

Progressing the Human Rights of Children in Scotland:

An Action Plan 2018-2021

Progress Report 2019



Ministerial Foreword



This year marks the 30th anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). As the Scottish Government Minister for Children and Young People, I am proud that we are continuing to make positive progress towards embedding and fulfilling children's rights across Scotland. This Government has committed to going further by incorporating the UNCRC into domestic law in this parliamentary session. I want to deliver the 'gold standard' for Scotland within the powers that are available to us. Through the responses to our consultation, it is clear there is widespread support for directly and fully incorporating all of the rights set out in the Convention. Our Bill will instead take a maximalist approach. We will incorporate the rights set out in the UNCRC in full and directly in every case possible - using the language of the Convention. Our only limitation

will be the limit of the powers of this Parliament – limits to which many of us obviously object. The Bill will also make provision to allow incorporation of those provisions of the Convention currently beyond our powers into our domestic law if – and when – the powers of the Scottish Parliament change in the future.

The Bill to incorporate the UNCRC will aim to ensure that there is a proactive culture of everyday accountability for children's rights across public services in Scotland. This will mean that children, young people and their families will experience public bodies consistently acting to uphold the rights of all children in Scotland.

Underpinning this is our vision for a Scotland where children are recognised as citizens in their own right, where their human rights are embedded in all aspects of society; a Scotland where policy, law and decision-making take account of children's rights and where all children have a voice and are empowered to be human rights defenders. This vision builds on the fantastic legacy of our first ever Year of Young People in 2018. Children and young people were involved at every stage in the development and delivery of that very special year, which celebrated the achievements of our young people and provided them with new and powerful ways to express their creativity, skills and talents.

The year 2018 also marked the publication of our [Report](#) and [Action Plan](#), *Progressing the Human Rights of Children in Scotland*, the first documents published in accordance with our duties under Part 1, section 1(4) of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The Report summarised our activities to progress children's rights since commencement of the duties in June 2015. The three year Action Plan sets out our commitment to strategic actions to deliver transformational change in how children and young people experience their rights from 2018 until 2021.

This document is our first annual update on the three year Action Plan. As well as confirming progress made in relation to our four strategic actions, this Report also provides an updated list of examples of the specific policies and initiatives that are also helping to take forward children's rights.

2019 has seen significant progress in realising children's rights in Scotland. In addition to confirming our commitment to incorporate the UNCRC into Scots Law, this year's [Programme for Government](#), *Protecting Scotland's Future*, also set out many important actions to improve the lives of our children and young people. The Programme has a particular focus on our commitments to tackling child poverty and the climate emergency. These are issues that many children and young people raise with me as priorities for action. This year will also see progress towards the implementation of the Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019, which raises the age of criminal responsibility from 8 to 12 years, and the Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland) Act 2019, which removes the legal defence which allows parents to physically punish their children. The Children (Scotland) Bill will progress through Parliament, to ensure that children's voices are heard clearly in family law cases. We are also continuing to take action to tackle Adverse Childhood Experiences and to improve outcomes for looked after children, while the Independent Care Review prepares to report early next year.

In taking forward these, and other relevant commitments, I am delighted to continue to have the opportunity to work on behalf of children and young people and with our many partners to make rights real for all children in Scotland.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maree Todd'.

Maree Todd MSP

Minister for Children and Young People

Introduction

This Report provides an update on progress made in taking forward the actions set out in the [Progressing the Human Rights of Children in Scotland: An Action Plan 2018-2021](#) since the Plan was published in December 2018.

Duties on Ministers under Part 1, section 1(4) of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (CYP Act) require them to report to the Scottish Parliament every three years on the steps they have taken in that period to secure better or further effect in Scotland of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) requirements and to promote public awareness and understanding of the rights of the child. Ministers must also set out their plans for taking forward children's rights until the end of the next three year period. The Scottish Government's responsibilities are restricted to devolved matters.

In accordance with these duties, the [Progressing the Human Rights of Children in Scotland: A Report 2015-2018](#) was laid before Parliament in December 2018. The Report sets out progress made in relation to children's rights from June 2015, when the duties first commenced, until June 2018. A separate Action Plan, published alongside this Report, set out the Scottish Ministers' planned activity to further children's rights from June 2018 until June 2021. The Plan was developed following public consultation and engagement with children and young people. It included the following four strategic actions which aim to support transformational change in how children and young people experience their rights:

- Incorporate the UNCRC into Scots law;
- Develop and deliver through co-production an ambitious programme to raise awareness and understanding of children's rights across all sectors of society in Scotland;
- Develop a strategic approach to children and young people's participation, as part of the Year of Young People legacy; and
- Evaluate the Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) process and further support and promote its use.

Responsibility for taking forward children's rights is mainstreamed across portfolios within the Scottish Government. The principles of the UNCRC are, therefore, taken into account in the development of relevant Scottish Government policies, strategic frameworks, action plans and other key documents, covering all areas relating to the health and wellbeing of children and families. To provide a more comprehensive picture of all the actions that Ministers intend to take forward to progress the rights of the child in Scotland from 2018 to 2021, the Annex to the Action Plan includes examples of key policy initiatives that are being progressed across Scottish Government portfolios during the three year period, in addition to the four strategic actions.

This Progress Report provides an update on progress made in taking forward the four strategic actions in the Action Plan since December 2018. The Annex to the Report includes an updated list of policy specific initiatives being progressed across the Scottish Government relevant to Ministers' commitment to furthering children's rights.

Our Vision

A Scotland where children are recognised as citizens in their own right and where their human rights are embedded in all aspects of society is the **Vision** we aspire to; a Scotland where policy, law and decision making take account of children's rights and where all children have a voice and are empowered to be human rights defenders.

Governance

Children's Rights Advisory Group

To provide a leadership space to discuss ideas and issues, to make children's rights real in Scotland and oversee the action plan.

INCORPORATION



We will incorporate the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into Scots law.

Actions:

- We will consult widely including with children, young people and families, local authorities and other public bodies across Scotland, as well as third sector partners on the right model of incorporation.
- We will also consider where it may be possible for Scots law to go further than the Convention requires, where that is demonstrably beneficial for children and young people.
- In the meantime, we will continue to consider ways in which rights under the UNCRC can be given better or further effect across individual policy areas.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT



We will evaluate the Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) process and further support and promote its use.

Actions:

- We will update the templates, guidance and training materials for the CRWIA process and make these publicly available on the Scottish Government website.
- We will encourage the use of the CRWIA materials by public authorities and children & young people's organisations.
- We will develop an impact evaluation process for the CRWIA.

Progressing the Human Rights of Children in Scotland: An Action Plan 2018-2021

RAISING AWARENESS



We will develop and deliver through co-production, an ambitious programme to raise awareness and understanding of children's rights across all sectors of society in Scotland.

Actions:

- We will map existing rights-based awareness resources, programmes and training packages
- We will recruit a group of young leaders to organise and co-facilitate 6 unConference Events and local discussion groups in different locations across Scotland. Participants will be invited to attend from across different areas of society. Particular attention will be paid to engaging with those that are seldom heard.
- Where gaps or weaknesses have been identified we will, through co-production, develop resources and training programmes to strengthen rights awareness and understanding across all areas of society.
- We will work alongside Education Scotland to strengthen awareness and understanding of children's rights through a range of activities which supports the development of a rights-based culture and ethos in schools and early learning and childcare centres.

STRATEGIC APPROACH TO PARTICIPATION



We will develop a strategic approach to children and young people's participation, as part of the Year of Young People (YoYP) legacy. Our aim is to mainstream the participation of children and young people in decision making across Scottish society.

Actions:

- We will work in partnership with our stakeholders, and importantly with children and young people, to develop our strategic approach.
- We will make sure that we listen to 'representative' voices of children and young people, in particular ensuring that the voices of the seldom heard, vulnerable and younger children are routinely heard.
- We will consider resourcing and how participation is made sustainable.
- We will consider access, including digital technology, to support wider engagement.
- We will publish an evidence base of existing research, good practice and policy areas that have consulted with children and young people.

How will we know we are making progress?

We will provide an update on progress in taking forward these strategic actions each year.

Incorporation

We will incorporate the UNCRC into Scots law.

The Programme for Government 2019/20 sets out the First Minister's commitment to incorporate the UNCRC into domestic law in Scotland in this Parliamentary Session. Ministers will introduce a Bill to incorporate the UNCRC as the key Bill of year five of the legislative programme.

This Bill will aim to ensure that there is a proactive culture of everyday accountability for children's rights across public services in Scotland. This will mean that children, young people and their families will experience public bodies consistently acting to uphold the rights of all children in Scotland.

A public [consultation](#) seeking views on the model of incorporation that will deliver the best outcomes for children, young people and families in Scotland opened on 22 May 2019. The consultation document made clear Ministers' intention to incorporate the UNCRC either directly, or through a Scottish suite of children's rights.

The consultation was due to close on 14 August but was extended by two weeks until 28 August to enable greater participation by children and young people. A total of 162 consultation responses were received (128 organisations and 33 individuals). The responses have now been [published](#). The independent analysis of these responses will be published on 20 November 2019, the 30th Anniversary of the UNCRC.

To complement the public consultation, a range of bilateral official and Ministerial meetings were held over the summer, engaging over 180 children and young people across seven Scottish Government-funded events and meetings with 47 organisations, representing a range of sectors.

The Scottish Government has also convened a short-life UNCRC Working Group that includes representatives from UNICEF, Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights), academics, parenting organisations, the Scottish Youth Parliament, NHS, Police Scotland, COSLA, the Law Society of Scotland and the Faculty of Advocates. The Group has met seven times and will have its final meeting before the end of the year.

The output from the Working Group, together with the responses from the public consultation and the views gathered during the bilateral meetings, will inform advice to Ministers on a draft Bill.

It is clear through the consultation that there is wide recognition that incorporating the UNCRC will significantly advance the protection and realisation of children's rights in Scotland. Through the responses to the consultation, it is evident that there is wide support for directly and fully incorporating all of the rights set out in the UNCRC. Children have said that they want to have the same rights here in Scotland as all children around the world.

Whilst there was some limited support for a 'suite of Scottish Rights approach', we have clearly heard that this approach carries a risk that rights are diluted or changed, even if this were to be unintended. We will, therefore, not take this path. The Bill which will be introduced next year will instead take a maximalist approach. Scotland will incorporate the UNCRC into law to the maximum extent possible within the powers of the Scottish Parliament. The Bill will also make provision to allow incorporation of those provisions of the Convention currently beyond our powers into our domestic law if – and when – the powers of the Scottish Parliament change in the future.

As a result, sadly, some parts of the UNCRC – for example, the provision on military recruitment – are reserved and cannot be incorporated by this Parliament. Our expectation is that a vast majority of the UNCRC's provisions can be incorporated by this Parliament. That will ensure that the rights contained in the UNCRC are afforded the highest protection and respect possible within our constitutional settlement. This approach will for the first time mean that the UNCRC is directly built into Scots law. This represents a huge step forward for the protection of children's rights in Scotland. Every devolved body, every health board, every council – and the Scottish Government itself – will be legally obliged to respect children's rights.

