CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S Commissioner Scotland

"This is our lives, it matters a lot."

Summary report: local authorities respond to our recommendations

Contents

About the Children and Young People's Commissioner 4

Introduction 5

Culture 6
- Participation 6
- Child- friendly complaints 7
- Support and supervision 7
- Relationships 8
- Safeguarding gaps 8

Curriculum 9
- Subject choice 9
- Online school 10

What was missing 11
- Extra-curricular activities 11
- Rest, relaxation and leisure during the school day 11
- Overload and homework 11

Personalisation and support 12
- Responding to additional support needs 12
- Deaf children 13
- Co-ordinated Support Plans (CSPs) 14
- Influencing workforce development planning 14
- Children not regularly attending school 14

Assessment and qualifications 15
- Implementation of the Hayward Review 15
- Senior stage and S6 15

Purpose 16
- The UNCRC in education 16

What was missing 16
- Stress and pressure 16

Conclusion 17

Recommendations 18
- Culture 18
- Curriculum 19
- Personalisation and support 19
- Assessment and qualifications 21
- Purpose 21

About the Children and Young People's Commissioner

Nicola Killean is the Children and Young People's Commissioner for Scotland. She became the Commissioner in August 2023 and has a six-year term. The Commissioner works with her team to promote and protect the rights of children and young people in Scotland. That is:

- everyone under 18, and
- everyone up to 21 who is in care or care experienced

The law that created the Commissioner's role says that the Commissioner must:

- Promote awareness and understanding of children's rights.
- Involve children and young people in the Office's work.
- Make sure laws, policies and practice affecting children and young people's lives are fair and respect their rights.
- Promote and carry out research to progress children's rights.
- Share examples of adults working well to fulfil children's rights so others can learn from it.

The Commissioner also has legal powers which we can use in some situations where we are concerned that human rights promises to children and young people are not being kept. We use these powers of investigation and litigation (taking action in court) when we think we can make a bigger change that lots of children can benefit from. There are rules about when we can do an investigation. We must not duplicate the work of another Office, and we cannot investigate when it is an issue that is reserved to the UK Parliament. Our Office's role is to hold people in power to account and to take action when children's rights are breached.



Introduction

In April 2025, we published "This is our lives, it matters a lot": Putting children's rights at the heart of education, which drew together the views that children had shared with the Commissioner over 18 months and set them within the context of children's rights.

We promised children and young people that we would follow up our report by asking duty-bearers what they would do to address the concerns that children raised with us.

Our recommendations were addressed to duty-bearers in education – to the government, local authorities, and public bodies who are accountable for delivering education in Scotland.

We asked the following duty-bearers to respond to our recommendations:

- the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
- the chief executives of Scotland's 32 local authorities
- the chief executives of Education Scotland, the General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS), His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland (HMIE) and the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), now Qualifications Scotland.

We received responses from the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, Education Scotland, GTCS, HMIE, and from 30 local authorities.

This report provides a summary of local authorities' responses to the specific recommendations we made to them. We also produced a short film for children and young people, to update them in an accessible way.

Many of the responses from local authorities were comprehensive and directly link back to specific recommendations that have been made in our "This is our lives" report. We are grateful to all who have taken the time to consider the concerns children have raised, and what more they can do to address them.

Seven local authorities did not provide detailed responses to the concerns raised or to our recommendations and instead used a shared template response letter asking for more information on our methodology.

It is clear that some concerns children raised are well understood and shared by leaders within local authorities. There is evidence of work underway to address them, but this is not consistent. Some concerns raised by children received limited acknowledgement and for these there is much less evidence of action. There are also responses that lead us to question whether children's concerns are truly understood or given the priority they require.

We were clear in our report that the concerns being raised are system wide. Improvement is needed across every area in Scotland.

In this summary, we have provided examples of ways duty-bearers are taking action to address our recommendations. We believe these examples will be of interest for others to explore.

We have also highlighted areas where we received fewer responses to concerns raised by the children.

Finally, we have highlighted where there were some specific asks for help from respondents so other education organisations and the Scottish Government can see what more is being asked of them for support.

