

Welcome to our 2022 State of Children's Rights case files!

We've been top detectives and investigated how well children's rights are being protected in Scotland. These are our case files. They show what's going well and what more needs to be done.

Let's begin by looking at what children's rights are!

What are children's rights?

Every child is born with human rights. These are things every child needs to grow up happy, healthy and safe.

Children have lots of rights, for example:

- The right to learn and go to school
- The right to have a say and be listened to
- The right to a safe home
- The right to good food and clean water
- The right to play
- The right to be protected from harm

Countries around the world made a promise to protect children's rights. This included the United Kingdom. The countries wrote their promise down. It's called the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (or 'UNCRC' for short).



What was our investigation about?

We looked at what the adults around you should be doing to make sure your rights are protected all of the time.

We've grouped the evidence we found into eight case files. These include real-life examples of things that have worked well. What children say is really important, so we've included what you've said!

We hope our case files help you learn more about your rights and know when adults aren't doing enough. We hope the examples can be shared with adults, to help them do better!

Making children's rights part of the law!

The Scottish Government want to make children's rights part of the law.

They wrote a bill to help make this happen.

What is a bill?

A bill is a document that could become a law.

Head over to the next page to find out what this will mean for you when the UNCRC Bill becomes a law!

What will happen when the UNCRC Bill becomes a law?

- The Scottish Government will always have to respect children's rights when running the country.
- Children's rights will always need to be respected in schools and hospitals, by the police, and even by people who make decisions about roads, parks and the environment.
- Children can complain to a judge if their rights aren't being protected and have something done about it.
- The Scottish Government will have to write a report every year that says what they're doing to protect children's rights.

The UNCRC Bill is not part of the law yet. Before this can happen, the Scottish Government need to make a few changes. The UNCRC Bill then needs to pass a vote in the Scottish Parliament. Scotland needs to start getting ready for the new law. Our case files look at some of the things adults in the Scottish Government, local councils, schools, police and other organisations should start doing to get ready.



Detective Naomi

Who wrote these case files?

These case files were written by the very best detectives from Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights). Together is a charity that works to make sure children's rights are protected.

We got a lot of help from other charities who were very happy to share their promising practice casefiles with us. This really helped us to write the report!



Detective Maria



Detective Mercy



Detective Siti

Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights)

The Melting Pot, 15 Calton Road,
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Charity Reg No. SC029403
Company No. SC199725



Children's Participation

EVIDENCE

case no. 2022

What is this case file about?

Article 12 UNCRC says every child has a right to have a say and be listened to.

'Participation' means having a say in decisions and being listened to by adults. There are lots of examples, like helping your school choose what should be on the lunch menu or working with the local council to design a new park.

Why is participation important?

Including children has lots of benefits:

- It leads to better decisions.
- Adults start to understand what children really need.
- Children have the power to say when adults are doing something wrong and what should change.

"The reason that a child should be listened to is that they might have better ideas than the adult"

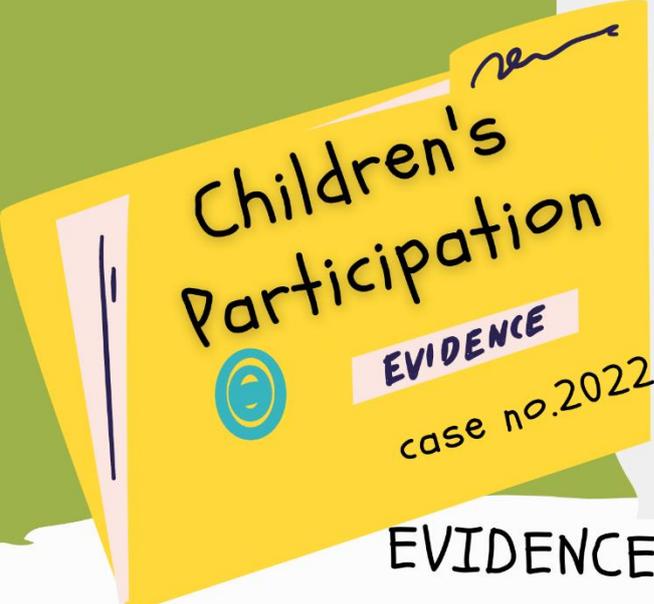
"The first thing about engaging with young people is that you actually need to plan it, rather than getting to the end of a project and being like, oh my god we've not engaged with any young people"

What should adults do?

