

# Involving children in child rights impact assessment (CRIA) and child rights impact evaluation (CRIE)

Report from the Observatory of  
Children's Human Rights Scotland

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## Summary

At the time of writing this report Scotland is poised to incorporate the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into domestic law, with the [UNCRC \(Incorporation\) \(Scotland\) Bill](#). This is a transformative opportunity to ensure all [children's human rights](#) are respected, protected and fulfilled.

Such incorporation requires a human rights approach to policies, services and practices. Public authorities can benefit from examining the potential impacts of service and policy developments on children's rights (child rights impact assessment - CRIA) and from evaluating the actual impacts once these developments are implemented (child rights impact evaluation - CRIE). One of the general principles of the UNCRC is the right of children to have their views given due weight in decision-making (article 12). This is pertinent for carrying out quality CRIAs and CRIEs.

The project was facilitated by Children's Parliament with Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights) and the Observatory of Children's Human Rights Scotland. The project was undertaken with East Lothian Council and delivered within the framework of the East Lothian Children's Strategic Partnership (ELCSP).<sup>1</sup>

The project introduced CRIA and CRIE to identified Champions<sup>2</sup>, who then undertook an initial CRIA of the ELCSP Children and Young People's Service Plan. As part of the project, the Children's Parliament worked with over 100 children in East Lothian to develop recommendations for involving children in CRIA and CRIE, which were fed back to the Champions. The findings about children's involvement are shared through a Case Study with Members of Children's Parliament and the 'Listen, engage, have fun guide on involving children in CRIA and CRIE'.

This report focuses on the results of key informant interviews, focus group discussions, surveys, and reflective learning activities with adults who were involved in the project. It highlights wider considerations necessary to ensure meaningful and effective participation of children within CRIA and CRIE.

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1 East Lothian is one of 32 local authorities (often called councils) in Scotland. Local government responsibilities and functions are devolved from the Scottish Government to local authorities. The East Lothian Children's Strategic Partnership (ELCSP) brings together key organisations involved in supporting children, young people and families in the local authority area. This includes the council, health services, the police and voluntary sector organisations. It provides leadership and direction for services ensuring a multi-agency approach. The partnership is responsible for the Children and Young People's Service Plan.

2 Adults engaged with East Lothian Children's Services Partnership who took part in the East Lothian CRIA project.

**Key findings are:**

- CRIA, CRIE and children's rights more generally need to be demystified for those working in public authorities and other relevant services, and for children and their families. People need opportunities to learn and reflect on the value of engaging children and respecting and upholding their rights.
- Directly engaging with children during CRIA and CRIE shows the value of such assessments for adult decision-makers and highlights the importance of children's participation.
- Children's participation in CRIA and CRIE is best embedded in meaningful and ongoing opportunities more generally, and not as one-off initiatives. Children themselves have inclusive, cost- and time-effective ideas about how to do so. All children need to have opportunities to participate, as well as outreach to those who might be particularly impacted by the policy, service or practice.
- CRIA and CRIE are most valuable as a process of engagement, reflection, and monitoring, rather than solely a desk-based activity.
- CRIA and CRIE typically benefit from being undertaken by a team. This requires Children's Rights Champions being identified from relevant areas and having adequate time and resources. The Champions need sufficient clout to make change happen, with links into senior decision-making.
- CRIA and CRIE, and children's engagement with them, require time, resources and capacity. Initial investment is needed to establish them for the longer term. Current pressures on services and families present challenges but also opportunities to build in CRIA, CRIE and children's participation.

## 1. Introduction

A year-long project was undertaken to develop understanding and good practice on how to involve children<sup>3</sup> in child rights impact assessment (CRIA) and child rights impact evaluation (CRIE). The project focused on the East Lothian Children's Strategic Partnership Children and Young People's Service Plan 2020-2023 (henceforth 'the Plan'). It worked with East Lothian Council (ELC) and, more broadly, the East Lothian Children's Strategic Partnership (ELCSP)<sup>4</sup>, which is the multiagency forum responsible for the Plan.

