

OUR YEAR 2020/21: REPORT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Every year, we report to you about our work. This is our report for the year between April 2020 and March 2021, which began around the same time as lockdown.

WHO ARE WE?

The Children and Young People's Commissioner is Bruce Adamson. His job is to promote and protect your human rights if you're under 18 or up to 21 if you have care experience. He works with a team of people.

We work to make sure the laws that affect your lives are fair.

We help you understand how valuable and important your rights are.

We make sure adults in Scotland know more about your rights so they can see where they need to make changes.

We put you at the heart of our work and will listen and learn from you.

We work with Young Advisers who tell us what they think about lots of issues.

A FIERCE CHAMPION FOR YOUR RIGHTS

Child (UNCRC) a part of our law. This is the most important thing we can do to protect your rights.

- In March 2021, the Scottish Parliament voted to incorporate the UNCRC into Scots law. It means that the Scottish Government will need to keep its promises to children and young people.
- The UK Government has challenged parts of the bill that will make the law so more work has to be done. But incorporation will still happen.

"Incorporation means children's voices will be heard. They will be listened to and know that they matter." Abigail, Young Adviser

INVOLVING YOU

Working directly with you is essential to our work. Here are some of the ways that's happened this year...

- Our Young Advisers told us when their rights like education and health were not upheld in the pandemic.
- They helped us respond to issues such as poverty, education, digital exclusion, and mental health.
- They gave evidence to the Scottish Parliament and appeared at the United Nations.
- We spoke online to children all over the country so they could tell us about their experiences.

PUTTING YOUR RIGHTS INTO LAW

Our office has been campaigning alongside children for a long time to make the United Nations on the Convention on the Rights of the

WHAT HAVE WE BEEN DOING?

The UK went into lockdown because of coronavirus in March 2020 and we started working on the impact this was going to have on your rights.

- We were most worried about schools closing, families living in poverty, and mental health.
- We worked with children's rights experts to assess how coronavirus was affecting children.
- And this helped adults understand how decisions and laws affected you.
- When exams were cancelled, we told the Scottish Government and the SQA they had to listen to young people.
- We worked with the World Health Organization to look at how schooling could continue while keeping everyone safe.
- We reported to the UN on how well the government is doing on children's rights.
- We have been campaigning to protect children from harm. A new law said adults can no longer use any physical punishment on children.
- We've told the Scottish Government about how important it is to speak to you about climate justice.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Here are some of the things we'll be doing...

- We'll continue to promote and protect children's human rights during the pandemic.
- We are going to hit the road and chat to as many of you as we can in person as long as Covid-19 measures allow! We can't wait to hear your views.
- We are working with three new groups of Young Advisers. They'll be telling us about the issues that matter to them like mental health.
- We're looking forward to supporting young human rights defenders to demand change at climate conference COP26 in Glasgow.

OUR INVESTIGATIONS

Our Advice and Investigations team help the Commissioner use his power to investigate issues impacting children's human rights.

- We investigated if children were being locked up in prisons without proper laws being followed.
- Our previous work on restraint and seclusion in schools was used this year to make things better for children.

GETTING ADVICE

This year we helped even more people get advice on children's human rights.

They asked about loads of different things relating to Covid, like support for children with additional needs and rules around whole classes having to isolate.

THANK YOU!

We want to thank you all for helping us this year. You are all incredible human rights defenders.

Special thanks to our out-going group of Young Advisers. We couldn't have championed children's rights without you by our sides.

