



**PRESS RELEASE FROM:** Children's Parliament and the Scottish Youth Parliament  
**Embargoed until 00:01 GMT on Tuesday 3rd March 2020**

## **Children and young people take part in fourth historic meeting with the Scottish Cabinet**

Representatives from the Children's Parliament and the Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP) will meet with the full Scottish Cabinet today, marking the fourth time that such a historic meeting has taken place.

The Scottish Government has committed to hearing directly from children and young people on issues which affect their lives and to collectively agree actions for the coming year in relation to their human rights.

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said:

“Today's Cabinet meeting is another great opportunity to engage with our children and young people at a national level, ensuring they have their voices heard, their concerns listened to, and their ideas considered at the heart of our government.

“The Scottish Government has already committed to the incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child by the end of this parliamentary term.

“The Bill will seek to incorporate in full and directly - using the language of the Convention - in every case possible.

“The joint efforts of the Children's Parliament and the Scottish Youth Parliament have been instrumental to this journey and we are clear that

incorporation is fundamental to ensuring Scotland is the best place for children to grow up.”

The First Minister, Deputy First Minister John Swinney, Minister for Children and Young People Maree Todd, and Cabinet Ministers will welcome seven Members of the Children’s Parliament (MCPs) and seven Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYPs) to Bute House today (Tuesday 3rd March).

MCPs will speak about their rights to food, protection and education and their vision for a Scotland where children grow up with enough, good quality food; are free from the impact of alcohol; and are treated with respect and dignity in their schools.

MSYPs will address seven key issues impacting young people to the First Minister and her cabinet, including gender recognition, reducing Scotland’s pollution levels, and suicide awareness training in schools.

Chair of SYP, Jack Dudgeon MSYP, said:

“MSYPs have called for the full and direct incorporation of the UNCRC into Scots Law at every joint Cabinet meeting, so we’re delighted that the Scottish Government have committed to delivering this before the end of the 2016-21 parliamentary term. Having said this, the matters which we bring to the Cabinet today demonstrate there is still a long way to go until we can say that young people’s rights in Scotland are fully respected and upheld.

We’d like to thank the Scottish Government for recognising our need for a seat at the table, keeping in mind that Scotland is the only country in the world where a meeting like this takes place on an annual, formal basis - children and young people must be involved in discussions about the decisions which directly affect their lives. SYP looks forward to seeing what can be achieved over the next 12 months to meet the UN’s gold standard on children’s rights.”

Member of Children’s Parliament, Sophie, aged 11 said:

“The Cabinet Takeover is important: one, so people can see children are serious about these issues and are trying to change things; and, two, because obviously there’s some things only the Scottish Government can change.”

Cathy McCulloch, Co-Director, Children’s Parliament said:

“We approach the fourth Cabinet meeting in the knowledge that the First Minister has made a clear commitment to ‘full and direct’ incorporation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into Scots law in 2021. This is the result of many years’ work from Children’s Parliament, SYP and many

other individuals and organisations and is evidence of the government's commitment to put human rights at the heart of all we do with, and for, children and young people. The 7 MCPs who will attend the Cabinet meeting have worked hard to study the concerns and opinions of children across Scotland during 2019 and look forward to another meeting with Cabinet Ministers where they share the results of their work and where their views are listened to and taken seriously.”

ENDS

### Notes to editor

1. To arrange an interview with Jack Dudgeon MSYP, or for other Scottish Youth Parliament media enquiries, please contact Rachel Ashenden, Communications Officer, [rachel.a@syp.org.uk](mailto:rachel.a@syp.org.uk) or 0131 524 0819.
2. The [Scottish Youth Parliament](#) is the democratically elected voice of Scotland's young people. Their vision for Scotland is of a nation that actively listens to and values the meaningful participation of its children and young people. SYP is grounded in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, particularly Article 12, which lays out young people's right to be listened to on the issues that affect them, and for their views to be given weight.
3. [Children's Parliament](#) is Scotland's Centre of Excellence for children's participation and engagement. Their dream is that children grow up in a world of love, happiness and understanding. Their mission is to inspire greater awareness and understanding of the power of children's human rights and to support implementation across Scotland. They work creatively to improve communication between children, and adults and to build relationships based on mutual respect and understanding. They provide younger children with opportunities to share their experiences, thoughts and feelings so that they can influence life at home, in school and in the community through change at a local and national level.

Information and films of previous Children and Young People Cabinet meetings can be found here (2019):

<https://www.childrensparliament.org.uk/childrens-voices-and-the-scottish-cabinet-2019/>

here (2018): <https://www.childrensparliament.org.uk/cabinet-meeting-2018/>

and here (2017): <https://www.childrensparliament.org.uk/scottish-cabinet-2017/>

4. The annual children and young people's meeting with the Scottish Cabinet first took place in 2017. At that meeting, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon made a commitment that the meeting would become an annual event in the Scottish political calendar. The second annual meeting took place on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2018. The third annual meeting took place on Tuesday, March 5<sup>th</sup> 2019. The progress report on the actions from the 2019 meeting can be found here: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/children-young-peoples-voices-matter/pages/1/>. Photos from this year's event will be available at the following link: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/26320652@N02>

**For further Information:**

**Scottish Youth Parliament**

Rachel Ashenden - 0131 557 0452

[rachel.a@syp.org.uk](mailto:rachel.a@syp.org.uk)

**Children's Parliament**

Orlaith McAree - 0131 558 9030

[info@childrensparliament.org.uk](mailto:info@childrensparliament.org.uk)