

# June 2023



Project Play is a grassroots NGO that aims to provide safe spaces for displaced children in northern France.

**85**  
Children

**69**  
In GS

**16**  
In MA

We work with children in the informal living site in Grande-Synthe (GS), as well as in independently run safe houses and day centres (maisons accueillantes - MA).

This month, we worked with 85 children, and met an additional 15 children in GS who didn't join our sessions. We expect the total number of children-on-the-move in northern France to be higher.

## Hostile Borders & Children's Rights

**Safe routes to the UK are inaccessible to the majority of those who need them.**

Instead, the UK and French Governments pursue increasingly hostile policies. Failing in their aim of deterrence, these force people to take more perilous journeys and endure more dangerous living conditions.

**This is deeply detrimental to the mental and physical wellbeing and development of children, and contrary to the rights enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).**

Both France & the UK are signatories to the UNCRC, obligated to uphold the rights within it.

## Freedom from Violence

**UNCRC Article 19:** every child has the right to be protected from all forms of mental and physical violence. States have an obligation to protect children from harm - not be the source of it.

The journeys children and their families are forced to undertake are a source of **physical and mental trauma**.

This month, children regularly described experiences of police violence, and anxiety about the journeys that lay ahead of them. **One child described the police stabbing the boat that they were trying to board.**

Our team also observed a **significant change in the behaviour** of children on session when police were seen inside the living space, with children displaying heightened anxiety and expressing feeling afraid.

On another occasion, children ran and hid from a drone, which they **believed to be the police 'always watching'** them.

## Access to Food & Water

**UNCRC Article 24:** every child has the right to the highest standard of health attainable for them, requiring the provision of adequate food and clean drinking water.

Hostile border policies force people to live with little stability or access to resources. This month, **one child told us that their family hadn't had food in three days.**

Children asked us for water on every session, and expressed **feeling thirsty** on multiple occasions. Children also suffer from **scabies and nits, due to insufficient water for sanitation.**

People on the move in Calais have access to **less than 10% of the water required** to meet their basic needs. Alongside partner organisations, we're urging the French Government to act - and we need you! **Sign our petition.**



[www.project-play.org](http://www.project-play.org)

Contact us:  
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# No childhood should look like this.

Project Play is a registered French Charity, No: W594012083. We also operate under Donate4Refugees, Charity No: 1168435.