Raising Awareness

We will develop and deliver through co-production, an ambitious programme to raise awareness and understanding of children's rights across all sectors of society in Scotland.

Fundamental to embedding children's rights fully across Scottish society, is a Scotland-wide knowledge and understanding of children's rights and how to act on them. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has emphasised that awareness-raising about children's rights is most effective when progressed through interaction and dialogue¹. Co-production was endorsed as a "game-changing" approach for the rights awareness raising programme at the Children in Scotland Children's Sector Strategic Forum.

Ahead of the Bill to incorporate the UNCRC into domestic law, the Scottish Government is, therefore, progressing through co-production the three-year programme to raise awareness of children's rights across all sectors of Scottish society, including children and young people themselves.

In April 2019, five RightsCafe events were held in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Inverness, Stirling and Dundee with 180 children, young people and professionals in attendance. These events aimed to identify gaps, or areas for development, in awareness of children's rights, which should be addressed through the three year programme. Initial feedback from the events highlighted parents/carers as a group where gaps in awareness may exist and that for children's rights to be truly embedded, a culture change needed to take place across Scotland. This feedback informed the development of the next phase of the programme.

The Scottish Government then commissioned Young Scot, in partnership with Children in Scotland, to work with a group of children and young people to develop through co-production a range of resources that will help to raise awareness of children's rights across all sectors of Scottish society. This contract also includes children and young people's involvement in the development of a strategic approach to participation, another related priority for the strategic actions. Work on this programme commenced in August 2019 and will continue until 31 July 2020.

The children and young people who are working with this programme will be aged 3 to 18 years old, with 50% of them having come from seldom heard groups and 50% having never participated in a national programme previously. In September 2019, 63 children and young people applied to take part in the group, with 20 children and young people being selected.

In addition, between March and July 2019, an online resource mapping exercise was undertaken inviting professionals and organisations from across the children and young people's sector to share their knowledge of existing children's rights awareness raising resources, programmes and training packages. The mapping exercise received 112 responses.

A further resource mapping exercise will be undertaken by the children and young people who are part of the co-production group. Combined with the results of the initial exercise, the children and young people will be able to identify any gaps and develop resources to fill them.

¹ [Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No.5, paragraph 69](#)

Raising awareness of children's rights amongst public bodies with duties under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (CYP Act) is also critical to making rights real for children, young people and their families. To support the implementation of children's rights by public bodies across Scotland, support meetings have been offered to all public authorities who have a reporting duty under Part 1, section 2 of the CYP Act. These duties require public authorities listed in [Schedule 1](#) of the Act, to publish a report every three years on the steps that they have taken in that period to secure better or further effect of the UNCRC requirements within their areas of responsibility. To date, the Scottish Government has supported 10 public authorities in this way, including facilitated development sessions with three local authorities.

We continue to work alongside Education Scotland to strengthen awareness and understanding of children's rights through a range of activities which support the development of a rights-based culture and ethos in schools and early learning and childcare centres. Education Scotland have updated their [Recognising and Realising Children's Rights](#) online resource supporting professional learning. They are also rolling out the 'Young Leaders of Learning Programme' which seeks to ensure children and young people are actively involved in ongoing self-evaluation activities leading to improvement by:

- Taking part in reciprocal visits to other schools to identify what is working well, areas for improvement and effective practice; and
- Promoting ways that children and young people can be involved in school improvement activities in their own school.

Strategic Approach to Participation

We will deliver a strategic approach to children and young people's participation, as part of the Year of Young People (YOYP) legacy. Our aim is to mainstream the participation of children and young people in decision-making across Scottish society.

Ahead of a Bill to incorporate the UNCRC into Scots Law, the Scottish Government is developing a strategic approach to participation. Four working groups – Strategic, Resource, Access and Research – are being established to help develop the strategic approach to participation, with volunteers from the third sector, local government, health and academia working in partnership with the Scottish Government.

The Research short-life group was convened first as this theme underpins the broader participation approach. The group's purpose was to consider the evidence base of existing guidance and research on participation of children and young people in decision-making, practice examples and policy areas that have consulted with children and young people – helping to shape the strategic approach to participation.

The group met three times during 2019 – in March, June and September. A small subgroup of members, made up of academics and representatives from third sector organisations covering the age range 0-18 years, was also convened to help steer the work of the Research group. This subgroup met twice, with six young people attending one of the meetings. We also commissioned a researcher for three months (June to September 2019) to work with us to take forward the tasks of the Research group.

The main output from the Research group will be a participation webpage on the Scottish Government website. Its purpose will be to provide information, guidance and support on children and young people's participation in decision-making. The intended audience of the webpage is those who engage, or want to engage, with children and young people as part of their decision-making (e.g. public authorities, policymakers, service designers). It is intended that the webpage will cover:

- A definition of children and young people's participation in decision-making and its benefits;
- Guidance on how to enable the participation of children and young people;
- Reports and evidence that outline children and young people's views on a range of subjects;
- Practice examples showing different methodologies of children and young people's participation;
- Research publications covering different aspects of participation, such as theory, methodology and ethics; and
- Signposting to organisations that can offer support in delivering the participation of children and young people.

The Access group will consider how best to support and promote wider engagement from children and young people so they can participate in decision-making. The group will also consider the methods children and young people can use to participate, including digital media. However, the group is still in its early stages – its role and remit still need to be agreed. Members of the Access group include those from across stakeholder organisations in the third sector, public sector, children and young people and Scottish Government officials. The first meeting of the Access group was held on 8 October. The group will engage with children and

young people to:

- Help inform the scope and remit of the working group;
- Seek their views on how best we engage with them; and
- Ensure that co-production methods are used.

Young Scot, in partnership with Children in Scotland, have been commissioned to co-produce the strategic approach to participation (along with the children's rights awareness raising programme) with children and young people aged 3 to 18 years. This work commenced on 1 August 2019 and will continue until 31 July 2020. Children and young people will work closely with the working groups (Strategic, Resource, Access, Research) with specific tasks and outcomes developed as the working groups are progressed.

The work under the Strategic and Resource groups is intended to commence in 2020. We expect that the Resource group will consider both funding and capacity. In the interim, third sector organisations undertaking work to deliver on children's rights and participation were eligible to apply for the new Families and Communities Fund, providing up to £16 million each year for three years. Consideration of those applications is well underway and it is our intention to announce the results of that process before the end of the year.

Impact Assessment

We will evaluate the Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) process to further support and promote its use.

The CRWIA aims to ensure that all areas of the Scottish Government consider the possible direct and indirect impacts of proposed policies and legislation on the rights and wellbeing of children and young people. The views of children and young people are integral to the CRWIA process. [Guidance](#) on the CRWIA approach has been published for use by public authorities and others, should they wish to use this resource.

The use of the CRWIA is assisting government and other relevant organisations to take a rights-based approach to the development of policies and services ahead of the Bill to incorporate the UNCRC into Scots law.

The Scottish Government commissioned an independent review of the CRWIA. In March 2019, the streamlined process, updated guidance, training tools and templates were made available on the Scottish Government website.

We continue to raise awareness of the CRWIA and to promote its use across public authorities, including as part of visits to support individual authorities in meeting their reporting duties under Part 1 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

We have also included an objective within the terms of grant of the core funded organisations within the CYPFEIF/ALEC² Fund to 'take steps to promote the UNCRC through the creation and development of their policies and procedures'. The indicator for this objective is that, by 31 March 2020, the organisations 'will evidence that they have considered the rights and wellbeing of children and young people by completing a Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) for the creation and development of their policies and procedures'.

We intend for an independent assessor to undertake an evaluation of the impact of CRWIA in 2021 to further support and promote its use.

2 Children, Young People and Families Early Intervention and Adult Learning and Empowering Communities Fund

Governance Arrangements

To provide a leadership space to discuss ideas and issues, to make children's rights real in Scotland and oversee the action plan.

High-level oversight of progress made in relation to the strategic actions in the Action Plan is provided by the Improving Outcomes for Children and Young People Strategic Forum. The Forum, which is jointly chaired by the Scottish Government Director for Children and Families and the Scottish Government Director of Learning, includes representatives from local government, public authorities and the third sector. The Group meets quarterly.

In addition, the Director for Children and Families has convened a cross-government Group at Director level within the Scottish Government to ensure co-ordinated approaches to policy and outcomes relevant to the rights and wellbeing of children and young people.

Annex

KEY FORWARD ACTIONS AND STRATEGIC PLANS

Responsibility for taking forward children's rights is mainstreamed across portfolios within the Scottish Government. The principles of the UNCRC are, therefore, taken into account in the development of relevant Scottish Government policies, strategic frameworks, action plans and other key documents, covering all areas relating to the health and wellbeing of children and families.

The progress and actions that Ministers intend to achieve in relation to the rights of the child between 2018 and 2021 are, therefore, set out within a wide range of individual policy documents and action plans. A non-exhaustive list of summaries and links to some of these key documents and policy initiatives is provided below. These are organised under the cluster groups used in reporting to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Where relevant, monitoring and reporting arrangements for individual initiatives are also included.

General Measure of Implementation

[National Performance Framework \(2018\)](#)

The revised National Performance Framework was developed together with the people of Scotland to reflect our values as a nation and the aspirations we hold for our future. It has also been formulated to link with and promote our commitment to the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals which are aimed at improving wellbeing across the world. The high level outcomes for the Framework include: *"We respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination"* and *"We grow up loved, safe and respected so that we realise our full potential"*

[First Minister's Advisory Group on Human Rights Leadership](#)

The First Minister's Advisory Group on Human Rights Leadership reported on 10 December 2018 and a National Taskforce has been established to progress the report's [recommendations](#). The National Taskforce is Co-chaired by Shirley Anne Somerville, the Cabinet Secretary for Social Security and Older People and Professor Alan Miller, the Special Envoy for the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions. The priority work for the National Taskforce will be a statutory human rights framework that gives effect to internationally-recognised human rights by incorporating them into domestic law. The National Taskforce will also oversee wider work on participation and capacity building as part of the development and implementation of the new legislation.

[Universal Periodic Review of Human Rights in the United Kingdom \(2017\) Progress Report \(January 2019\)](#)

The Scottish Government's [response](#) to the most recent Universal Periodic Review of the UK was published in December 2017. A report on progress in implementing the UN Human Rights Council's recommendations in five thematic areas was published in January 2019.

[UN Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment – Position Statement \(February 2019\)](#)

The Scottish Government published a position statement in advance of the examination of the UK by the UN Committee Against Torture, which took place in Geneva on 7 and 8 May 2019.

