



For immediate release

Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights) welcomes passing of landmark children's rights legislation

- Historic duty on those providing services for children including schools, hospitals, police, transport to protect and uphold children's rights passed by the Scottish Parliament today.
- In the most serious cases where children's rights are breached children will be able to complain to the courts.
- Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights) says this is a moment to celebrate but there is much more work ahead to ensure the legislation translates into a practical impact on the lives of children and young people.

In a historic step that will inspire countries across the world, the Scottish Parliament has today passed a Bill that will incorporate the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into Scots law.

The Bill places duties across a range of different areas—including schools, hospitals, policing and transport—to protect and uphold the rights sets out in the Convention. In the most serious of cases, if children's UNCRC rights are breached, children will be able to complain to the courts.

The move comes after decades of campaigning by children, young people, Together's members and wider civil society and 30 years after the UK became a signatory to the UNCRC in 1991. Without incorporation the rights remained guiding rather than binding in law. The passing of this legislation means that the Scottish Government, public authorities and those providing services for children and families has to do everything possible to embed children's rights into everything they do.

Director of Together, Juliet Harris said: "In passing this Bill, the Scottish Parliament is making a promise to children and young people that their human rights will be at the heart of every decision made in Scotland.

"This historic moment will be widely celebrated by the countless children, young people and charities across Together's membership who have worked so hard over the past decade to make this happen.

"From the environment to public transport, policing to public health, this Bill is a significant step forward in ensuring Scotland is a great place to grow up – for this and future generations of children and young people."

Together's Chair, Mary Glasgow, Chief Executive, Scotland's national children's charity, Children 1st said: "I am delighted to be celebrating with Scotland's children and young people and the members of Together on this momentous occasion. After decades of campaigning by children and young people, and nearly thirty years since the UNCRC was ratified by the UK, the Scottish Parliament has committed to ensuring that children's rights are binding across Scotland by incorporating it into domestic law.

“ Today we’re celebrating a world leading step by Scotland to uphold children’s rights but we are also looking ahead to the commencement of the Bill in six months time when the hard work to translate the law into action begins.”

ENDS

For more information contact:

Juliet Harris
Together (Scottish Alliance for Children’s Rights)
E: juliet@togetherscotland.org.uk

Notes to editors:

1) The UNCRC and the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is an international human rights treaty which sets out the rights that every child has. It was ratified by the UK in 1991 but was not incorporated into domestic law.

The UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill was introduced to the Scottish Parliament on 1st September 2020. It incorporates the UNCRC into Scots Law to the maximum extent of the Scottish Parliament’s powers and will ensure children in Scotland have legally binding rights. It passed the final stage of Parliamentary scrutiny on the evening of 16th March 2021.

More information is available here: <https://www.togetherscotland.org.uk/about-childrens-rights/monitoring-the-uncrc/incorporation-of-the-un-convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child/>

2) About Together

Together (Scottish Alliance for Children’s Rights) is an alliance of Scottish children's charities that works to improve the awareness, understanding and implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

They do this by:

- promoting the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- helping children's organisations to integrate the UNCRC into their work;
- monitoring and reporting on the progress made at a Scottish and UK level.

Together has over 450 members, including children's charities, from small local playgroups through to large international charities, alongside individuals, academics and professionals with an interest in children's rights.

More about Together is available here: <https://www.togetherscotland.org.uk/>