This report complements the other project outputs, namely the case study with Members of Children's Parliament and the 'Listen, engage, have fun guide on involving children in CRIA and CRIE'. The case study discusses Children's Parliament engagement with the children, including key findings from the children involved. The guide concentrates on how to involve children in CRIA and CRIE, including children's own suggestions and reflections. This report concentrates on adults' reflective learning from the project and the wider considerations necessary to ensure meaningful and effective participation of children within CRIA and CRIE.

The project worked with the definitions of CRIA and CRIE<sup>5</sup> provided by the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC):

**Child rights impact assessment (CRIA):** examines the potential impacts on children and young people of laws, policies, budget decisions, programmes and services as they are being developed and, if necessary, suggests ways to avoid or mitigate any negative impacts. This is done prior to the decision or action being set in place.

**Child rights impact evaluation (CRIE):** provides an opportunity to consider the intended or unintended effect legislative changes, budget decisions, policies, programmes or services have had on children and young people's rights. Where necessary, the CRIE can propose what changes would be needed to ensure the measure respects children's rights and complies with the UNCR. This is done after a decision has been made or an action has been taken.

3 We use the word (or term) 'children' to mean all children and young people up to the age of 18, in line with the approach taken by the UNCR.

4 Partnership members are Children's Social Work, Connected Communities (East Lothian Council), East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership, Edinburgh College, Education, Elected Members, NHS Lothian, Police Scotland and Volunteer Centre East Lothian.

5 ENOC (2020) Common framework of reference on child rights impact assessment. A guide on how to carry out CRIA, Strasbourg, France: ENOC, p. 3. URL: <http://enoc.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/ENOC-Common-Framework-of-Reference-FV.pdf>

Children have the right to participate in decisions that affect them. This is underpinned by article 12 of the UNCRC and other participation rights. Such participation rights are also important for children to realise their human rights for prevention of harm, provision, and protection. Thus, this project explored how children could best be involved in CRIA and CRIE, as one method to enable them to participate in service and policy development.

Following this introduction, the report has five further sections.

- **Why are we doing this project?** Explaining the background and impetus for the project.
- **What did we do in this project?** Describing what was done in the project overall and particularly on how reflective learning was gathered during the project.
- **What did we find in this project?** Presents key findings, grouped into three themes.
- **Lessons learned and implications.**
- **Further information.** Includes information on project partners and useful resources.

## 2. Why are we doing this project?

Scotland is poised to incorporate the UNCRC into domestic law, with the [UNCRC \(Incorporation\) \(Scotland\) Bill](#). This is a transformative opportunity to ensure all [children's human rights](#) are respected, protected and fulfilled.

Such incorporation will require a human rights approach to policies, services and practices. It requires considering all of children's economic, social, cultural, political and civil rights holistically, as well as providing for transparency and accountability. It requires us to think systematically about how well duty bearers such as local authorities and other public bodies are complying with children's human rights and how they might further realise children's rights. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has recommended CRIA and CRIE as one of the general measures of implementation.<sup>6</sup>

Once commenced, the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill will require Scottish Ministers to prepare and publish a child rights and wellbeing impact assessment (CRWIA) in relation to:

- a Scottish Government Bill they intend to introduce to the Scottish Parliament;
- certain Scottish statutory instruments; and
- decisions of a 'strategic nature' relating to children's rights and wellbeing.

Such assessments are also an important measure for public authorities to adopt to ensure they meet their obligations under the UNCRC legislation.

In 2020, the Observatory of Children's Human Rights Scotland (the Observatory) was asked by the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland to undertake a CRIA of emergency COVID-19 measures as they impacted on children's rights. In 2021, to further understand and support learning on CRIA and CRIE, a project was implemented with ELC and the ELCSP to:

- Develop understanding of, and good practice on, how children can be involved in the process of CRIA and CRIE.
- Provide ELC and ELCSP staff with appropriate training and support to enable them to embed a continuous process of impact assessment and evaluation of the impact of services on children's rights.
- Learn from the above to inform the Commissioner's work with public authorities on how to involve children in CRIA and CRIE processes to ensure children's rights sit at the heart of decision-making.

<sup>6</sup> UN Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment No.5. (2003) General measures of implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (arts. 4, 42, and 44, para.6), CRC/GC/2003/527 November 2003.