Culture

In "This is our lives" we heard from children that school culture (how school makes them feel) was one of their biggest areas of concern. It was not universal, but the issues raised were consistent across Scotland. Practice varied from school to school and even within the same school. Different children had different experiences, and some children experienced significant variance in approaches between staff or from year to year. This inconsistency was also highlighted by Who Cares? Scotland in their report for us on care experienced children and young people's experiences of education.

Participation

Many local authorities told us they use different participation models and toolkits to strengthen participation of children in school decision-making. Many identified a need to improve consistency, quality and inclusivity of participation. A number highlighted they engaged with third sector organisations, such as Children in Scotland and Children's Parliament, to deliver training. Local authority Community Learning and Development services, particularly youth work teams, also had an important role to play.

Some local authorities called for Education Scotland to develop clearer quality benchmarks of what constitutes good, inclusive participation in schools.

East Dunbartonshire highlighted that they were developing a child-friendly version of their school improvement plans. The use of child-friendly language in policies and plans is an important step in supporting children's participation in decision-making.

South Ayrshire highlighted that young people sit on action groups alongside officers and elected members across children's services, providing support and challenge.

In **Glasgow**, local authority central scrutiny of school improvement plans includes assessment of how children and young people have been involved in developing the plan. Schools receive feedback on how their participation work could be improved.

Highland has developed a participation strategy, as have **Scottish Borders**, who are also currently developing a specific strategy for children aged 0-12 years old, **Perth and Kinross** is developing a new learner participation strategy for early learning settings and schools, and **West Lothian** has developed a Youth Voice Charter and Framework.

Perth and Kinross has recruited Inclusion Ambassadors, with the support of Children in Scotland, to provide an opportunity for young people with additional support needs to shape inclusive practices and influence strategic planning.

Clackmannanshire has created a resource bank of tools to support participation with children and young people with additional support needs, and has committed to rolling out staff training on the participation of children and young people with additional support needs.

Stirling has developed an Inclusive Participation Guideline for schools.

There were examples of children and young people being involved in participation linked to specific local authority wide polices, but it was not clear how children were involved strategically in ongoing policy development. Only five local authorities reported that children were involved to some extent in budget processes.

Child- friendly complaints

In 2024, the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) launched a new child-friendly complaints handling process with training provided to support implementation. It is based on the SPSO's model complaints procedure which has been in use in local authorities for more than a decade. Twenty local authorities told us they are either developing, implementing or have child-friendly complaints processes in place. Of these 20, nine were in the process of implementing it.

Our recommendation related to both the availability of child-friendly complaints handling and the promotion of these to children and young people. Only a small number of local authorities told us they were promoting child-friendly complaint procedures to both staff and children. In other areas training seems to be focussed on senior management or central staff.

Scottish Borders is creating a visual guide for children, while **Clackmannanshire** has created a child-friendly leaflet and **Renfrewshire** is planning a child-friendly communications strategy.

East Dunbartonshire and **East Ayrshire** both told us they are considering how to involve children and young people in monitoring complaints from children.

Support and supervision

We have previously highlighted as good practice, the professional reflective supervision programme for headteachers developed in **Highland Council**, and adopted by **Moray Council**.

We were pleased that there was support for this practice from a number of local authorities, with some already piloting and evaluating different models, although some noted that financial constraints were a barrier to fully implementing this model.

Relationships

Fewer than half of the local authorities responded to our recommendations about reducing stigmatising, unfair or poor treatment within education and shouting in schools. We said that people in power should work with children, young people and staff to understand children's experiences of school cultures. Responses tended to focus on positive relationship training for staff and building a general understanding of inequality, poverty and trauma rather than hearing from children.

Children told us they and their friends were sometimes treated unfairly by adults within education settings. Many of these children were disabled or had other support needs. We frequently heard examples of children being shouted at, or sometimes even "picked on", by staff. Some said confidential personal information was shared in front of other staff or children and they felt they had intentionally been embarrassed.

Adults modelling respect and positive communication with children and with other adults is an important part of changing school cultures. There are clear standards that staff working in school should adhere to, but there seems to be inconsistency in practice.

Safeguarding gaps

Fewer than half of the local authorities gave any response to our recommendation to urgently address any gaps in safeguarding within education.

