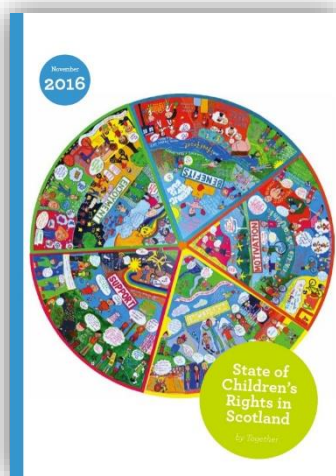


## Implementing and monitoring the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in Scotland – Seminar Series 2017

### The UNCRC in a Scottish context

The UK Government ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child -- the UNCRC -- in 1991. This is a commitment that all areas of government – from national UK and Scottish Government through to local authorities, health services, criminal justice institutions and schools - will do everything possible to fulfil children’s human rights. At a UN level, the Committee on the Rights of the Child is responsible for checking the UK complies with its commitment to the UNCRC and provides recommendations (referred to as Concluding Observations) every five years.

Together’s 2015 *State of Children’s Rights* report was submitted to the UN Committee to inform its examination of the UK. In 2016, the Committee made a series of 150 recommendations to set out where the UK – including Scotland – was falling short. Each of these recommendations have been translated into Scotland-specific actions by Together’s 2016 *State of Children’s Rights* report which sets out how to progress the UN recommendations and ensure children’s rights are at the heart of legislation, policy and practice.



As recognised by the UN Committee, real progress has been made to improve the realisation of children’s rights across Scotland. Further, Scotland has a First Minister who speaks positively about human rights and who is open to ‘exploring implementing and incorporating into Scots law some of the key international human rights treaties’, including the UNCRC. However, our 2016 *State of Children’s Rights* report shows that much more still needs to be done – there are still widespread failures to take account of children’s views in decisions that affect them at a national and local level, and particular groups of children continue to be left out of participation mechanisms such as children with disabilities and younger children.

### The UNCRC seminar series 2017

The Scottish Universities Insight Institute (SUII) seminar series aims to address these gaps by examining implementation of the UNCRC in Scotland from perspectives of law, practice and policy.

The seminar series involves four one-day interdisciplinary seminars held in partnership between Together, the Centre for Research on Families and Relationships at the University of Edinburgh, and the Centre for Child Wellbeing and Protection at the University of Stirling. The events offer a significant and timely opportunity to bring together children and young people, civil society, academia and public bodies to examine Scotland’s approach to taking forward children’s rights. The series has caught the imagination of international experts in children’s rights, who will be travelling to Scotland to speak at the seminars and share their experiences with delegates.

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 places the UNCRC on statute for the first time, and requires Scottish Ministers to give due consideration to ways in which the UNCRC can be better implemented in Scotland. Reporting duties on public bodies and Ministers under Part 1 of the 2014 Act provide a welcome and useful opportunity to mainstream children’s rights into decision-making, and yet they fall short of requiring any action to implement the UNCRC. Further steps can and should be taken in several areas of legislation, practice and policy. There is where the UNCRC seminar series 2017 steps in....

#### 1. The UNCRC in Law – 10<sup>th</sup> February 2017

The first seminar explored the strengths and weaknesses of using legislation to progress UNCRC implementation. Dr Simon Hoffman and Professor Ursula Kilkelly examined important trends in the incorporation or near-incorporation of children’s rights principles into national and domestic law throughout Wales and Europe. Clan Childlaw explored some of the current legal issues facing children in Scotland whose rights under the UNCRC are not being upheld. The

seminar aimed to identify a set of priorities to support the implementation of the 2014 Act and ensure children's rights approaches are taken forward at a local and national government level.

## 2. The UNCRC in Practice – 20<sup>th</sup> March 2017

The second seminar will explore methods through which children and young people's views and experiences are – and could be – used to inform legislative and policy developments and how children's rights are fulfilled in practice. Gerison Lansdown will talk through research developments and learning in children's participation over the past 25 years. The seminar will also explore practice models and participation strategies through Who Cares Scotland, Children's Parliament and the Scottish Youth Parliament. An agreed set of priorities will be developed for research and practice, through the participation and engagement with the workshops run by children and young people themselves.

## 3. The UNCRC in Policy – 24<sup>th</sup> April 2017

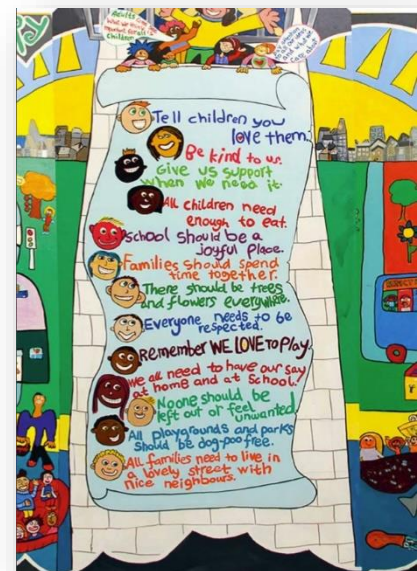
The third seminar will use learning from participants such as Professor Laura Lundy and Dr Susan Elsley to explore how new policy developments – such as those relating to child rights impact assessments and planning in children's services – can provide opportunities to further children's rights and their participation in policy developments. The seminar aims to inform new models of UNCRC implementation that support public bodies to meet new obligations under the 2014 Act.

## 4. The UNCRC Going Forwards – 1<sup>st</sup> June 2017

The final seminar will bring together all the learning, experience and proposals of the previous three seminars in order to develop a shared and sustainable model to take forward children's rights in Scotland. This model will hold government to account in meeting its international obligations to children, and aims to drive a culture change in the monitoring and implementation of the UNCRC.

### Children and young people's participation

Throughout the series, a team of MSYPs and members of the Glasgow Youth Council will be working with us to write child-friendly briefings to inform a fantastic creative project run in partnership with the Children's Parliament. The children will create a set of artwork panels, depicting how they interpret key messages from the series and what they think should be done to further the UNCRC in Scotland - their work will be displayed in Scottish Parliament, placing awareness and understanding of children's rights in the centre of decision-making environments.



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[Seminar series organiser page](#)