[Council of Europe Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading](#)

[Treatment or Punishment – Response to Report \(October 2019\)](#)

The Scottish Government responded to a report from the Council of Europe Committee Against Torture following from its visit to Scotland in October 2018.

[UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights – Response \(May 2019\)](#)

The Scottish Government published in May 2019, a response to the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights following his visit to the UK in November 2018.

[Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children Against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse \(Lanzarote Convention\)](#)

The Scottish Government contributed to the UK response to the 2019 General Overview Questionnaire, in which we set out the legislative mechanisms in Scotland to establish the various forms of sexual abuse of children as criminal offences, including such abuse committed in the home or family, with the use of force, coercion or threats.

[Child Rights Wellbeing Impact Assessments \(CRWIA\) Guidance \(March 2019\)](#)

Scottish Government guidance on when and how best to use the Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) was first published in 2015 for Scottish Government officials, alongside draft templates and a training tool. The guidance has been shared more widely with public bodies. The CRWIA guidance, templates and training tool were updated in early 2019 following an independent evaluation of the CRWIA process.

[Scottish Budget 2019-20: Equality and Fairer Scotland Statement \(2018\)](#)

The Equality and Fairer Scotland budget statement was published alongside the Scottish Government Draft Budget 2019-20, to reflect and report the impacts of policy and spending decisions on equality outcomes. The equality budgeting process for the Scottish Government is developed with the involvement of an expert advisory group. For 2019-20, the Statement included a specific chapter on the impact of budget decisions on child poverty, as well as an overview of the impact of budget decisions on children and young people and a Fairer Scotland assessment. The Scottish Government is continually striving to improve its equality budgeting processes.

[Global Citizenship: Scotland's International Development Strategy \(2016\)](#)

The Scottish Government's refreshed International Development Strategy sets the direction for Scotland's international activity to contribute to the fight against global poverty, inequality, injustice, and promotes sustainable development via the mechanism of the UN Global Goals. The Scottish Government is also committed to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals via the mechanisms of the National Performance Framework (NPF) in order to reduce inequality both domestically and internationally.

[National Action Plan to Implement the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#)

The Scottish Government is working with partners to develop a co-ordinated plan of action in Scotland to implement the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs). A national baseline assessment (NBA), which was published in October 2016,

sets out how law, policy and practice in Scotland aligns with the UNGPs. Further engagement with stakeholders, including children and young people, has helped to prioritise the NBA's recommendations and is informing the drafting of an action plan.

[Common Core of Skills, Knowledge & Understanding and Values for the 'Children's Workforce' in Scotland \(2012\)](#)

The Common Core describes the skills, knowledge and understanding, and values that everyone should have if they work with children, young people and their families, whether they are paid or unpaid. The skills, knowledge and understanding are explicitly cross-referenced to the guiding principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

[Getting it right for every child](#)

Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) is Scotland's national approach to improving outcomes for children through promoting and supporting their wellbeing to help them grow up feeling loved, safe and respected so that they can realise their full potential.

The GIRFEC approach is about making support accessible and responsive to the needs of children and their families; and, to prevent any needs, risks or concerns getting worse. It provides a framework for everyone who works with children, young people and their families to provide support based on a shared understanding of wellbeing needs and a shared approach to responding to those needs, including planning for children and young people. Within this network of support, a named person can provide a known point of contact, and a lead professional can co-ordinate services, in partnership with families. It puts the rights and wellbeing of children and young people at the heart of policies and services that support them and their families.

The Scottish Government has made a commitment to refresh *Getting it right for every child* policy and practice guidance in order to provide families, practitioners, and organisations with confidence, clarity and practical support on the delivery of GIRFEC.

[Fairer Scotland Action Plan \(2016\)](#)

The Fairer Scotland Action Plan was produced following Fairer Scotland conversations held in 2015. It sets out 50 actions that will help build a fairer and more prosperous country – one with low levels of poverty and inequality, genuine equality of opportunity, stronger life chances, and support for all those who need it. It is based on five ambitions for the period to 2030: a fairer Scotland for all; ending child poverty; a strong start for all young people; fairer working lives; and a thriving third age. The [Fairer Scotland Action Plan: Progress Report 2018](#), which was published in December 2018, outlines progress made since the previous Progress Report in November 2017.

[Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report 2017 \(2017\)](#)

The report provides an update on the Scottish Government's progress in promoting and mainstreaming equality across its activities and in delivering on the 2013 equality outcomes. It also sets new equality outcomes covering the period 2017-21. The two most relevant outcomes relate to: ensuring that children affected by domestic abuse are increasingly recognised and supported in the justice system; and, making progress in the educational experience of children whose success, according to the evidence, is hampered by having

a protected characteristic. The document includes measurement tools for progress on each of the outcomes.

[Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report 2019 \(April 2019\)](#)

The report provides an update on the progress made by the Scottish Government in mainstreaming and promoting equality across its activities. It also provides an update on progress on the equality outcomes set in 2017. A final report will be published on these outcomes in 2021.

[Race Equality Framework for Scotland 2016-2030 \(2016\)](#)

The Race Equality Framework for Scotland sets out the Scottish Government's approach to promoting race equality and tackling racism and inequality between 2016 and 2030. The first Goal within the document is for the establishment of an accountable approach to support and drive forward the implementation of the Framework.

[A Fairer Scotland for All: Race Equality Action Plan 2017-21 \(2017\)](#)

The Race Equality Action Plan outlines actions being taken over the course of the Parliament to make improvements in the lives and experiences of minority ethnic communities in Scotland as part of the 15 year Race Equality Framework. The Plan seeks to advance race equality, tackle racism and address the barriers that prevent people from minority ethnic communities from realising their potential.

[Race Equality Action Plan: Year 1 Progress Update \(June 2019\)](#)

The Update provides an overview of the work that was undertaken in the first year of the plan (December 2017 – December 2018), ongoing work that is underway in year two, and outcomes from the first Race Equality Action Plan conference in December 2018. Progress updates will be published in 2020 and 2021.

[Improving the Lives of Scotland's Gypsy/Travellers \(October 2019\)](#)

This is a joint Action Plan by the Scottish Government and COSLA to improve outcomes for Scotland's Gypsy/Travellers in the key areas of accommodation, education, health and poverty. It sets out five long-term goals which are to ensure that Gypsy/Travellers:

- Have safe and culturally appropriate places to live and travel;
- Understand their rights and have positive experiences of accessing services;
- Have support to maximise incomes, increase employment opportunities, and improve the standard of living;
- Feel safe, respected and valued members of Scotland's diverse population; and
- Have a seat at the table, are listened to and have a say in decisions that affect their lives.

The plan sets out 33 actions to be delivered in the current parliamentary term to make progress towards these goals, while also laying the foundation for lasting change that will see an end to deeply-embedded inequalities. The actions have been developed with the advice, support and challenge of advocates, activists and members of the Gypsy/Traveller communities, as well as being informed by the expertise of those who are responsible for developing and delivering policies and services, nationally and locally. Members of the Ministerial Working Group and COSLA will meet every six months with members of the Gypsy/Traveller community to monitor and discuss progress and find solutions to any challenges that might arise.

[Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACEs\)](#)

ACEs are stressful or traumatic experiences that can have a huge impact on children and young people throughout their lives. The Scottish Government is committed to preventing ACEs and helping to reduce the negative impacts of these where they occur and supporting the resilience of children, families and adults in overcoming adversity. We are taking forward action in four key areas: providing inter-generational support for parents, families and children to prevent ACEs; reducing the negative impact of ACEs for children and young people; developing adversity and trauma-informed workforce and services; and increasing societal awareness and supporting action across communities. We are working with NHS Education for Scotland and have [announced £1.35 million funding to deliver a national trauma training programme](#). This will help Scotland's current and future workforce develop skills and services that respond appropriately to people's adverse childhood experiences and other traumatic experiences.

[British Sign Language National Plan 2017-2023 \(2017\)](#)

The British Sign Language National Plan 2017-2023 sets out the ambition to make Scotland the best place in the world for BSL users to live, work and visit. The plan is framed around ten long-term goals and contains a number of actions relevant to children and their families. A progress report and a further set of actions will be published in 2020.

[Year of Young People 2018](#)

Scotland's Year of Young People 2018 provided an opportunity for generations to come together to celebrate our nation's young people, to create a platform to give them a stronger voice on issues which affect their lives, showcase their ideas and talents, and ultimately, challenge the status quo and create a more positive perception of young people in society. The Scottish Government is continuing to ensure that the legacy of this successful Year continues beyond 2018.

[Actions Agreed at the Cabinet Meeting with Children and Young People – 6 March 2018 – Progress Report \(February 2019\)](#)

In February 2019, the Scottish Government published a Report on progress made in taking forward the actions agreed at the second annual Cabinet meeting with children and young people.

[Actions Agreed at the Third Annual Cabinet Meeting with Children and Young People \(June 2019\)](#)

In June 2019, actions agreed at the third annual Cabinet Meeting with children and young people were published. They cover a wide range of issues, including child poverty, bullying, public transport and incorporation of UNCRC into Scots law. A Progress Report on these actions will be made available in 2020.

[Rethinking Legal Aid – An Independent Strategic Review \(February 2018\)](#)

Rethinking Legal Aid: An Independent Strategic Review, commissioned by Scottish Ministers and chaired by Martyn Evans, was published in February 2018. It sets out an ambitious vision for publicly funded legal assistance in Scotland, through a citizen focused approach, including for children's legal aid. A Scottish Government [consultation](#) on possible actions following from the recommendations made in the Review closed on 19 September 2019.

CIVIL RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

[Biometric Data](#)

The Scottish Government's response to the Report by the Independent Advisory Group (IAG) on the Use of Biometric Data was published in March 2018. The Scottish Government agreed with the Group's recommendation for considering a different approach to children aged between 12 and 17 to ensure that their biometric data is taken, used and retained in a proportionate manner that reduces any unintended negative risks or consequences. This approach is consistent with wider Scottish policy approaches including *Getting it right for every child* and the *Whole System Approach for Children and Young People who Offend*. Police Scotland established a short life working group to develop the new policy; new investigative options; and the decision-making model required to progress this recommendation, in parallel with considerations arising from proposals to increase the minimum age of criminal responsibility in Scotland. Police Scotland are currently taking forward the recommendations of the short life working group in respect of:

- Altering the presumption to one of not taking biometrics from children arrested and released without charge unless the case is one of serious violent or sexual offending;
- That in instances when biometric data is taken, this should be authorised by the custody sergeant and the rationale and decision-making process is recorded and as such the National Custody System should be amended to allow the recording of this information.

The remaining recommendations around the taking of samples including from vulnerable children are intended to be taken forward in liaison with the Scottish Biometrics Commissioner once the post of the Commissioner has been established.

The role and functions of the Commissioner are currently set out in [draft legislation](#) for the scrutiny and approval of the Scottish Parliament. The Commissioner, if appointed, is expected to promote the interests of children and young people and have a role in raising their awareness of police powers and duties in relation to biometric data – and of how these powers and duties can be monitored and challenged.