West Dunbartonshire's response provided a detailed overview of their child protection and safeguarding work – including highlighting how they involve children in child protection quality assurance work and have developed "mechanisms to share actions from child protection learning reviews".

Responses were very general and tended to focus on structures already in place, such as annual audits and the role of quality improvement officers. There was a strong reliance on feedback from HMIE inspections as assurance.

Our recommendation came from our long-standing concerns that there are potential gaps around child protection and safeguarding in schools. Concerns around potential inspection gaps were shared by the Scottish Parliament during their scrutiny of the recent Education (Scotland) Act 2025.

One local authority highlighted the increasing complexity of child protection and safeguarding work and the need for national resourcing to support with the workload implications for education.

Curriculum

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is clear that children have a right to an education that develops their personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential. It highlights the importance of a broad curriculum which develops a wide range of skills and knowledge and to different forms of secondary education including vocational education. Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) has the flexibility to deliver a rights-based education as outlined in Article 29 of the UNCRC and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's General Comment No. 1. In primary school it generally achieves this. However, as the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) found in 2021, "the emphasis on exams in secondary education seems to widen the gap between the vision set in CfE and the practice."

Subject choice

Responses demonstrated that education authorities understand that the current subject choices do not always meet the needs of all children.

A number welcomed our recommendation for Scottish Government and Education Scotland to undertake a national analysis regarding subject choice. **Midlothian**, **Aberdeen** and **South Lanarkshire** had already undertaken their own audit.

Although it is common for schools within a local authority to align timetables to make options at other schools available, creating timetable space for digital teaching options and accessing the curriculum with third sector providers or colleges was becoming more common. But as we detailed in our submission to the UN from our office's Young Advisors (Page 3) these options are not consistently available in all local authorities and transport can be a barrier outside larger urban areas.

Aberdeen highlighted the work they have been doing on 'ABZ campus' programme, which offers subject choices in school, online and at a variety of other venues. They also noted their interest to work across local authority boundaries to maximise the potential of this approach.

A number of responses highlighted the positive uptake and impact of foundation apprenticeships, and potential for widening this, however also highlighted concerns about the standstill in funding for foundation apprenticeships.

Online school

We called on the Scottish Government to invest in e-Sgoil and other online school models to maximise both access to a wider range of curriculum subjects and to increase access for children who need alternative education provision.

There is clearly innovation and interest to expand the choice of subjects and ways of learning for children and young people across Scotland. The opportunity to provide children across Scotland with equal opportunities to access all curriculum options and with flexibility to respond to differing needs feels like a tangible goal, but there is no national approach to this at present, despite regional innovation.

The Scottish Government released a discussion paper on online learning in March 2026, which proposed a group or forum to discuss future priorities for the national online learning offer. We urge local authorities to work with the Scottish Government to share learning and widen access to all children who would benefit from online learning.

East Ayrshire told us that they now have a digital broad general education offer for children who struggle with attendance.

South Lanarkshire has invested in the creation of a digital classroom in every secondary school to enable broader access to complementary curriculum options.

What was missing

Extra-curricular activities

Many responses highlighted the importance of providing a range of extra-curricular activities. Some local authorities covered transport costs and others noted that in rural areas activities are offered in the school day, but only three local authorities provided information to suggest they were taking a more focussed look at who accessed these opportunities.

Glasgow provided statistics that highlight what percentage of children and young people are engaged in extra-curricular activities offered, and how under-representation is being addressed.

Inverclyde noted that in almost all establishments extra-curricular uptake is tracked to understand if all children have experiences.

North Ayrshire noted that they also track participation of children in extra-curricular opportunities.

One highlight was **Renfrewshire**, who has been developing an achievement tracker, with some schools using these to ensure children have access to extra-curricular activities.

In "This is our lives", children told us that they wanted to learn in a variety of ways and have time for different types of learning. But many found that as they moved from primary to secondary school, there were fewer opportunities for extra-curricular activities.

Rest, relaxation and leisure during the school day

Our report highlighted the importance of children's right to rest and play, (UNCRC Article 31) during and outwith the school day. We recommended that timetables are designed to allow children to have appropriate time for rest, relaxation and leisure, including time with friends during the school day.

