



together

Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights



THE RIGHTS DETECTIVES

MISSION UPDATE #003

DECEMBER 2023

In partnership with:



Contents

Part 1 – Introduction	4
Background to a new Human Rights Bill for Scotland	4
About the Rights Detectives	4
About this report	4
Our approach	5
Supporting children and young people to respond to the public consultation	5
Detectives’ investigations	5
Investigation questions	6
Weaving a strong web of children’s human rights protections	6
Part 2 – Detectives’ findings	8
Rights most at risk of falling through the gaps in the web	8
Children and young people	8
Women and girls	8
Black, brown and ethnic minority children and young people	9
People with disabilities	9
LGBTQ+	10
Care experienced children and young people	10
Justice system	10
Bereavement, trauma and loss	10
Older people	10
The flies – examples of children’s rights breaches	11
War, armed conflict and global issues	11
Bullying and disrespecting rights	11
Access to justice	12
What should be included in the right to a healthy environment	13
Healthy environment	13
Environmental justice	13
Accessible transport	14
Social justice	14
Public services	14
Housing and buildings	15
Part 3 – Strengthening the web	16
What should Scottish Government be doing – recommendations:	16
Conclusion	17
Appendices	17

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A special thanks goes to the S1 pupils from St John Ogilvy High School and the Girl Guides in Edinburgh who helped with our latest Investigations, Together staff, PhD student – Felicia Szloboda and to Scottish Government for funding the project.

Part 1 – Introduction

Background to a new Human Rights Bill for Scotland

Scottish Government plans to introduce a new Human Rights Bill that will incorporate four United Nations human rights treaties into Scots Law. The four treaties are:

- the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (**ICESCR**)
- the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (**CEDAW**)
- the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (**CERD**)
- the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (**CRPD**)

Subject to **devolved powers**, the proposals plan to strengthen protection for the human rights of women and girls, disabled people and minority ethnic communities. Scottish Government also intends that the Bill will set out the right to a healthy environment and strengthen rights protection for LGBTQ+ and older people.

The development of the new Human Rights Bill builds upon findings of the **National Taskforce for Human Rights Leadership** and **ongoing work** to incorporate the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into Scots law.

About the Rights Detectives



Together (Scottish Alliance for Children’s Rights) has been commissioned by Scottish Government to support the ‘Children and Young People Lived Experience Board’ which is helping to inform the development of this new Human Rights Bill for Scotland. In June 2023, as the public consultation was launched, Scottish Government asked Together to continue the work and provided funding for a further six-month period (June - Dec 2023).

The ‘Children and Young People Lived Experience Board’, known as ‘The Rights Detectives’, is currently made up of three children and young people, aged 11-17 and one mentor, and is supported by Together and the following member organisations:

- Children in Scotland (2 Detectives)
- Scottish Youth Parliament (1 Detective)

The Rights Detectives form one of three ‘Lived Experience Boards’ in response to recommendation 27 of the National Taskforce for Human Rights Leadership report: “The Scottish Government should adopt an innovative and human-rights based approach towards engaging the public in developing the framework, including the guidance and its implementation.”¹

About this report

This report is the **third** in a progressive series. It documents Together and the Rights Detectives approach to supporting children and young people to respond to **Scottish Government’s public consultation** (June - Sept 2023) and sets out the findings from two additional Detectives Investigations (Nov 2023).

¹ National Taskforce for Human Rights Leadership report

This report should be read in conjunction with the previous reports (links below) which detail the project set up, the Detectives' previous investigations and a mapping research report of what we already know about children and young people's views and experiences of their rights:

- **Mission Update 1 – Feb 2023** (full report – also available Appendix 1)
- **Mission Update 1 – Feb 2023 – child-friendly version** (also available Appendix 2)
- **Mission Update 2 – June 2023** (full report – also available Appendix 3)
- **Mission Update 2 – June 2023 – child-friendly version** (also available Appendix 4)
- **Mapping Research Report** (also available Appendix 5)

Our approach

Supporting children and young people to respond to the public consultation

On the 15th of June, Scottish Government launched a public consultation on proposals for a new Human Rights Bill. To support children and young people to respond to the consultation, Together worked with **the Rights Detectives** to shape child-friendly consultation resources in partnership with Scottish Government.