Adults should include children in all decisions that affect them. There are lots of things adults can do to help children take part. Adults should:

- Involve children from the very beginning and all the way through.
- Create child-friendly information.
- Create a space that lets children feel comfortable.
- Make sure children know they can stop taking part at any time.
- Make sure everyone involved (adults and children) feels able to trust each other.
- Make sure children of all ages and backgrounds are included.
- Be honest with children about what might happen as a result.
- Understand children do not have answers to all of the questions.
- Make sure children get something in return for their time and effort.
- Let children know how their views have affected the decision.
- Treat children's views with respect.
- Give children the power to lead.
- Make sure adults know how to work with children.

"don't just listen to us and disappear."



Children's Participation

EVIDENCE

case no.2022

What is happening across Scotland?

Lots of organisations are already including children in decision making. Others have said they are trying hard to get better at this.

Have a look below to check out the evidence!

EVIDENCE #1

Climate Change Investigators

Children's Parliament supported 100 Climate Change Investigators, aged 7-14, to give advice to the [Scotland's Climate Assembly](#), Scottish Government and [COP26](#) on tackling climate emergency in Scotland.

[Read about Climate Change Investigators here.](#)

EVIDENCE #2

Young Advisers

Young Advisers support the Children's Commissioner to understand what children need. There are 31 Young Advisers, aged 14-17, who come from all across Scotland from the Borders to Orkney.

[Read about Young Advisers here.](#)

EVIDENCE #3

Rights Right Now!

A group of children, aged 10-17, are shaping Scottish Government's plans to put children's rights into law. They are helping Scottish Government learn how they can involve children better in decisions.

[Read about Rights Right Now! here.](#)

What do you think?

We want to know what you think. This will help our next investigation!

- Do you think your right to be heard is respected?
- Do you have any ideas for how things should change?
- Are there any examples you want to share?



Include
Everyone!

EVIDENCE

case no. 2022

What is this case file about?

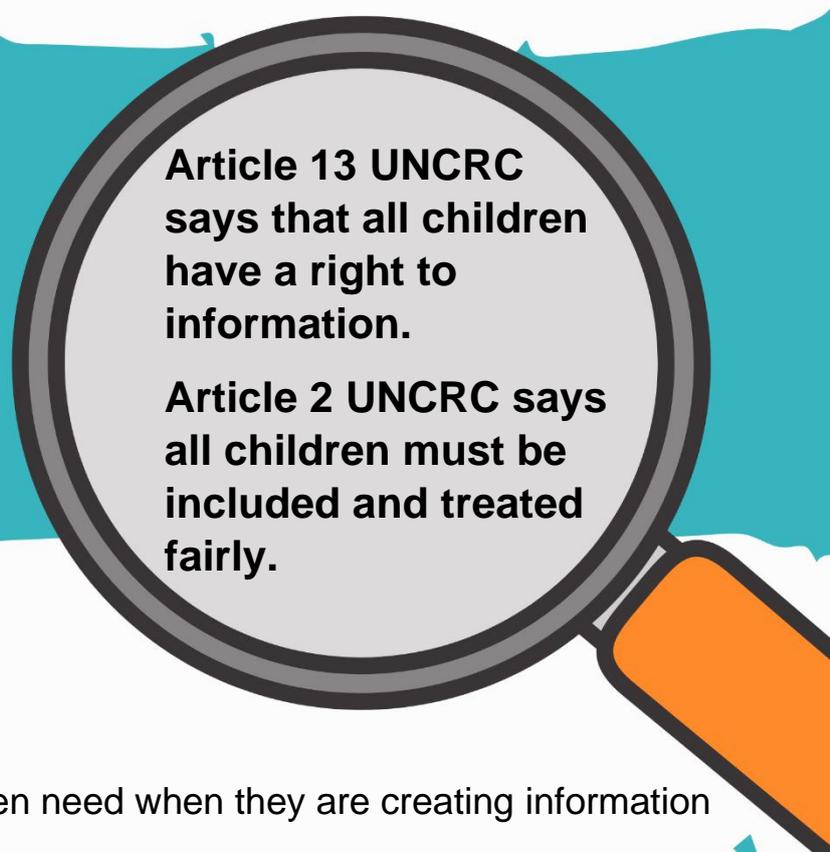
Some children find it harder to have their views heard. This might be because they are younger, disabled, speak another language or another reason. It's sometimes difficult for them to find information that they understand.

