



**Easy
Read**

**CHILDREN &
YOUNG PEOPLE'S**
Commissioner
Scotland

Our yearly report from 2024 to 2025

How we are promoting and
protecting children and young
people's rights in Scotland



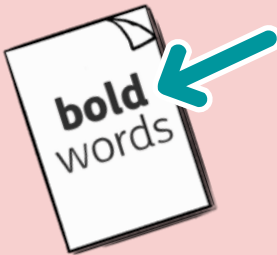
Easy Read



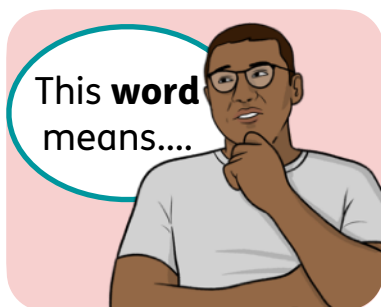
This is an Easy Read version of some information. It may not include all of the information but it will tell you about the important parts.



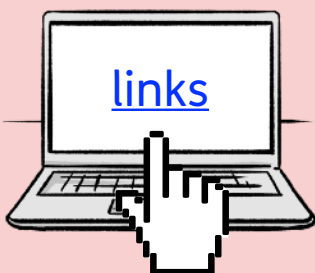
This Easy Read booklet uses easier words and pictures. Some people may still want help to read it.



Some words are in **bold** - this means the writing is thicker and darker. These are important words in the booklet.



Sometimes if a bold word is hard to understand, we will explain what it means.



Blue and underlined words show links to websites and email addresses. You can click on these links on a computer.

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About this report



This report is from the **Children and Young People's Commissioner** for Scotland.

The Children and Young People's Commissioner is the person in charge of supporting the **rights** of:



- Children and young people who are under 18.



- Young people who are aged 18 to 21 and are in care, or have been in care before.

There are different ways a young person can be in care, like living with a family member who is not their parent.



Rights are the things that every person should have, by law. Like the right to be safe.



Nicola Killean is the Children and Young People's Commissioner for Scotland.



We have written a report about the work we have been doing in the last year to make children and young people in Scotland's lives better.

About us

We work to:

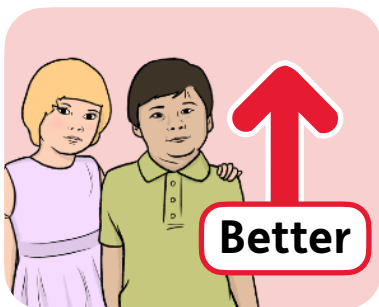


- Make sure that the law and **policies** are fair.

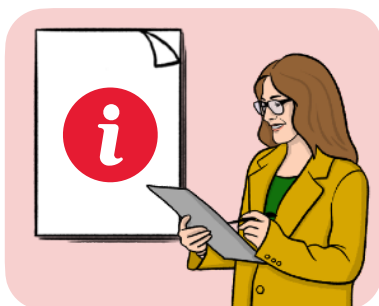
Policies are the ways an organisation works and does things.



- Help you understand your rights.



- **Research** how to make young people's lives better.



Research means collecting information about something to find out more about it.

We also:



- Share stories of people who are supporting children's rights well. This helps other people to learn from them.



- Use the law in situations where we are worried that human rights are not being supported or respected.

Young advisors group



We work with a group of young advisors. They are a group of young people aged between 12 and 17.



They all live in different parts of Scotland and have different backgrounds.



We meet with young advisors to talk to them about their lives.

They also:



- Help us with our work.



- Share information with other young people to help them learn more about their rights.

About our plan



It is important for us to understand what matters to children and young people in Scotland.



We asked them what problems they want us to work on.



We used what they told us to write a plan for the next four years.



We told the Scottish Parliament about our plan in March 2024.



All of our work this year is because of what children and young people said they wanted us to do.

Our recommendations



A **recommendation** is important advice that can help people make good decisions.



We have made 5 recommendations in this report.



We think these recommendations will make children's rights better.

1. Education



People who are making changes to education must include and talk to children and young people.



What children and young people think is very important.

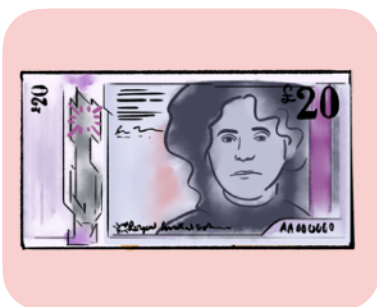


Organisations like the Scottish Government should try very hard to include all children.

