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**Defending  
and promoting  
the rights of  
the child**

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When it comes to rights, we are all equal

**Défenseur des droits**  
RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

# One institution, five specialist areas

**“The Defender of Rights ensures that rights and freedoms are upheld”**

Article 71-1 of the Constitution

The Defender of Rights is an independent institution tasked with defending rights and individual freedoms within five areas of expertise as determined by the law:



**Defending the rights of public service users**



**Ensuring the rules of professional conduct are followed by security officials** (police, “gendarmes”, private security services, etc.)



**Defending and promoting the rights of the child**



**Combating discrimination and promoting equality**



**Guiding and protecting whistleblowers**

## To accomplish its duties, the Defender of Rights:

- **processes the complaints** it receives by coming up with fitting solutions;
- **works to improve equal access to rights for all** through information and training and by forging partnerships and proposing reforms.



# 30%

**of complaints** received by the institution on children rights' defence concern **childcare services**.

# Defending the rights of the child: a commitment in the best interests of the child

Every child has fundamental rights in terms of healthcare, education, justice and social protection for example. The Defender of Rights defends and raises awareness of these rights.

Children's rights are recognised by the law and enshrined in the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child** (UNCRC). In France, the Defender of Rights is the UN-designated organisation for ensuring these rights are respected. There is a twofold mission underpinning its action: to protect and promote the rights of the child. It particularly ensures that "the best interests of the child" are respected, i.e. that the interests of the child are considered to be of paramount importance and to take priority over all others. Moreover, the Defender of Rights ensures that children are not discriminated against and that they are able to take part in decisions and initiatives concerning them.

Aided by a deputy who is the **Defender of Children**, the Defender of Rights takes action when a person refers situations to it where the rights of the child or his or her best interests do not seem to have been respected.

## Who can refer cases to the Defender of Rights?

-  **A child or young person under 18**
-  **His or her legal representative**
-  **A member of his or her family**
-  **A medical or educational professional or social services**  
(doctor, nurse, teacher, social worker, etc.)
-  **An association that defends children's rights**



**My parents  
are getting  
divorced and  
I want to  
speak to the  
magistrate**



**My daughter  
is being  
bullied at  
Kids' Club**



**I can't find a school  
with the possibility of  
taking my disabled son**

## **What can the Defender of Rights do?**



**Investigate**



**Come up with  
an amicable  
settlement**



**Make  
recommendations  
about a situation**



**Present its  
observations  
before the  
courts**



**Call for  
disciplinary  
proceedings**



**Put forward  
proposals for  
reforming  
legislation**

# Delegates: a unique service on your doorstep

## The Defender of Rights is supported by a network of nearly 500 delegates

The Defender of Rights' delegates are available nationwide. Anyone looking for assistance with defending their rights can contact them free of charge at more than **750 reception points** in mainland France and overseas. These can be found in *Maisons de la Justice et du Droit* (legal advice centres/MJD), *Points d'accès au droit* (free drop-in centres for anyone looking for guidance on legal matters/PAD), prefectures or town/city halls for example.

### Delegates can:



**Listen to your concerns**



**Guide you  
in your procedures**



**Help you to exercise  
your rights**



**Forward your case to  
the Head Office in Paris**

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**80%**

**of complaints lodged with the Defender  
of Rights are received by the delegates  
at their local offices**

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**See the list of offices:**

[www.defenseurdesdroits.fr](http://www.defenseurdesdroits.fr)

# Think your rights haven't been respected?

Get in touch with the  
Defender of Rights for free



**Via the delegates, at:**

[www.defenseurdesdroits.fr](http://www.defenseurdesdroits.fr) /  
"Comment obtenir des réponses?" (How can you get answers?) or in a reception point.



**Via freepost, so no need for a stamp:**

Défenseur des droits – Libre réponse 71120 –  
75342 Paris Cedex 07 France



**Via our online form, at:**

[www.defenseurdesdroits.fr](http://www.defenseurdesdroits.fr) /  
"Saisir le Défenseur des droits" (Refer a case to the Defender of Rights)



You can also get information  
**by calling +33 (0)9 69 39 00 00** or making  
an appointment with a delegate.



**Don't forget to provide us with all the documents (copies of administrative documents, letters, emails, eye-witness accounts, etc.) that the Defender of Rights will need to examine your case.**

## DID YOU KNOW?

You do not have to pay anything to contact the Defender of Rights.

The Defender of Rights cannot call into question a judicial decision.

Its referral does not interrupt or suspend the time limits for civil, administrative or criminal proceedings or those concerning administrative appeals or appeals to the court.

**Find out all our news at:**



[www.defenseurdesdroits.fr](http://www.defenseurdesdroits.fr)



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