It's important that *all children* can access information and opportunities. This means having adults who know how to support children's needs. It might also mean using easy words, British Sign Language, braille or interpreters.

Why is it important to include everyone?

No child should be left out because of who they are. Adults should make sure all children are included.

"If a child can't speak English, they won't be able to speak up about their worry or complaint"



**Article 13 UNCRC
says that all children
have a right to
information.**

**Article 2 UNCRC says
all children must be
included and treated
fairly.**

What should adults do?

Adults should always think about what children need when they are creating information and activities. They should:

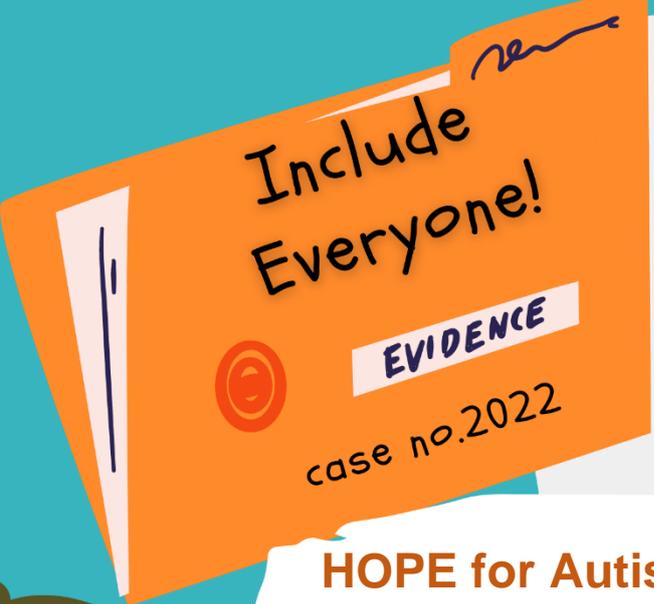
- Get training on how to share ideas in ways that all children can understand.
- Be open to different ways that children communicate. If a child doesn't understand what you're saying then try a different way, don't just repeat the same thing in the same way.

"Find different ways to express and communicate."

- Think about what you need to do to include all children from the very beginning of a project.

"Government could put more things in place for people with support needs/accessibility needs."

- Put money aside for interpreters or other things children might need.
- Make sure information is easy for children to find. Examples of this could be using Tik Tok, Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat, surveys, and videos depending on age.



Include
Everyone!

EVIDENCE

case no.2022

What's happening across Scotland?

Lots of organisations are trying to get better at how they include all children.

Have a look below to check out the evidence!

EVIDENCE #1

HOPE for Autism



HOPE for Autism is training staff on how to use Makaton and Talking Mats with autistic children. Makaton is a type of language that uses symbols, signs and words. Talking Mats uses a mat with symbols. These can make it easier for autistic children to express what they think and feel.

[Find out more about HOPE for Autism's work here.](#)

EVIDENCE #2

Children's Health Scotland

Children's Health Scotland uses drawing and other creative activities to help children with long-term illnesses to share their thoughts, feelings, worries and get help.

[Learn more about Children's Health Scotland's work here.](#)

EVIDENCE #3

Starcatchers

Starcatchers is helping adults understand what babies and very young children want.

[Find out more about the Wee People, Big Feelings project here](#) and [learn more about Sprog Rock here.](#)

What do you think?

We want to know what you think. This will help our next investigation!

- Do you have any ideas for how things should change?
- Are there any examples you want to share?

Let us know by emailing: info@togetherscotland.org.uk



Together (Scottish Alliance
for Children's Rights)

*The Melting Pot, 15 Calton
Road, Edinburgh, EH8 8DL*

Charity Reg No. SC029403
Company No. SC199725

What is this case file about?