### 3. What did we do in this project?

The project was developed and undertaken in collaboration with key personnel in the ELC and ELCSP. The project team consisted of the Children's Parliament, Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights) and the Observatory of Children's Human Rights Scotland. Undertaken from February 2021-2022, the project's activities were:

- Identifying a group of Champions from the ELCSP, who were responsible for taking forward aspects of the Plan – particularly the Plan's priority of reducing inequalities for children.
- With the Champions, introducing CRIA and CRIE in a workshop, followed by a collective CRIA analysis of the Plan.
- Direct engagement with over 100 children aged 8-13 for their ideas on how best to involve children in CRIA and CRIE.
- Linking the children and their findings with the Champions.

Children's Parliament led the work with children from three primary schools and one secondary school in East Lothian. This is fully documented and reported on in the case study. The Observatory led on the overall reflective learning, considered in this report. Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights) contributed significant expertise, knowledge and understanding of CRIA and CRIE and led the collective CRIA analysis of the Plan.

To gather in and reflect on learning, the Observatory took several steps, with due consent from all those involved:

- Documenting the process, including collecting meeting notes, session guides and PowerPoint presentations.
- Considering the collective CRIA analysis of the Plan.
- Gathering reflections from adults involved in the project, which included group discussions at the start and end of the project, recorded interviews with eight Champions who were available, and individual responses to online surveys (referred to as 'adult participants' below).
- Individual online feedback from 29 children participating in the project and 3 teachers who supported them.

These resources were systematically analysed, using thematic analysis to generate themes and findings.

The project team reflected that the project has concentrated on the potential impacts of the Plan (CRIA) but not on the actual impacts of the Plan's implementation (CRIE). Further experiences and research of CRIE are needed to help develop this approach systematically. The findings below relate to both CRIA and CRIE.

## 4. What did we find in this project?

The project's findings suggest that the aim of this project - to understand how best to involve children in the process of CRIA and CRIE - requires attention to wider considerations. Such considerations can be grouped into three themes:

- 1) Knowledge, understanding and valuing of CRIA and CRIE more generally
- 2) Opportunities for meaningful and sustainable participation for children generally and
- 3) How to embed both themes within current services and governance structures.

These themes are explored below.

### 4.1 Knowledge, understanding and valuing of CRIA and CRIE

The project's findings underline that many people in local council areas, from service providers to children, are unfamiliar with CRIA, CRIE and children's rights more generally. The findings suggest that there are certain advantages to the terminology and frameworks in being official, legalistic and formal. The findings also show that they can be intimidating and abstract. People need to see the value of CRIA, CRIE and children's rights, particularly in how they improve services and children's experiences. These points are elaborated upon below.

From adult participants' perspectives, the formality of CRIA and CRIE had certain advantages: it sounded official, it had a clear process and template, and it fitted with other equalities and human rights assessments already undertaken. For example, an adult participant reflected how staff members' attention increased when being trained on impact assessments when they realised the legal imperatives. A few adult participants saw potential for current equalities and human rights impact assessments to knit together with CRIA and CRIE, with one interviewee stating they could 'become a valuable tool for managers as they are thinking of service change'. Awareness of UNCRC incorporation appeared to be growing across the council area and ELCSP, which potentially can support staff and organisations to perceive the importance of assessing children's rights impacts within their work.

While CRIA and CRIE's formality provided some benefits, a number of adult participants highlighted the terminology can be unfamiliar, intimidating, and abstract for those less engaged in formal assessment processes. Several adult participants were concerned about their knowledge of children's rights, and particularly not knowing the range of children's rights within the UNCRC and other human rights treaties. They were further concerned that those working directly with children would also lack knowledge. Participants' reflections highlighted that children's rights language could be intimidating and unduly abstract. One adult participant interviewed explained

that, 'children's rights can be seen as evangelical academic stuff that doesn't relate to day-to-day practice'. From the child participants' survey responses, increased knowledge about children's rights was the most common learning from being involved in the project (20/ 29 responses). When reflecting on the project, a focus group discussion underlined the need to 'translate' rights into language that is accessible for people who are working with children and for children themselves. Both adults and children need to have a good baseline knowledge of children's rights to be involved substantively in CRIA and CRIE.

