

## Learning about Children's Rights

We have created this short resource for adults who work with children and young people to use and adapt in discussions and planned sessions on putting children's rights in law in Scotland. We have created a presentation to support this resource where you'll find this information and more as a set of slides for you to use.

### Children's rights

Children's rights are about what you need to grow up.

Things you need every day like food to eat, clothes to wear and a safe house to live in. Like green spaces to play, being able to learn and being able to meet your friends.



## **Putting children's rights into the law**

In March 2021 something very special happened in Scotland for children.

The Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament (the people in charge of Scotland) put all your rights into a law.

A law is a set of rules that people have to stick to and now there's a special one that's all about children's rights.

The law is called UNCRC Incorporation. Incorporation means including something. This means your rights will now be included in law in Scotland.

Putting children's rights into the laws in Scotland means that everyone will have to do that what is best for you.

## **What will change?**

We know from other countries across the world that putting children's rights into law means that people change the way they think about children.

It means adults start thinking about children's rights more, and they take action to help you when your rights are not being looked after.

It means that when things go wrong, you'll have the power to demand change.

It means that when people don't respect children's rights, like people who make decisions in Scotland– including the Scottish Government – there are consequences for them.

## **Your power**

This new law gives children power to change things – like a super power! If you had the power to change something very important to you in your life. What would you change?

You might have heard of a girl called Greta Thunberg, she is using her power to change how we look after the planet. Or Malala Yousafzai who used her power to make sure girls could go to school. There's lots of children in Scotland like them too, standing up to help look after the environment, education and other things that matter..

But it doesn't have to be big things like the planet. Small changes make an important difference too. You can change things that matter in your school or where you live too.

## What would you use your power to change?

### Discussion notes for Adults

Incorporation: the story so far

[The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (UNCRC) is an international human rights treaty. It sets out rights which every child is entitled to.

The UN adopted the UNCRC over 30 years ago in 1989. Since then, it has been signed up to by every country in the world except the USA.

The UK ratified the UNCRC in 1991, but none of its four countries have incorporated it into domestic law until now.

In March 2021 Scotland passed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) bill.

This is important as it means that children's rights now have to be at the heart of all decision-making. They will have to be taken into account when budgets are set and decisions are made that affect children's lives.

It means that children and their families at the last resort, could use the law to take their cases to court if their rights are not respected.

However, the evidence from other countries is that this doesn't have to happen. Instead, the culture of the country changes and children and young people are more valued.

#### UNCRC

There are 54 articles in the UNCRC. The first 42 of them describe what every child and young person from birth to 18 years old should experience.

- It applies to everyone under 18

- Human rights can't be taken away from you.
- Human rights can't be separated from each other. There is no right that is more important than another right.
- Human rights depend on each other. They need each other to work.

## **Power**

This new law gives children power as they can hold governments and other decision-makers accountable for their rights.

## **Prompt questions for discussion**

Why is it important that children get their rights?

What could adults do to help you get your rights?

If you could write your own law, what would it be about?

## **Information about the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland**

The Children and Young People's Commissioner is a person called Bruce Adamson. He works with a team of people who are fierce champions for the rights of all children under 18, or young people up to the age of 21 if they have care experience.

The Commissioner's job is to promote and protect children's human rights in Scotland.

The Commissioner is accountable to children and young people. That means he has around one million bosses!

If you are a child or young person you can get in touch with the Commissioner for more information or if you feel your rights are not being respected.

Adults who work with and care for children can also get in touch for advice on rights.

There is a lot of information on the website [www.cypcs.org.uk](http://www.cypcs.org.uk), and we would love to hear from you.

**Email:** [inbox@cypcs.org.uk](mailto:inbox@cypcs.org.uk)

**Phone:** 0131 346 5350

**Young People's FREEPHONE:** 0800 019 1179

**Text: 0770 233 5720** (Texts charged at your standard network rate)

Please note that the team are all working from home due to Covid-19 restrictions so it may take a little longer than usual to reply.