Some children need extra help to make sure their rights are met. This might be because they are disabled, live away from their family, or for another reason.

Adults need to collect information to find out *who these children are* and what the *best way of supporting them is*.

Children whose rights are at risk

EVIDENCE

case no.2022

Article 2
UNCRC says
that children
shouldn't be
treated unfairly
for any reason.

Why is it important to collect information?

If adults don't collect information, it means they won't know which children are having their rights met and which children are struggling. This means they won't get the help they need.

For example, young carers are children who help look after a family member, friend or neighbour. Many young carers miss school because they are caring for the person. Collecting information helps adults find this out and put supportive things in place to make sure young carers don't miss out on any learning.

"Everyone's different and everyone needs different things. So no one can really say, 'well, that'll help' because some people might not be able to do that. So it'd be neat to kind of ask people what they need"

What should adults do?

Adults should collect different kinds of information to build a big picture. Some of the things adults should do are:

- Gather children's views as well as the important numbers.
- Ask children to get involved as researchers.
- Don't treat children as "all the same". Gather information about different groups of children so you can understand what they need.
- Collect information before making changes and afterwards. This helps to see if the changes are working.

Children whose rights are at risk

EVIDENCE

case no.2022

What's happening across Scotland?

Lots of organisations have started to collect information so they can help children who need it.

Have a look below to check out the evidence!

EVIDENCE #1

Who Cares? Scotland

Who Cares Scotland asked what school pupils knew and thought about their Care Experienced classmates. The charity helped pupils learn more. This helped Care Experienced pupils feel more accepted and included.

[Learn more about Who Cares? Scotland's work here.](#)

EVIDENCE #2

Kinloss Primary School

Kinloss Primary School started to count how many pupils had a parent in the army. They spoke to them to find out what they need and made changes to help them.

[Read more about Kinloss Primary School's work here.](#)

EVIDENCE #3

What is Care Experience?

This means someone who has been or is currently in care. It includes children who are living:

- with a relative who isn't their parent
- at home with the help of social work
- in a residential unit or school
- with foster carers.
- in a secure unit.
- with adopted parents

Children in Scotland

Children in Scotland got children involved as researchers. They helped investigate what other children think. Children felt more comfortable sharing their thoughts with another child.

[Read more about the Health Inequalities project here.](#)

What do you think?

To help with our next investigation, we want to know what you think!

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Getting help
about your rights

EVIDENCE

case no.2022

What is this case file about?

It should be easy for children to get help if their rights aren't met. They need easy ways to complain so that things can be made better. They also need information about how to complain and adults they can go to if they need help. This adult could be a parent, a teacher, a youth-worker or maybe even a lawyer.

Why is it important to get help about your rights?

It's easier to fix a problem if children have information, easy ways to complain and adults who can help them. This is important because it helps protect children's rights.

"I think the process needs to be easier to challenge, waiting for a response for an email for 3 weeks is still quite long"

"It's important that children know about their rights so if someone disrespects them, they can stand up for them"

What should adults do?

There are lots of things adults can do to help children. Adults should:

- Make sure children know about their rights and what to do if something goes wrong.
- Speak to children about what help they might need.
- Have different ways for children to complain and make sure these are free, easy and quick for *all* children to use.
- Get training so adults understand how to help children better.
- Always try to get better, based on what children are saying.
- Help children speak to a lawyer if they need one.

"Having the right person, one adult to make a big change"

"Not all children should be expected to know what they are doing in court, like really young children"



Getting help
about your rights

EVIDENCE

case no. 2022

What's happening across Scotland?

Lots of organisations have been trying to make it easier for children to get help if they're not happy about something.

Have a look below to check out the evidence!

EVIDENCE #1

Care Inspectorate



The Care Inspectorate helps children living in care. It spoke to children about what would make it easier for them to speak up if something was wrong. Children said they didn't feel comfortable making a complaint over the phone. The Care Inspectorate changed things so children could complain by sending a text. They also made child-friendly leaflets so children knew about this.

[Learn more about the text-to-complain service here.](#)

2

EVIDENCE #2

My Rights, My Say

My Rights, My Say supports children aged 12-15 who need extra help at school. It helps them say what they need and what will help them learn. It helps them if they feel they've been treated unfairly.