The idea of impact assessments was also potentially unfamiliar: for example, one adult participant commented in an interview, 'Initially I was like, what is it?' Previous experience of impact assessments had felt bureaucratic and risked tokenism: a few adult participants shared that such assessments were a bit of an 'eye roll moment' that were done at the end of a report but not thoroughly thought through. Several adult participants underlined that CRIA and CRIE needed to be different and valued - as one participant expressed: 'If people don't see it adds value, they will do it in a really tokenistic way'. Notably, the Champions who engaged directly with children for the project saw this value: the energy, ideas and creativity of this engagement demonstrated the value of children's participation and rights more generally, and CRIA and CRIE's potential.

Undertaking an initial assessment of the Plan using a CRIA template proved daunting for many in the project. One adult participant reflected that the assessment raised 'more questions than answers' and another participant commented that it became clear that 'doing a CRIA on a complex CSP [children's services plan] is not easy'. Adult participants widely agreed that starting a CRIA earlier in the creation of a services' plan would be easier and valuable, and particularly for the engagement of children. One person fed back through email:

*I believe a key challenge [of our project] is that children are engaging with a written plan not a developing plan and good practice is that engagement of children should be before the plan is developed, to inform the development of the plan ... We are also assured that gaps the children identify could inform reviews of the plan.*

While daunting, the initial assessment raised important issues for planning that were shared with the ELCSP. For example, the Plan referred to surveys and other information from children, but these were not always tied explicitly into the proposed actions. The data cited were not always disaggregated for groups of children whose rights were most at risk, nor were data always available in relation to key rights for children, particularly for those aged 16 to 17. Senior managers reflected that it was not only data that was needed, with one participant saying in an interview, 'Having enough information about children and young people, missing information as well as learning about consulting those involved and making use of it in terms of reviewing and remedy'. The initial CRIA undertaken for this project showed the merits of realising what data and information were available, which were missing, and making use of this in reviewing and ensuring remedies for children.

Thus, CRIA and CRIE as a process had certain advantages:

- it gave an official status to considering how service planning could impact on children and their rights
- the process itself already raised important issues to take forward and
- it could be knitted together with other impact assessments already undertaken, helping integration as well with adult-oriented services.

However, the terminology of CRIA, CRIE and children's rights more generally could be daunting and abstract to those less centrally involved. This demonstrates a need to show CRIA and CRIE's value more effectively through user-friendly language that connects with potential users' roles and priorities and supports people to explore how they can make a difference in everyday practice.

## 4.2 Opportunities for children and young people's participation

The principle of children's meaningful participation was supported by all adult participants. At times it was difficult to realise, due to time constraints, systems not being in place, and the busy schedules of children, schools and adult participants, particularly heightened due to the COVID-19 pandemic. When adult participants were able to engage directly with children through this project, the adults often considered it transformative for them and their work. It showed the value of the CRIA process, illuminated current gaps in engaging children and young people systematically and meaningfully, and suggested ways to change this.

For the Champions who engaged directly with groups of children, facilitated by the Children's Parliament, the experience and learning were described as inspirational. In group discussion, adult participants reflected that they found it 'refreshing' fun, and enjoyable to engage with children through interactive sessions. Several stated that they learned a lot from the process, with one adult participant saying that children were 'more insightful than we thought' with 'really cool ideas' that were either new to the adult or validated decisions to support them on the right track. Many child participants recognised their own valuable contributions and recommended adults listen and take appropriate action based on their ideas. This is exemplified by children's comments in the online feedback, such as one child writing: 'Listen to them [children] and try to accomplish their ideas instead of ignoring them and do[ing] your ideas because their thoughts may be better than anything an adult could think up'. Champions were inspired to incorporate such approaches in their future planning and responsibilities. One adult participant exclaimed 'you never get this much fun in an adult session!', spurring conversations on the possibilities of adopting such practices into adult CRIA processes to generate more engagement. One adult participant encapsulated how experiencing productive engagement with children made them realise its importance: 'Once people do it and get involved, it starts to generate more interest, they are converted. Grounds for optimism'. Thus, adult decision makers' experience of directly engaging with children made the value of participation evident.

