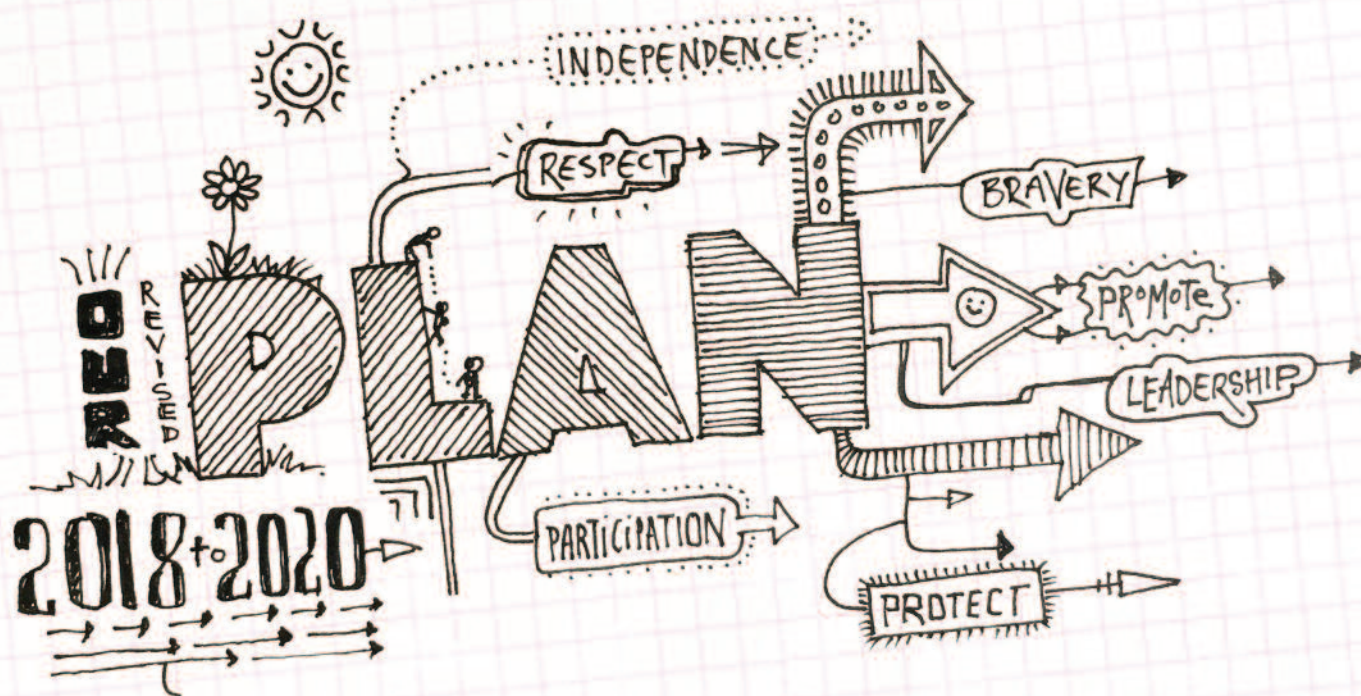
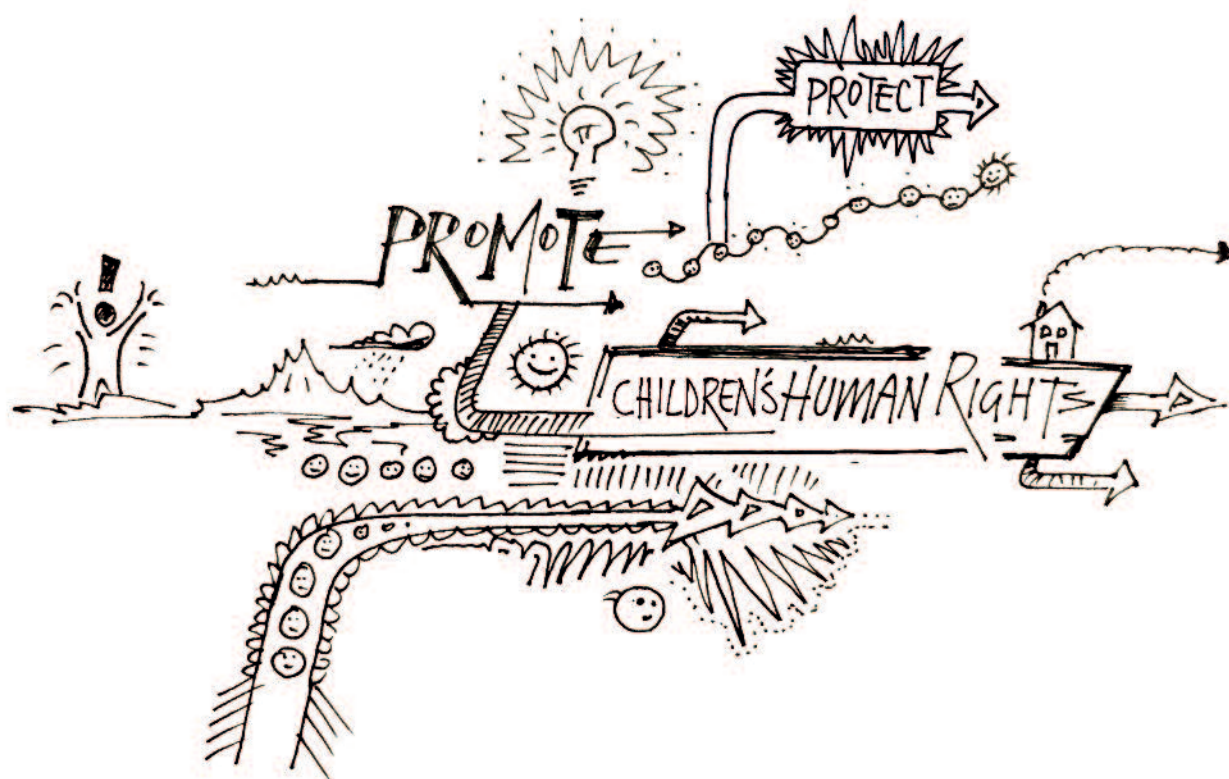