[Code of Practice on the Use of Stop and Search \(2017\)](#)

The Code of Practice, which was developed by the Independent Advisory Group on Stop and Search, came into force on 11 May 2017. The Code and its use is a matter for Police Scotland and it has been designed to ensure that searches are carried out with fairness, integrity and respect. Chapter 7 of the Code is targeted specifically at children and young people and sets out additional consideration and specific guidance for police officers on the conduct of searches in cases where a child or young person is involved. The Code specifies that the police must have the child's wellbeing as a primary consideration in deciding whether to proceed with a stop and search and, where that is necessary, to conduct searches in a way that minimises potential distress. A separate guidance document, [Stop and Search in Scotland: What you need to know – A Guide for Children and Young People](#), was also published in 2017. In June 2019, the Independent Advisory Group published a twelve month [Review](#) of the Code of Practice.

Violence Against Children

[Child Protection Improvement Programme Report and Child Protection Systems Review Report Recommendations](#) (2017)

The Child Protection Improvement Programme report sets out 35 Actions covering children's hearings; leadership and workforce development; inspections of children's services; neglect; data and evidence; child sexual exploitation; child internet safety; and trafficking. The Systems Review report makes 12 recommendations, covering Initial and Significant Case Reviews, Child Protection Committees, the Child Protection Register, and matters of leadership, governance and accountability. The Scottish Government has accepted all of the recommendations made in the Report and progress is being monitored through the National Child Protection Leadership Group.

[Scotland's National Action Plan to Prevent & Tackle Child Sexual Exploitation Update](#) (2016)

The Update reported on progress made since the publication of the first National Action Plan in 2014 and outlined 44 actions to be taken between summer 2016 and 2019. The Scottish Government continues to work with the National Child Sexual Exploitation Group on the implementation of these actions.

[National Action Plan on Internet Safety for Children and Young People](#) (2017)

The Action Plan sets out specific actions under three broad aims – giving everybody the skills, knowledge and understanding to help children and young people stay safe online; inspiring safe and responsible use and behaviour online; and creating a safer online environment.

[Protecting Children: Review of section 12 of the Children and Young Persons \(Scotland\) Act 1937 and section 42 of the Sexual Offences \(Scotland\) Act 2009](#) (2018)

The PfG 2017/18 included the commitment to consult on revising the criminal offence of abuse and neglect of children to ensure it reflects a modern understanding of such terms. A formal consultation on the proposed amendments took place during 2018. The Scottish Government's [analysis report](#) of the consultation responses was published on 30 September 2019. We are carefully considering responses to inform next steps in this complex and sensitive area of the law. We plan to undertake further engagement with the third sector and other key stakeholders as we develop and refine the proposals.

[Disclosure \(Scotland\) Bill](#) (June 2019)

The Disclosure (Scotland) Bill, which was introduced to the Scottish Parliament on 12 June 2019, will make the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme mandatory for anyone working in regulated roles with children and protected adults, such as sports coaches. It will end lifetime membership of the PVG Scheme, replacing it with a renewable five-year membership. It will also end the automatic disclosures of criminal offences committed as a child, with decisions to be taken on a case by case basis.

[Children \(Equal Protection from Assault\)\(Scotland\) Act 2019](#)

The Children (Equal Protection from Assault)(Scotland) Act 2019 was passed by the Scottish Parliament on 3 October 2019. This member's Bill removes the existing defence of reasonable chastisement in relation to the physical punishment of children by parents or people in charge of or caring for children. The Scottish Government supports the removal of this defence, which will provide children with the same protection from physical assault as adults.

[Trafficking and Exploitation Strategy \(2017\)](#)

Scotland's first Trafficking and Exploitation Strategy sets out the Scottish Government's ambition to work with partners to eliminate human trafficking and exploitation. The Strategy identifies the following areas for action: identify victims and support them to safety and recovery; identify perpetrators and disrupt their activity; and address the conditions, both local and global, that foster trafficking and exploitation, as well as dedicated section on actions related to Child Trafficking.

The [Second Annual Report](#) on progress with the Strategy was published in June 2019. There is a statutory duty to review the Strategy every three years and a review of the Strategy is underway and will report in 2020. A [consultation](#), which relates to a duty to notify and provide information about victims, closed in September 2019. Responses are currently undergoing analysis.

[Unaccompanied Children](#)

The Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) Act 2015 made the provision of independent child trafficking guardians statutory for eligible children. Expertise has been drawn from across government, the current Scottish Guardianship Service, COSLA and others working with unaccompanied children across Scotland to develop a [consultation](#) to define the role, responsibilities and functions of the Independent Child Trafficking Guardian in Scotland. The consultation closes on 17 November 2019.

[Equally Safe: Scotland's Strategy for Preventing and Eradicating Violence Against Women and Girls \(2018\)](#)

Equally Safe, Scotland's Strategy for preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls, seeks to work with stakeholders, to prevent violence from occurring in the first place, build the capability and capacity of mainstream and specialist services to support survivors and those at risk, and strengthen the Justice response to victims and perpetrators. The Strategy was updated in March 2016 and further updated in April 2018.

[Equally Safe – A Delivery Plan for Scotland's Strategy to Prevent and Eradicate Violence Against Women and Girls 2017-21 \(2017\)](#)

The Delivery Plan sets out the actions the Scottish Government, COSLA and partners will take to prevent and ultimately eradicate all forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG), including the impact for children and young people. The Delivery Plan includes a range of actions relevant to children and young people, including prevention within schools and ensuring more effective, trauma-informed support for children and young people affected by VAWG. Progress on the specific actions in the delivery plan is reported annually. The [Equally Safe Delivery Plan: Year One Update](#) (2018), provides an overview of progress made to date and sets out priorities for the year ahead.

[Scotland's National Action Plan to Prevent and Eradicate Female Genital Mutilation \(FGM\) 2016-2020 \(2016\)](#)

The National Action Plan sets out an agreed range of actions and associated activities to be taken forward by the Scottish Government and its partners to prevent and ultimately eradicate FGM. Progress against actions from the National Action Plan is being monitored by a Multi-Agency Implementation Group. The FGM National Action Plan [Year One Report](#) was published in October 2017.

[Female Genital Mutilation \(Protection and Guidance\)\(Scotland\) Bill](#)

The Female Genital Mutilation (Protection and Guidance)(Scotland) Bill was introduced to the Scottish Parliament in May 2019. The legislation will introduce Protection Orders specifically designed to safeguard women and children who might find themselves under pressure to undergo FGM. It will also provide for the development of statutory guidance for professionals and agencies working in this area.

[Domestic Abuse \(Scotland\) Act 2018](#)

Ground breaking legislation that criminalises psychological domestic abuse and coercive and controlling behaviour came into force on 1 April 2019. This includes a specific statutory sentencing aggravation to reflect the harm that can be caused to children growing up in an environment where domestic abuse takes place.

Family Environment and Alternative Care

[National Parenting Strategy \(2012\)](#)

The National Parenting Strategy seeks to strengthen the support on offer to parents and make it easier for them to access this support. When we refer to parents, we mean anyone with a parenting role for children of all ages.

[The Children \(Scotland\) Bill](#) and [Family Justice Modernisation Strategy](#) (September 2019)

The Children (Scotland) Bill was introduced to the Scottish Parliament in September 2019. The Bill was informed by the outcomes of a Scottish Government consultation on the [Review of the Children \(Scotland\) Act 1995](#). The Bill seeks to make changes to family law, in particular to further ensure that the child's best interests are at the centre of any contact and residence cases and that the views of the child are heard. A Family Justice Modernisation Strategy, outlining current and planned work to improve how family cases are dealt with, was also published in September 2019.

[Getting it Right for Looked After Children and Young People Strategy](#) (2015)

The Strategy sets out the Scottish Government's priorities to improve the lives of looked after children and young people. The Strategy, which has relationships at its heart, has three priority areas of work: early engagement, early permanence and improving the quality of care. The Strategy proposed that different approaches would be required in monitoring and assessing progress on the priorities identified through the strategy.

[Independent Care Review](#)

In 2017, Scottish Ministers established an independent root and branch review of the care system for children and young people in Scotland, to help identify how to change the future of the care system for the better and to improve both the quality of life and outcomes of young people in care. The Review is due to conclude in early 2020.

[Realigning Children's Services](#)

The Realigning Children's Services (RCS) programme has been delivered since 2015 by the Scottish Government to support and challenge Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) in Scotland to drive improvement in their joint strategic decision-making in relation to children's services. RCS is a two-stranded programme. It delivers an evidence programme centred around quantitative school-based wellbeing surveys with primary and secondary school pupils. The surveys engage children and young people directly to gather information on their perceptions of their health and wellbeing across the following domains: Family, School, Peer Relationships, Local Area and Health. RCS also offers a development and facilitation

programme to the Community Planning Partnerships to help local stakeholders to understand and implement evidence-based policy making in relation to their children's services.

[National Review of Care Allowances \(2018\)](#)

A National Review of Care Allowances for children living in foster care, kinship care and adoptive placements was carried out between November 2017 and August 2018. The Review Group's final report, including 12 recommendations for Scottish Ministers and COSLA leaders, was published in September 2018. The Scottish Government is continuing to work with COSLA to agree how best to take forward the Group's recommendations, with a view to implementation from April 2020. This will improve consistency and transparency for looked after children, their families and their carers across Scotland.

[National Missing Persons Framework for Scotland \(2017\)](#)

The National Missing Persons Framework for Scotland sets out the roles and responsibilities of respective agencies, as well as key national objectives and supporting commitments to focus efforts on preventing people from going missing and limiting the harm associated when they do go missing. The Framework clarifies responsibilities and sets out a clear set of objectives and supporting commitments. It also includes an Implementation Plan that is currently being reviewed by a Working Group which will work closely with the new national co-ordinator.

[Support for Young Carers](#)

We are continuing work to embed the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 and focusing on priorities highlighted in the [National Implementation Plan](#) for the Act. As well as the [Carers' charter](#), we have funded partners to develop resources aimed at supporting young carers to understand their rights under the Act, including a Carers Act [Young Carers Jargon Buster](#).

[Carers Strategic Policy Statement Consultation \(September 2019\)](#)

We are publically consulting on our draft Carers Strategic Policy Statement, which will map a range of existing policies to support carers and young carers across different Ministerial portfolios. The final document will be published in spring 2020.

[Young Carer Grant](#)

On 21 October 2019, Social Security Scotland began accepting applications for the Young Carer Grant. The first of its kind in the UK, the Young Carer Grant will help eligible young carers aged 16, 17 and 18 with a payment of £300, which can be applied for annually, to help them access life opportunities which are the norm for many other young people. The Grant builds on wider support planned or underway for young carers, for example through the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016, and benefit take-up activity targeted at carers aged 16-24.