[Learn more about My Rights, My Say here.](#)

EVIDENCE #3

Salvesen Mindroom Centre

The Salvesen Mindroom Centre helps autistic children have their views heard and challenge decisions they don't agree with.

[Find out more about Salvesen Mindroom Centre's services for children and young people here.](#)

What do you think?

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Knowing about children's rights



EVIDENCE

case no.2022

What is this case file about?

Everyone should know about children's rights - both children and adults. There are lots of ways to make sure this happens - like learning about rights at school, posters, leaflets, shows, adverts and training for adults.

Why is it important to know about children's rights?

If **children** know their rights, they will know when they aren't being respected. They can then complain so that things are put right.

If **adults** know about children's rights, then they will understand what children really need and know how to make things better for children.

"Adults need to know all of children's rights to understand how to help a child"

"Write a picture book about children's rights so children and adults can read about children's rights together"

"I think we should learn about children's rights in school more, but it should be taught in a fun way and not just reading through a list of rights"

What should adults do?

Some of the things adults should do are:

- Make sure children can learn about their rights in a fun way.
- Make sure children have information about their rights that is easy for *all* children to understand.
- Get training so they can understand children's rights better.
- Do more to make sure everybody knows about children's rights.

"Government could raise awareness of children's rights"

"Teachers should have a course on children's rights, showing how much of a difference it makes"

Knowing about children's rights

EVIDENCE

case no.2022

EVIDENCE #1

Includem and EachOther

Children who'd been excluded from school made a film about how this affected their rights. They recorded their stories and an artist made cartoon characters so that no one knew who they were.

[Watch the documentary here.](#)

EVIDENCE #3

Licketyspit

Licketyspit supports young children to share their views through play. Before lockdown, the children helped adults learn about their rights by playing games with them. This included "What's the Time Mr No Rights Wolf?" and some dressing up. This helped the adults learn about children's rights from children themselves.

[Read more about Making Children's Rights Real across Scotland event here.](#)

[Read more about the Storyplay Champions and their projects.](#)

What's happening across Scotland?

Lots of organisations are trying to make sure everyone knows about children's rights. Some have been helping children and others have been helping adults.

Have a look below to check out the evidence!

EVIDENCE #2

A Place in Childhood

A Place in Childhood helped children aged 9-11 say what would make their area a good place for children to live. The children used Minecraft to design the perfect neighbourhood. This was a fun way for children to learn about their rights and show adults what they needed.

[Read more about the Minecraft project here.](#)

EVIDENCE #4

Rights Respecting School Awards

Lots of schools take part in the Rights Respecting Schools Award. To get the award, the school needs to show that children and teachers understand children's rights, that children's views are taken seriously and that teachers think about children's rights whenever they make decisions.

[Read more about the Rights Respecting Schools Award here.](#)

What do you think?

To help us with our next investigation, we want to know what you think!

