

# **Children and Young People's Voices Matter!**

**Progress report on actions agreed at the  
Cabinet meeting with children and young  
people, March 2022**

**#CabinetTakeover**

**May 2022**

# Introduction

The fifth annual meeting of Cabinet members and children and young people was held virtually on 16 March 2021. This report highlights the progress made on the actions agreed at the event.

The Cabinet Takeover meeting is an example of the Scottish Government's commitment to Article 12 within the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) which states children and young people have the right to be heard and influence decisions on matters that affect them. The Scottish Government remains committed to incorporating the UNCRC into Scots Law and has made significant progress across many areas set out in the: [Progressing the human rights of children in Scotland: action plan 2021 to 2024 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/documents/2021/03/Progressing-the-human-rights-of-children-in-Scotland-action-plan-2021-to-2024.pdf)

At this meeting MCPs and MSYPs represented children and young people's views from across Scotland and talked about issues that were important to them. This report highlights the work undertaken by the Scottish Government in response to the 16 actions points agreed in the meeting.

We would like to thank everyone who has supported this important work over the last year.

Seven Members of the Children's Parliament (MCPs) attended. They were Haris (12), Harry (11), Milosz (13), Teeda (11), Kelly (13), Kristers (13), Arden (12).

Seven members of Scottish Youth Parliament attended. They were: Josh Kennedy (Chair, MSYP for Renfrewshire North and West); Liam Fowley (Vice Chair, MSYP for Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley, Trustee, and SYP representative on the COVID-19 Education Recovery Group); Erin Campbell (MSYP for Midlothian North and Musselburgh, and Trustee); Ilse Cuthbertson (MSYP for Carers Trust Scotland and Convener of SYP's Health and Wellbeing Committee); Mollie McGoran (MSYP for Caithness Sutherland and Ross, Convener for SYP's Transport, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee, and Trustee); Brooke Barr (MSYP for Angus South and Convener of SYP's Jobs, Economy and Fair Work Committee); and Daniella Faakor Dampthey (MSYP for Angus South).

# Anti-Racist Education (actions 1-4)

These actions are being addressed through the Scottish Government's Race Equality and Anti-Racism in Education Programme (REAREP) which was established in early 2021. This programme covers four key themes identified following robust stakeholder engagement: school leadership and professional learning; diversity in the teaching profession and education workforce; curriculum reform; and racism and racist incidents in schools.

A Programme Board, Stakeholder Network Group, four themed subgroups (taking forward the 4 themes noted above) and a children and young people's group have been established to take this programme forward.

[Action 1 - Ensuring all children in Scotland get an anti-racist education and school staff in Scotland receive training and are able to deliver anti-racist education.](#)

- Our **Subgroup on Curriculum Reform** agreed their vision as: "Scotland's schools and early learning environments will promote and embed racial equity, anti-racism and global citizenship through their systems, leadership and curriculum drawing from a critical race theory framework. All of our learners and the people that support them will benefit from a curriculum, culture and ethos which reflect the diversity of the early learning and school community, Scotland and the wider world".

[Action 2 - Providing support for children who have experienced racism.](#)

- Our **Subgroup on Racism and Racist Incidents** is currently developing an action plan to strengthen monitoring and reporting of racist incidents in schools when these occur, and to support actions to address, and prevent, future incidents.

[Action 3 - Ensuring there are more ethnic minority teachers and staff in schools in Scotland.](#)

- Our **Diversity in the Teaching Profession and Education Workforce Subgroup's** vision is: "Scotland's education workforce reflects and supports the racial diversity of modern Scotland, thereby enriching the education experience for the whole school community."

[Action 4 - Holding further discussions with MSYPs on our approach to anti-racism.](#)

- Three Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYPs) are members of our Stakeholder Network and on the Curriculum Reform Subgroup. Involving young people and centring the voices and experiences of young people of colour and young people with a racialised identity is key principle of the Curriculum Reform Subgroup - working with MSYPs will be a critical aspect of that.

## Trees for All (actions 5-7)

Action 5 - Protecting and looking after spaces where trees are already spreading and growing, and planting more trees in places they would grow naturally, making sure different types of trees are growing together.

- Our **Control of Woodland Removal policy** and felling and planning regulations provide direction on woodland removal and replanting to ensure that woodland cover is not lost.

Action 6 - Ensuring all tree guards are biodegradable.

- Steps are being taken to ensure forest owners are more aware of their responsibilities under Section 34 of the Environment Protection Act 1990 which **places a duty of care on all landowners in Scotland to store and dispose of waste appropriately**. Once used, all tree shelters and vole guards must be removed and reused, recycled or disposed of appropriately.

Action 7 - Giving everyone in Scotland a tree and helping them plant it themselves, or with the help of somebody else, and have a National Tree Planting Day.

- We have **supported the planting of over 22 million trees in 2021-22**, mainly in the form of woodland which is around 4 trees per person in Scotland. Scottish Forestry has liaised with the Children's Parliament to highlight children and young people's current involvement in a National Tree Planting programme.