An equally strong finding is that, to date, meaningful participation opportunities were not available to many children. When undertaking the Plan's initial CRIA, adult participants reflected that some children may have been surveyed and consulted on the problems but were very seldom involved in identifying and co-producing the solutions. Both child and adult participants were concerned that feedback was not routinely provided to children on what happened to the views children shared during other participation activities. Child participants could not identify regular and meaningful opportunities for them to share their views and ideas with service decision-makers. Adult participants recognised that time, resources and capacity were needed for participation: one participant considered, 'Understanding how we participate with children is the hardest thing I think in a way that doesn't cost a lot of money and can be done regularly'. The child participants had ideas for embedding participation mechanisms across their schools, communities and region to ensure regular, consistent and ongoing dialogue with decision-makers: they identified numerous and inventive ways to do this, from community post boxes to mobile apps (see case study with Members of Children's Parliament and the 'Listen, Engage, have fun guide' for further examples).

In final reflections on the project, adult participants identified the imperative to ensure sustainable and meaningful opportunities for children's participation generally across the council area. One senior manager expressed the potential for this in their interview:

*Having people at the heart of design in what they want to enjoy. Let's co-design what we do in the summer. Let's co-design how we make use of spaces. ... Getting to daily experiences will get rights embedded.*

If participation were more generally working well across the council area, then the specifics of engaging children with CRIA and CRIE could dovetail effectively. Further, baseline evidence would be available and further research and engagement could be commissioned where there were gaps.

A consistent finding was that some groups of children were meaningfully involved: namely, care experienced children through the [East Lothian Champions Board](#). It was noted that senior decision-makers engaged directly with children through the Board, with considerable impact. This led several project participants to reflect that many other children did not have this opportunity. One adult participant elaborated upon this emphatically:

*What I want to make sure this is about every child and young person. Sometimes it's tokenistic approach it's [the] same children and young people all the time. The child in the middle of class who never says much or makes any fuss, is that child being listened to? How do we make sure we listen to everybody? Not just about having a group. How does everyone participate?*

Through being part of the project, opportunities were identified: for example, from the initial assessment of the Plan, one participant saw opportunities to consider and learn from child-friendly complaints.

Thus, the project generated strong and consistent findings about the role of children's participation in service development.

- The direct engagement of adult decision-makers with children demonstrated to the adults the value of such engagement and of the potential for CRIA and CRIE processes themselves.
- Children's participation in planning processes is best embedded into wider commitments and opportunities that can reach out to all children.
- Adults recognised that time, capacity and resource issues needed to be addressed to engage children meaningfully and sustainably. The children had cost-effective ideas on how to do so.

### 4.3 Embedding CRIA and CRIE

Three elements were identified as essential to embedding CRIA and CRIE within service planning and evaluating, and particularly children's participation in CRIA and CRIE processes.

First, there need to be identified staff members leading on the CRIA and CRIE process. As one adult participant commented, 'If it's everyone's job it is nobody's job. You do need a lead to make things happen'. Several adult participants suggested specific ways to make this effective, such as:

- Having at least one person in each division as a champion of children's rights, who can train up others (current 'diversity champions' were identified as a promising option).
- Ensuring such people have sufficient seniority and operational responsibilities to make change happen.
- Linking these people into the highest level of service and governance structures, to ensure that senior decision-makers are engaging with the CRIA and CRIA process and findings.

Thus, certain elements were required – Children's Rights Champions with the ability to make change happen and the reach to senior decision-making.

Second, teams need to be created for CRIA and CRIE across the relevant services. As one adult participant described, what is needed is,

*Embedding children's rights through whole systems work in organisations. For many years people thought it was about children's services. In the last few years, we have been working hard to expand understanding on the influence the public sector has.*

According to this participant, this went beyond services traditionally considered for children in health, social work and education. Awareness-raising and training is needed across organisations, from planning to housing, as one adult participant remarked. Terminology could be important: this was not only for East Lothian Council, but also for NHS Lothian and other partners.