Two different sets of resources were developed - one for children and young people who were new to the topic and another for those who already had some knowledge of human rights and incorporation. Each pack came with a facilitator guide for adults who were supporting children and young people to share their views.

- **Introductory consultation pack**
- **Accompanying introductory facilitator guide**
- **More detailed consultation pack**
- **Accompanying more detailed facilitator guide**

The consultation period was extended from the normal twelve weeks to sixteen weeks, to allow as many children, young people and adults to respond as possible.

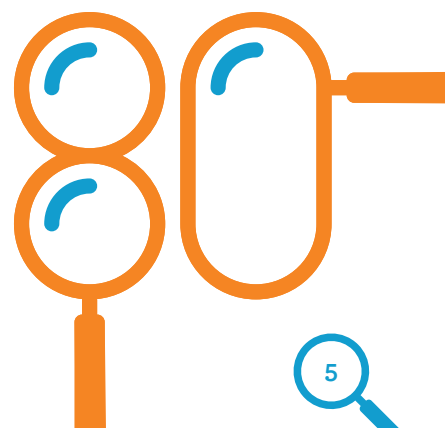
During this time, Together worked with the Rights Detectives using the child-friendly materials to form their own individual responses to the consultation. This took the form of group activities during an in-person Detectives meeting and follow up 1:1 sessions online. Instead of using Scottish Government's citizen space to respond, the Detectives submitted their responses directly to the Human Rights Bill team.

Detectives' investigations

After the Detectives submitted their individual responses, their focus moved to co-producing session plans for the final Investigations of this stage of the project. Once again, the Detectives excelled and managed to engage with a diverse group of children and young people in the central belt/Edinburgh area of Scotland.

In total, 80 children and young people, aged 10 - 17 were involved in this Investigation:

- 3 x Rights Detectives (aged 12 - 17) and 1 mentor
- 60 x S1 pupils from St John Ogilvy High School, Hamilton (aged 11 - 12)
- 16 x Girl Guides, Edinburgh (aged 10 - 14)



Whilst the public consultation had closed, the Detectives chose some of the consultation questions alongside some of their previous Mission questions to ensure the Investigations were as accessible as possible for the children and young people taking part.

Investigation questions



1. What does Scotland need to do to make things better for people whose rights are most at risk?
2. Can you give some examples of where/when children's rights might get broken?
3. Who should help when children's rights are broken, and what should they do?
4. What things do you think should be included in the right to a healthy environment?

Weaving a strong web of children's human rights protections

During our in-person meeting on October 28th, Jules, the Director of Together and the Rights Detectives reflect on their work with Rights Right Now! on the incorporation of the UNCRC into Scots law. Jules provided an update on the Bill and explained she had been invited to give evidence on behalf of Together members and children and young people before the Equalities, Human Rights & Civil Justice Committee. Jules explained how the outcome of the reconsideration stage of the UNCRC Bill would significantly influence what the new Human Rights Bill might look like.

Jules talked about the conversations she'd had with lots of Together's members and children and young people (including the Detectives) to help her find out what was important to share during the evidence session. All the children and young people mentioned that she was giving evidence on Halloween (31st October 2023) and some dared her to go to Parliament dressed up in costume.

Whilst dressing up wouldn't be possible, Jules did promise to wear a spider brooch, like Lady Hale once wore in the UK Supreme Court, so that any children and young people watching knew that Jules knew it was Halloween. She also invited Oscar and Safiyah to help her write her opening statement, as she recognised the valuable insights and creative thinking they would bring to the Committee about the amendments to the Bill. Enter ... the spider's web!!!

In keeping with the Halloween theme, Oscar started by creating two spiders' webs whilst Safiyah created some flies (*and a pair of glasses?!*) The first web was complete and strong without any gaps. They discussed how this web represented the UNCRC Bill as it was passed in Parliament back in March 2021. It offered the strongest protection against breaches of children's human rights. The flies represented the breaches which would get caught in this strong web. The very fact there was a web at all would actually stop some of the flies from coming near the web – like the UNCRC Bill would help to make sure people respect children's human rights from the outset.

The second web was less complete, with larger gaps and not as strong as the first. The Detectives felt this web represented the UNCRC Bill now after the changes made to address the UK Supreme Court judgment. This web would still catch some of the flies (children's human rights breaches) but some would get through the larger gaps where the protection wasn't as strong as before.

