

1.2 National youth law

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Existence of a National Youth Law

There is no single national youth law in England. However, there are a number of pieces of legislation which address the needs and rights of young people and regulate how youth issues are addressed. Relevant legislation includes the:

- [Children Act 1989](#)
- [Children Act 2004](#)
- [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [Children and Young Persons Act 2008](#)
- [Children and Families Action 2014](#)
- [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#)

There was no systematic consultation of young people in the drawing up of this legislation. However, young people would be able to contribute to any public consultation which generally precedes a new piece of legislation; see the chapter on '[Participation](#)' for further details.

A Civil Society Youth Steering Group was set up within DCMS as part of the Civil Society Strategy 2018, to oversee the development and implementation of policies affecting young people. The DCMS also set up a national Young Commissioners and Inspectors Group to involve young people directly and meaningfully into

the commissioning, monitoring and evaluation of national programmes affecting young people.

Scope and contents

Safeguarding and child protection

Much of the relevant legislation relates to safeguarding and child protection. The Children Acts of 1989 and 2004 provide the legislative framework for child protection in England. The [Children Act 1989](#) sets out what [local authorities](#) and the courts should do to protect the welfare of children and places a duty on local authorities to provide services for children in need, their families and others. Based on proposals in the Government Green Paper, [Every Child Matters: Change for Children in Schools](#) (Department for Education and Skills, 2003), the [Children Act 2004](#) created a statutory framework for local cooperation to improve the well-being of children in their local areas and placed a duty on specified agencies with regards to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. It also established the post of the [Children's Commissioner](#), the holder of which has a statutory duty to promote and protect the rights of all children in England in accordance with the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#).

The [Children and Young Person Act 2008](#) reformed the care system in England and Wales, implementing the proposals of the Government White Paper [Care Matters: Time for Change](#) (Department for Education and Skills, 2007). The [Children and Families Act 2014](#) introduced a range of reforms to improve services for key groups of vulnerable children, including children in the adoption and care systems; those affected by the decisions of the family courts; and those with [special educational needs and disabilities](#). It gave the Children's Commissioner special responsibility for the rights of children in or leaving care, living away from home or receiving social care. This legislation covers the welfare of young people up to age 18. It may extend to those aged 18, 19 and 20 for those who have been [looked after](#) by a local authority after age 16 or who have a learning disability.

Duty on local authorities

The [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#) implements the proposals of the 2005 Government Green paper [Youth Matters](#). In particular, it imposed a duty on local authorities (LAs) to promote the well-being of persons aged 13-19 (and of persons aged up to 24 with learning difficulties) by securing access for them to sufficient educational and recreational leisure-time activities and facilities so far as is reasonably practicable. LAs can fulfil this duty by providing activities and facilities, assisting others to do so or making other arrangements to facilitate access which can include the provision of transport, financial assistance or information. LAs must supply young people with up-to-date information regarding the leisure-time activities and facilities that are available locally. They must also ascertain from young people their views of existing provision and the need for additional provision and to take those views into account. For further information, see the section on local government in the article on ['Youth Policy Decision-Making'](#).

Revisions/updates

There is no single piece of legislation covering youth policy, it is therefore not possible to describe when, how and why it has been updated. When newer legislation updates or revokes existing legislation, details are provided on the [UK legislation website](#).