

EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE TO CLAIM THEIR RIGHTS



Policy 6:

The UK Government must ensure that all refugee and asylum-seeking children and young people have a right to reunite with their families in the UK.

Endorsed by:



What's this all about?

Young people told us that assisting refugees and asylum-seeking children is the right thing to do. They told us this starts by promoting positive attitudes towards people seeking asylum. Scotland should be a place where all children and young people can access the resources – housing, healthcare, employment, family support – that they need to live a full and healthy life.

“Immigration is important to our country, they come here seeking a better life for them and their families. That's not a crime.”

– Young man aged 12-13

“It is callous to keep refugee families apart when they have already undergone awful circumstances to get here. Children should always have the opportunity to be with their families.”

– Young man aged 18-21, Dundee

What are young people in Scotland calling for?

- Young people want to see more opportunities, support and investment put into helping children and young people who are refugees or seeking asylum integrate into the local community

“And all unaccompanied children or young people should have the right to special support including in maintaining their cultural identities.”

– Young woman aged 22-26, Highlands

- Decision makers must ensure children and young people are fully informed at all stages of the asylum-seeking process through more consistent and accessible information in a language and format that is accessible to them.

“Children [...] should be informed of what is happening during the process, so as to reduce stress as much as possible.”

– Young woman aged 14-17, Edinburgh

Evidence and Support

- According to the [British Red Cross](#), [refugee family reunion](#) should be a vital and safe way for refugee families to reunite after they have been torn apart by war and prosecution. However, the current visa process is not simple or accessible and the criteria is restricted. Families have to do it without any formal support, while navigating complex systems that don't reflect the reality of life for a reunited refugee family.
- [Together - Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights](#) published their [Child-Friendly Consultation Analysis on the Human Rights Bill for Scotland](#) in 2024. They noted that some asylum-seeking young people highlighted support they receive from social work, but called for improvements such as increased financial assistance so they can pursue their interests and feel more settled with one young person commenting: “I have a social worker but they can't always help me with the things I need. When I lost my money and didn't have food they made me wait a long time for help and I want to join a gym but they won't help me get a gym membership. The money isn't enough for things that I need, like clothes and a gym membership.” and “People who have immigrated, asylum-seekers, refugees, need more support with finance, housing and everything in general.”

What has SYP done?

Previous [SYP Consultations](#) includes [SYP's response to the Proposed Youth Work Bill \(2025\)](#) and [SYP's response to the Scottish Government's Human Rights Bill consultation \(2023\)](#). 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).