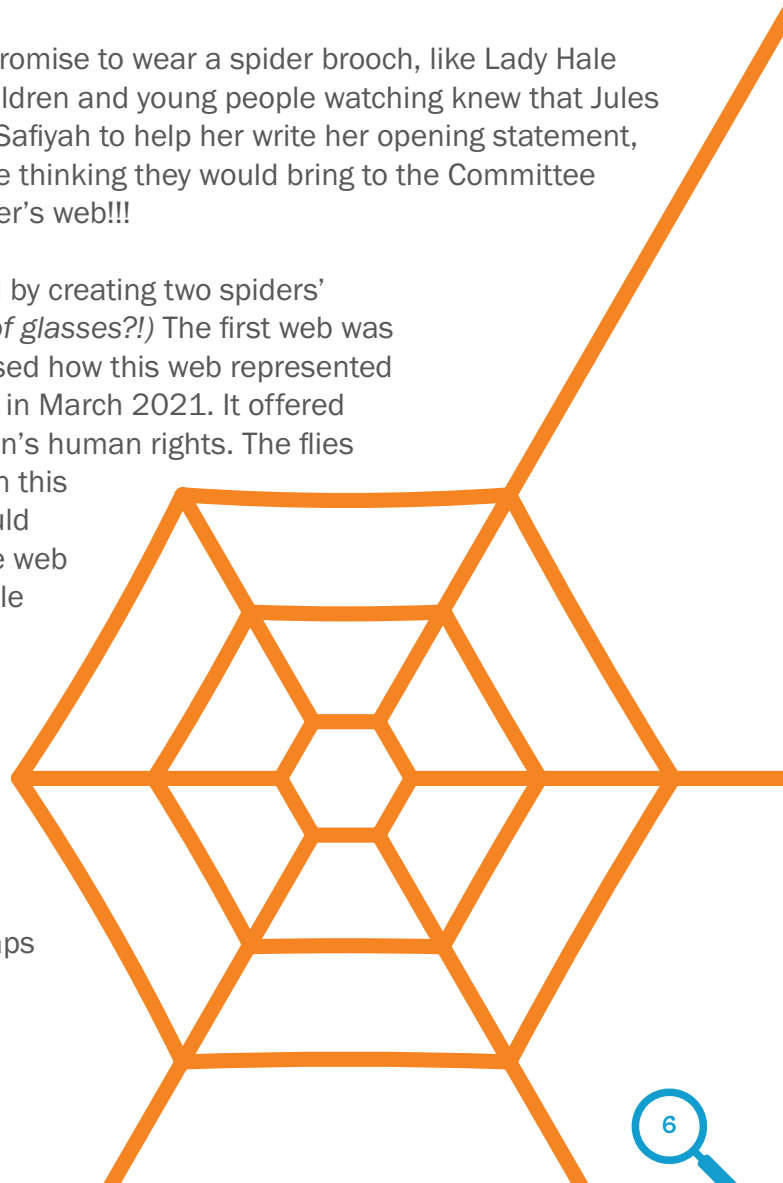




Figure 1: **Detectives creating the webs**

Of course, a web is spun by a spider, so next the Detectives turned their attention to creating some spiders. The first was the boss spider...and this is where Safiyah's glasses came in! This spider, represents the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice who is in charge of the web. The Detectives also created some smaller spiders to represent other Members of the Spider Parliament (MSPs) and the spider courts.

Whilst the new web isn't yet as strong as it was back in March 2021, Cabinet Secretary Spider and Members of the Spider Parliament can work together over time to strengthen the web of protection for children's human rights in Scotland. There is also a role for the spider courts and spider judges.

You can watch as Jules's opening statement to the Committee at the link below (*timestamp 09:52:38*) and see just how powerful and child-friendly an explanation the Rights Detectives helped create with their spidery webs. **Juliet Harris, Director of Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights) giving evidence before the Equalities, Human Rights & Civil Justice Committee.** You can also read the following blog on the Together website for more information: **Reconsideration of the UNCRC Bill: a crucial 'web' of protection – Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights) (togetherscotland.blog).**

The evidence session is a rich example of the fact that children and young people's perspectives matter and that decision makers must provide them with opportunities to express these views in a way that works for them. The spider's web analogy beautifully captures the essence of the Bill – a significant step on Scotland's journey to fully realise children's human rights and one that can be built upon and strengthened over time. Children's active participation, clear communication, and a commitment to collaboration are some of the key ingredients that will help make the web even stronger.