2. Government



The Scottish Government and other people in charge should be clear about what they are doing for children.

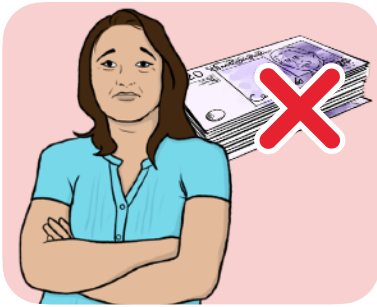


They should also be clear about the money they spend.



That means people can check to see if it is happening.

3. Poverty



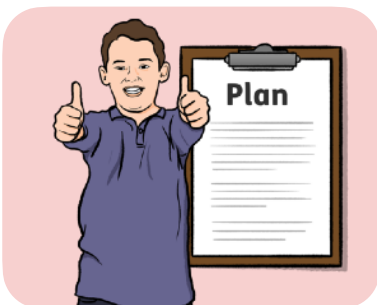
Poverty means not having enough money to buy the basic things you need to live.



The Scottish Government will make a new plan about child poverty soon.



There are too many children living in poverty, and the plan will work on this.



It must make sure that children who live in poverty are included in making the new plan, because what they think is very important.

4. The law



The Scottish Government must make sure that as many people as possible can use the new law that is about children's rights.



The new law is from the **United Nations** and is called the UN Convention on the Rights of the child, or **UNCRC** for short.



The **United Nations**, or UN for short, is an organisation made up of many countries working together. It works to make the world a safer and better place.

5. Children's rights



The Scottish Government must spend money and time to make sure that children, young people and adults know about children's rights in the UNCRC.

Our plan



Our plan has 3 main **aims**.

Aims are what we want to do.

1. Leadership



Leadership is about planning and making decisions that affect people.



Our aim is to get people in leadership to talk to children and young people when they make plans or decisions.

2. Protect

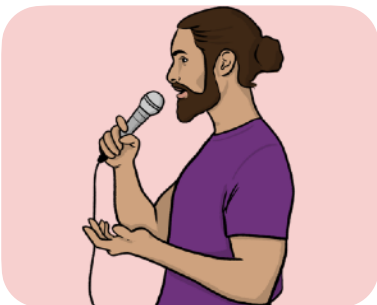


Protect means to keep something or someone safe.



Our aim is to make sure that rules and laws protect the rights of children and young people.

3. Promote

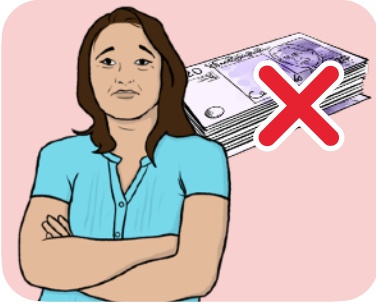


Promote means telling more people about something.



Our aim is to make more people aware of the rights of children and young people and why they are important.

Children told us the problems they want us to work on are:



- **Poverty.**

Poverty means not having enough money to buy the basic things you need to live.



- **Education.**

Education is where you learn new skills, like at a school or college.



- **Mental health.**

Mental health is the way you think and feel. Having good mental health means being able to cope with your emotions.



- **Discrimination.**

Discrimination is when you are treated badly or unfairly. This could be because of your gender, race, religion, disability, health condition or sexual orientation.



Children also said they wanted us to work on **climate change**.

Climate change is all about big changes in the weather. For example, storms getting worse than they used to be, or having less rain in some places.

Leadership



Remember, **leadership** is about planning and making decisions that affect people.

Education



All children have the right to an education that helps them improve their talents and learn new skills.



Children have told us that not everyone is getting their right to education.



We have spoken to children from all over Scotland in schools, in **additional support units**, and who are learning in a different way, to find out what they think.

Additional support units are schools for children who need extra help.



We have told the Scottish Government and other people in charge of education that they have to do more to make education better for all children.



We wrote a report which tells people in charge of education what they can do to make sure children get their right to education.



We are now working on making sure they do make changes.

Mental health



Another important part of our work is mental health.



The United Nations says that children have the right to the best possible health – that means physical and mental health.



We have been working with other organisations to find out how young people can have better access to mental health services.

Poverty



The UK and Scottish governments must do more to stop children from living in poverty.