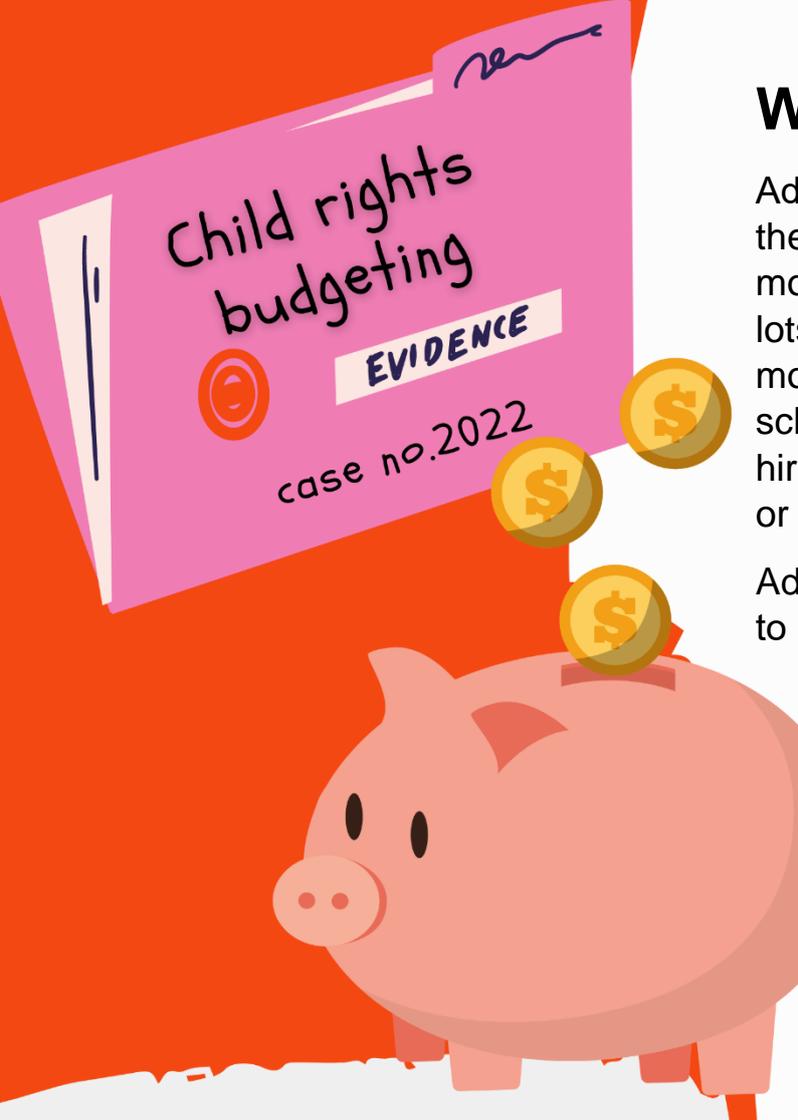
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Child rights budgeting

EVIDENCE

case no. 2022

What is this case file about?

Adults should think about children's rights when they are making decisions about spending money. For example, the government makes lots of decisions about schools that involve money - like which children should get free school meals, how many teachers they should hire and if there is enough money for computers or school trips.

Adults should use as much money as they can to protect children's rights.

Why is child rights budgeting important?

If adults don't think about children's rights when making decisions about money, then they might spend it on something that's less important. They might even spend it on something that's bad for children's rights.

"Put more money into supporting low-income families"

"Increased funding for families and other vulnerable groups"

"Put funding towards support for disabled people"

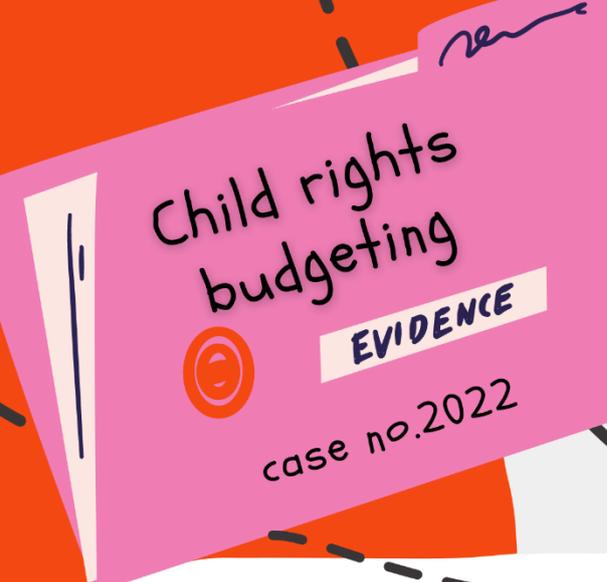
What should adults do?

Some of the things adults should do are:

- Learn as much as they can about children's rights so they understand the effects of their decisions.
- Involve children in decisions about spending money (and all other decisions that affect children).

"the government doesn't have the money to get it wrong so they should listen to [children and young people] to get it right"

- Use as much money as they can to protect children's rights, before spending it on anything else.
- Spend money wisely so that it helps the children who need it most.



Child rights budgeting

EVIDENCE

case no.2022

What's happening across Scotland?

Some organisations have started to think about children's rights when deciding how to spend money. Others have said they want to learn more about how to do this.

Have a look below to check out the evidence!