With teams brought together, the experiences of this project underlined the importance of clear expectations and roles. The Champions in this project were initially not clear on their involvement, and this needed to be addressed as the project progressed. A team, across relevant services and beyond the Council, is necessary but that also requires attention to ensuring the team works effectively together.

Third, several participants commented on the difficulties and opportunities due to COVID-19 for engaging children in CRIA and CRIE. Responding to COVID-19 was causing considerable time and resource demands on staff, which would continue because of its detrimental effects for many children and their families. As services are stretched with competing demands, one adult participant expressed that it '... can feel like, oh my goodness, this is something else we have to do right now'. But, at the same time, in the change inspired and required by responses to COVID-19, there was the possibility of embedding CRIA, CRIE and children's participation in them, specifically, in service redesign. As one participant commented, 'I say it's a good time ... because we are changing so many things that you know ... there's opportunities to build that in'. The reality of resources, time and capacity needed to be acknowledged, according to adult participants, but also the opportunities offered by a time of change.

In short, three elements were highlighted throughout the project as important for embedding CRIA and CRIE and, particularly, children's participation:

- There needed to be champions in services, who had sufficient power and were linked into senior decision-making.
- Teams were necessary for the CRIA and CRIE process, which required investment to ensure team members worked well with clear expectations and roles and must go beyond council services to other relevant partners.
- The realities of resource, time and capacity needed to be considered, particularly due to the demands caused by COVID-19, but that in redesigning the process there were opportunities.

## 5. Lessons learned and implications

The project suggests particular learning for public authorities who are undertaking CRIA and CRIE and committed to engaging with children while doing so.

- ✓ CRIA and CRIE, and children's rights more generally, may be unfamiliar to those working in public authorities and other relevant services and to children and their families. CRIA and CRIE need to be demystified for people. They need to have accessible opportunities to learn about and reflect on the value of engaging children, respecting and upholding children's rights in service planning, development and delivery.
- ✓ Directly engaging with children during a CRIA and CRIE can highlight their value to adult decision-makers and show the importance of children's participation. Further, meaningful ways to involve children – using creative and engaging online and in-person methods – have lessons for other impact assessments and planning participatory approaches with adults.
- ✓ Children's involvement in CRIA and CRIE processes are best embedded in meaningful and ongoing opportunities for participation more generally. Children themselves have ideas about how to do this, including ideas that are inclusive, cost- and time-effective.
- ✓ CRIA and CRIE are most valuable as a process of engagement, reflection and monitoring, rather than a 'tick box' exercise. They can help identify solutions as well as problems, highlight gaps in information and data, and focus attention on groups of children whose rights are most at risk.
- ✓ Addressing children's rights requires not only children's services to work together (such as education, health and social work) but much more widely across local authority services, other public authorities and other organisations. This project suggests: identifying Children's Rights Champions across services with sufficient clout to make change happen; ensuring these Champions are linked into senior decision making and governance structures; and investing in awareness-raising and training.
- ✓ In such contexts, a CRIA and CRIE require a team to take forward the process, drawing on such Champions across services. This requires clarity of expectations and roles, and investment in the effective working of the team.
- ✓ CRIA and CRIE, and children's engagement with them, require time, resources and capacity. Initial investment is needed to establish them for the longer term. The current pressures on services and families present challenges, but also opportunities in terms of re-design and innovation.

## 6. Further information

### Sources directly related to CRIA and CRIE are:

- ✓ ENOC publications highlighting the importance of CRIA and CRIE in embedding children's rights. ENOC publications are available on their website. <http://enoc.eu/>
- ✓ Independent Children's Rights Impact Assessment on the Response to Covid-19 in Scotland. <https://www.cypcs.org.uk/coronavirus/independent-impact-assessment/>
- ✓ Conducting Children's Rights Impact Assessments: Learning in Action Practice Note. <http://www.ed.ac.uk/education/observatory>
- ✓ Listen, engage, have fun: Guide on involving children in child rights impact assessment (CRIA) and child rights impact evaluation (CRIE). <https://www.cypcs.org.uk/>
- ✓ Involving children in CRIA: A case study with Members of Children's Parliament. <https://www.cypcs.org.uk/>

### A brief overview of the East Lothian CRIA project

**Context:** In March 2021, the Scottish Parliament passed the UNCRC (Incorporation) Scotland Bill. As Scotland moves towards making the UNCRC part of the law in Scotland, it is imperative that CRIA and CRIE and other implementation measures are adopted to put children's rights at the heart of public authority decision-making.