Disability, Basic Health and Welfare

[A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Our Delivery Plan to 2021 for the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) (2016)

The Delivery Plan has five long-term ambitions and 93 actions aimed at transforming the lives of disabled people in Scotland and ensuring that their human rights are realised. The actions include a range of measures relevant to children and young people and supporting the families with disabled children and young people.

Progress is monitored through: the review process for the UK State Party in relation to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; the [Fairer Scotland Action Plan: Progress Report 2018](#) (2018) and the [Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report](#) (April 2019). We plan to report on progress to the Scottish Parliament in early 2021.

[Supporting Disabled Children, Young People and their Families: Guidance](#) (April 2019)

As a result of a 2016 survey of families with disabled children and young people, a resource was developed to centralise relevant information and organisations. The resource aims to provide clear, accessible information on national policies, entitlements, rights and the different options for support available. The information covers topics such as types of professional support for disabled children and young people, law and children's rights, and leisure and social activities. Real life stories of children and young people were used to highlight how support or a service available in their area helped them.

[Scottish Strategy for Autism: Outcomes and Priorities 2018-2021](#) (2018)

The refreshed Strategy sets out the priorities for action through to 2021 to improve outcomes for autistic people living in Scotland. One priority is the development of a national campaign to improve the understanding of autism across Scotland along with a fund to support a grass roots movement of change and acceptance. Other priorities include improving access to diagnosis and post diagnostic support along with improving the opportunity for autistic people to gain employment.

[Keys to Life: Implementation Framework and Priorities 2019-21](#) (March 2019)

The vision of the Keys to Life is that everyone – including people with learning disabilities – should be able to contribute to a fairer Scotland and tackle inequalities. Everyone should be treated with dignity, respect and understanding; with a strategic ambition for A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People. Priorities have been driven by four rights-based strategic outcomes including live healthy and active lives, learn to reach their potential, participate in an inclusive economy and contribute to a fair, equal and safe Scotland. We want everyone in Scotland with a learning disability to live healthier lives, enjoy choice and control over the services they use, and are supported to be independent and active citizens. Consideration will be given to a strategy refresh in 2021.

[See Hear](#) (2014)

This strategic framework aims to meet the needs of people with a sensory impairment in Scotland and commits to ensuring that children, young people and adults have the same access to opportunities and public services as everyone else. The strategy is being implemented through local partnerships of statutory and third sector organisations. Sensory Impairment Leads have been nominated to help drive progress across priority areas within the local partnerships insofar as local resources allow. Local partnerships will adopt different approaches and the level and pace of progress towards the achievement of outcomes will accord with local circumstances.

We are now reviewing what has been achieved so far and reflecting on what outcomes we would collectively like to achieve, and what success will look like in the medium to longer-term. A key part of this will be engaging with service users and stakeholders to capture their views and experiences. To this end we are currently collecting responses to a survey sent out to all See Hear Leads, as well as third sector organisations.

[Part 4 of the Health \(Tobacco, Nicotine etc. and Care\) \(Scotland\) Act 2016 – Provision of Communication Equipment](#)

Part 4 of the Act, which commenced on 19 March 2018, places a duty on NHS Boards to ensure communication equipment, as well as the support to use it, are provided free of charge to people of all ages, from all care groups, who cannot speak or who have difficulty speaking. To support the delivery of legislation, the following tools have been developed: [Guidance on the Provision of Communication Equipment and Support in using that Equipment, Easy Read version of the Guidance](#) and a [National AAC Core Pathway](#). Work is now underway to co-produce, with our national advisory group members and stakeholders, a refresh of the national Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) high level work plan, reflecting the broader and ongoing program of work on AAC.

[Going Further: Scotland's Accessible Travel Framework \(2016\)](#)

Scotland's Accessible Travel Framework is about improving the door to door journeys that disabled people make whilst working to remove the barriers which prevent them travelling. The ten year Framework has been shaped by disabled people themselves, together with organisations that represent them; this ensures the experiences and voices of disabled people are heard. It is built around one vision, four outcomes and 48 actions that were collectively agreed by disabled people's organisations, transport providers and government. We have worked with partners to respond to stakeholders' concerns to progress the Framework more quickly and ramped up implementation of the Framework by moving to an annual delivery plan for this and future years. The first annual [Delivery Plan](#) was published in June 2019 and focusses on eight priority areas.

[A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan \(2018\)](#)

A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan sets out the steps Scottish Government will take to reduce the employment gap between disabled people and the rest of the working age population by at least half, by 2038. These actions cover three key themes that emerged during the development of the plan: supporting employers to recruit and retain disabled people; supporting disabled people to enter employment; and young people and transitions. Key actions within the plan to support young disabled people making the transition from school to further or higher education include:

- Building on the Seven Principles of Good Transitions, and broader recommendations from sector experts, disabled young people and their families and carers, and work across government to improve transitions. This includes considering how we can extend the current public sector internship scheme to see greater use by the private sector;
- Providing young disabled people with the highest level of Modern Apprenticeship funding, and removing the barriers that have previously prevented young disabled people entering Modern Apprenticeships (MA), through the implementation of [The Equalities Action Plan for Modern Apprenticeships in Scotland](#);
- Supporting Developing the Young Workforce Regional Groups to develop actions to support

the recruitment of disabled people; and

- Initiating a practice and improvement evaluation of the equality outcomes in Developing the Young Workforce to support policy and delivery improvement.

We will continue to work across Scottish Government, and with partners (including: local government; Scottish Funding Council; and Skills Development Scotland) to ensure delivery of these commitments.

[No One Left Behind – Next Steps for the Integration and Alignment of Employability Support in Scotland](#) (2018)

In March 2018, the Scottish Government published No One Left Behind – Next Steps for the Integration and Alignment of Employability Support in Scotland, which contains a comprehensive range of activities to deliver more effective and joined-up employability support across Scotland. The document recognises that better integration and alignment of employability with other services is a vital part of its ambition to tackle labour market inequalities and help more people into work. Phase 1 of the new No One Left Behind Employability Funding Stream commenced in April 2019. Funding has been allocated to all 32 local authorities to deliver the key objectives of Phase 1, which includes providing tailored support to some young people who have left school to help them prepare for employment, training or education. We are currently working on planning Phase 2.

Health and Wellbeing

[The Best Start: A Five-Year Forward Plan for Maternity and Neonatal Care in Scotland](#) (2017)

The Best Start sets out the vision for the delivery of high quality and safe maternity and neonatal services across Scotland where services regard mother and baby as one entity and truly put the mother, baby and family at the centre of service planning delivery. Implementation of a number of key policies in the report is well underway. This will see: the introduction of continuity of carer for women throughout pregnancy which will improve relationships and evidence tells us will lead to improved clinical outcomes for mothers and babies; and a range of changes for neonatal services which will keep mothers and babies together as much as possible which will improve bonding and attachment.

[Improving Maternal and Infant Nutrition: A Framework for Action](#) (2011)

The Framework sets out the action to be taken by NHS Boards, local authorities and others to improve the diet and nutrition of pregnant women, babies and young children in Scotland, including the ongoing commitment to promoting, supporting and protecting breastfeeding as the normal nutrition for babies.

[A Universal Health Visiting Pathway for Scotland](#) (2015)

The Pathway sets out the minimum core home visiting programme to be offered to all families by Health Visitors. The programme consists of 11 home visits to all families – 8 within the first year of life and 3 child health reviews between 13 months and 4-5 years.

[Family Nurse Partnership](#) (FNP)

The FNP is an intensive, preventive, one-to-one home visiting programme for first-time mothers aged 19 and under and their children (as well as some mothers aged up to 24 years in some areas). It covers early pregnancy until the child reaches two. The FNP programme aims to

improve pregnancy and birth outcomes and break the cycle of disadvantage by working directly with young mothers and their children to improve their health and wellbeing.

[Pregnancy and Parenthood in Young People Strategy 2016-2026 \(2016\)](#)

The Pregnancy and Parenthood in Young People Strategy sets out the action required to support young people around pregnancy and parenthood. It aims to address the cycle of deprivation that is often associated with pregnancy in young people and supports young parents. The Strategy focuses on increasing the opportunities available to young people, to support their wellbeing and prosperity across the life course and to help young people develop the appropriate knowledge, skills and confidence they need around pregnancy and parenthood through a partnership approach between professionals and young people.

[The 10 year Child and Young People Health and Wellbeing Action Plan.](#)

Good progress has been made on a health and wellbeing action plan. Extensive engagement has been undertaken with children, young people, parents and professionals to understand how best to support and improve child and adolescent health. Building on this feedback and research evidence about the broad determinants of health, the Scottish Government is currently undertaking work to finalise a shared cross-portfolio Vision and Action Plan. This will take a holistic approach to improving a broad range of outcomes for children, young people and their families, covering the wide range of factors which influence health and wellbeing. The cross-portfolio Vision and Action Plan will be published in early 2020.

[A Healthier Future: Scotland's Diet & Healthy Weight Delivery Plan \(2018\)](#)

The Diet & Healthy Weight Delivery Plan sets out our vision for everyone in Scotland to eat well and have a healthy weight. Central to the plan is our ambition to halve childhood obesity by 2030, and to significantly reduce diet-related health inequalities. The plan has over 60 broad ranging actions including more support for women to have a healthy weight in pregnancy; support for breastfeeding; improving food served in early learning and childcare settings and schools; and better access to quality weight management services. We will also introduce a Bill next year to restrict the promotion of foods high in fat, sugar or salt with little or no nutritional value, which are more likely to be consumed by children.

[Best Start Foods](#)

As part of our programme of support, alongside measures such as Best Start Grant payments and the Baby Box initiative which target the formative early years of a child's life, Best Start Foods aims to support young families in establishing and maintaining healthy diets, improve health outcomes and tackle inequality. It does this by providing direct financial support to families on lower incomes to access affordable nutritious food at critical points in their lives – pregnancy, birth and early childhood. Best Start Foods replaces the UK Government's Healthy Start Vouchers and has: increased payments; introduced a new payment card to remove the stigma of the current paper vouchers; improved choice by including a wider range of foods for families to purchase; and increased access to a wider range of retailers.

[A More Active Scotland: Scotland's Physical Activity Delivery Plan \(2018\)](#)

Following from the [Active Scotland Outcomes Framework \(2017\)](#), the Delivery Plan outlines the actions that the Scottish Government and a wide range of partner organisations will take to support and enable people in Scotland to be more physically active. This includes actions which particularly target the needs of girls and young women and those children and young

people who face barriers to participation. The Active Scotland Delivery Group will monitor delivery of the actions in this plan.

[Oral Health Improvement Plan \(2018\)](#)

As part of the Oral Health Improvement Plan, we continue to develop the Childsmile Programme of toothbrushing and fluoride varnish application for children up to five years of age. The programme has been expanded to include all children in the 20 per cent most deprived areas of Scotland.

