start

Before starting the workshops, it can help to map out and contact any local groups or professionals that you might want to involve, such as police, fire services, RNLI, local community groups, the environment agency, etc. We found that children were especially engaged when they worked with new people or in new locations, and went out on visits. Whilst the programme should always strive to be child-led, bringing in partners during the course of the workshops can be really useful to building the knowledge and confidence of the young people. You can then incorporate partners' expertise and experience, and it also builds local engagement and buy-in ahead of the learning exchange. You can find suggested session plans in the annex.

**Child-led methods** to consider for your Take Care workshops include:

- Small group discussions e.g. collecting ideas, prioritising options
- Voting: e.g. on ideas to take forward
- “Recap and feedback” groups e.g. to give overview of current/past session and suggest next session
- Collective writing: e.g. scripts, emails, invitations, letters
- Research in community (visits, guest speakers or “risk-walks”)
- Interactive evaluation: asking for ideas of content and/or feedback on how to improve or change future sessions

**Child-friendly activity** examples include:

- ‘Picture My Rights’: each child chose one of their rights from the UNCRC and drew a picture to portray what it would be like if the right wasn’t honoured, as well as what it would be like if the right is upheld.
- “Risk walk”: the children were given a camera to take picture of risks they identified on the walk around their local area. Photos were laminated and then used to recreate a community map which the children completed.
- The ‘Rights Tree’ was used to help create a child-led community action plan. This helped the children to identify the gaps, what the causes of the gap were, and what the solutions might be.



# TAKE CARE: A TOOLKIT



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## WHY IT WORKS

Traditional projects often curate children's voices but do not usually offer the opportunity to have these heard by people of influence who can translate their voices into meaningful change. Take Care ensures that local, national, and European policy-makers will hear participants. To do so, we started with UNCRF's article 12 on the rights of the child, and ensured the four "building blocks", as seen in this diagram.

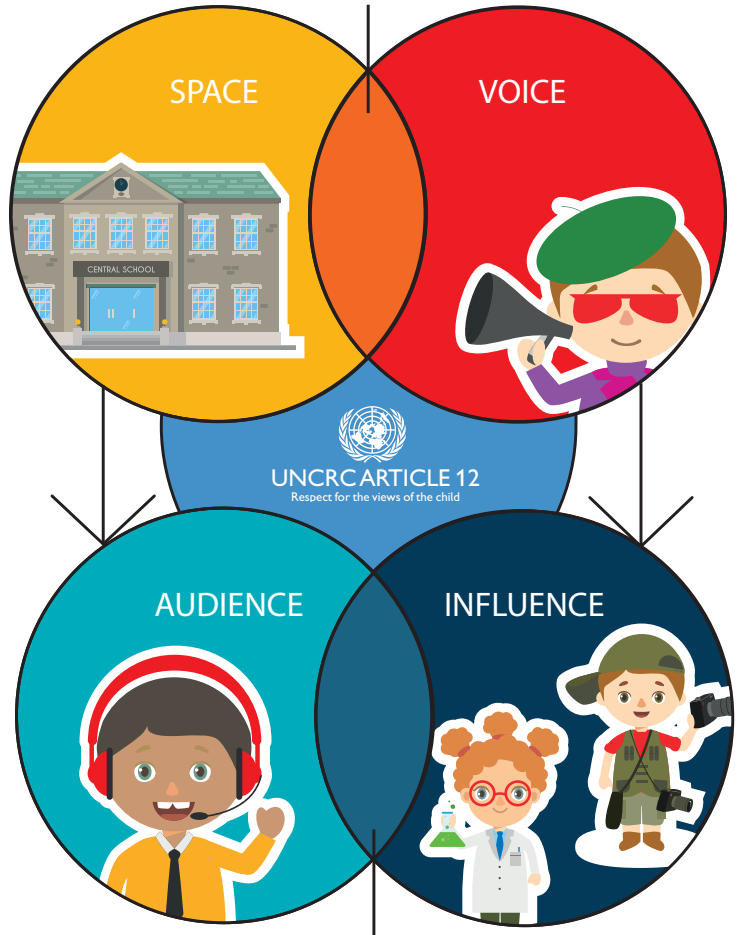
Whilst delivering Take Care, we were conscious that children are not one single group. They have unique and diverse experiences and perspectives informed by their ethnicity, age, gender, socio-economic class, disability, and migration status. The programme's adaptable nature allowed us to run different sessions in different sites, tailoring the content to the needs of the group. Thus, whilst all our outcomes are slightly different, we gained considerable insight into the capacity of all the children to investigate vital issues, build their resilience and share their opinions. Children shared their knowledge and endeavour with those around them, helping to build other's capacity and willingness to make changes, including peers, families, communities, and national and international policy makers.