2018 to 2020

PARTICIPATION

PROTECT



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FROM THE COMMISSIONER



In 2003 the Scottish Parliament wanted to "make a real difference by creating an independent, high-profile and influential post" of Children and Young People's Commissioner with a responsibility to promote and safeguard the rights of everyone under 18 in Scotland or up to 21 if the young person is in care or has care experience.

Children and young people don't have the same economic or political power as adults. Adult systems aren't designed around children's needs and when things go wrong it's much harder for them to get justice. They need a champion who is an independent person able to challenge those in power. The role of Commissioner must do that, whilst bringing together different parts of the political and institutional systems and society in the best interests of the child.

In 2017 I was chosen to be the Commissioner for the next six years. Since my very first day, I've had the pleasure of meeting with children and young people from all across Scotland and I have been told, in no uncertain terms, that to be a good Commissioner I must be brave and fierce.

As well as being a champion for rights, a key part of my job is to work with people who make decisions that affect children's and young people's lives so that they deliver on their promises— for example within education, healthcare, housing and justice. Decision-makers must understand their rights obligations and by including and listening effectively to children and young people, they will do their jobs properly.

As Commissioner, I have a dedicated team of 15 staff who bring a variety of skills and talents to help make sure I have the information and support to do my work.

To help develop this plan, we created a Young Advisers Group where 11 amazing young people from different backgrounds and experiences came together to inform, influence and inspire us as a team.

We have also sought the views of children and young people from across Scotland in a variety of ways. We asked for opinions about what they wanted from their Commissioner and about how we should spend our time and money to do the job well. This plan is informed by the powerful views and ideas that were shared with us and this is our commitment to the children and young people of Scotland. A big thank you to all the children, young people and adults who have helped us shape it.

Bruce Adamson



A Commissioner is someone who is given special authority by those in power. The Children and Young People's Commissioner has an Act of Parliament (law) and a special 'warrant' that gives him the power to promote and protect the rights of all children and young people in Scotland.



OUR MISSION



It is our mission to be fierce champions for the rights of all children and young people in Scotland. We promote and protect your rights if you're under the age of 18, or up to 21 if you are in care or have care experience.

We will work to make sure the laws that affect your lives are fair. We will challenge people in power as they have made promises to you to make sure you have all you need to grow up in an environment of happiness, love and understanding.

We will help you understand how valuable and important your rights are. With that understanding you can demand change where your rights, or the rights of others, are not being respected. We will support you to become human rights defenders, and make sure that when you stand up for rights you aren't punished for it.

We will make sure adults in Scotland learn more about your human rights so that they can see where they need to make changes.

We will put you at the heart of all of our work. We will be caring and kind and will always listen and learn from you.



This is in the international law, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)



OUR VALUES



We will stand up to people in power and hold them to account. We will use the authority given to us to protect children and young people's rights, even if it is difficult or challenging.

We will not be unduly influenced, or be seen to be influenced, by people in power. We will be accountable to the people of Scotland through the Scottish Parliament.



We will make sure that all the work that we do to promote and safeguard the rights of children and young people is grounded in knowledge and expertise. We will use our expertise to shape law, policy and practice and we will seek to inspire and influence others both in Scotland and internationally.