[Oral Health Community Challenge Fund \(June 2019\)](#)

The Oral Health Improvement Plan also included a key commitment to introduce a new three-year Oral Health Community Challenge Fund. This seeks to enable third sector organisations to deliver projects that support families with young children living in areas of multiple deprivation to reduce oral health inequalities and support better early years oral health. The Fund was launched in February 2019 and 22 projects across Scotland have received funding to deliver a range of oral health interventions.

[Mental Health Strategy 2017-2027 \(2017\)](#)

The Strategy sets out a central vision for Scotland where people can get the right help at the right time, expect recovery, and fully enjoy their rights, free from discrimination and stigma. It sets out 40 actions organised under five key headings: Prevention and Early Intervention; Access to Treatment and Joined-up, Accessible Services; the Physical Wellbeing of People with Mental Health Problems; Rights, Information Use, and Planning; and Data and Measurement. The plan includes a range of specific actions relevant to children and young people, including the commitment to develop a matrix of evidence-based interventions to improve the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people.

[Children and Young People's Mental Health Taskforce \(July 2019\)](#)

The Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Board has been established to take forward the recommendations of the Children and Young People's Mental Health Taskforce. The Programme Board will oversee a set of reforms designed to ensure children, young people and their families receive the support they need, when they need it, underpinned by the values, principles and components of GIRFEC, and responsive to local needs and systems. The Board will be supported by a lived experience group to ensure the voices and experiences of children, young people and their families are at the centre of this work.

The [Mental Health Strategy actions: progress reports June 2019](#) (September 2019) set out progress in relation to the actions identified in the 10 year Strategy.

[Every Life Matters \(2018\)](#)

Every Life Matters is Scotland's Suicide Prevention Action Plan and envisages a Scotland where suicide is preventable; where help and support is available to anyone contemplating suicide and to those who have lost a loved one to suicide. The Plan sets out ambitious actions which leaders at national, regional and local level must take to transform society's response and attitudes towards suicide, including the targets to further reduce the suicide rate by 20% by 2022 (from a 2017 baseline) and to consider, in particular, the needs of children and young people. The National Suicide Prevention Leadership Group (NSPLG) has been established to recommend how actions in the action plan are to be implemented, to influence change and remove barriers to progress. The NSPLG published their first [Annual Report](#)

on 30 September 2019.

[A Connected Scotland: Our Strategy for Tackling Social Isolation & Loneliness and Building Stronger Social Connections](#) (2018)

The Scottish Government's first national strategy to tackle social isolation and loneliness sets out a vision for a Scotland where everyone has the opportunity to develop meaningful relationships, regardless of age, status, circumstance, or identity. The Strategy was published in December 2018, and since then we have formed both the National Implementation Group year two Ministerial Steering Group to drive forward implementation of the strategy. A year two progress report will be published in 2020.

[Sexual Health and Blood Borne Virus Framework 2015-2020 Update](#) (2015)

The Sexual Health and Blood Borne Virus Framework was first published in 2011 and updated in 2015 to run to 2020. The Framework brought together policy on sexual health and wellbeing, HIV and viral hepatitis for the first time. It set out five high-level outcomes which the Government wished to see delivered, and it sought to strengthen and improve the way in which the NHS, the Third Sector and Local Authorities supported and worked with individuals at risk of poor sexual health or blood borne viruses. Work to develop a further update to the Framework is underway, with the Minister and officials engaging with a wide range of stakeholders to identify areas for further action, with a view to publishing an update in 2020. We will adopt the co-production approach taken in the past which has supported the progress made across Scotland since the Framework was first published in 2011.

[Alcohol and Drug Treatment Strategy – Rights, Respect and Recovery](#) (2018)

The Strategy presents a combined approach to the treatment of drugs and alcohol in recognition of the many shared underlying causes and similarities in treatment services. The [Alcohol Framework](#) (2018) outlines the Scottish Government's national prevention aims on alcohol including a strong focus on doing more to protect children and young people from alcohol-related harm.

[Raising Scotland's Tobacco-Free Generation](#) (2018)

This five-year action plan sets out interventions and policies to help reduce the use of, and associated harms from using, tobacco in Scotland. It aims to protect children born since 2013 from tobacco so that when they begin to turn 21 (from 2034) they will be, and remain, tobacco-free. Bi-annual evaluations of progress will be published every two years from 2020.

[Strategic Framework for Action on Palliative and End of Life Care \(2016-2021\)](#) (2015)

The Strategic Framework committed explicitly to better supporting children and families by promoting the further development of holistic palliative care for the 0-25 year age group, recognising that many of their needs may differ from those of adults. In 2019, the Paediatric End of Life Care Network (PELiCaN) was established to bring together medical professionals working in children's palliative care to improve on the care and support provided to children and their families when they need it most.

Support for Families

[Child Poverty \(Scotland\) Act 2017](#)

The Act sets in statute the ambition to eradicate child poverty in Scotland underpinned by four ambitious income-based targets for child poverty reduction to be met by 2030 (final targets), alongside interim targets to be met by 2023. It places duties on Scottish Ministers to produce three 'delivery plans' (in 2018, 2022 and 2026) setting out action to be taken to meet the targets and report annually on progress. In addition, local authorities and health boards are also required to jointly produce Local Child Poverty Action Reports, outlining the action they have taken in the reporting year, and plan to take in future, to contribute to reducing child poverty. The Act was passed unanimously in the Scottish Parliament in December 2017.

[Every Child, Every Chance – The Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2018-22](#) (2018)

The first Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan, published in March 2018, sets out the action we will take to make progress towards Scotland's ambitious child poverty targets. The Plan outlines a comprehensive range of actions to tackle the three key drivers of child poverty reduction (income from work and earnings; costs of living; income from social security) and action to mitigate the impacts of poverty on children living in low income households. This includes transformative new action such as the Scottish Child Payment which will be delivered in full by the end of 2022. Annual Reports will be published on the progress being made against delivery of the actions within the Plan and against the targets set. The first [progress report](#) was published in June 2019.

[Fairer Scotland Duty](#) (2018)

The Fairer Scotland Duty, Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010, came into force in Scotland from April 2018 following consultation in 2017. The Duty places a legal responsibility on particular public bodies in Scotland to actively consider how they can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socioeconomic disadvantage, when making strategic decisions. Interim Guidance on the Duty was published by Scottish Ministers in March 2018. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is the Regulator for the Fairer Scotland Duty and will be closely involved with monitoring and the development of best practice for the Duty, particularly in the first three years, seen by the Scottish Government as an implementation phase.

[Social Security](#)

The Scotland Act 2016 devolved new social security powers to Scotland. Section 1 of the Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018 sets out eight core principles in the Scottish social security system's founding legislation. These principles will define all aspects of the design, development and implementation of this new system. The Act also proposes a statutory requirement on Ministers to produce a publicly accessible charter that reflects the key principles and communicates in clear terms what people are entitled to expect from the new system, and how it will be delivered in practice.

[Our Charter](#), which was published in January 2019, was co-designed with people who have lived experience of social security, organisations that help or represent people who may use the new system and Scottish Government and Social Security Scotland staff. The charter was approved by the Scottish Parliament.

A [Measurement Framework](#) relating to commitments set out in the charter was published in October 2019. It sets out a strong commitment from Scottish Government and Social Security Scotland to openly and honestly report on the extent to which we are delivering the commitments in the charter. Like the new Social Security System in Scotland, the framework is innovative and challenging and as such will require bespoke data collection which we will

develop and roll out as the system rolls out.

[Benefit Take-up Strategy \(October 2019\)](#)

The Scottish Government published its first Benefit Take-up Strategy under the provision of the Social Security (Scotland) Act on 21 October 2019. This strategy identifies a number of barriers to benefit take-up, and sets out our person-centred approach to addressing these through policy development, service design and delivery. In doing so, we outline our work to date, and our commitments and ambitions to maximise take-up of Scottish social security benefits. The focus on devolved benefits reaffirms our responsibility for, and commitment to, social security in Scotland, as well as acknowledging the extent of our direct influence. As well as setting out our accessible and inclusive policy design and delivery principles, this strategy introduces a number of new initiatives including:

- A new £500,000 Take-up Preparation Fund;
- A new fund of £100,000 to assist organisations who support groups of people who face particular barriers to accessing social security;
- Establishment of a Stakeholder take-up reference Group; and
- Two round table events on access to disability benefits and Scottish low-income benefits, bringing together users and practitioners.

[Best Start Grant](#)

The Best Start Grant (BSG) has replaced and improved upon the UK Government's Sure Start Maternity Grant in Scotland. Split into three payments, the BSG offers financial support to low income families at key transition points in a child's early years. Social Security Scotland began accepting applications for the Pregnancy and Baby Payment in December 2018. Early Learning and School Age Payments commenced in April and June 2019 respectively.

[Scottish Child Payment: Updated Position Paper \(October 2019\)](#)

In June 2019, the Scottish Government announced a brand new benefit to provide eligible families with £10 a week for every child under 16, with early introduction for under sixes starting by Christmas 2020. An updated position paper was published in October 2019, setting out the policy and delivery developments to date on the Scottish Child Payment.

[Fuel Poverty \(Targets, Definition & Strategy\) \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#)

A [Draft Fuel Poverty Strategy](#) for Scotland was published alongside the Fuel Poverty (Targets, Definition & Strategy) (Scotland) Bill, on 27 June 2018. With the Bill having become an Act in July 2019, we are now developing a final strategy which will outline the actions we are taking to drive progress towards meeting the ambitious targets that it sets out. This strategy will bring thousands out of fuel poverty, improving people's lives and ensuring support is provided to those who need it most, based on the principles of fairness and equality for all, and reflecting the different needs of all of Scotland's urban, suburban, rural and remote communities. We are aligning this work with policies across government to tackle poverty and improve homes, including the Fairer Scotland Action Plan and Child Poverty Action Plan. The final strategy will be published no later than September 2020.

[Ending Homelessness Together: High Level Action Plan \(2018\)](#)

The Ending Homelessness Together: High Level Action Plan takes forward the 70 recommendations from the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group and sets out a five-year programme, to be delivered in partnership with local authorities and others,

to end homelessness and transform temporary accommodation in Scotland.

[Energy Efficient Scotland: Route Map \(2018\)](#)

Published in May 2018, the route map for the Energy Efficient Scotland sets out the journey for homes, businesses and public buildings to become more energy efficient. It proposes clear long-term energy efficiency standards for buildings to be warmer, greener and more efficient by 2040. It sets out the pathways that different building sectors will take between now and then to achieve those standards, through two key objectives: removing poor energy efficiency as a driver for fuel poverty; and reducing greenhouse gas emissions by improving the energy efficiency of our buildings and decarbonising our heat supply.