Figure 2: **The Detectives and some of the adults at their residential in Dundee**

Part 2 – Detectives’ findings

Rights most at risk of falling through the gaps in the web

When asked how Scotland can make things better for people whose rights are most at risk, children and young people share some clear messages which echo the findings in our previous Detectives reports and mapping research.

Children and young people

Our findings in this round of Investigations show that children and young people are recognised as a distinct group whose rights could be at risk due to their age, dependence on adults for care and many of the reasons noted below. There are strong views that decision makers should do more to identify children whose rights are at risk and then speak with these children to find out what they need.

***“Respect each child no matter how old.
Inside is where they should be, not out in the cold.
Get together and talk about what rights you own.
Help kids to remember, they’re never alone.
To respect others right is the best you can do.
So stand up and speak about your rights and you”***

Acrostic Poem By C, Girl Guides, Edinburgh

Women and girls

In the mapping and previous Detectives reports, we heard from girls and young women about harmful gender stereotyping in both uniforms and language, coupled with intimidation from boys at school and in their local communities. This was confirmed during our latest Investigations by a number of girls who tell us of instances of sexism and fear and discomfort walking alone at night. They also talk about gender discrimination, especially in relation to employment opportunities and the gender pay gap.

 ***“It can feel uncomfortable walking home alone at night, especially walking past boys.”***

“There should be more cameras for protection against things like catcalling.”

Girls also tell us of the societal pressures they face, including *“conforming to internet beauty standards”* and the *“impact this has on their confidence, self-esteem and mental health.”* Furthermore, those grappling with mental ill health found it challenging to access adequate help, impacting various aspects of their lives.

The Detectives’ findings around health map broadly into provisions across the four international human rights treaties on equal access to physical and mental health services (Article 12 ICESCR, Article 12 CEDAW, Article 5(e)(iv) CERD, Article 25 CRPD). Article 12 CEDAW is clear that this right encompasses not just access to healthcare but also to counselling, support and information. Article 25 CRPD provides the most detail, including that health services should be accessible, affordable and as close as possible to people’s communities.

CEDAW seeks to address many of the challenges facing women and girls that the Detectives identified. It calls on governments to take extra steps to ensure women and girls experience their rights to the same level as men and boys (Article 4) and to address gender stereotypes (Article 5). In relation to the Detectives’ calls around gender discrimination, Article 10 requires governments to end gender inequality in education, including girls’ access to sport and physical education. It also says

that schools should update textbooks to make sure these don't reinforce stereotyped roles for men and women. CEDAW also contains articles relating to Detectives' findings on eliminating the gender pay gap (Article 11) and ensuring women and girls' equal participation in public and political life (Article 7). The treaties also recognise intersectionality – with the CEDAW preamble recognising the particular challenges faced by women and girls living in poverty, while the CRPD calls on governments to take action to end gendered violence and abuse of disabled people (Article 16).

Black, brown and ethnic minority children and young people

For black, brown, and ethnic minority communities, the children and young people speak about the importance of recognising uniqueness, treating people with kindness and addressing fundamental needs like financial stability, shelter, equality, food, and water. Refugee and migrant children face multifaceted difficulties during the asylum process, from accommodation to education, healthcare, and financial issues. Black, brown and ethnic minority children and young people also emphasise the importance of acknowledging Scotland's colonial past and promoting anti-racism in addition to advocating for safe spaces.

CERD aims to end racial discrimination in all of its forms. It puts a duty on governments to review and amend their own laws, policies and practices, but also to act against discrimination by “any person, group or organisation” (Article 2(1)(d)). This wide duty reflects the Detectives' priority that Scottish Government should demonstrate that it cares for all its citizens – including those who are treated unfairly by members of the public – rather than the government or a public body. Article 5(b) CERD sets out Black, Brown and minority ethnic people's right to be free from all forms of violence, regardless of who is the perpetrator. Article 5I sets out the right to equal political participation, reflecting Detectives' previous calls around representation in political parties and the Scottish Youth Parliament.

