



Carole Littlechild's description on giving evidence on behalf of Nagalro to House of Lords Justice and Home Affairs Committee

On 6th October, I gave oral evidence on behalf of Nagalro to the House of Lords Justice and Home Affairs Committee, regarding migrant children and unaccompanied asylum seeking children. There were 8 questions, 3 of which were aimed specifically at Local Authorities and other witnesses, so I focused on the ones to which I could contribute.

My aim was to bring the Committee's attention to the children as their key focus. I wanted to get across the importance of understanding trauma experienced by these children with its effects, and implications for their considerable vulnerabilities and need for particular support.

I was able to highlight the risks of abuse from unregulated placements. Such placements are being used by the Home Office for migrant children even as young as 11, over and above the use of that facility which has been available since September 2021 for Local Authorities for children in care from their 16th birthday.

With the final question about the Courts, I explained the style of the Family Courts approach with the Children Act 1989 as its bedrock, and with all its thoroughness, embracing the paramountcy of the child's best interests that leads decision making. I sought to present the work of the Equal Justice for Migrant Children group in their proposals to seek the creation of a children's court. Their aim would be to have the migrant children's representatives and the Home Office collaborating as level partners working for the child's best interests, rather than the current separate operations and primacy of the Home Office position (where currently, legal duties to the children are ignored).

Given the tight timing, it was inevitable that there was plenty more I did not get to say. You can judge for yourselves how it went by viewing and listening to the session here:

[Parliamentlive.tv - Justice and Home Affairs Committee](https://www.parliamentlive.tv/Justice_and_Home_Affairs_Committee)

The secretariat for the House of Lords Committee will be publishing a transcript within 5 or so days of the session, which will be posted on our website.

Carole Littlechild,
Chair of Nagalro
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