## Children and change

Children in the Take Care project identified a real range of key issues, ideas and challenges for the sector and local services to act upon, including:

- Children said they wanted to have practical information about what to do in an emergency and who to contact. The children saw this as very important.
- Children wanted this information to be accessible, child-friendly and delivered in a fun way
- Children wanted everyone else to also know what to do. They felt that more should be done to make sure

## Right to cultivate and express their ideas



## Right to have their views given due weight and showcased at relevant platforms

- other children could understand, as well as families and vulnerable people in the community
- Children wanted to take action to ensure their homes and schools would be safe, and they expressed a strong desire to help others
- Children really engaged with the child rights element, particularly embracing their right to be listened to by adults

*"I learnt that us children should be heard in our own opinion and adults should take it seriously. They should listen to children's opinions... children need to know what is going in the situation so the children are not scared."*

Lilly, England



## Children and resilience

Through this project we found that the children's knowledge, preparedness and resilience all increased.

- Children learnt key information about what to do in an emergency, including where to go, who to talk to, what services there would be and what safe spaces there would be
- Children learnt about, and implemented, precautions that they and their families could take to reduce risks
- Children learnt about their rights to be heard and influence decisions that impact them
- Children helped spread learning across schools and communities. They also took learning home to parents, some of whom may be hard to reach with safety messages
- Children gained confidence in talking to authority figures, such as the police, and visiting local authority buildings, such as council chambers.
- The learning exchange events helped garner better community links between schools and services, and between children and services. This builds potential for future collaboration and co-working in emergency preparation and recovery
- Learning exchange events also helped connect schools and services to parents, and helped highlight local issues to relevant services, e.g. lack of sprinklers in a local apartment building

*"I believe the children would be much better prepared if Littleborough ever flooded again. I am sure they have enough knowledge now, especially with regards to flooding to engage with other children, adults and policy makers. The children talk about how to prepare for disasters/emergencies amongst themselves. They seem more aware of procedures and how to prepare for potential hazards/ emergencies."*

Teacher, Rochdale

## Other benefits of Take Care include:

- Children built self-confidence through the child rights approach, and built their confidence in communicating with adults
- Children practiced research and presentation skills, as well as creative and independent thinking
- Children increased their community awareness
- and engagement, developing their sense of social responsibility and active citizenship.
- Children became more aware of how decisions are made locally, nationally and internationally, which may increase their political agency in the future
- The programme helped build career aspirations through interaction with professionals

## What does it cost?

We suggest the following provision for the workshops, but again stress the flexibility of the project and the importance of tailoring the content to the circumstances:

- Time: to have an effective, child-led engaging project that successfully builds resilience, children and adults need to work together over time to explore this topic
- £400-500 for workshops (which includes also materials for workshops and creation of communication tools etc).
- £400-£500 for the learning exchange (if hiring venue, student travel, providing food etc)
- £Variable for the wider change (depending on the scale and nature of the activity)





## LEARNING EXCHANGE

### Influencing policy and practice at local level

After workshops have been completed, the project builds on the children's input and moves forward to hold learning events between children and emergency planners locally, nationally and at UK-level to create an opportunity for children and adults to learn from, and share with, each other.

#### Top tips

Holding these events quickly after the workshops ensures the content is fresh in the children's minds. These events can take some time and effort to arrange, so do factor this in to the project planning!