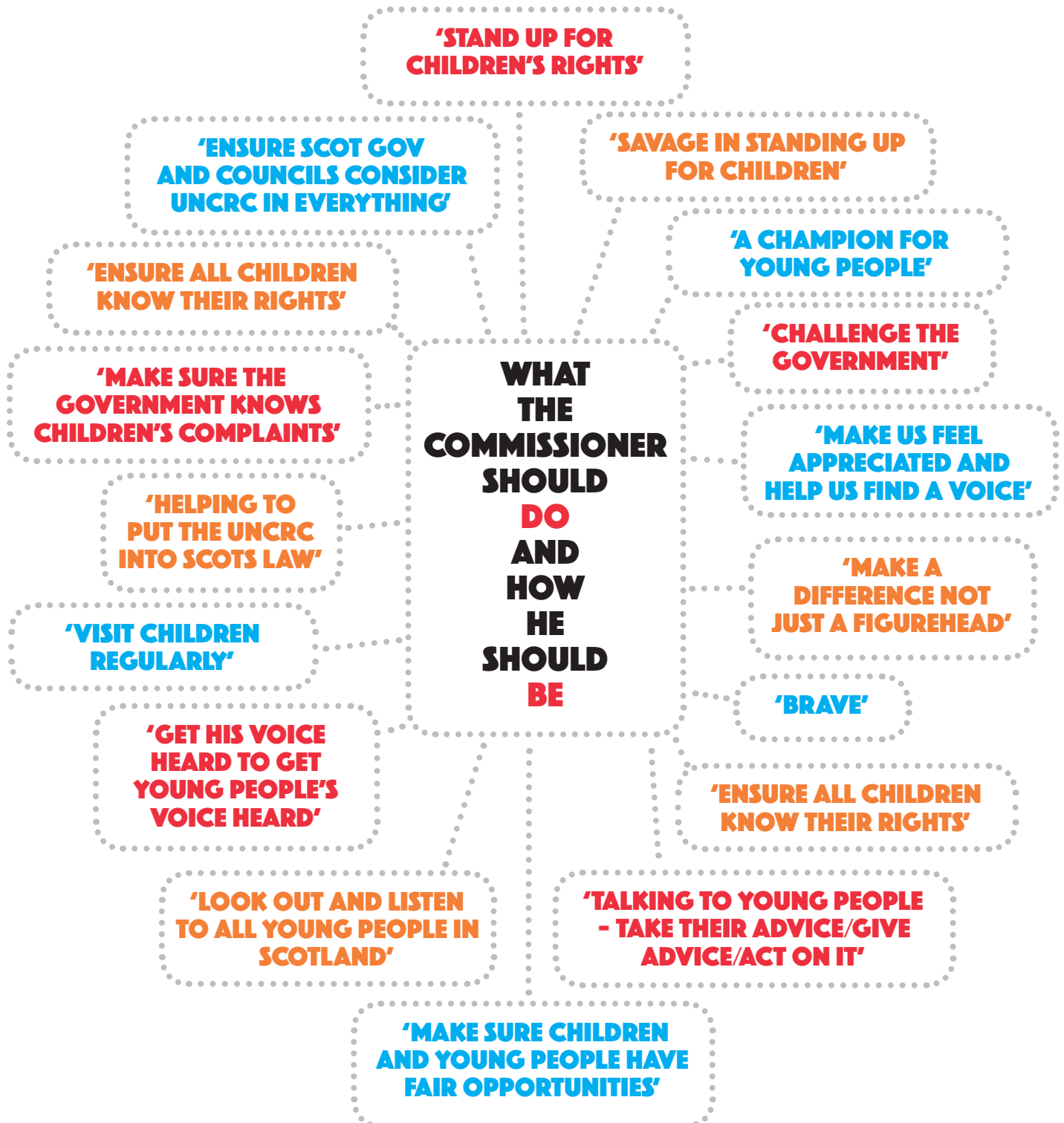
We will have children and young people's views at the heart of all of our work and we will be open and approachable. We will make a special effort to involve children and young people who are less likely to be included or listened to, and those whose rights are most at risk.

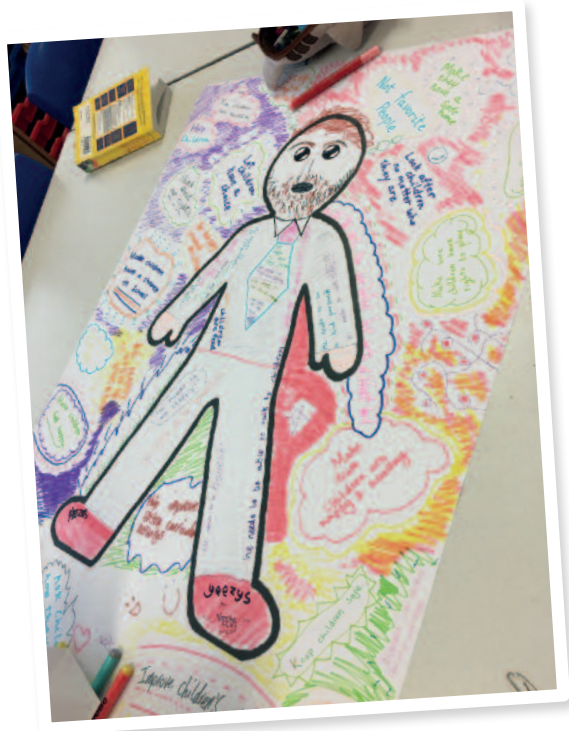
We will always act with truthfulness and honesty and treat everyone with respect.