People with disabilities

For people with disabilities, they highlight practical changes like equal access to all venues, more space in restaurants, bigger toilets and larger cars. A number of young people emphasise that people with disabilities can experience discrimination, “*not getting to go to as many things and activities*” and can have less educational, employment and social opportunities.

The Detectives hear many examples of challenges children with disabilities face in educational settings, for example; teachers “*shouting at pupils with additional support needs or bullying them.*” Children and young people value supportive educators but note the lack of consistent additional support due to funding shortages. They underline the importance of being treated with dignity and respect and emphasise the right for people with disabilities to participate in a broad and inclusive range of activities. The children and young people we spoke to also recognise that living in poverty makes it more difficult to access their right to an education.

 **“Disabled people should get to go into places first.”**

The CRPD seeks to uphold disabled people's rights across a wide range of settings. Article 7 CRPD sets out the specific rights of disabled children, including that governments should take extra steps to make sure disabled children have their right to be heard and that their views are considered and taken seriously. The CRPD sets out lots of other rights that disabled people of all ages have – including the right to be included in their communities (Article 19), the right to accessible information (Article 21), to an inclusive education (Article 24), to be fully involved in political and public life (Article 29) and to rest, play and leisure (Article 30).

LGBTQ+

In previous Investigations we heard that LGBTQ+ children feel unheard, face privacy breaches and discrimination in schools. In our recent Investigations, children and young people identify the need for better public awareness and comprehensive “*education on LGBTQ+ issues in schools.*” They call for the creation of “*safe spaces at work and in school.*” It is important to note that attitudes towards LGBTQ+ people vary across society (including children and young people) and many continue to experience various forms of discrimination as a result. This reveals the continued complexity of societal attitudes, however many of the children and young people the Detectives spoke to are clear that everyone has a right to be treated with dignity and respect.

Care experienced children and young people

Care-experienced children and young people face stigma and additional barriers affecting their education, privacy, housing, and family life. They highlight the crucial role of independent advocacy workers in ensuring their voices are heard. Young carers noted that they require more support to balance their caring roles with education, facing challenges in accessing work experience placements.

Justice system

Children who have contact with the justice system encounter stigma and powerlessness and urge against treating 16- and 17-year-olds as adults who can be prosecuted and sent to prison. Children with a parent or family member in prison grapple with mental, emotional, and social impacts.

Bereavement, trauma and loss

Children and young people affected by bereavement, trauma and loss stress the need for tailored support across different age groups, emphasising the importance of easily accessible help.

Older people

Children and young people talk about the kind of support their older family members like grandparents might need including “*help with technologies*”, access to suitable housing and “*good quality care*”, and provisions “*like food packages if they struggle with cooking.*”

In recognising these diverse challenges, it becomes evident that having as strong a web as possible to protect children’s human rights demands a nuanced understanding of their unique experiences and proactive efforts to address areas where their rights might be at risk.

There are strong calls from children and young people for understanding, equality and practical improvements that cater to the unique needs of each and every person. Children and young people highlight that it’s about creating a society where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

The Detectives’ evidence echoes the non-discrimination provisions across the four treaties. These seek to ensure that everyone, regardless of their background or who they are, has equal access to their human rights. For example, Article 2 ICESCR prohibits discrimination based on someone’s race, colour, sex, language, religion, opinions, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. The remaining treaties set out clear prohibitions on discrimination against women and girls (Article 2 CEDAW), disabled people (Article 5 CRPD) and Black, Brown and minority ethnic people (Article 2 CERD). Discrimination can take many forms – for example, Article 1 CERD says racial discrimination can include “*distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference*” but importantly that countries should be allowed to take positive steps in relation to a particular racial or ethnic group to help them achieve equity (Article 1(4) CERD).



Figure 3: **Human Rights Patchwork by Girl Guides, Edinburgh**

**“Respect for opinions and views
 Include everyone in activities
 Getting HELP that you need
 Healthcare that is free
 Teachers that respect you
 Safety at all times”**

Acrostic Poem By E, Girl Guides, Edinburgh

The flies – examples of children’s rights breaches

War, armed conflict and global issues

In exploring instances where children’s rights might be breached, several key concerns were raised during the Investigations. Similar to the views of children in East Lothian (Mission Update Report #002) the most frequently mentioned breaches are around war and armed conflict, and the impact this has on children’s human rights.