EVIDENCE #1

Children in Letham

Children in Letham are helping Perth & Kinross Council to think about children's rights and wellbeing before making decisions about money. They're telling the council what would make Letham the best place to grow up. The council will then know what it needs to spend money on to help make this happen.

[Learn more about what Children in Letham are doing here.](#)

EVIDENCE #2

Children in Scotland

Children in Scotland is a charity that protects children's rights. It brought lots of other charities and adults who make decisions about money together. They asked an expert to write a report on how money should be spent carefully to protect children's rights.

[Read about Children in Scotland's work here.](#)

What do you think?

To help us with our next investigation, we want to know what you think!

- Do you have any ideas for how things should change?
- Are there any examples you want to share?

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Child rights impact assessments

EVIDENCE

case no. 2022

What is this case file about?

Adults should think about children's rights when making decisions. There's a special tool that can help adults do this. It's called a Child Rights Impact Assessment (or 'CRIA' for short).

This tool helps adults make sure their ideas, decisions and actions respect children's rights. It does this by asking adults a list of questions.

Why are child rights impact assessments important?

Adults in power often make decisions that affect children. The ideas adults have can make children's lives better or worse. A CRIA helps adults make changes to their idea. They can do this before their decision is final to make sure it doesn't cause children any harm.

Sometimes, decisions can affect children in different ways. For example, it might affect disabled children or refugee children more than it affects their friends. A CRIA can help adults find a way to change their idea so that every child's rights are respected.

What should adults do?

Adults should:

- Learn as much as they can about children's rights and how to do a CRIA well.
- Do CRIA early, so that there's lots of time to make changes.
- Keep thinking about children's rights - don't just do a CRIA and then forget about it.
- Involve children when doing a CRIA. They might think about things that adults miss.
- Share information about CRIAs in a way that all children can understand.

"We like the idea of a child-friendly version of CRWIAs, but the original should be easy to understand too. There should be other accessible formats of these"



Child rights impact assessments

case no.2022

What's happening across Scotland?

The Scottish Government and lots of other organisations are thinking about how to respect children's rights when making decisions.

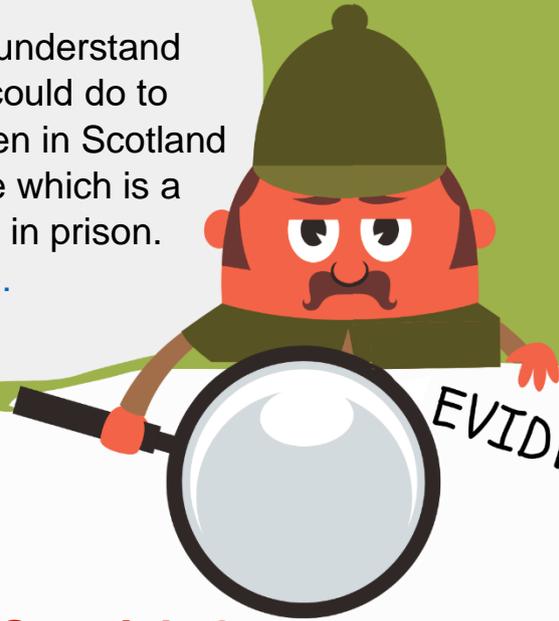
Have a look below to check out the evidence!

EVIDENCE #1

Children in Scotland and Families Outside

Some charities have started doing CRIAs to understand what they're doing well and what more they could do to protect children's rights. For example, Children in Scotland has made a start, alongside Families Outside which is a charity that helps children who have a parent in prison.

[Children in Scotland's work can be read here.](#)



EVIDENCE #3

Scottish Government

The Scottish Government wrote a big report to help adults know what a CRIA is and how to do one.

[Read the CRWIA Guidance for Scottish Government Officials here.](#)

What do you think?

We want to know what you think. This will help our next investigation!

- Do you have any ideas for how things should change?
- Are there any examples you want to share?

Let us know by emailing:

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EVIDENCE #2

Scotland's Children's Commissioner

The Children's Commissioner did a big CRIA looking at how coronavirus rules had affected children's rights. It made a child-friendly version of its report so children could know what was happening.

[The Children's Commissioner's work can be found here.](#)



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