

EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE TO CLAIM THEIR RIGHTS



Policy 1:

The Scottish Government and other decision-makers must uphold the right set out in Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child to respect the views of children and young people in all decisions that affect them.

Endorsed by:



What's this all about?

Incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is only the beginning, not the end, of realising children and young people's human rights in Scotland. Young people have told us they want to see the UNCRC and their wider human rights upheld by all decision makers, and for there to be transparency and accountability when these human rights are not being upheld. Young people's thoughts, opinions and voices must be respected and included in all decisions that affect them, and decision makers should ensure that all engagement and participation is meaningful.

"This is a really important article to remember of the UNCRC and is kind of the foundation to all the others."

– Young woman aged 22-26, Aberdeen

What are young people in Scotland calling for?

- Decision makers must recognise young people's lived and living experience for their expertise, and for power to be given to young people when deciding what will make Scotland the best place to grow up.

"It is ridiculous that we should have no say in how our own lives are affected. We might be young, but we are our own people, and should be treated as such. We think and believe and hurt just as well as any adult."

– Young woman aged 14-17

- Decision makers should implement accessible, inclusive and meaningful models of participation that ensure young people are involved in the right way, where they are respected, their dignity is upheld, and inclusion is equal.

"Nothing about us without us."

– Young woman aged 22-26, Glasgow

- The Scottish Government should create more awareness of young people's human rights and how young people can access information about their rights, including how to complain about their rights being breached.

"Children and young people should be more involved in the policy making of issues that affect them."

– Young woman aged 18-21, Edinburgh

Evidence and Support

- [Together - Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights](#) consulted 229 children and young people - including 9 MSYPs for their [State of Children's Rights in Scotland 2024](#) report. It found that a common theme amongst the children and young people consulted was the desire for genuine and inclusive opportunities to take part in decision-making. It was the most frequently mentioned issue when children and young people were asked about life in Scotland and the role of adults around them.
- Some encouraging comments from the children and young people include: "It's good because it lets people know your voice", "I think decision-makers listen a lot more than they used to". However, there were also comments that highlighted the lack of opportunities to engage in decision-making at a national level: "I don't feel like I have much say in Scotland on the wider front", "Decisions by the adults in charge of Scotland are not the best. I feel they don't listen".

What has SYP done?

Previous [SYP Consultations](#) include [SYP's Response to the Proposed Youth Work Bill \(2025\)](#) and [SYP's response to the UNCRC Incorporation Guidance Parts 2 and 3 \(2024\)](#). The [SYP Policy Log](#) includes policies on improving participation in politics; the right to vote for all over 16s and young offenders;

additional funding for the Scottish Youth Parliament and several other policies relating to youth participation.