🗣️ “When there is a war and you can’t get resources.”

This shows the genuine worry and concern that children and young people have which may well be exacerbated by the extensive media coverage of the unfolding war in the Gaza strip and the ongoing war in Ukraine.

The children we speak to have a good grasp on other global challenges like human trafficking and child labour, underlining their understanding of the broader interconnectedness of children’s rights. This also expands to include worries about “*people dying in the world*”. Many children still talk about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly during periods of isolation when interaction was limited, and the covid-related deaths.

Bullying and disrespecting rights

As with all the other Detectives’ Investigations, bullying (both in-person and online) emerged again as a major concern within schools, with children and young people highlighting its detrimental effects on their health, wellbeing and rights. One child described “*bullying as like being at war with people.*” Within the school environment, potential rights breaches include instances of not being able to go to the toilet when needed and getting into trouble when it wasn’t your fault. These and many other examples (see previous reports) continue to shed light on the complexities of children and young people navigating their way around educational spaces.

Each of the four treaties contains provisions on equal access to education (Article 13 ICESCR, Article 10 CEDAW, Article 5(e)(v) CERD, Article 24 CRPD). Some of the treaties go into greater detail about the aims of education or how it should be delivered. For example, Article 13 ICESCR and Article 24 CRPD echo the Detectives' concerns around their rights not being respected in school, saying that education should be directed at the full development of their personality/potential, their sense of dignity, their rights and fundamental freedoms.

Girl Guides provided additional insights, identifying scenarios where rights might be compromised. These scenarios ranged from encountering mean individuals, "censorship" complexities surrounding "vaccinations" and "where there is abuse and neglect." Instances of disrespect in public spaces, like encounters with older boys and "catcalling" in the streets are also noted by girls and young women.

In summing up, these examples coupled with the extensively detailed issues detailed in Mission Updates #001 and #002 reports, highlight the wide-ranging challenges faced by children and young people. They emphasise the need for comprehensive efforts by all duty bearers to safeguard and uphold their rights across various contexts.

***"Respect for myself and others
Individual choices about my life
Getting to make a difference in the world
Hear about what I can do
Think about the world and other children
Shine a light on children and how they are living"***

Acrostic Poem By E, Girl Guides, Edinburgh

Access to justice

Who should help and what should they do? During our latest investigations, children and young people offered insights into who they believed should step in and what actions they should take when children's rights are breached. Teachers top the list, with children and young people emphasising their role in providing support and/or contacting the appropriate agencies depending on how serious the breaches were;

 ***"Teachers should help you with your work."***

"A teacher should contact the police and let them deal with it."

Parents, carers, extended family members and support from all adults come a close second. As for what these adults should do, the responses reflect a nuanced understanding of the support they need. Actions range from providing emotional support and protection, fighting for justice, advocating for your rights and spreading awareness.

 ***"They can look after you and support you in ways that you need. They can protect you."***

"Explain what children think."

"Give you a hug."

"Try to help as much as possible" and "ensure it doesn't happen to anyone else."

"They should make sure you're safe" and "fight for justice/our rights."

A small number of children think adults and young people could harness the power of social media to raise awareness about children's rights breaches, however others recognise their right to privacy and say they wouldn't want personal information shared on such public platforms.

🗣️ “They could post it on Insta, and if it goes viral then people will know they will need to make a difference.”

“You could create a hashtag like, #EveryoneDeservesRights”

Additionally, healthcare staff including doctors, NHS workers, therapists, and emergency services are mentioned frequently. These professionals are seen to provide not only medical assistance but also emotional support and protection. Some children and young people emphasise the importance of involving authorities, such as the police and government, to address more serious violations.

🗣️ “The adults should try to fix the problem, and have the child/young person's back.”

“[They should] inform the authorities depending on how serious it is.”

“Talk to the government.”

“The Police should press charges against the person.”

Friends are identified as an important source of support and children and young people recognise the individual and collective actions they could take, like making posters, videos, and documentaries about their rights, and leveraging social media to raise awareness. The Girl Guide group also talk about the role of trusted adults and mention the importance of pets.

