

Children's Rights: Improving the Lives of Children in Scotland



The Scottish Government and Children's Rights

The Scottish Government supports the provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Scotland (UNCRC) and is using it as a driver for improvements to children's rights in order to **improve outcomes for all children and young people in Scotland**.

Contact details

Email childrensrights@scotland.gsi.gov.uk if you have any questions about Scottish Government activity in relation to children's rights. You can also contact the team by telephone on:

0131 244 0835 - Irene Szymoszowskyj (Mon-Tues) or Fiona Brown (Wed-Fri) - for general queries and publication requests

0131 244 0707 – Joanna Mackenzie – for more specific queries on children's rights and UNCRC

0131 244 0789 - Tracy O'Hanlon – for specific queries around asylum issues relating to children and young people.

Portfolio changes in Education and Lifelong Learning

Changes in Ministerial responsibilities in the Education and Lifelong Learning portfolio were announced in January. More details can be found on The Scottish Government website [here](#).

Do The Right Thing

Work on two important and connected action areas in *Do the Right Thing* is underway:

- **Action area 6: Advocacy services for children and young people**

In January we published Susan Elsley's report on advocacy services for children and young people '[Advocacy Makes You Feel Brave](#)'.

The Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance (SIAA: www.siaa.org.uk) recently launched a revised version of 'Independent Advocacy - A Guide for Commissioners'. This publication updates and builds on the guidance previously issued by the Scottish Executive in 2001 reflecting new legislation as well as the updated Principles and Standards and Code of Practice published by SIAA in 2008.

The Scottish Government recognises that children and young people have specific needs around advocacy services and we are taking forward dedicated work on this, following the publication of Susan Elsley's report. We will keep you informed of developments in this area.

- **Action area 19: Better support for unaccompanied asylum seeker children**

The Scottish Refugee Council has been awarded crucial funding from the Big Lottery Fund to help vulnerable unaccompanied children through the asylum process. The Scottish Government is also supporting this project which is the first of its kind in the UK. The Project is set to be launched in partnership with Aberlour Child Care Trust later this year.

There are around 200 separated children currently in Scotland, many have witnessed family members being persecuted or killed. We believe that every unaccompanied asylum seeking child should be given support to guide them through the complexities of the asylum and social work systems and ensure that their best interests are identified and taken into consideration.

Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights: *What can the UNCRC do for you?*

The Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights (SACR: www.sacr.org.uk) is hosting a free seminar to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child on Wednesday 17th March from 13:00 – 17:00 at Renfield St Stephen Centre, Bath Street, Glasgow. Download the information and a booking form here:

http://www.falkirkchildrensrights.org.uk/pdf/what_can_the_uncrc_do_for_you.pdf

For further information contact SACR on: 0131 225 8864 or info@sacr.org.uk.

Scotland's Commissioner for Children & Young People: *A Right Blether*

In March, Scotland's Commissioner for Children & Young People Tam Baillie will be embarking on a series of regional events to raise awareness of an ambitious national consultation project with Scotland's children and young people.

The events will be a chance for you to find out the ways in which the Commissioner plans to engage with children and young people, how you can become involved, and what tools are available to you to help you with this.

This is a significant consultation, which will be rolled out nationally over the next 9 months. It will culminate in November 2010 with one of the largest votes ever for Scotland's children and young people and a huge celebration of Scotland's achievements in making a positive difference to children and young people's lives at both a national and local level.

What the Commissioner learns from children and young people through "A Right Blether" will directly influence his policy priorities. The resulting priorities will be used by his office to influence law, policy and practice. This will include ensuring that the Scottish Government fulfils its obligations to Scotland's children and young people under the United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child (UNCRC).

Events are being held as follows:

Friday 9th March, 4.30 – 6.30pm, Trades Hall, Glasgow

Friday 12th March, 1.30 – 3.30pm, Spectrum Centre, Inverness

Tuesday 16th March, 4.30 – 6.30pm, Dewars Centre, Perth

Friday 19th March, 1.30 – 3.30pm, Oasis Youth Centre, Dumfries

Tuesday 23rd March, 5.30 – 7.30pm, Merchants' Hall, Edinburgh

For more information on the event or to RSVP, please contact Sareta Puri at sareta.puri@sccyp.org.uk or on 0131 558 3733. When you RSVP please let Sareta know if you have any dietary or other requirements. Further details on the event will be sent out after you have registered your attendance.