Only a few local authorities provided examples of improving practice during the school day, such as soft starts in **Glasgow** and **Inverclyde** introducing quieter "chill out" spaces.

This recommendation came from children describing the vital importance to them of play and social interactions, with the structure and short length of breaks, including lunch in secondary schools, leaving little time for this.

Overload and homework

There were very few direct responses to our recommendation that schools must recognise the harmful impact of overload and address the lack of coordination of homework. Some local authorities did explain that this concern had also been raised through their health and wellbeing survey, but responses tended to focus on wellbeing support rather than addressing underlying causes.

West Dunbartonshire highlighted they have a youth advisory board who are currently reviewing their homework policy.

Personalisation and support

A number of local authorities supported our recommendation for the Scottish Government to work with education authorities to urgently undertake an analysis of the resources and infrastructure required to deliver an inclusive education system across Scotland.

This recommendation is not asking for another independent review of education.

It is asking for robust planning of the supports children need, economic modelling, and a plan for future investment and implementation.

Responding to additional support needs

Some respondents outlined the different ways they are trying to adapt physical infrastructure of schools to better meet the needs of disabled children and those with other support needs through capital investment.

Stirling has used capital investment to create two specialist facilities for primary and secondary children with additional support needs.

Scottish Borders and **South Lanarkshire** spoke about the importance of assistive technology for disabled children.

Falkirk, **Highland**, and **Stirling** all noted the importance of support for learning staff including the development of specific training programmes and progression opportunities.

Perth and Kinross outlined its ASN Transformation Programme and their Enhanced Support Model (ESM) which develops a more personalised approach to aligning staff support, training and environments to the needs of the child.

While local authorities welcomed additional Scottish Government funding for additional support needs, most highlighted the need for increased and ongoing investment to meet the needs of all children.

Specific issues were highlighted with the funding of foundation apprenticeships and alternative education provision. Concerns were raised that a lack of multi-year funding creates insecure placements for children living in some of the most vulnerable circumstances.

Several local authorities highlighted difficulties with the continued ring-fencing of funding for teacher numbers. They said this causes limitations on flexibility for workforce planning to respond to children's needs.

The majority of local authorities responded positively to our recommendation that challenging behaviour should be understood within the context of children communicating need. Responses noted investment in training for staff in understanding trauma, attachment, adverse childhood experiences, dysregulation and nurture approaches.

East Ayrshire has developed a 'dysregulation tracker' to try to understand conditions, triggers and actions that support children and staff best.

South Lanarkshire has developed a good practice guide and accreditation toolkit for its education settings. There are six attachment-informed, trauma-sensitive pledges and it is monitoring how many settings are achieving these.

Highland has invested over £1million to create a team of Advanced Pupil Support Assistant practitioners and a specialist ASN teacher team to work in schools to develop individualised plans and drive excellence in practice.

There were strong examples of educational psychologists developing resources, training and understanding of more complex behaviours across education services, but fewer examples of work with allied health professionals to support disabled children and how that factored into future modelling and additional support for learning strategies.

Many responses spoke about additional support needs in general, improvements in support for care experienced children or focussed on support needs due to autism and other neurodivergent conditions.

Deaf children

We made a specific recommendation about addressing the lack of accessibility and support for British Sign Language (BSL) users, including interpreters in education settings. Those who responded provided an overview of the support they offer for deaf children, without always addressing the specific concerns children raised with us in relation to accessibility.

There were some exceptions. **Midlothian** and **South Lanarkshire** both provided detailed responses on their work in this area. **Midlothian** included the challenges it had faced in recruiting a BSL tutor. **North Ayrshire**, **Shetland** and **South Lanarkshire** provided details of their investment in staff training. **Shetland** told us they have recently appointed a Teacher of the Deaf and communication support worker and **North Ayrshire** that they support staff through BSL qualifications. **South Lanarkshire** included information about how they support deaf children through transitions at all levels from pre-school to post-school.

Deaf children told us they had missed out on access to subject classes due to limited availability of interpreters and the lack of inclusive processes within schools. In some cases this impacted on their safety (for example, being unable to hear tannoy messages). Children explained staff often touched them to get their attention and needed basic training on different methods of attracting attention and inclusive practice.