### Stakeholder meetings

Attending or hosting a meeting of relevant stakeholders is a great format for sharing, however children should be encouraged to be as creative as they want. A typical format for a learning exchange event covers a **presentation** by the children, time spent in mixed-group small **roundtable discussions** around key questions and potential solutions, and a **plenary** session to review actions and follow up. In most cases, we asked attendees to make **pledges**, identifying specific, real actions they would take. However, this format can be adapted and changed, and the children can be as creative as they would like. The venue should be child friendly and meet relevant health and safety requirements.

#### In preparation for the event, children should:

- Be in the driving seat in planning including leading/ supporting selecting the venue, the format, designing invitation, securing any key speakers, creating resources, planning how to evaluate the event's success etc
- Have time and space to plan and practice the event
- Be supported to have a role in the day that they feel comfortable with
- Have time to prepare answers to likely questions, and prepare some suggestions for solutions to the challenges discussed.

#### If possible, children should select the stakeholders they would like to invite. Some suggestions include:

- Local Resilience Forum (England and Wales), Regional Resilience Partnerships (Scotland), Emergency Preparedness Groups (Northern Ireland) – these are often key partners for this project.
- Emergency services: police, ambulance, fire
- Local authority emergency planning teams
- Housing Associations
- Environment agency
- National response organisations such as the British Red Cross
- Community groups and youth groups
- Local stakeholders: churches, "safe places", large employers
- Local service providers (including hospitals, doctors, transport, phone/internet companies)
- Insurance providers
- Parent Teacher Associations and school support staff
- Media (local news programmes/newspapers/radio stations who provide information in emergencies)

The potential for these local events to influence practice is significant. Where you are able to galvanise support from the right stakeholders, and then help them to really understand the potential of this work on increasing community resilience, you can start the ball rolling for wider change. Whilst it is rare to change long-standing behaviour through one intervention or event, these learning exchange events can be a great motivator to demonstrate willingness on all sides – both services and communities.



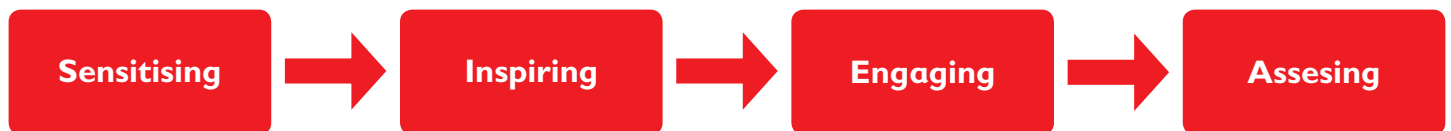
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Adults should be pre-prepared to work with children (either by a preliminary meeting, a call, a briefing document, or something similar). Through the event they can then be inspired by the children's creativity, knowledge, and unique perspective. It is important adults also engage beyond listening with children to either address gaps/challenges the children raise, or work together to design ways to improve planning and response systems. The event could aim to help ensure sustainable changes are made to the practices of local professionals, and ensure that children can regularly input into the design, delivery and potential evaluation of emergency response planning, response, and recovery. Finally, children and adults should work together at the event to agree a follow up plan and work out how to assess if this engagement has created lasting change.

It is important to try to guide adult attendees through this process:



**To help make your event as effective as possible, please consider the following:**

- Ensure everyone has clear and realistic expectations of the event, including children and adults
- Try to keep the event solutions-focussed; thinking about positive changes you all can make in the future
- To increase impact, try to limit yourselves to a smaller number of clear asks/messages rather than including everything the children have thought of and learned in their workshops
- Making your event interactive and fun will help increase the engagement of everyone involved, and will hopefully motivate them to make some changes
- Don't forget to plan for how you want to follow up with your attendees, and how they will keep the children informed of how they have acted on what they've learned
- Completing a child-friendly follow up session with the young people will help you understand how they found the day and how it's impacted their confidence and resilience.
- Consider any risks or safeguarding issues prevalent to your event, ensuring sufficient mitigating provisions are in place.