Our values come from our work with children and young people across Scotland.



WHAT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE TOLD US





**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
TOLD US THAT THEY WANTED THEIR
COMMISSIONER TO HAVE 'BIG EARS
FOR LISTENING', 'HAVE A GOOD
HEART' AND BE**

'GENEROUS'

'STUBBORN'

'LOUD'

'ENTHUSIASTIC'

'KIND'

'CLEVER'

'CONFIDENT'

AND

'TO CARE'



HOW THE COMMISSIONER SHOULD SPEND HIS TIME AND MONEY

A key part of revising our plan was children and young people directing us as to how the Commissioner should spend his time and money. This is reflected in our aims for 2018-2020.

Children and young people told us that the Commissioner should spend most of his time and money working to:

'make sure that laws that are made by the government are fair to children and young people' and

'involve children and young people in his work'

You can read more detailed information on the process and findings of how children and young people's views informed this revised Strategic Plan on cypcs.org.uk.

ISSUES THAT MATTER

Children and young people told us about some of the important things they care about. Issues around not being listened to, or not being able to influence decisions being made that affect them were key themes. This was expressed both as decisions made locally, for example in education, or nationally and internationally, like concerns around laws and the impact of Brexit. Some of the issues raised related to **poverty, mental health, discrimination, justice** and **education**.

OUR AIMS



1

To be a successful Children and Young People's Commissioner who makes a difference to the lives of children and young people

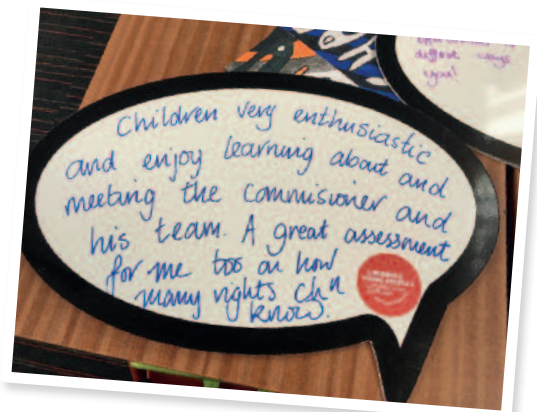
- Making sure that children and young people's views are at the heart of all that we do.
- Being a trusted expert who supports the development of children's human rights in Scotland.
- Connecting children's human rights work in Scotland to the rest of the world.
- Sharing knowledge and learning from others.
- Being approachable and professional with everyone in the work we do.
- Upholding the highest standards as a public body and being accountable to the people of Scotland through the Scottish Parliament.



2

To establish a culture of children's human rights in Scotland

- Helping children and young people to know and understand their rights.
- Making the Scottish government, and others in power, keep their promises to children and young people.
- Helping the Scottish Parliament to be a good children's rights guarantor.
- Ensuring all public bodies, including people who hear complaints and inspect services have children's human rights at the centre of their work.
- Supporting civil society to put children's human rights at the centre of their work.
- Making sure that parents and carers are given the support they need so that children and young people realise their rights.
- Inspiring children and young people to become 'human rights defenders,' that is, to defend their own rights and the rights of others.



WHAT WILL A CULTURE OF CHILDREN'S HUMAN RIGHTS LOOK LIKE?

People of all ages will understand the rights of children and young people in a meaningful way. This doesn't just mean that people will be able to list these rights - but that:

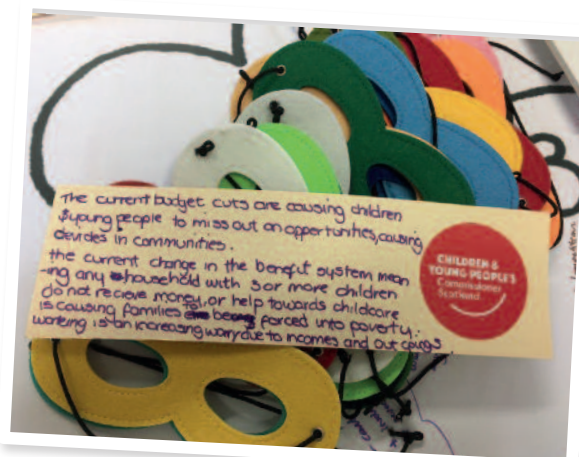
- children and young people will feel able to demand change through knowing and understanding their rights, and
- adults will change how they make decisions and the laws and rules they make because they know about these rights.

This means that the Parliament has a special responsibility to make sure that children's human rights are protected in Scotland.