Overall, the responses mirror the findings of the previous Mission Updates and mapping report, and reflect a diverse group of adults, children and young people working together to uphold and fulfil children's rights.

What should be included in the right to a healthy environment?

Healthy environment

Ensuring a healthy environment extends beyond physical surroundings. When thinking about what makes up a healthy environment, children touch on various aspects of their lives. The importance of “loving,” “happy,” and “protective” family relationships is emphasised, highlighting the role of close connections in personal wellbeing. Children and young people recognise the significance of a supportive community, quality education, and a clean living environment. This holistic approach encompasses not just a green lifestyle but a commitment to justice, fairness, and an overall high quality of life. These findings emphasise the depth of thought and care that children and young people invest in imagining a sustainable and fair future.



Environmental justice

As with our previous findings documented in all our reports, environmental consciousness is at the forefront of children and young people's minds when we talk to them about the right to a healthy environment. This is seen in the many calls to “No deforestation,” “a clean environment,” “ensure wildlife is safe,” “no fast fashion,” “WIND TURBINES,” and “Remove plastic from the ocean.”

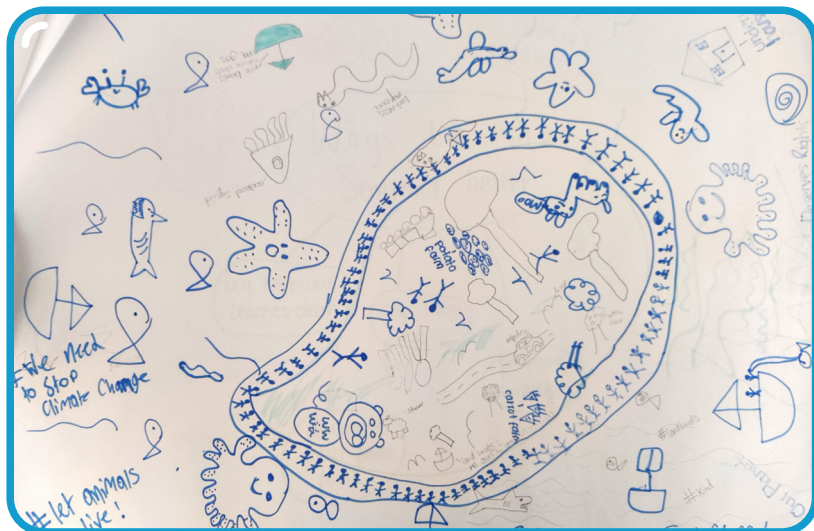


Figure 4: Images depicting the right to a healthy environment



Accessible transport

Children and young people are clear on the need to make significant changes in our transportation habits. They showed preferences for sustainable alternatives including “less airplanes and no private jets!” and “more train travel.” There is a call for cheaper electric cars to make them more accessible, however with an important concern about the ethical dimension of electric cars and the demand for “no child labour to mine the parts for electric cars.”

Accessibility, frequency/reliability and affordability of public transport is also raised, especially for children and young people in rural communities. On a positive note, buses are “free with your Young Scot card” for young people in Scotland aged 12-26. However, as noted in Mission Update Report #001 and #002, a number of young people in rural communities say they are unable to take advantage of the new free bus travel scheme due to the lack of accessible public transport - making it very difficult for some pupils and students to access education. Cycling is often mentioned but comes with the plea for better infrastructure:

“Bike lanes are shoddy and infrequent – cyclists don’t have enough space.”

Social justice

Children and young people’s voices echo broader societal concerns, including racism, poverty, ageism, gender equality, and animal rights as being important in creating a healthy environment. The desire to “END RACISM” and see “more respect for elderly and children” is a powerful call for social justice. We heard from young women and girls who frequently say “ensure women are treated fairly,” and “ensure that villages, towns and cities are safe for women and children,” reflecting a strong call for gender equality.

Public services

Public services emerge as important elements in creating a healthy environment. The practical aspect of waste management is highlighted with children keen to ensure there are lots of “Bins and frequently collected.” Recognising the importance of community services, participants acknowledge the roles of “Fire engines, bus drivers, bin collectors – people and services working for the community.”