**Examples of pledges made by stakeholders include:**

*"To include children as key stakeholders at our decision-making stage... I have learnt how amazing children are with learning about the type of thing we would usually try to shelter them from"*  
Anwaar, Wales



*"I will share what the children did today right across the UK so other young people can be inspired by you to do the same."*  
Louise, Wales

*"To take on board children's views when planning for emergencies. To be open and honest with children about risks and how to prepare for them"*  
Ben, Wales





## WIDER CHANGE

### Influencing policy and practice at regional and national level

Building on the achievements, initiative, knowledge and experience developed, children may choose to take their project a step further and advocate for a wider regional or national change. The aim of this is to **articulate the key messages to a high regional, national, and international level in order to affect policy or practice in this area.**

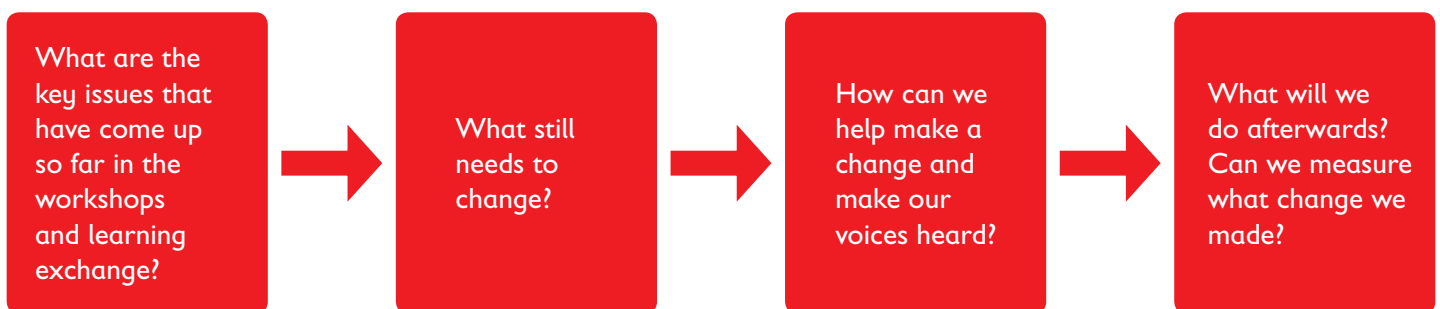
Depending on your capacity, this effort could be a continual process or a one-off contribution. The work can take any form the children decide, from a petition to hosting an event to a media campaign to visiting parliament. You could link this to an event that's already happening, or a national/international day (International Day for Disaster Reduction 13 October, Poetry Day 21 March, World Environment Day 5 June), or you could create a campaign of your own. Joining with other groups of children and young people can add to your campaign. Similarly, working with your local partners from the learning exchange can help your group reach new audiences and spread their message.



### Potential aims/outcomes of this work:

- Updated/new guidance
- Updated regional/national policy
- Changed regional/national practice of authorities or service providers
- Raised awareness amongst stakeholders
- Commitment to further consultation

### Key questions to consider with the young people when designing this further advocacy effort:



### Things to remember:

- A clear and realistic aim should help guide this process and ensure that children's expectations are in line with the group's capacity and reach. Awareness raising and communication is often a long-term goal, and so it may help to think about this effort as part of a wider process.
- This advocacy effort should be built upon the workshops and learning exchange to ensure that all children and young people's perceptions, priorities and ideas are heard at a high level. Previous outcomes/achievements can help to recruit and sensitize policy-makers, practitioners, and the media so as to raise awareness and focus attention on the national event/campaign.
- As with the other parts of Take Care, this work should be both child-friendly and child-led.

# TAKE CARE TOP TIPS



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## TAKE CARE TOP TIPS

### Tips for Take Care Facilitators

Participation is about having the opportunity to express a view, influencing decision-making and achieving change. Children's participation is an informed and willing involvement of all children, including the most marginalised and those of different ages and abilities, in any matter concerning them either directly or indirectly.