Support for Communities

[Cleaner Air for Scotland: The Road to a Healthier Future \(2015\)](#)

Scotland's first distinct air quality strategy, sets out a comprehensive series of actions intended to deliver further reductions in air pollution. Progress is monitored through regular reporting on the key outcomes and objectives. Additionally, for central government and local authorities, a series of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) is proposed. An independent review of the strategy was completed in July 2019, which assessed progress to date and identified priorities for additional action. The conclusions and recommendations arising from the review will be used to develop a revised and updated strategy during 2020.

[Climate Ready Scotland: Climate Change Adaptation Programme 2019-2024 \(September 2019\)](#)

The second Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme sets out policies and proposals to prepare Scotland for the challenges we will face as our climate continues to change. The five-year Programme takes an outcomes-based approach taken from the UN Sustainable Development Goals and Scotland's National Performance Framework. The Programme recognises that babies and young children face disproportionately high health effects as a result of climate change impacts. Case studies set out within the Programme include Scottish Natural Heritage's CivTech 3.0 Challenge to use tech to enhance the experience of the outdoors in a way that will deliver its benefits to young people, and the 2050 Young Malawian Climate Leaders project; designed to build a network of young people who will be active in advocating for action on climate change.

[Scotland's Forestry Strategy 2019–2029 \(February 2019\)](#)

The Scottish Government's Forestry Strategy sets out a long-term framework for the expansion and sustainable management of Scotland's forests and woodland. It recognises the critical role forestry can play in combating climate change, building a growing and inclusive economy, and improving people's health, wellbeing and life chances. The Strategy presents evidence that children that are given the opportunity to experience outdoor learning and play show improvements in their physical, social and emotional development. It commits to supporting greater opportunities for children to play and learn in forests and woodlands, so more of Scotland's young people can realise these benefits. The Scottish Government is working with partners and stakeholders to develop an implementation plan for publication by April 2020.

Education, Leisure and Cultural Activity

[2019 National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan \(2018\)](#)

The National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan is designed to help deliver the twin aims of excellence and equity in education. It serves as the single, definitive plan for securing educational improvement through six key improvement drivers: school leadership; teacher professionalism; parental engagement; assessment of children's progress; school improvement; and performance information. Through the National Improvement Framework and the annual [NIF Interactive Evidence Report](#), we will build up a clear picture of progress across the key drivers and of overall progress towards our key priorities. The 2019 National Improvement Framework (NIF) and Improvement Plan replaces the 2018 NIF and Improvement Plan.

[Scottish Attainment Challenge](#)

The Scottish Attainment Challenge was launched by the First Minister in February 2015. This was expanded in 2016 to be supported by the £750 million Attainment Scotland Fund over the course of this parliament (2016/17 – 2020/21), including since 2017/18, £120 million in Pupil Equity Funding annually issued directly to over 95% of schools. It is underpinned by the National Improvement Framework, Curriculum for Excellence and Getting it right for every child. It focuses on improvement activity in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing in schools across Scotland to close the poverty-related attainment gap. It will also support and complement the broader range of initiatives and programmes to ensure that all of Scotland's children and young people reach their full potential.

Continued funding for the Challenge in 2021/22 was confirmed in the 2019 Programme for Government. This funding is making a difference, with the Attainment Scotland Fund having been identified by headteachers as a driver for change and cohesion. We also know that headteachers are confident that they will see improvements in closing the attainment gap over five years as a consequence of the Attainment Scotland Fund. In June 2019, the Scottish Government published an [interim evaluation](#) of year three (2017/18) of the programme, and will publish findings on year four in spring 2020. This follows the already published 2018 [headteacher survey](#) and [case studies](#) and the publication of the [interim evaluation of years 1 & 2](#).

[Scotland's Ten-Year Strategy for the Learning Provision for Children and Young People with Complex Additional Support Needs 2017-2026 \(2017\)](#)

In response to recommendations of the Doran Review, a National Commissioning Group was established to develop a 10-year strategy for strategically commissioned national services. Scotland's Ten-Year Strategy for the Learning Provision for Children and Young People with Complex Additional Support Needs was the subject of a public consultation in 2017. The full

[consultation analysis](#) was published in April 2019 and the [final version](#) of the 10-year strategy was published on 19 September 2019.

[Guidance on the Presumption to Provide Education in a Mainstream Setting](#) (March 2019)

The Scottish Government's new guidance on mainstreaming provides clear, updated information to help decide the best learning environment for a young person. For the first time, it includes a Scottish definition of inclusion and practical guidance to deliver inclusion in schools.

[Respect for All: National Approach to Anti-Bullying](#) (2017)

Scotland's national approach to anti-bullying aims to build capacity, resilience and skills in children and young people to prevent and deal with bullying. The approach is underpinned by the values of fairness; respect; equality and inclusion. It includes an explicit commitment to addressing prejudice-based bullying. The report sets expectations for the recording and monitoring of bullying and anti-bullying activity.

[STEM Education and Training Strategy](#) (2017)

The Strategy aims to build Scotland's capacity to deliver excellent STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) learning, and to close equity gaps in participation and attainment in STEM. It also aims to inspire young people and adults to study STEM, and to provide a better connection between STEM education and training and the needs of the labour market in Scotland. The remit of the STEM Strategy Implementation Group includes to develop and oversee a delivery plan for the actions within the Strategy. The first STEM Strategy [Annual Report](#) was published in February 2019.

[Review of Personal and Social Education: Preparing Scotland's Children and Young People for Learning, Work and Life](#) (January 2019)

The Scottish Government announced in March 2017 that as part of the Mental Health Strategy the intention was to undertake a national review of Personal and Social Education (PSE). This report outlines findings and the steps to take to strengthen PSE delivery and wider network of pastoral guidance. Sixteen recommendations have been identified as a result of the findings of the Thematic Inspection and feedback received from delivery partners, young people, trade unions and third sector organisations. A joint approach will be taken between Scottish Government, COSLA, ADES, local authorities and specialist third sector partners where appropriate to deliver a shared policy aim.

[Key Messages for Young People on Healthy Relationships and Consent](#) (May 2019)

In May 2019, the Scottish Government published a new resource for professionals to help them support young people's understanding of healthy relationships and consent. This means that wherever a young person seeks advice – whether from a teacher, a health professional or a youth worker – they should receive consistent, age appropriate information. The messages set out that relationships should be mutually respectful, consensual, positive, healthy – and enjoyable. They are applicable to all romantic relationships regardless of whether they are in same sex or mixed sex relationships.

[Learning for Sustainability Action Plan](#) (June 2019)

Learning for Sustainability is a cross-curricular approach to learning which enables young people to develop the skills, knowledge and values to live sustainable lives. In recent years, Learning for Sustainability policy has been informed by the Learning for Sustainability National Implementation Group which made 14 recommendations to the Scottish Government. In 2019, the Scottish Government published a new Learning for Sustainability action plan to give effect

to those recommendations. The plan's actions are developed around:

- Developing a strategic national approach to Learning for Sustainability;
- Adapting curriculum and assessment guidance to provide further opportunities for Learning for Sustainability;
- Increasing the skills and confidence of practitioners in relation to Learning for Sustainability;
- Ensuring that education leaders and decision-makers understand the value of Learning for Sustainability; and
- Adapting the learning estate to allow increased opportunities for the delivery of Learning for Sustainability.

[A Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning & Childcare in Scotland – 17-18 Action Plan](#) (2017)

In joint agreement with local government, the Scottish Government is delivering a transformative change in the provision of early learning and childcare (ELC), almost doubling the funded entitlement from 600 to 1140 hours per year from August 2020 for all three and four year olds and for eligible two year olds. A Blueprint for 2020, sets out the Scottish Government's vision for the expansion of ELC, underpinned by four principles of quality, flexibility, accessibility and affordability.

[Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland: Quality Action Plan](#) (2017)

The Quality Action Plan sets out 15 actions to further embed and strengthen quality of funded early learning and childcare (ELC) in taking forward the expansion to 1140 hours of funded entitlement. The plan is clear that the most important driver of the quality of a child's experience is a high quality workforce. There is, therefore, a very strong focus in the plan on supporting professional learning and development within the ELC workforce. This action plan reflects the international research and evidence which tells us that high quality ELC is a cornerstone for closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

[Learning Together: Scotland's National Action Plan on Parental Involvement, Parental Engagement, Family Learning and Learning at Home 2018 – 2021](#) (2018)

Parental engagement in children's learning makes an important contribution to their attainment and achievement, and therefore supports a number of rights under the UNCRC. The Scottish Government's action plan "Learning Together", which contains over 50 actions, sets out a vision for parental involvement and engagement to support the learning and development of children and young people, from pre-birth to age 18, and takes account of the national and international evidence base and Scottish education system expertise. The National Parent Forum of Scotland will monitor progress against this plan in partnership with the Scottish Government. Key actions include a new census on Parental Involvement and Engagement (piloted in 2019), the development of strengthened statutory guidance and the funding of "Equalities and Equity" projects to assist involvement and engagement amongst families who may face additional barriers, for instance those from more deprived circumstances or those from black and minority ethnic backgrounds. A progress report will be published at the mid-way point and the end of the plan (June 2021).

[Play Strategy for Scotland: Our Vision](#) (2013)

The Strategy is built on the views of children and young people, parents and carers, the play sector and others involved in their wellbeing. Together with the action plan, the Strategy seeks to improve the play experiences of all children and young people, including those with disabilities or from disadvantaged backgrounds.

[Play Strategy for Scotland: Our Action Plan \(2013\)](#)

The action plan supports the earlier play strategy by setting out the steps needed to realise a vision for play, underpinned by partnership working. A Play Strategy Implementation Group led by the Scottish Government and made up of representatives of statutory bodies, local authorities, third sector organisations and funders was established in order to support and monitor our progress.

[Playing with Quality and Equality: a Review of Inclusive Play in Scotland \(2015\)](#)

This review of inclusive play in Scotland aimed to identify context, current practices, barriers and aspirations and to build the knowledge base to inform implementation of the Play Strategy for all children.

[Scotland's National Position Statement on Outdoor Play Based Learning \(2018\)](#)

A coalition of over 80 influential national bodies and organisations have committed to work together to embed playing and learning outdoors as an everyday activity for all children and to celebrate this as a fundamental part of growing up in Scotland.

[Out to Play: Practical Guidance for Creating Outdoor Play Experiences in Early Learning and Childcare \(2018\)](#)

Out to Play provides practical guidance and advice for early learning and childcare settings and childcare practitioners on how to access outdoor spaces, including land or forest areas owned by local authorities, private landowners or national bodies to create safe, nurturing and inspiring outdoor learning experiences.