## Involving Children in National Decision Making (actions 8-10)

Action 8 - Ensuring that children and young people's voices are included on all matters affecting them, by creating both youth-inclusive government working groups, and other opportunities to ensure children and young people can meaningfully engage, are actively listened to, and are given clear and child-friendly feedback.

- We have launched the **"Our Hearings, Our Voice Interactive Zine"** - an online platform where young people who have experience of the Children's Hearings System share their 40 Calls to Action for change and improvement.
- In partnership with Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights) we have established an **'Interim Consortium' called Rights Right Now!** of organisations to represent the views of children and young people on the **UNCRC Strategic Implementation Board**.
- As a result, children and young people have participated in the development of the **Progressing the Human Rights of Children in Scotland: An Action Plan 2021 to 2024**.
- Views gathered from children and young people themselves were key to informing our paper **"Justice for young people – a rights respecting approach: vision and priorities"** which builds on the youth justice strategy which concluded in 2020.

Action 9 - Prioritising our engagement with children and young people from seldom-heard groups to ensure that they have their voices heard.

- To explore the **lived experiences of seldom heard children and young people during the Covid-19 pandemic**, we have worked in collaboration with a range of stakeholders who have existing and trusting relationships with various groups of children and young people including those: who have experienced trauma; with additional support needs; with domestic abuse experiences; who are asylum seeking; from minority ethnic backgrounds; and in gypsy/traveller families.

Action 10 - Holding the Children and Young People's Cabinet Meeting, with involvement from the Scottish Youth Parliament and the Children's Parliament, beyond this Parliamentary term.

- The First Minister has committed to continue to hold the **Annual Children and Young People's Cabinet meeting** throughout this Parliamentary term.

## Implementation of the UNCRC (action 11)

Action 11 - Involving children and young people in helping with reports from Scottish Ministers on what they are doing about children's rights, and keeping children and young people involved in conversations about how we continue to make their rights real in Scotland, after the UNCRC Bill becomes a law.

- In April 2022, we will launch a **Children's and Young Peoples Consortium** to further develop mechanisms that ensure children and young people's meaningful participation in the Governance and delivery of the UNCRC implementation programme.

## Young people's experience of the pandemic and calls for a human rights based approach to recovery (actions 12-16)

Action 12 - Ensuring we keep children and young people's voices and rights at the heart of the nations' recovery from the pandemic so that Scotland's children and young people are not unfairly impacted.

- We know that young people have been the most impacted by the pandemic, and that was the basis of the development of the **Young Person's Guarantee**. The Guarantee outlines the commitment to connect every 16 to 24 year old in Scotland to an opportunity to study; take up an apprenticeship, job or work experience; or participate in formal volunteering.

Action 13 - Ensuring children and young people are actively involved in the design of the new mental health training and learning resource, and that there is a greater focus on young people who are most at risk of developing mental health problems. We will ensure everyone who works in education and health care has access to this kind of training.

- A new **online mental health professional learning resource** for all school staff was published in June 2021, to support the wellbeing of children and young people within their schools.
- In August 2021 we published a **Whole School Approach Framework** for schools to utilise as they continue to support children and young people's mental health.

Action 14 - Ensuring young people's grades or lack of experience does not hold them back, and that the attainment gap does not widen. Employers and educational institutions will be advised to take into account the impact the pandemic will have on grades, work experience and other employment opportunities.

- The first instalment of the expanded **£1bn Attainment Scotland Fund** was paid in the government's first 100 days of the new parliamentary term. Officials are currently working on the next phase of the **Scottish Attainment Challenge** which aims to improve the pace and impact of the programme and link with the Government's overall mission to tackle child poverty.

Action 15 - Better equipping Scotland's children and young people through improved Wi-fi connections, wider provision of technology for online formal and non-formal education, for extra-curricular activities, and to enable access to critical support.

- Since the programme launch in May 2020, **Connecting Scotland** has brought 60,000 people online. Target groups have included low income families with children and young care leavers. Work is now underway to scope out an extension to the programme to reach 300,000 households over the course of this Parliament – helping people get the devices, data and skills to connect.

Action 16 – Reviewing the Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013, and beginning work with partners, including COSLA, to determine the impact of these regulations on budget decision making, and in doing so, seek to safeguard investment in Community Learning and Development

- The review of the **Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013** is anticipated to start later in 2022.

# Quotes from Children's Parliament & SYP

"It's important that children go to Cabinet so that we can influence how Scotland works and make Scotland a better place."

"Everyone should be heard and kids also have a creative side so you may get some new ideas."

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"We should teach younger kids about racism so when they're older they can help stop racism."

"Racism hurts children and adults, and it happens too much today."

"Children need to live in environments that are safe and clean. Trees can help with that."

"We have technology we can use against climate change – the name of the technology is a tree!"

"If you learn about this early on, it will stick with you for the rest of your life."

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"I enjoyed hearing how the government is taking the views of young people into account."

"I felt that my voice was being heard."

"I hope the government will take our calls into account and action them."

"I hope that all of the young people in attendance made an impact."

"I hope that it will help the environment and possibly reduce the amount of racism and that more people will hopefully know more about what's happening and will be able to help so the world will slowly become a much better place for future generations."



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