

EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE TO CLAIM THEIR RIGHTS



Policy 5:

The Scottish Government must enshrine a right to independent advocacy for Care Experienced people of all ages, so they can realise their rights.

Endorsed by:



What's this all about?

Care Experienced young people told us they want more of a voice in advocating for their rights and in decisions that affect them. Independent advocacy is an important step in realising equal opportunity and rights for every young person, and will ensure Care Experienced Young People are meaningfully listened to. There is still work to be done on increasing young people's knowledge of independent advocacy and what it means for realising their rights. This is where the Scottish Government must collaborate with experts to ensure all young people understand how to access independent advocacy or how they can support their loved ones to access it.

"Independent advocacy is important to ensure that individuals who have been in care can have a voice in decisions that affect their lives. It provides them with the support needed to navigate their rights in areas such as health and social services."

– Young woman aged 14-17, Clackmannanshire

What are young people in Scotland calling for?

- Decision-makers should ensure all young people understand their right to independent advocacy, especially Care Experienced young people.

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– Young woman aged 14-17, Clackmannanshire

- **The provision of independent advocacy should be consistent across all of Scotland for anyone who needs it wherever they are.**

“I support this being expanded to every single young person”

– Young woman aged 18-21, North Ayrshire

- **The Scottish Government and the public sector must fulfil The Promise.**

“There should be some support to know and understand their rights to have a level playing field.”

– Young person, East Renfrewshire

Evidence and Support

- [Who Cares? Scotland Action on Advocacy Campaign](#) - for almost 50 years, Who Cares? Scotland has been at the heart of the Care Experienced community in Scotland. In 2024, their advocacy workers supported over 1,600 Care Experienced people with more than 6,000 issues across Scotland.
 - Independent advocacy workers work one-on-one with Care Experienced people to have their voices heard in decisions affecting them. Whether it's helping a young person reunite with their brother or sister, signposting Care Experienced adults to critical housing support, or accompanying a young person to their Children's Hearing, independent advocacy is a vital and valuable service for all who need it.
 - However, not all Care Experienced people have this, as current provision depends on your age and where you live. Who Cares? Scotland's Action on Advocacy Campaign is calling for a legal right ensuring Care Experienced people across Scotland have access to an independent advocate, regardless of age or location.
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What has SYP done?

Previous [SYP Consultations](#) includes [SYP's response to the Scottish Government consultation on developing a Universal Definition of Care Experience \(2025\)](#) and [a report from SYP's consultation workshop on the Scottish Government's Community Mental Health Supports and Services Framework \(2024\)](#). The [SYP Policy Log](#) includes the right to a transition plan; youth-friendly information from public bodies; investment and accessibility of youth work; investment in welfare services in colleges and universities; supporting learners with additional support needs; incorporation of UNCRC; financial support for students; young carer training for guidance teachers; expansion of carers allowance; young carer respite opportunities; upholding of sibling rights; student carer bursaries; support for students with school absence; raise awareness of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).