Save the Children work to create a foundation of meaningful, ethical, and safe participation for children. To help prevent children's participation from being tokenistic or unsafe, we address the following:

- **An ethical approach: transparency, honesty, and accountability:** Children are involved from the earliest possible stage and can influence the design and content of participatory processes.
- **Children's participation is relevant and voluntary:** Children participate in processes and address issues that affect them – either directly or indirectly – and have the choice as to whether to participate or not.
- **A child-friendly, enabling environment:** Child-friendly meeting places are used where girls and boys feel relaxed, comfortable and have access to the facilities they need. The meeting places must be accessible to children with disabilities.
- **Equality of opportunity:** No assumptions are made about what different groups of children can and cannot do. All children are given an equal opportunity to voice their opinions and have their contributions reflected in any outcomes of a participatory process, including in processes that involve both children and adults.
- **Staff are effective and confident:** Staff are supported in participatory practice to enable them to work effectively and confidently with children of different ages and abilities.
- **Participation promotes the safety and protection of children:** Careful assessment is made of the safeguarding and risks associated with children's participation in speaking out, campaigning or advocacy. Depending upon the risks identified, steps may be needed to protect children's identity or to provide follow-up measures to give protection (e.g. to ensure their safe reintegration into their communities).





## TAKE CARE TOP TIPS

### SET THE TONE

There should be a strong emphasis on children's rights, whole-group involvement, safe and creative discussion spaces, and on the importance of respecting confidentiality and difference of opinion. The tone should embrace participation to the extent that the project is child-led where possible. Since some participants may have been directly impacted by issues raised in discussions, it could be helpful for both facilitator and participants to establish ground rules and safeguarding procedures.



### CONTEXTUALISE AND PREPARE

The Take Care project can be run with a wide range of participants from different ages and cultures, and the materials in this handbook should be adapted to suit the needs of the group. The session plans included in the annex provide basic introductions to each issue covered, but you may find it helpful to further research certain topics or engage the class to do so as a homework task. It may also be beneficial to invite an external speaker(s) for part of the workshop. Whilst it is recommended that all facilitators have a strong background in participation methods and child rights, with this approach, a thorough understanding or emergency response is less essential – the content can be explored together as a group.

### TAKE CARE TOP TIPS

Some issues covered in the framework may trigger memories of direct experiences for participants which require attention. Where possible, facilitators should make a contingency plan for this and take time to sensitively discuss the issue with the child individually and/or, if appropriate, revisit the need to respect confidentiality with the group and for the group to support each other. Any safeguarding issues should be raised with the relevant project lead.



# CONCLUSION



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## CONCLUSION

Save the Children seeks to encourage the natural resilience of children and support them to be safe, confident and thriving no matter their circumstances and background. The Take Care programme is a way to help ensure that children can be aware of, and involved in, decisions that affect them in extreme circumstances such as emergencies.

The project uses participation practices that support children to build confidence and resilience. Through localised community engagement and national advocacy efforts, children taking part in Take Care help to inform emergency planners of their unique perspective, to identify gaps in provisions and processes, and to adapt emergency services to be both inclusive and effective. It is hoped that Take Care will help embed child participation in emergency planning and response.

The Take Care programme allows and encourages children to engage with issues that can affect them, their families, their schools and their communities. The programme is designed to help build confidence, preparedness, understanding, advocacy skills and active citizenship. It does require time, expertise and commitment to create the right environment for children to feel comfortable engaging and participating in this process. By taking part in the Take Care programme you are giving children and their families the essential knowledge needed to cope in a disaster along with essential skills that can be used throughout their lives.

**For questions about Take Care, or this toolkit, please contact Save the Children's UK Programmes Team' via [supportercare@savethechildren.org.uk](mailto:supportercare@savethechildren.org.uk)**

# APPENDIX



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## ANNEX

- A. Suggested session plans
- B. Curriculum fit (as of 2016)
- C. Glossary of terms

# GET IN TOUCH

If you have any questions, need advice or want to request any resources, you can email us anytime at [supportercare@savethechildren.org.uk](mailto:supportercare@savethechildren.org.uk)

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