[Our Ambitions for Improving the Life Chances of Young People in Scotland: National Youth Work Strategy 2014-2019 \(2014\)](#)

The Strategy, developed jointly by the Scottish Government, Education Scotland and YouthLink Scotland, aims to set out our ambitions for improving outcomes for young people through youth work. It also aims to ensure that we harness and build on our partnerships across the youth work sector and develop what we know works well in delivering vibrant and effective youth work practice. The Strategy recognises the contribution that youth work makes towards the National Outcomes and the wide range of activities and policies that impact on young people's lives; it also recognises that both universal and more targeted specific work have equal validity and importance. The Strategy is currently being reviewed with a final report expected in early 2020.

Concurrently, a new youth work strategy is under development. As well as reflecting our learning to date, this will build on the success of the previous strategy, and commitments made to children and young people's participation through the Year of Young People. A co-production approach is being taken. We are working with a national cohort of representative young people and a national stakeholders group to drive this work. Local conversations are also underway with young people and youth workers across the country to create a strategy grounded in the issues that affect youth work in Scotland. The new strategy will be published in 2020.

Widening Access to Higher Education

[Scottish Government Overview of 'No Deal' Brexit Preparations \(October 2019\)](#)

The document outlines our preparation for 'no deal' Brexit and planning work to date, and proposed mitigations to deal with the impact on Scotland of a 'no deal' exit from the European

Union. The document notes the specific impact of a 'no deal' Brexit on Higher Education institutions.

[15-24 Learner Journey Review \(2018\)](#)

The Scottish Government will take forward the recommendations of the 15-24 Learner Journey Review, the report of the review of education provision for 15-24 year olds. The report sets out the Scottish Government's ambition for a world class education and skills system. Implementation has commenced and the Scottish Government is committed to improving the experience for the learner and setting a clear expectation for more purposeful collaboration between schools, colleges, universities and employers.

[A Blueprint for Fairness \(2016\)](#)

The Commission on Widening Access was established in 2015 to advise Ministers on the steps necessary to achieve their ambition that every child, irrespective of socioeconomic background, should have an equal chance of accessing university. The Commission published its final report, *A Blueprint for Fairness*, in March 2016. This included 34 recommendations, which were accepted in full by the Scottish Government. We are making progress on implementing, co-ordinating and monitoring the recommendations through the [Access Delivery Group](#). The latest statistics from the Higher Education Statistics Agency published in January 2019 show that 15.6% of Scottish full time first degree entrants to Scottish universities were from the 20% most deprived areas. We are now only 0.4 percentage points away from the Commission on Widening Access' interim target for 2021 of 16%.

Following the introduction of the Care Experienced Bursary in 2017, minimum entry requirements for SIMD students have now been set by all Scottish universities and were published for the first time in this year's prospectuses for 2020-21 entrants. All of Scotland's higher education institutions have also committed to guaranteeing an offer of an undergraduate place at university to care-experienced applicants who meet minimum entry requirements, which will be in place for learners entering university in autumn 2020.

In May 2019, the Commissioner for Fair Access launched Scotland's [Framework for Fair Access](#), comprising an online toolkit for Scotland's Community of Access and Participation Practitioners. The Commissioner also published a [discussion paper](#) on disabled students at university in February 2019, as well as his second annual report, [Building on Progress towards Fair Access](#), in June 2019, in which he stated that Scotland was leading the way in the UK on widening access.

[Developing the Young Workforce: Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy \(2014\)](#)

Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy set out how the Scottish Government will implement the recommendations from the Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce, including the commitment to reduce the 2014 level of youth unemployment by 40% by 2021 – a target that was met four years early in 2017. Together with Getting it right for every child and Curriculum for Excellence, Developing the Young Workforce is the key policy approach through which the Scottish Government is creating excellence and equity in Scottish education. Progress continues to be reported on annually.

Culture

[Developing a Culture Strategy for Scotland](#)

The Scottish Government will soon publish a Culture Strategy for Scotland that will set out a vision and priorities for the future development of culture in Scotland. The final strategy will

recognise the fundamental value of culture and its transformative and empowering potential, which everyone in Scotland, including children and young people, should have an equal opportunity to experience.

[Ambition and Opportunity. A Strategy for Public Libraries in Scotland 2015 – 2020](#) (2015)

Scotland's first National Strategy for Public Libraries sets out recommendations for all those involved: Scottish Government, local authorities, library services, library staff, publishers and more. A leadership body will oversee activity relating to each of the six strategic aims within the Strategy and monitor implementation. Strategic Aim 4 focuses on the contribution that public libraries make to promoting social wellbeing, including improving the life chances for children, young people and families at risk.

In early 2019 the [Ambition and Opportunity Refresh](#) was published, highlighting the progress which has been made since the launch of the original strategy. The Refresh reaffirms the fact that visits to Scotland's libraries continue to grow against a tough financial backdrop. It looks at where we are today, and how we can prepare Scotland's libraries for the future. The Refresh includes 'The Next Chapter', co-designed with Young Scot to ensure young people's views were represented.

Special Protections

[Justice in Scotland: Vision and Priorities](#) (2017)

The Vision and Priorities document, agreed jointly by the Scottish Government and key justice organisations, sets out collective priorities to ensure a just, safe and resilient Scotland, with established priorities for 2017 to 2020. The document focuses specifically on prevention and early intervention. The Justice Vision and Priorities is accompanied by a [Delivery Plan](#) that sets out actions to help progress the priorities.

Children's Hearings

[Better Hearings Partnership](#)

The Better Hearings Partnership is an initiative resulting from 2016 research on what makes a hearing work well from the perspective of those involved. It involves multi-agency partnership working in all areas of Scotland to identify points for improvement, plan actions and deliver change at a local level. In the first year of implementation, local areas have undertaken baseline assessments against agreed standards, which has helped them to identify priority areas for improvement. A [progress report](#) on the first year of implementation has recently been published by the Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership. The next steps for 2019 and 2020 will involve implementing improvements and measuring and reporting on their success.

[Advocacy in Children's Hearings](#)

We have worked with sector partners to test various models of advocacy to consider the best ways of delivering a sustainable, supportive advocacy service. In spring 2020, we will introduce

a national children's hearings advocacy scheme, backed by £1.5 million, to further reinforce children's rights and make sure the interests of each child are at the very heart of their hearing.

Youth Offending

[Whole System Approach](#)

The Whole System Approach (WSA) is our programme for addressing the needs of young people involved in offending. It takes a strong focus on early and effective intervention, diversion and appropriate support to address offending behaviour by young people. This is done in a timely and effective way through a whole system approach to offending behaviour, based on multi-agency partnerships. Based on the principles of Getting it right for every child, the approach aims to prevent the use of custody and secure accommodation wherever possible. It ensures that young people get the right support at the right time, providing better outcomes for young people, victims and communities.

[Preventing Offending: Getting it Right for Children and Young People \(2015\)](#)

The Strategy sets out priorities for 2015 to 2020, building on the progress already made over the past decade in reducing offending and keeping children and young people out of the criminal justice system. It focuses on three priority areas: Advancing the Whole System Approach; Improving Life Chances; and Developing Capacity and Improvement to support the workforce and improve systems. A [progress report](#) was published in June 2017.

[Age of Criminal Responsibility \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#)

The Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019, which received Royal Assent in June 2019, will raise the age of criminal responsibility in Scotland from 8 to 12 years. There will be a phased implementation of the legislation to ensure children benefit from this reform as quickly as possible. As of 29 November 2019, there will be no new convictions or criminal records for children under 12. An Advisory Group has also been established to review the operation of the Act as well as to consider whether the age of criminal responsibility should be increased further.

[SPS Family Strategy](#)

The Scottish Prison Service (SPS) launched a Family Strategy in 2017 that sets a clear direction for the improved delivery and alignment of family engagement and activities for people in custody and a focus on how SPS can play its part in avoiding the intergenerational impact of parental imprisonment. This includes actions for SPS establishments to have a Family Strategy Group and an improvement plan in place to support this.

[National Performance Framework for Prison Visitors' Centres in Scotland \(2017\)](#)

The National Performance Framework for Prison Visitors' Centres in Scotland was developed by the National Prison Visitor Centre Steering Group in collaboration with the Scottish Government and the Scottish Prison Service. Agencies will report on their progress towards achieving the outcomes within the document using shared measurement tools and a standardised reporting framework.

Victims and Witnesses

[Vulnerable Witnesses \(Criminal Evidence\) \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#)

The main purpose of the Act is to improve how child and vulnerable witnesses participate in our criminal justice system by enabling the much greater use of pre-recording their evidence in advance of the criminal trial. The Act will create a new rule for children under 18 (complainers and witnesses) in order to ensure that where they are due to give evidence in the most serious cases, they will have it pre-recorded. It is anticipated that a number of the provisions within the Act will be commenced from January 2020.

[Barnahus](#)

The Scottish Government has commissioned Healthcare Improvement Scotland and the Care Inspectorate to develop Scotland-specific standards for Barnahus, based on the European PROMISE quality standards which outline best practice for countries who wish to develop the model. The Scottish Barnahus Standards will provide a roadmap for a genuinely child-centred approach to delivering justice, care and recovery for children who have experienced trauma. A stakeholder scoping event took place in June 2019 involving a wide range of participants across health, justice and child protection. The standards development group, which includes clinical expertise, health boards, children's services, the third sector and statutory justice partners, had its second meeting on 31 October. The development work will be informed by the lived experience of children and young people and their families. It is anticipated that draft standards will be available for consultation at the end of 2019, and that finalised standards will be published in summer 2020.

Child Safety

[Building Safer Communities](#)

Building Safer Communities (BSC) is a collaborative approach which seeks to help national and local partners and communities work together to make Scotland safer and stronger, and is focused on building capacity within our communities. In looking to drive a co-ordinated approach to Unintentional Harm and Injury, we are working in partnership to implement the key findings from Scotland's first ever national strategic assessment of unintentional harm and injury, published in April 2017. The key findings from this work are being progressed by an Executive Working Group, chaired by Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, and there is a clear action plan to drive forward progress.

[Cashback for Communities](#)

The CashBack for Communities programme is a unique Scottish Government initiative, which takes funds recovered through the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 and invests them back into communities. The Programme is designed to focus on positive outcomes for young people aged 10 to 24, and their communities. Since 2008, £110 million seized from criminal activity has been committed to community initiatives to improve the quality of life for young people right across Scotland. The programme is about to enter its fifth phase, which runs from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2023.

Refugee and Asylum Seeking Children

[New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy 2018-2022 \(2018\)](#)

The New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy sets out an approach to support the vision of a welcoming Scotland. Children and young people can arrive with their families through the asylum dispersal process and through refugee resettlement programmes, or they may arrive

unaccompanied. Some of these children will have had traumatic experiences in their formative years. They may also have missed significant amounts of education, which can be challenging, particularly if they are having to learn a new language. The Strategy recognises that children and young people may require additional support to access the services they need and opportunities to participate in society. The New Scots Strategy is led in partnership by the Scottish Government, COSLA and the Scottish Refugee Council. The [New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy 2018-2022: First Year Progress Report](#) (April 2019) provides a summary of progress made during the first year of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy.



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