3

To make sure that children's human rights are at the centre of laws, policies and practice

- Making sure the Scottish and UK Governments keep the promises they made to children when they signed up to international human rights laws.
- Using the law to make changes that will improve children and young people's lives.
- Using the Commissioner's legal powers to highlight and challenge failures in law, policy and practice.
- Investigate issues affecting children's human rights and take action, including through the courts.
- Arguing for human rights agreements and laws to be made part of Scots law. For example, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
- Reporting to the United Nations and other international groups on how well children's human rights are being respected in Scotland.



OUR APPROACH TO PARTICIPATION



Every child and young person has the right to participate in matters that are important to them.

When the Scottish Parliament created the role of Commissioner they made it clear that involving children and young people must be one of the most important parts of our work and this is laid down in law.

The way we involve children and young people will be **meaningful, relevant** to their lives, **empowering** and **enjoyable**.

Over the next two years we will work to make sure as many children and young people as possible get a chance to be involved, particularly those who are less likely to be included or listened to, and those whose rights are most at risk.

Children and young people have told us how much they value being able to meet us in person and we are committed to regularly travelling to work within different communities.

We will involve children and young people by:

- Supporting children, young people, and adults to help us make good decisions about how we run our office.
- Making sure that every member of the team involves children and young people in their area of work or specific projects.
- Working and supporting partnership organisations who have specialist

knowledge and extensive networks so that we can make an impact with large numbers of children and young people.

- Connecting with children and young people online in a way that respects their rights and safety.
- Organising a Human Rights Gathering every year to report back on how we are doing, as well as being honest about where we can do better.



OUR STORY



©Alex Leonard

Whilst our office was set up by the Scottish Parliament in 2003, the idea of a Children's Commissioner goes back to the start of the modern system of human rights. Scotland should be rightly proud of its place within this international movement.

INTERNATIONAL

In the mid 1940s the world was coming together after the horrors of war. Together, the people of the world put in place the foundation for what would become the international human rights framework. Over the last 70 years, through laws, governments have made promises that they would respect, protect and fulfil all human rights. These cover everything from the right to life and survival, to being protected from torture and equal rights within law, to freedom of expression, rights to housing, social security, education, and healthcare.

To make sure that governments keep those promises to children and young people they must report back regularly to the international community through the United Nations and other international bodies. However, the UN recognised that there needed to be an added way to hold governments to account. There needed to be an independent post tasked to make sure those promises were kept. That post brings the weight of those international obligations to the places where children live and where decisions are made.

SCOTLAND

People working in children's human rights in Scotland had called for Children's Commissioner for a long time. Soon after the Scottish Parliament was created in 1999, the Education, Culture and Sport Committee started discussing the need for a Commissioner. It is one of the only times that a Committee of the Parliament has created a law without the government or someone from a particular political party. Children and young people were involved from the start of the process and the law made sure that the Commissioner was given the independence and the power to be effective. On 26 March 2003 all of the Members of the Scottish Parliament from across political parties agreed to pass a law to "create a friend - a powerful friend - for all of Scotland's children and young people" - that friend is the Children and Young People's Commissioner.



OUR FOUNDATION



THE UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

There are many international laws which set out the human rights of children and young people, but the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is special. It is the first legally binding international instrument to incorporate the full range of civil, cultural, economic, political, and social rights, as well as aspects of humanitarian law for everyone up to age 18.

The Convention starts with the premise that children should grow up in a family environment of **happiness, love and understanding**.

The UNCRC builds on the Charter of the United Nations (1945) which recognised that the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family are the foundation of freedom, justice, peace and social progress. The UNCRC breathes life into the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) which proclaimed that childhood is entitled to special care and assistance.

The UNCRC is the most rapidly and widely ratified international human rights treaty in history. It changed the way children are viewed and treated in international legal terms. It proclaims children's status as human beings with a distinct set of rights, not just as passive objects of care and charity.

The rights contained in the 54 articles of the UNCRC are universal, interdependent and interrelated. The articles cover all aspects of a child's life and explain how those in power must work together to

make sure all children and young people can enjoy all their rights.

The rights can be grouped into four categories: **Survival, Development, Protection** and **Participation**, as well as a set of General Principles and additional provisions (articles 43 to 54) explaining how governments and international organisations will work to implement the UNCRC.



GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Four UNCRC articles (sometimes called General Principles) that are particularly important

- ♦ **Article 2 (non discrimination)** The rights of all children must be respected. Governments must be able to show that they have treated everyone fairly.
- ♦ **Article 3 (best interests of the child)** This means adults should think about what is best for children and young people when making decisions that affect them.
- ♦ **Article 6 (the child's right to life, survival and development)** This means making sure that children develop in the best way possible
- ♦ **Article 12 (the child's right to express views)** This means involving children in decisions which affect them and thinking of how best to do this, depending on the age of the child

THE COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

There is a group of experts that works for the United Nations called the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Governments who have agreed to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) have to report to it every 5-8 years. This is to check that they are keeping their human rights promises to children and young people.