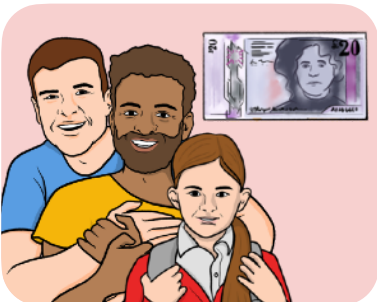
Poverty can have a very bad effect on children.



It can make them feel cold and hungry and make it hard to concentrate at school.



We want the UK and Scottish governments to think about children and their rights when they make decisions.



We want them to help children, like by giving money to families who need it.



We want them to give more children free lunches in school.

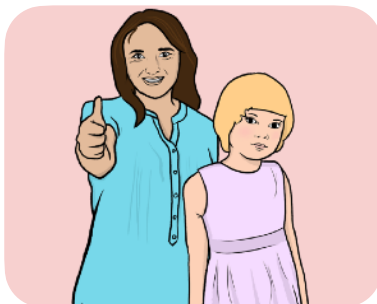
International work



Our young advisors told the United Nations that it is difficult to make a complaint about school.



Our young advisors said they thought that children should be able to make a complaint.



But they said that they did not usually get any response to complaints unless adults got involved.

Protect



Remember, **protect** means to keep something or someone safe.



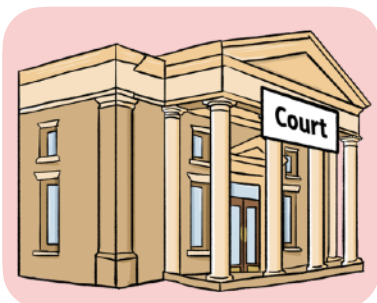
Children's rights are already part of a law called the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, or UNCRC for short.



In 2024, a law was passed that makes children's rights part of the law in Scotland.

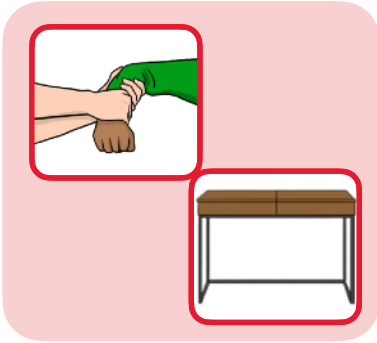


This new law also gave us more powers.



It means we can take part in court cases, or take our own cases to court, to make sure children get their rights.

Restraint and seclusion



Restraint means holding a child or young person to stop them from moving.

Seclusion means shutting a child or young person in a room on their own.



We wrote a report about restraint and seclusion in Scotland's schools in 2018, and we have been working on making things better since then.



The Scottish Government must look after all children in Scotland.



It must make sure children are safe and protected in all the places where they are looked after when they cannot live at home.



Children might be looked after somewhere else, for example if they need help with their mental health.



This year we supported an idea for a new law which would make stronger rules about restraint and seclusion.

The police



We are looking into how the police use **force** against children.

Force means making someone do something, or stopping them from doing something.



When police deal with children, they must be fair and respectful.

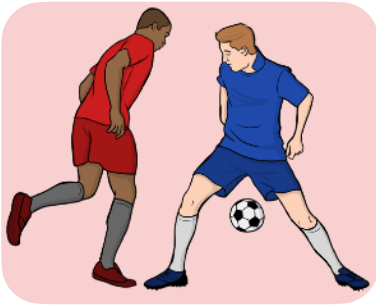


Information from the Scottish Police Authority shows that the police are more likely to use force against children than against adults.



We want to know why this is happening and how to stop it.

Child footballers



We have been working for a long time to protect the rights of children who play football for **professional** clubs.

Professional means you get paid to do something, like a job.



We complained to an organisation called the Competition and Markets Authority, or CMA for short, about the way football clubs and the football league treat young footballers.



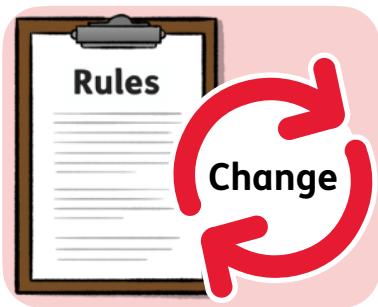
We wanted them to investigate and make the Scottish Football Association, or SFA, and Scottish Professional Football League, or SPFL, treat players better.



Sometimes players are not allowed to change teams easily, or play football for their school team.



Not letting players choose for themselves is wrong.



The CMA are not going to investigate at the moment, but we think we will make progress and get the rules changed.

Promote



Remember, **promote** means telling more people about something.

British Sign Language Plan



We told the Scottish Parliament about our British Sign Language Plan for 2024 to 2030.