In support of this, the office of the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland (the Commissioner's Office) identified a need to develop knowledge and understanding of how to involve children and young people in CRIA and CRIE processes, and how this can be applied by public authorities in Scotland. The Commissioner's Office thus worked with partner organisations to undertake the East Lothian CRIA project to learn more about involving children in CRIA and CRIE.

**Partnership:** The project was facilitated by Children's Parliament with Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights) and the Observatory of Children's Human Rights Scotland. It was undertaken with East Lothian Council and delivered within the framework of the East Lothian Children's Strategic Partnership.

**Purpose:** To develop understanding of and good practice on how children can be involved in CRIA and CRIE processes.

**Approach:** This project was about putting children's rights at the heart of public authority decision-making. The project took a case study learning approach centred around the East Lothian Children and Young People's Service Plan and focused on several key activities including:

- the engagement of a group of children to investigate CRIA and CRIE in East Lothian
- identification of a core group of 'Champions' who had roles affiliated to the development and delivery of the Children and Young People's Service Plan
- the development of a CRIA on the Children and Young People's Service Plan
- raising awareness and understanding of CRIA and CRIE with the Children's Strategic Partnership and Champions
- capturing, sharing and embedding learning throughout the project.

**Output:** A national 'how to' guide on involving children and young people in CRIA/CRIE for the Commissioner's Office.

## About the partners

### Children's Parliament

Established in 1996, Children's Parliament is Scotland's centre of excellence for children's participation and engagement. Our mission is to inspire greater awareness and understanding of the power of children's human rights and to support implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) across Scotland.

Through our children's human rights based practice we provide children with opportunities to share their experiences, thoughts and feelings so that they can influence positive change in their lives at home, in school and in the community. We use creative, participatory methods to support children to meaningfully engage in decision-making processes, as outlined in the UNCRC. We work across Scotland with children up to 14 years of age from diverse backgrounds.

For more information about Children's Parliament please visit: [www.childrensparliament.org.uk](http://www.childrensparliament.org.uk)

### Children and Young People's Commissioner

Established by the Commissioner for Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2003, the Commissioner is responsible for promoting and safeguarding the rights of all children and young people in Scotland, giving particular attention to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The Commissioner has powers to review law, policy and practice and to take action to promote and protect rights. The Commissioner is fully independent of the Scottish Government and Parliament.

For more information about the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland please visit: [www.cypcs.org.uk](http://www.cypcs.org.uk)

### Observatory of Children's Human Rights Scotland

We are a collaborative of Scottish organisations working to drive implementation of children's human rights in Scotland, in line with the UNCRC and broader international human rights treaties. This will help to ensure that children's human dignity is respected, and all children are supported to thrive and reach their full potential. To achieve this, we want to change locally and learn globally.

For more information about the Observatory please visit: [www.ed.ac.uk/education/observatory](http://www.ed.ac.uk/education/observatory)

## Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights)

An alliance that works to improve the awareness, understanding and implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and other international human rights treaties across Scotland. We have almost 500 members ranging from large international and national non-governmental organisations (NGOs) through to small volunteer-led after school clubs and interested professionals. We take proactive steps to build awareness of children's human rights across our membership, public bodies and children. We build members' capacity to embed children's rights-based approaches and use human rights to influence change. This includes targeted webinars, training, resources, peer support, and collaborating on our annual State of Children's Rights reports and submissions to UN bodies.

For more information about Together please visit: [www.togetherscotland.org.uk/](http://www.togetherscotland.org.uk/)

### Ethical Approval

The Ethics Committee of MHSES, University of Edinburgh, approved the project. A range of issues were considered, such as voluntary and informed consent, do no harm, power dynamics, data management and participants' anonymity.

### Writing credits

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