The Committee also produces extra information, called General Comments to help people better understand children's human rights. It does this by explaining in more detail what governments should do to make sure that children and young people get their rights. Two of these General Comments are especially important to our work: General Comment 2 and General Comment 5.



GENERAL COMMENT NO. 2 (2002)

THE ROLE OF INDEPENDENT NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS IN THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

General Comment 2 explains how people like Children and Young People's Commissioners can best protect children's human rights.

- Help children, young people and adults understand children's human rights.
- Make sure children and young people know how to contact them.
- Listen to all children and young people's views and make sure others do too.
- Involve children and young people in their day to day work.
- Work closely with children's and young people's organisations.
- Be able to investigate where children's human rights are not being respected.
- Report back to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child on how their country's government is respecting children's human rights.

The Committee also says that like other national human rights institutions, Commissioners should be independent of government.

GENERAL COMMENT NO. 5

(2003) GENERAL MEASURES OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

The 'General Measures of Implementation' are the parts of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which set out what governments should do to respect children's human rights.

- Governments need to do everything in their power to respect children's human rights. They should make sure that they provide the most money they can to make that happen.
- Governments should make sure that children and young people know what their rights are.
- Governments should help adults understand how to respect those rights.
- When governments are reporting back to the United Nations about what they have done to respect children's human rights, they should make sure that those reports are available to everyone, including children and young people.

COMMISSIONER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (SCOTLAND) ACT 2003

This is the law that created the job of Children and Young People's Commissioner in Scotland.

The Commissioner's main job is to promote and safeguard the human rights of everyone under 18, or up to the age of 21 if a child or young person is in care or has care experience.

This means the Commissioner should:

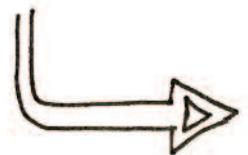
- Make sure that children, young people, and adults know about children's human rights and that they understand them.
- Make sure that people in power respect, protect and fulfil children's human rights, and make suggestions to improve the law, policies and the way people work.
- Find examples of where adults work well with children and young people and share them with others so they can learn from this.
- Carry out research into children's lives and let adults know when the rights of children and young people are not being respected.
- Make sure adults listen to what children and young people have to say when decisions are being made that affect their lives.

In his work, the Commissioner must:

- Pay special attention to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Include children, young people and the people who work with them when he makes decisions about what work he does and how he does it.
- Listen to children who don't always get a chance to share their views.
- Write a plan saying what work his office will do and tell people about it
- Make sure that children and young people know about the Commissioner's job and how they can contact him.
- Write a report every year saying what he has done to make sure children and young people's rights have been respected, protected, and fulfilled.

The Commissioner also has powers to help children and young people when their rights are not being respected by:

- Providing children and young people with information about their rights.
- Helping children and young people complain when they feel their rights are not being respected.
- Working with people who provide services to children and young people, like schools or local councils, to sort out any problems or complaints.
- Investigating cases where the rights, interests or views of children and young people have not been respected, and suggest changes to make things better.



HOW WE CREATED OUR PLAN



Children and young people's views are at the heart of this plan and they were involved in the work in different ways. We also asked adults for their views.

WORKSHOPS

In August and September 2017 we travelled across Scotland to work with 16 groups, a total of 247 children and young people. We created workshops to enable children and young people to share their opinions with us. This in-depth approach gave us the chance to hear from those who are less likely to be included or listened to, and whose rights are most at risk.

SURVEY

We created a short survey which was shared on our website and on social media. Young people were also asked the same questions in a survey which was run in some secondary schools.

YOUNG ADVISERS

From September 2017, we supported a group of 11 young people from across Scotland to work closely with us on this project. The group's first focus was on a planned residential event for young people and they took on a variety of tasks including influencing the structure and content, presenting the workshop findings and co-hosting the weekend with the Commissioner.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S HUMAN RIGHTS GATHERING

In November 2017, we organised a three-day residential event where over 60 young people from across Scotland came

together to discuss the results from the workshops, give their views on the way the Commissioner's office should work and share their 'burning issues'. This gave us the chance to raise awareness of children's human rights and the work of the office. One of the messages from the weekend was that we should have an annual event to report back to young people about how we are doing and find out from them where we could do better. We are firmly committed to doing this.



INFLUENCING THE PLAN

We gathered all the material from the workshops, including photos, drawings and written views, then added views from the online survey.

All of this gave us a picture of how children and young people saw the role of the Commissioner, how he should spend his time and money, and how children and young people could help the Commissioner do his job.

Children and young people told us about important issues and their views will continue to influence our work during 2018-2020.

Adults and organisations shared their views with us by answering questions in a short online survey. The range of responses will provide a focus for our future engagement with stakeholders and organisations.

HOW WE WILL TRACK OUR PROGRESS



Children and young people are at the heart of all of our work, so it is important that they tell us where we are getting it right and where we could do better.

