

# Human Rights of Children in Scotland

Report to the Scottish Parliament

Easy Read



November 2021



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
gov.scot

## Introduction



I am Clare Haughey the Scottish Government Minister for Children and Young People. I want to make sure that Scotland is a place where children's rights are respected, protected and fulfilled.



Children's human rights are written down in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is an important agreement between lots of countries who have made a promise to protect children's rights.



The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child says:

- all children have rights.
- adults must do what is best for children.
- children should be supported to live and grow.
- children have the right to be listened to and taken seriously.



It also explains what adults and governments must do to protect children's rights.



This document will help you to understand what the Scottish Government has been doing to make sure children's rights are understood and protected in Scotland.



Our new Action Plan says what we will do over the next 3 years to make sure that children's rights are respected, protected and fulfilled in Scotland.

## Our Action Plan 2018-21: What Have We Been Doing?



Our last Action Plan said we would:

- Make the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child the law in Scotland
- Make sure children know about and understand their rights, and that adults do too.
- Look at how we involve children in our work so they can help to make decisions
- Look at how useful the Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment was in protecting children's rights.

## Action 1: What have we done to make the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child the law in Scotland



The Scottish Government is committed to making the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child the law in Scotland. This is called incorporation. Incorporation will mean children's human rights are protected by law.



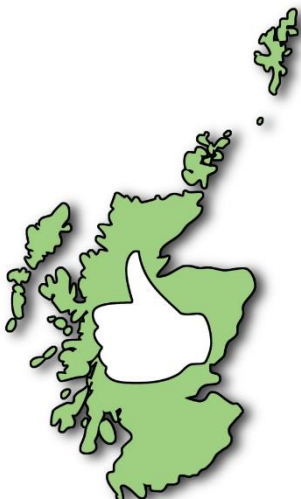
**The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill (the Bill)** was introduced to the Scottish Parliament and was passed on 16th March 2021. This was a great day of celebration.



The Scottish Parliament has limited powers. This means that some laws can only be made by the United Kingdom Parliament. If the Scottish Parliament looks to go over its powers, it can be challenged.



The United Kingdom Government thought that some parts of the Bill could not be decided by the Scottish Parliament. They asked the UK Supreme Court to look at this.



The United Kingdom Supreme Court decided that some parts of the Bill went over the powers of the Scottish Parliament.

There are still several ways we can incorporate the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child into law in Scotland.

We are now looking at the best way for the Scottish Parliament to go forward.

## Action 2: What have we done to make sure children know about and understand children's rights?



We have worked with Young Scot, Children in Scotland, and young people to create an information resource. This is called #ActivateYourRights.

#ActivateYourRights helps children and young people to find out about their rights. It helps them know what the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child means. It lets them know what to do if they feel their rights are not respected.



The #ActivateYourRights resources were published in September 2020. You can take a look at them on the Young Scot [website](#)



We held 5 Rights Cafe events in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Inverness, Stirling and Dundee. 180 children, young people and adults attended. We discussed what else we needed to do to make sure everyone knows about and understands children's rights.



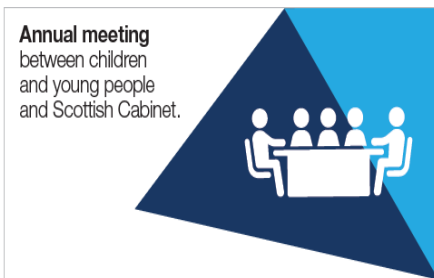
We have also worked with Education Scotland and YouthLink Scotland to help test training for adults working with children and young people to know more about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.



### Action 3: What have we done to look at how we involve children, so they can help to make decisions



We want to make sure all children and young people in Scotland can get involved and share their views when decisions are made that affect them.



We have held meetings of the Scottish Cabinet with children and young people. This is to make sure that children's voices are heard at the highest level of Government.



Children and young people have also been involved in First Minister's Question Times, government meetings, panels, discussion groups and taken part in surveys.

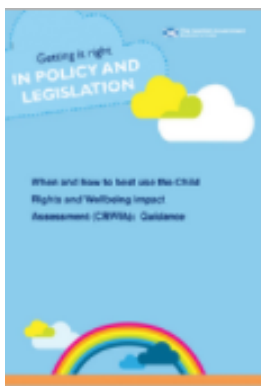


In March 2020, we published guidance to help organisations involve children and young people in decision-making. You can see this guidance [here](#).

## Action 4: What have we done to look at how useful the Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment was in protecting rights?



We have encouraged decision-makers to use the Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment. This helps them understand how their choices affect children's rights and wellbeing.



We have also made sure the Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment is useful. We have made some changes to it so it helps decision-makers.



## Children's Rights and the Coronavirus Pandemic



Coronavirus is one of the most difficult things the world has had to cope with.



We have made sure that children's rights are at the heart of the Scottish Government's response to the Coronavirus crisis. We have done this while protecting those at risk.



The Scottish Government listened to the views of children and young people when we decided how best to keep everyone safe.



We provided £25 million so that school-aged children could be digitally connected. This means having access to the internet.



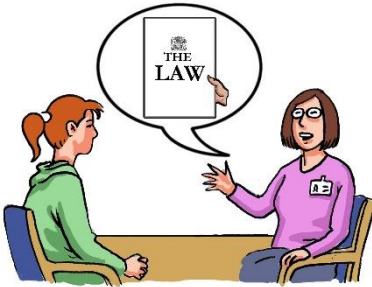
We also provided £20 million to help children and their families to play and socialise during the summer holidays.

## Highlights of the Last 3 Years



The Scottish Government has done a lot over the last three years to make sure children grow up loved, safe and protected.

Here are some of the things we have done:



Improve the experiences of children and young people in family proceedings



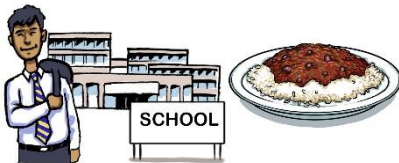
Children have the same legal protection from assault as adults



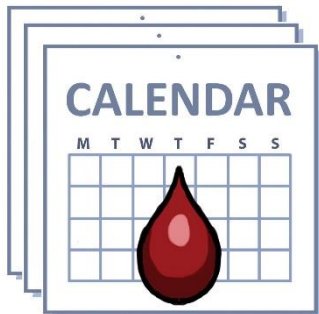
We have delivered over 190,000 Baby Boxes since the start of the scheme



Support children with our Scottish Child Payment worth £40 every 4 weeks



Free school meals for all pupils in primary 1 to primary 4 at all publicly-funded schools.



The first national government to introduce free period products for students attending schools, colleges and universities.



The age of criminal responsibility in Scotland will be raised from 8 to 12



Make sure children involved in the Children's Hearings System can get help have their views heard.



If you are interested in knowing more about children's rights in Scotland there's lots of information on the [Scottish Government](#) website, or you can read the full version of this document here.



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
gov.scot

© Crown copyright 2021

**OGL**

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit [nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3](https://nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3) or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at [www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot)

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at

The Scottish Government  
St Andrew's House  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

ISBN: 978-1-80201-595-9 (web only)

Published by The Scottish Government, November 2021

Produced for The Scottish Government by APS Group Scotland, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh EH6 5NA  
PPDAS966086 (11/21)

W W W . g o v . s c o t