



Cayman Islands Human Rights Commission

promoting, protecting and preserving human rights

9 August 2018

Human Rights Commission's Statement on International Youth Day 2018



2018
SAFE
SPACES
FOR YOUTH



International Youth Day is celebrated annually on 12 August and the Human Rights Commission joins the United Nations (UN) and organisations around the world in recognising this date and drawing attention to issues concerning young people. The theme for 2018 is “Safe Spaces for Youth”, which highlights the need for “safe spaces where [young people] can come together, engage in activities related to their diverse needs and interests, participate in decision making processes and freely express themselves.”¹ The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs emphasises the importance of safe spaces for young people to engage with each other so “they can effectively contribute to development, including peace and social cohesion.”² Examples of safe spaces include civic (political/governance), public (social, sports and leisure), digital (virtual and international) and physical (urban and building design) spaces.

One of the Human Rights Commission's key objectives this year is to raise awareness about protection of young people, which corresponds with the right to the Protection of Children (section 17 of our Bill of Rights). Under this section of the Constitution children are defined as individuals under the age of 18. While most other rights in the Bill of Rights apply equally to children and adults, section 17 focuses on rights that are specific to children, such as the right to a name from birth, being cared for by a parent or guardian, being protected from maltreatment or abuse, and ensuring that the best interests of the child are the most important factor in matters concerning children.

The Commission encourages the extension of these principles to all young people. Cayman's National Youth Policy relates to individuals between the ages of 10 and 25³, and targets especially those more vulnerable who may require additional support to achieve their full potential. Supporting the development of young people helps create a healthy society and a robust economy for the future. Ensuring young people have access to spaces that are safe is an essential component to achieving this goal, and the Commission notes the work of several government and non-governmental organisations in Cayman which strive to provide safe spaces for young people including; Big Brothers Big Sisters, the Crisis Centre's TAYA Lounge, the Red Cross and the Youth Services Unit. The Commission continues to

¹ <https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/international-youth-day-2018.html>

² Ibid.

³ <http://ministryofhealth.gov.ky/sites/default/files/National%20Youth%20Policy%202011%20-%20Situational%20Analysis%20and%20Historical%20Background.pdf>

add to its list of organisations in Cayman offering youth protection services which includes these and other organisations providing safe spaces for youth: www.humanrightscommission.ky/local-interest-groups.

For persons or groups interested in creating their own safe spaces for youth, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has partnered with the government of Guyana to compile a [Guide for Establishing Community Youth Friendly Spaces](#) which provides detailed guidance. There is also an [International Youth Day Toolkit](#) designed to support International Youth Day. The Commission encourages the use of these resources to develop new safe spaces, or to assist with developing established youth-focused programmes or organisations and contributing to the protection and development of children and young people across the Cayman Islands.

To find out more information on section 17 of the Bill of Rights, or other human rights in the Cayman Islands, visit www.humanrightscommission.ky. To add your organisation to the Commission's growing list of youth protection services you can contact the Commission at info@humanrightscommission.ky or 244-3685.

Ends.