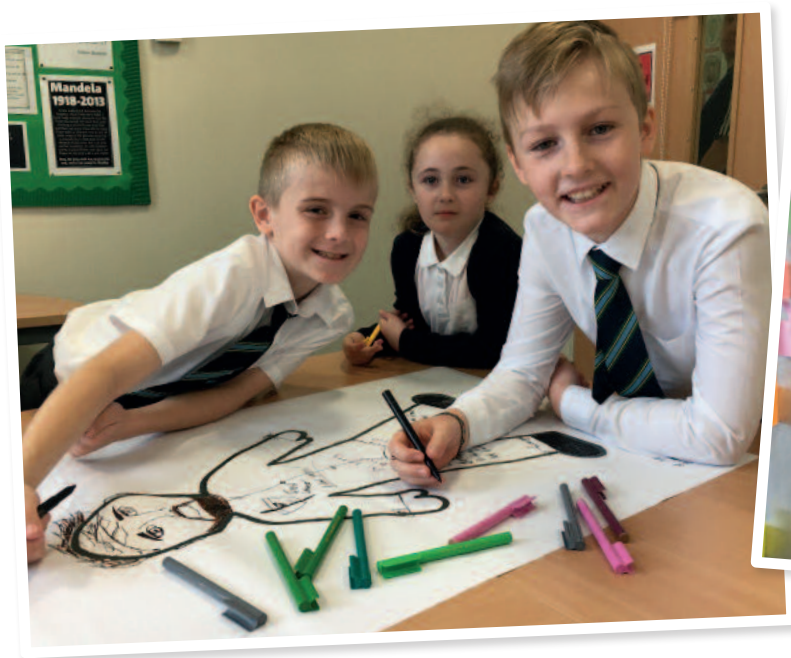
We will work with children and young people to develop a way of measuring how well we are doing against our three aims and continually reflect on what they tell us. With their help we will seek to review and improve our plan to make sure that our work always reflects our values.

Every year we will publish our annual report detailing our activities and this will be laid at the Scottish Parliament.

We will use planned events in November each year to involve children and young people in reviewing our actions and helping us shape future plans.



The 20th November is Universal Children's Day and we celebrate children's human rights by gathering together children and young people to listen and learn from them.



OUR MONEY



The office receives money every year from the Scottish Parliament to promote and safeguard children's human rights in Scotland. This money is available from 1 April in each year to 31 March of the following year. The table below shows how much money we plan to spend in the years up to 31 March 2020.

	2018-19	2019-20
Aim 1 To be a successful Commissioner who makes a difference to the lives of children and young people	£98,100	£98,862
Aim 2 To establish a culture of children's human rights in Scotland	£163,500	£164,770
Aim 3 To make sure that children's human rights are at the centre of laws, policies and practice	£65,400	£65,908
Staff Wages	£895,696	£840,520
Staff Related Costs Includes recruitment and selection of new staff as required	£4,700	£4,700
Property Costs Includes rent, rates, electricity, cleaning and repairs	£110,469	£114,250
Professional Fees Includes external audit of accounts, legal fees and subscriptions	£28,302	£28,850
Running Costs Includes stationery, insurance, postage and telephones	£48,123	£48,660
Capital Expenditure For replacement of IT equipment	£600	£1,000
TOTAL	£1,414,890	£1,367,520

Staff Team

As well as the Commissioner, there are 15 people working in the office as follows:

Commissioner	1
Senior Management Team	4
Staff	11
Total	16

OUR THANKS



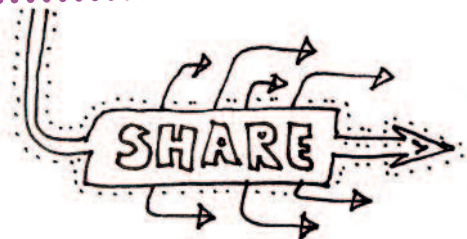
Thanks to every child and young person who helped us create our plan.



Thank you to our fabulous Young Advisers: Fergus Blyth, Sarah Brown, Zen Ghani, Clara Gray, Robert McCall, Mhairi McCann, Holly Mitchell, Liam Slaven, Winnie Thomas, Tanya Thomson and Lucas Webster. You worked so hard and became a special part of our team.



To all the children, young people and adults who shared their thoughts with us by filling in our online surveys, thank you for taking the time to do that.



There were many adults who supported children and young people to be involved with this project. Thank you so much for your hard work and commitment to children and young people's rights.



(CCYP/2018/1) Laid before the Scottish Parliament by the Commissioner for Children and Young People in Scotland in pursuance of section 14A(7) of the Commissioner for Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2003 on 29/03/2018.



Thank you to everyone who took part in our workshops.

