EMBEDDING THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION FOR THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD INTO A PALLIATIVE CARE SETTING

1Emma Aspinall, 2Susan Hayward, 2Sarah Jasper. 1Formerly, Acorns Children’s Hospice, Birmingham, UK; 2Acorns Children's Hospice, Birmingham, UK

Background Children’s Rights are central to the work of all children’s services across statutory or voluntary sectors. In 2019 Acorns commenced a journey with UNICEF’s Rights Respecting Program to embed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in all we do through the charity; this journey took over three years and has resulted in Acorns being the first non-education organisation to received Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards for our Rights Respecting work.

Aims To share our experience of embedding the UNCRC informing our direct work with children and governance process. Highlight the impact for our workforce as Duty Bearers and for the children who have embraced being Rights Holders.

Methods 2019 – UNICEF Champions from each of the hospices were identified, a steering group developed. Champions went on training, meeting with other organisations also participating in the programme. Mar. 2020 – Received the Bronze Award in recognition of the strategic and operational planning being put in place to support the transformational change required. Dec. 2021 – Received the Silver Award for the visibility of the UNCRC within the hospices and via support provided to children. Apr. 2023 – Acorns was awarded GOLD award for demonstrating the impact UNCRC had on children and young people empowering them to know their Rights and to champion for others.

Results Evidence of increased confidence and empowerment for children and young people. Young people actively planning their end of life and after death care. Children challenging decisions and identifying their own wishes. Campaigning for others using the UNCRC as a reference.

Conclusions To embed the UNCRC there needed to be a strategic approach from the Executive putting UNCRC at the core of the hospice’s ethos.

How innovative or of interest is the abstract? We hope that sharing our learning will benefit colleagues from across the wider palliative care sector.