Co-ordinated Support Plans (CSPs)

We highlighted the importance of Co-ordinated Support Plans (CSPs), but fewer than half of local authorities responded to this recommendation. We were pleased some local authorities were taking active steps to improve processes to ensure all children entitled to a CSP have one.

Glasgow had undertaken an audit, following which they updated training and guidance.

Part of **Falkirk's** ASN Co-ordinators' role is to ensure that every child who is entitled to a CSP has one in place. Other local authorities had paid particular attention to ensuring eligibility for a CSP was considered for care experienced children.

Influencing workforce development planning

Less than half of the local authorities provided any response to our recommendation that they should develop feedback loops with children and young people to identify workforce development areas and priority areas for training and support.

Aberdeen and **Glasgow** identified processes that link children and young people's feedback to school improvement plans and staff training.

Scottish Borders highlighted that through participation work with children and young people, they had identified that children wanted to deliver training to all education staff. This was currently being implemented.

West Dunbartonshire shared that feedback loops with children and young people are established through the Whole Family Wellbeing Support Officer, Rights Advisory Board, and Young Ambassadors for Inclusion Group to inform workforce development.

Children not regularly attending school

Significant public attention has been given to school attendance in recent years. Our report discussed from a child's perspective some of the reasons children may not be attending.

Some local authorities have been testing new approaches and several highlighted the positive impact these were having. However, across the country there is a lack of long-term core funding available for services to support these children.

Aberdeen provided information about 'The Bridge' – a service they have co-designed with children to support primary school children with attendance.

Shetland has developed a staged intervention pathway and children are supported by a home link teacher.

Stirling told us its engaging learners service had been 'transformational'.

Assessment and qualifications

Implementation of the Hayward Review

A number of local authorities expressed support for the recommendations of the 2023 Hayward Review on qualifications and assessment reform and several local authorities stated they were considering, developing or piloting a diploma of achievement for their area.

Fife is currently in the process of piloting a Fife Diploma of Achievement which will recognise the broad nature of young people's achievements across their learning and beyond that confined solely to national qualifications.

Some local authorities including **Falkirk** and **West Dunbartonshire** are testing digital profiles of achievement through the use of the Skills Development Scotland digital profile tool.

South Ayrshire has established a curriculum review group which is leading the development of approaches such as project-based learning and Inter-Disciplinary Learning (IDL). All secondary schools have undertaken an IDL project in 2025 accessing resources from the Daydream Believers website.

These pilots could provide important and significant learning to support the implementation of the Hayward Review recommendations.

Other local authorities stated they continue to wait for Scottish Government decisions on progressing the Hayward Review.

Senior stage and S6

We highlighted the importance of ensuring all children had opportunities until the end of S6, if they wished to stay on at school. A number of local authorities described how they were expanding opportunities in senior phase, particularly in S6, including exploring ways in which S6 could be combined with other commitments.

Scottish Borders told us they now placed greater emphasis on vocational pathways, with early evaluation showing a positive impact.

Highland linked broadening opportunities with improvement in leavers' destinations.

Purpose

The UNCRC in education

We highlighted the importance of the UNCRC, and in particular Articles 28 and 29, to understanding what the purpose of education should be in Scotland. The responses we received recognised that the UNCRC was a priority and several local authorities reported they have invested in UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools funding following the withdrawal of Scottish Government funding in April 2025.

Highland told us they had a strong focus on participation and were developing the use of children's rights impact assessments (CRIAs).

South Ayrshire has a dedicated member of staff to support UNCRC implementation.

In **South Lanarkshire** children and young people have designed and created a new UNCRC e-learning module which has been made available to public and third sector partners.

Not all local authorities told us whether they had invested in UNCRC training. Where it was available, it was not always extended to all staff working in education settings.

West Dunbartonshire not only provides mandatory training on the UNCRC for newly qualified teachers but also incorporated it into mandatory child protection training for all staff.

Some responses focussed solely on "pupil voice". This shows a narrow understanding not only of the UNCRC but also of what UNCRC incorporation means for education in Scotland.

What was missing

Stress and pressure

In our report we highlighted concerns from a wide range of children, some as young as 11, about the stress and pressure the education system places on them, particularly around assessment and exams.