Housing and buildings

In a session with the Detectives, the young people talked about the need to preserve old buildings but also of the importance of managing the housing crisis, showing a level of understanding of the delicate balance between heritage and progress. They also say that accessibility of buildings needs to take centre stage with the call for “*ramp access to buildings,*” recognising the importance of inclusive urban planning.

Whilst there is no specific treaty on the right to a healthy environment, the Detectives’ findings reflect provisions in the four treaties relating to health and participation. For example, Article 12 ICESCR sets out the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, specifying that full realisation of this right requires “*improvement of all aspects of environmental and industrial hygiene.*” Pollution and climate change requires global action, but it needs local action too – for example Article 14 CEDAW emphasises that woman and girls in rural areas have a right to participate in rural development planning.



Part 3 – Strengthening the web

What should Scottish Government be doing – recommendations:

Scottish Government should:



Access to information

- Raise awareness to make sure that all babies, children, young people and adults in Scotland know about the new Human Rights Bill and what it means for them and Scotland as a whole. Information needs to be readily accessible and in an appropriate format for children to understand.
- Provide information for children as short lists, images and infographics to help their understanding of otherwise complex issues. This should be shared in places that children say they can access– both on- and offline.



Access to justice

- Prioritise the development and promotion of formal and informal child-friendly and accessible complaints procedures to enable children and young people to voice their concerns and seek redress in a safe and supportive manner.
- Set up an independent monitoring group “to ensure the government is keeping to its commitment”. This group should be available so that children and young people can contact them if they need help to go to court.



Right to be heard

- Engage directly with babies, children and young people through schools, community groups, colleges, universities, uniformed organisations, local youth & community groups, Scottish Youth Parliament, Children’s Parliament, local authorities, focus groups and civil society organisations.
- Be open to direct communications from children and young people including through children’s letters and emails. Ensure fast, accessible and child-friendly responses to children and young people.
- Recognise diversity among children and young people and actively identify those whose rights are at risk, engaging in meaningful conversations to understand their needs.
- Ensure appropriate government departments (e.g. transport) are informed of the issues raised by children and young people through the consultation/passage of the Bill. Make sure the Bill includes robust mechanisms to hold duty bearers accountable for breaches in people’s human rights.



Participation and implementation

- Involve children and young people at each and every stage of incorporation of the new Human Rights Bill, including what the law looks like and how it is practically implemented. Important components include the development of shared mission, agreed at the outset; a clarity on process; remuneration for children’s expertise and time; child-friendly communication and information; the importance of relationships; the importance of creating child-friendly environments for participation; an inclusive, adaptive approach and a strong feedback loop.



Conclusion

As detailed throughout this report, much of what the Detectives discovered through their investigations directly links to the human rights enshrined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and wider human rights treaties that the Human Rights Bill for Scotland intends to incorporate into law. Children and young people's recognition of the importance of basic physiological needs such as food, water, and healthcare correspond to ICESCR Article 11, which enshrines the right to an adequate standard of living, including food, clothing, and housing.

Their emphasis on love, relationships, and a loving family aligns with the principles of dignity embedded throughout ICESCR and more specifically in ICESCR Article 10 of the ICESCR. The emphasis on accessible education, including diverse subjects, life skills and cultural activities resonates with ICESCR Articles 13 and 15 as well as UNCRC Article 24 which guarantee the right to education and cultural life. Furthermore, their concern for the environment reflects the importance of recognising the right to a healthy environment. These findings amplify the connections between children and young people's experiences of their rights and the international human rights framework, highlighting both the progress made and the challenges that need to be addressed through the new Human Rights Bill for Scotland.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – [Mission Update Report #001_Feb 2023 \(full report\)](#)

Appendix 2 – [Mission Update Report #001_Feb 2023 \(Child-friendly version\)](#)

Appendix 3 – [Mission Update Report #002_June 2023 \(full report\)](#)

Appendix 4 – [Mission Update Report #002_June 2023 \(Child-friendly version\)](#)

Appendix 5 – [Mapping Report of children and young people's engagement](#)

Child-friendly consultation materials and facilitators guides:

Appendix 6 – [Introductory consultation pack](#)

Appendix 7 – [Introductory facilitator guide](#)

Appendix 8 – [More detailed consultation pack](#)

Appendix 9 – [More detailed facilitator guide](#)

For more information about the Rights Detectives click here

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