

ABOUT THE NNCEE

OUR APPROACH

We are passionate about ensuring that children engaged in employment and the world of entertainment are effectively safeguarded from potential harm. We are also committed to what we believe as the right of children to access opportunity.

We are the only National organisation solely dedicated to the continual development and implementation of 'good practice' issues for children engaged in employment and taking part in public performances.

We are committed to pursue a reform of the current legislation that children in both fields are working within. Neither is currently fit for purpose – a fact supported by all. We continue to work with Government officials, employers and the wider entertainment industry to bring about a modern day legal framework that provides further opportunity for children, without prejudicing their welfare.

We are committed through liaison and dialogue with Government officials, and other stakeholders, that this legislation continues to be relevant to the current day, and not be allowed to become outdated through the passage of time and how the industry develops.

HOW THE NNCEE IS ORGANISED

The NNCEE is a national voluntary body, providing advice and guidance to its membership, which is predominantly, but not exclusively, made up of specialists from local authorities.

It is divided into 9 Regions across England and Wales who report back to a National Committee. Each of the Regions has a nominated Chair, and therefore a place on the national committee.

We have a direct contact link into the Department for Education team working in the area of children in employment and children in entertainment.

The NNCEE has a clearly defined constitution with which the national committee must conform. It is funded solely by membership subscriptions.

THE HISTORY OF NNCEE

The NNCEE was founded in 1996 its aims and objectives now are unchanged in essence to that of its inception.

THE WORK WE DO

Since the inception of the NNCEE we have strived to provide better outcomes for children.

Our fundamental approach to this is to provide advice and guidance to our membership who represents most of the 147 local authorities, as well as employers and the entertainment industry, both professional and amateur.

We recognise that a consistent approach by all local authorities will inevitably lead to providing more, as well as, better outcomes and opportunities for children.

This has meant that we have worked closely with employers and more significantly with the entertainment industry, that has changed out of all recognition in the way they use children, and of the types of programmes being produced and involving children.

Current legislation and the type of programmes now being made often don't fit, and are becoming increasingly mis-matched. Members of the Committee consistently talk with programme makers in an attempt to reach agreement on what may or may not be done. This helps provide a level of consistency across all local authority areas. We recognise the difficulties faced by productions where there is a different response in various parts of the country, and can mean that one child may take part and another may not. This is unfair on productions, but more significantly it is unfair to the child.

New ideas for programmes are constantly evolving, that must require a continual dialogue and joint working between Government and all stakeholders if the NNCEE is to meet one of its principal aims in providing opportunity for children. The so called 'postcode lottery', must be extinguished.

Since 2002 we have been working with NSPCC, The Children's Legal Centre, TUC and other partners to reduce the illegal employment of working children. For details of the progress of this work follow the link to <http://www.nncee.org.uk/news-latest-events/41-exploratory-review-of-the-regulations-of-child-performance>

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Early in 2003 the NNCEE set up two Code of Conduct Groups, (employment and entertainment), in order to identify the changes needed in legislation.

Through our efforts and those of our partners (above) a review was carried out by The Better Regulation Task Force in 2004 who recommended significant changes to the employment regulations. The report was adopted in full, by the

then Children's Minister Margaret Hodge. Due to a government re-shuffle this report was never activated.

During this period and beyond, we have continued to campaign for a review of the entertainment legislation that had not been amended since 1968, apart from an EU directive to member states and some cosmetic changes in 2000, which as a result, ensured that the Harry Potter films could be made lawfully in the UK.

Despite our vigorous complaints it remained difficult to gain government's attention. However, programmes such as Channel 4's Boys & Girls Alone! <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1145649/C4s-cruel-reality-axed-say-child-experts.html> received national condemnation and sparked a response from the then Minister Baroness Morgan.

In 2009 the NNCEE, with the support of the Code of Conduct Group, submitted a set of proposed changes of law to the Department for Education (DfES at the time), who then carried out a review involving numerous stakeholders. The DfE proposals met with the distinct displeasure of the professional entertainment industry; in the months leading up to the 2010 General Election, and the Government announced the plans had been scrapped, but that an Exploratory Review would take place early in 2010.

This became known as The Sarah Thane (OBE) Exploratory review of the regulation of child performance.

<http://www.education.gov.uk/a0068886/safeguarding-child-performers>).

The new coalition Government supported the continuance of further investigation into her report, and at the same time confirmed that further research on employment law being carried out by Professor Jim McKechnie at the University of the West of Scotland could also continue. <http://www.nncee.org.uk/news-latest-events/46-government-agree-new-research-into-child-employment>

Final reports were submitted to the Department in the summer, who has since made a number of proposals, for which we await Public Consultation Documents (PCD's) and the opportunity to publicly voice any concerns, opinions and possible evidence.