Some local authorities outlined ways they support children to cope with stress and recognise that dealing with stress and pressure is a part of life which we all have to learn to manage. However, few local authorities were attempting to reduce the stress caused by the education system itself, instead focussing on providing wellbeing support.

Conclusion

The responses we received showed us that there is innovation and improving practice happening in many areas of Scotland, but that the extent to which children's right to education is being realised is inconsistent.

Some of our recommendations received little recognition, even from local authorities who otherwise provided comprehensive responses. In one or two cases they were dismissed.

Our recommendations were based on what children across Scotland told us about their experiences of school and of education. We produced "This is our lives" to highlight those views and demonstrate how they affect the human rights of children and young people.

This summary report, compiled from written responses we received from local authorities, shares illustrative examples. It is not a comprehensive or comparative assessment of all relevant activity being delivered by local authorities. Our analysis is limited to reviewing only the self-reported information contained in the responses we received from local authorities. Where no information was proactively shared with us, it will be absent.

While acknowledging its limitations, we believe that this analysis poses some important questions about why some recommendations we have made have had fewer responses.

There are links between the recommendations where less responses have been provided.

Unfair and stigmatising treatment, shouting, and potential safeguarding gaps were all areas which had much fewer responses. We know that child-friendly complaints and inclusive participation methods are not yet fully embedded across local authorities. As a result, it may not yet be possible for children to easily raise their concerns about these issues themselves.

Overload, lack of co-ordination of homework, the domination of exams and children feeling a lack of understanding from the adults around them also had fewer responses – yet children are making direct asks to adults to change the circumstances that are causing additional pressure and anxiety for them.

There is still no support and supervision model available for all staff within education settings. As a result, it may not be possible for all staff to be adequately supported in their roles.

These are important areas that require further consideration.

Since we published our report, we have continued to talk to children about their experiences of education, with a focus on children with additional support needs or who are further from realising their rights. The messages we hear from children are consistent and reinforce all the recommendations we have made for change.

We will be continuing to raise these issues with all duty-bearers in education, and push for increased attention and action for the recommendations that have been made.

Recommendations

We made a series of recommendations in "This is our lives, it matters a lot.": Putting children's rights in the heart of education. The recommendations were themed across Culture, Curriculum, Personalisation and support, Assessment and qualifications, and Purpose.

Culture

1. Children are the most important stakeholders in the education system, their participation must be systematically embedded.

    1.1 Scottish Government must support and evidence ongoing participation of children and young people, including those furthest from enjoying their rights, in education policy development.
    1.2 Education authorities must involve children in policy development and budget processes.
    1.3 All schools must ensure all children have the opportunity to participate in decision-making in their school.

2. Decision-makers in the education system should use an inclusive range of ways to consult with children and provide meaningful feedback on how their views have been considered.

    2.1 Scottish Government and education authorities should use expertise from youth work and third sector organisations to help improve approaches to participation.

3. His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIE) and education authorities should monitor the development of meaningful participation in schools.

4. People in power should work with children, young people and staff to understand, acknowledge and address experiences within education of stigmatising, unfair or poor treatment.

5. Scottish Government, HMIE and education authorities must urgently address any gaps in safeguarding within education.

6. Education authorities should address the prevalence of shouting at children in schools.

7. GTC Scotland should produce a child-friendly version of the Code of Professionalism and Conduct (COPAC) to support children to know what they should expect from their teachers.

8. Child-friendly complaints processes must be available and promoted across all education settings.

9. Scottish Government should issue statutory guidance for all professionals working with children and young people on the use of restraint and seclusion, including a requirement for training.

10. Support and supervision structures should be embedded for all staff within education settings, and ensure sufficient access to ongoing training.

Curriculum

11. Curriculum design and implementation must deliver education that develops every child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential.

12. Scottish Government and Education Scotland must ensure children and young people can participate in the curriculum improvement cycle, identifying and influencing priorities for change.

    12.1 Children who are furthest away from having their needs met within education must be included in curriculum improvement processes.

13. Children across Scotland should have equal opportunities to access all curriculum options.

14. Scottish Government, education authorities and Education Scotland should undertake a national analysis regarding subject choice in secondary schools and create a national plan to address limitations and barriers.