The plan talks about what we will do for **young BSL-users**.

Young BSL-users are children and young people who use British Sign Language to communicate.

This plan is about how we will:



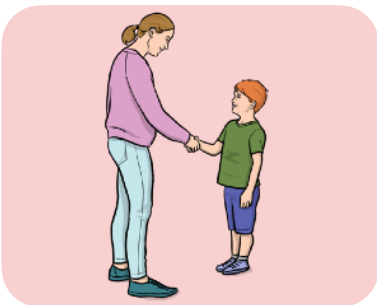
- Promote and protect the rights of young BSL users.



- Involve young BSL users in our work.



- Promote the use of BSL.



We worked with deaf children and young people to make the plan.



We have made a new BSL section on our website.



Some of our team have been learning BSL so they can work with deaf children.

Online assemblies



We have held three assemblies online for younger children to learn about their rights.



The first assembly was about climate change.



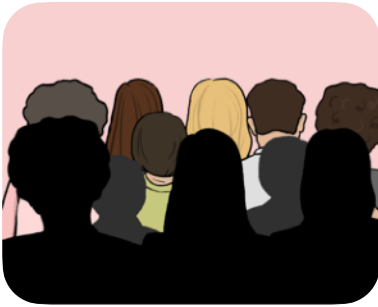
The second assembly was about happiness.



The third assembly was about play.



Each assembly was hosted by Commissioner Nicola and a different young person.

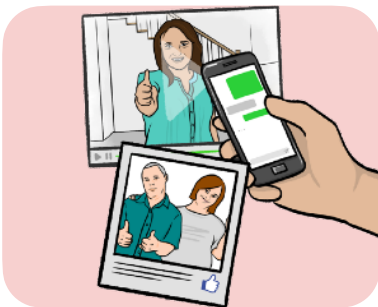


Thousands of children joined us online.

Telling people about rights

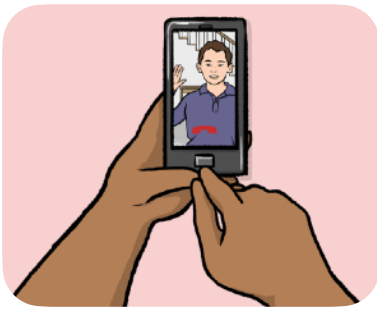


We talked to TV, radio, and newspapers about the rights of children and the work that we do.



We also tell people what we do on our website and social media.

Social media is websites like Facebook, X, and Instagram.



Our young advisors have made videos and written blogs about rights.



We have given lots of speeches about children's rights.

Website



We have worked to make our website easier to use for people who find reading hard or who use a screen reader.



We have made information about the UNCRC in languages like Punjabi and Polish, so more children can find out about their rights.

Money



We get money from the Scottish Parliament.

This year, we spent money on:



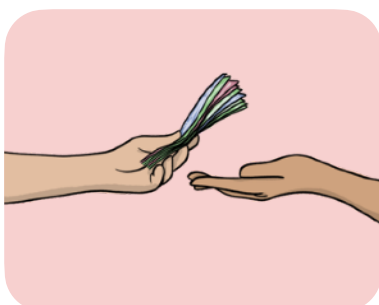
- Making sure people understand how important children's rights are.



- Including children and young people in our work.



- Things we need for our office, like internet and phones.



- Paying the Commissioner and our team for their work.

The next year



Our young advisors will be going to other countries to work with other young people on rights.



We are going to speak to lots more children from all over Scotland to find out what is important to them.



We are going to keep telling the Scottish Government and other people in charge what more they can do to help children's rights.



We are going to keep working on the things children and young people told us to work on, like education, poverty, and mental health.

Find out more



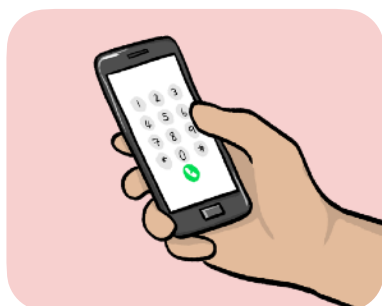
You can look at our website here:

www.cypcs.org.uk/

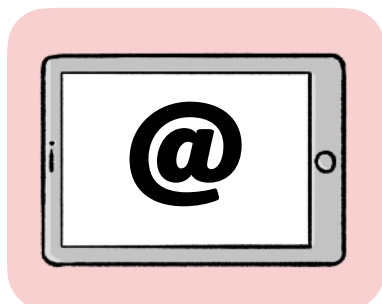
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