Pollokshields Primary School, Glasgow

The Young People's Organising and Campaigning (YPOC) Group, Aberdeenshire

Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYPS) from Ayrshire and Fife

National Youth Ambassadors with the Scottish Football Association (SFA)

New Struan School, Clackmannanshire

Action for Children UK, Eilean Siar Residential Unit and Who Cares? Scotland, Eilean Siar

Stornoway Primary School, Eilean Siar

Rossie Young People's Trust, Angus

Anderson High School, Shetland

OPEN Peer Education Project, Shetland

St Clement's Primary School, Dundee

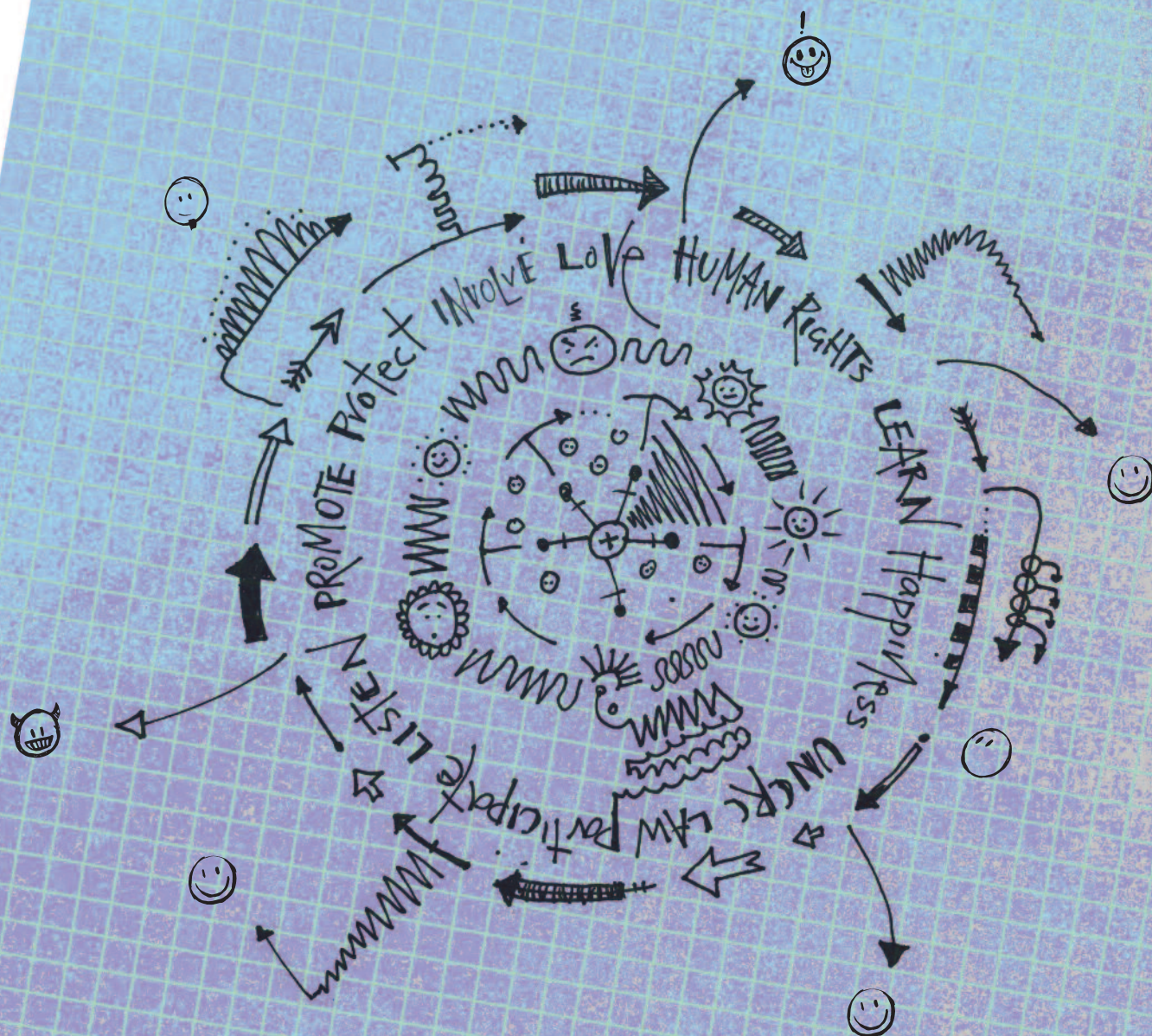
The Royal Blind School, Edinburgh

Caledonia Primary School, North Ayrshire

North Lanarkshire Young Parents Service, North Lanarkshire

Thanks to all of you who spent the weekend working with us at the Young People's Human Rights Gathering, and to the adults who helped support that.





OUR GROUP OF YOUNG ADVISERS MADE A SHORT FILM ABOUT OUR PLAN. PLEASE WATCH IT ON OUR WEBSITE.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE THIS DOCUMENT IN ANOTHER FORMAT, PLEASE LET US KNOW.

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