15. Scottish Government should commission a programme of research into the experiences of children and young people whose needs are not being met in education, to better understand their experiences and how this can shape improvements in policy, curriculum and education service design.

16. Scottish Government should invest in the e-Sgoil and other virtual school models to maximise access for children and young people to a wider range of curriculum subjects and to increase access for children who benefit from their alternative education provision.

17. Every child should have the opportunity to participate in inclusive extra-curricular activities.

18. Education authorities must ensure timetables are designed to allow children to have appropriate time for rest, relaxation and recreation, including time with friends during the school day.

19. Schools must recognise and address the harmful impact of overload and a lack of coordination of homework is having on children.

Personalisation and support

20. Scottish Government and education authorities must urgently undertake a full analysis of the resources and infrastructure required to deliver an inclusive education system across Scotland. This must result in robust economic modelling, and a plan for future investment and implementation. This plan must include, but not be limited to:

    - Leadership models
    - Staffing models
    - Buildings and supporting infrastructure
    - Workforce development planning
    - Digital infrastructure

    It is recognised that this planning will take time, so longer term work should be complemented by short term actions that are necessary to improve support within the current infrastructure:

21. Children in situations of vulnerability should be recognised and provided with education and support that meets their needs.

22. Participation must be realised for children within all levels of their support planning.

23. Education authorities must urgently address the lack of coordinated support plans for children who are entitled to them.

24. GTCS, Education Scotland and education authorities should develop feedback loops with children and young people to identify workforce development areas and priority areas for training and support.

25. Scottish Government and education authorities must address the issues highlighted by deaf children regarding lack of accessibility and support for BSL users, including interpreters in education settings.

26. Scottish Government must review standards for school buildings to ensure that all future school infrastructure is accessible, including for children with neurodivergent conditions.

27. Scottish Government and education authorities must create the conditions within education settings which minimise dysregulated behaviours and keep all children and staff safe, though early intervention and addressing unmet need.

    27.1 Complex or challenging behaviour should be understood within the context of children communicating need.

28. Scottish Government must ensure that all future Behaviour in Scottish schools research (BISSR) includes children and young people's participation.

29. Scottish Government and education authorities must provide adequate services to deliver education entitlement for children not regularly attending school. These should be developed with children and families, drawing on good practice from the education and wider children's sectors.

30. Funding for services supporting children and young people in alternative forms of education, including third sector services, must be secure and long-term to maximise effectiveness.

31. Scottish Government and education authorities must ensure all education settings have the funding and resource they need to provide the best support and education for all children.

Assessment and qualifications

32. Assessment, exams and qualifications should be understood as part of the education system, they should not dominate the system.

33. The Scottish Government, education authorities and Qualifications Scotland must ensure the senior phase allows all young people to understand their strengths, to have all of their skills recognised and to feel valued.

34. The Scottish Government and education authorities must meet the needs of all children and young people who want to remain within education settings until the end of S6.

35. The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework should have increased prominence and sufficient resource to promote greater awareness of the diverse range of qualifications available.

36. Scottish Government should fully implement the Hayward Review recommendations and ensure adequate resourcing and allocation of leadership responsibilities to enable tests of change for the personal pathway and clear plans for the delivery of the Scottish Diploma of Achievement.

37. Qualifications Scotland must ensure the governance of the organisation includes effective participation of children and young people and the agency should be designed now in a way that will enable the future delivery of the Scottish Diploma of Achievement.

Purpose

38. The UNCRC must be understood and prioritised by all responsible for delivering education across Scotland.

39. The education system should not create so much stress and pressure for children and young people.

40. Scottish Government must ensure the National Vision for Education, National Improvement Framework and related National Education Performance Measurements work for all children and progressively realise all children's rights within education.

41. Education in Scotland must be designed, delivered, measured, resourced and scrutinised in a way that promotes the development of every child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential.

42. His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIE) should inspect standards in education settings and provide advice which ensures the vision, purpose and quality of education is progressively realising children's rights.

43. HMIE should enhance the participation of children and young people throughout the inspection process, including those who are furthest from enjoying their rights within education.

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