

UNCRC Statutory Guidance: Consultation Analysis

Child Friendly Report

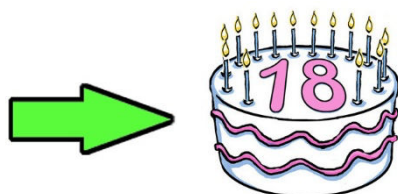
March 2025

Introduction

What is the UNCRC Act?



The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024, often called the UNCRC Act, is an important new law which means that children's rights are protected in law in Scotland.



'Children' in the UNCRC Act means anyone up to the age of 18.

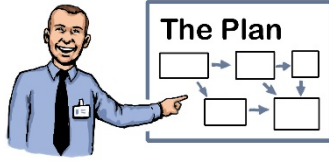


Public authorities, like schools, hospitals and the police, must respect children's rights when they make decisions and carry out their work.



Children and people who represent them can ask the courts to help if they feel their rights are not respected.

Report



Some organisations that are named in the Act – listed authorities – have to report on what they have done and plan to do to uphold this new law and progress children’s rights.

How do public authorities know what they need to do?



The Scottish Government has published two guidance documents to help public authorities understand this new law and what they need to do.



To help make the guidance, the Scottish Government asked the public what they thought of an early version of the guidance. They had 92 answers – from people and organisations.



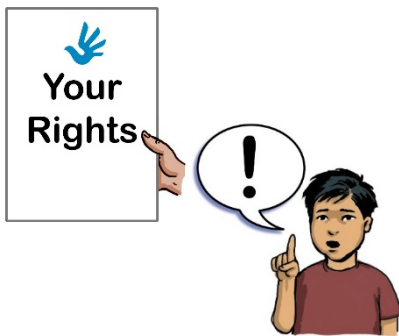
They also asked groups of children to share their thoughts. 55 children and young people shared their views on six areas related to the guidance. This summary report explains what they told us.

Views of children and young people



The 55 children and young people gave their views on different topics.

Awareness of children's rights



The children and young people who gave feedback had a good understanding of children's rights and had heard of the UNCRC, but they said that more education about this was needed as not all children knew about it.



They thought that adults also needed to be educated, as they would have to protect children's rights and help children to ask for their rights.

What public authorities need to know



Children and young people wanted public authorities to know that they must meet children's rights – it is the law.



Public authorities need to educate themselves, and tell children and young people, their families, and the general public about children's rights.



If children's rights are not met, children and young people could lose trust in professionals and in the UNCRC. It would mean that children might not be able to do things and would not do as well in life as they could.



Children and young people must be educated about their rights, they want to be involved and have a say.

Identifying where rights are (or are at risk of) not being fulfilled



Children and young people suggested lots of different groups of children who might be more at risk of not having their rights met. They said these children were also the least likely to know about their rights.



So it was important for the Scottish Government to do something about this.



Children and young people also thought it was important for all children to be listened to, which might mean different ways of communicating are needed.



Some were worried that public authorities would be too powerful for children and young people to make a complaint to, and that children might not be confident enough to speak up or have enough knowledge about their rights or what to do.

Ensuring children have effective access to justice



Giving children and young people information was seen as important. They need to know what to do and who to contact if they are worried about their rights not being met.

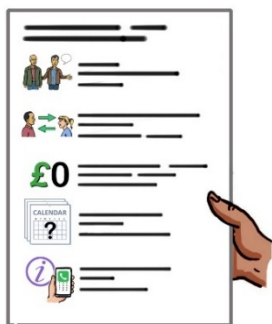


Children and young people also need information about how to complain, how long it would take, what would happen, and what help they could get. It is important for adults to listen to, trust and believe children and young people.

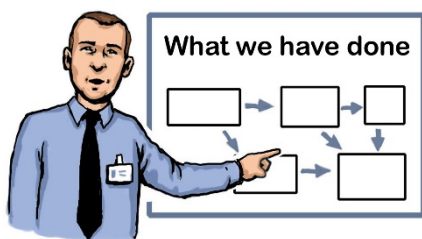
Reporting requirements for listed public authorities



It's important for public authorities listed in the Act to write reports about children's rights. Children and young people agreed that they should be involved in the reporting process and wanted lots of opportunities to get involved.



They also agreed that child friendly reports, made available in lots of different ways, would be important to make sure children can find and understand them.



Reports would also help make sure that listed authorities are doing the right things, and that they do what they say they will.

Inclusive communication and accessible information



Children and young people wanted all communication aimed at them to be age appropriate and use language that is easy to understand.



Lots of different types of information is needed, which is interesting to children and young people.



Schools were seen as very important in educating children and young people about their rights.



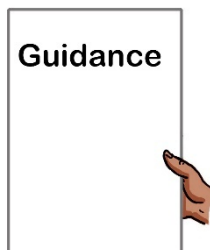
Parents and carers were also very important, both to educate their children and to make sure public authorities meet their children's rights.

Public Consultation



We received 92 answers to our public consultation, from people and organisations.

First UNCRC guidance document on upholding children's rights



The first guidance explained the UNCRC Act, what public authorities need to do to meet children's rights, and how children and young people can raise issues and take organisations to court if their rights are not met.



Adults told us that this guidance was too long and needed to be clearer. They thought that some of it was difficult to understand.



They wanted examples of organisations and workers who have to follow the guidance. Some people asked for sections to be moved around and some suggested extra information that could help readers.



The main concern was that some organisations might not realise that the new law applies to them.

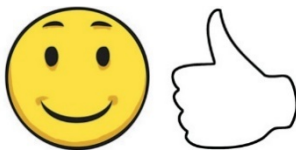


The guidance had a tool to help public authorities work out if their actions are upholding children's rights. Most people liked this tool but some people thought it needed to be easier to use.

Second UNCRC guidance document on children's rights reporting



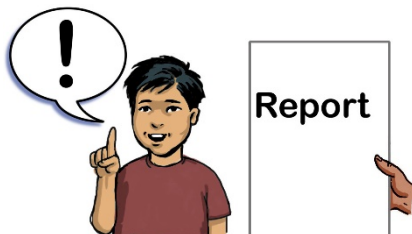
The second guidance was for 'listed authorities' like councils and health boards who have to write children's rights reports.



Most people thought this guidance was helpful, and clear about what listed authorities needed to do, and when they needed to do it.



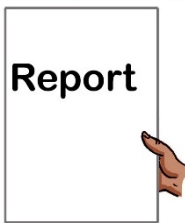
Some people told us that there was information in this guidance that could be cut – as it was already in the first guidance.



People liked that listed authorities would need to speak to children and young people and ask about their views, and that they would need to create a child friendly version of the report.



Some people said it should be clear that all children should be involved, including children who might find communicating difficult.



Some people liked that organisations could decide what their report looks like, a few people wanted them all to be the same. People liked that listed authorities could combine their children's rights reports with other reports.



People said that reports need to be interesting, easy to find and easy to read.



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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at

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