



together

Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights



THE RIGHTS DETECTIVES

MISSION UPDATE #003

CHILD-FRIENDLY VERSION

DECEMBER 2023

In partnership with:



Hi


We are the Rights Detectives! A group of children and young people aged 11-17 who are passionate about defending human rights. Welcome to our Mission Update #003, where we tell you about our latest work and Investigations! If you want to read our previous Mission Updates, you can [click here for Mission Update #001](#) and [click here for Mission Update #002](#).

?

What are human rights?

Human rights are the things that children and young people need to grow up healthy, happy and safe. They are written down in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (or 'UNCRC' for short). Children and young people have lots of rights in the UNCRC, including the right to be involved in decisions that affect us. We also have rights under other special agreements that the UK has signed.

Scottish Government wants to make a new human rights law for Scotland. The new law will create extra protections for disabled people, Black, Brown, and minority ethnic people, women and girls, older people and LGBTQ+ people. It will also protect the right to a healthy environment! Scottish Government asked if we could help them to involve children and young people in making this new law.



Having our say

On the 15th of June, Scottish Government launched a public consultation to find out what Scotland thought about their ideas for a new human rights law. To help make sure children and young people were included, we worked with Together staff to create two special consultation packs. One for children and young people who are new to the topic, and the other for those who already know a bit about human rights. Each pack came with a guide for grown-ups (we call them facilitators) who might help children and young people to have their say. You can see the packs here:

- [Introductory consultation pack](#)
- [More detailed consultation pack](#)
- [Introductory facilitator guide](#)
- [More detailed facilitator guide](#)

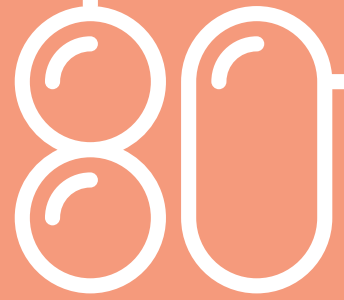
!

Each Detective used the packs to help us submit our individual consultation responses and tell Scottish Government what we thought of their ideas too. It's the first time any of us have done something like this!



Results from our missions!

We also ran Investigative workshops with **80 children and young people** in Hamilton and Edinburgh. We used activities like drawing, group discussions and creating collages to ask questions about fairness, rights, and how we can take care of the environment. We'll tell you more about what they said, but first we want to tell you about another part of our Mission – our spider's web story!!!



Web of protection for children's human rights

At our Detectives meeting in October, Jules (the boss at Together) told us she had been asked to give evidence about the UNCRC Bill to a group of Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) called the Equalities, Human Rights & Civil Justice Committee.

Jules talked to lots of children and young people to help her find out what was important to share during the evidence session. All the children and young people pointed out that she was giving evidence on Halloween (31st October 2023) and some dared her to go to Parliament dressed up in costume. Jules couldn't dress up, but she 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. Jules invited the Rights Detectives to help her write her opening statement and we decided it should have a Halloween theme!

We started by creating two spiders' webs. The first web was strong and without any gaps. This web represents the UNCRC Bill as it was passed in Parliament back in March 2021, when it offered the strongest protection of children's human rights. We also made some flies. The flies represented when children's rights get broken (called breaches), and these flies would get caught in this strong web.



July 2022:
Rights Detectives begins

December 2022:
Mission Update Report #001 published

December 2022:
Mission Update Report #002 published

August - November:
Investigation 3


August - December 2022:
Investigations 1 & 2

January - June 2023:
Investigation 3

July 2023:
Rights Detectives NEW Mission

December 2023:
This report!

The journey so far!



The second web had some gaps in it and it wasn't as strong as the first one. This web represents the UNCRC Bill now after some changes had to be made. This web would still catch some flies (children's human rights breaches) but others might get through the gaps where the protection wasn't as strong as before.

Next up, we made some spiders. The boss spider was first...to represent the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice who is in charge of the web. We also made some smaller spiders to represent Members of the Spider Parliament (MSPs) and the spider courts.

While the new web isn't as strong as it was back in March 2021, just the fact that it exists will help to scare away many of the flies. Over time, the Cabinet Secretary Spider and Members of the Spider Parliament can work together to strengthen the web of protection for children's human rights in Scotland. The spider courts and spider judges will help with this too.



You can [watch Jules's opening statement to the Committee here](#) (timestamp 09:52:38) and see just how powerful and child-friendly an explanation the Rights Detectives helped create with their spidery webs. We hope this explanation will help lots of children, young people (and adults!) to understand how important it is to have the UNCRC in Scots law.

What happens with the UNCRC Bill is very important for the new Human Rights Bill, so it's good for us to keep up-to-date with what's going on.



Okay, so let's get back to our Investigations... here's some of what children and young people told us this time...

Who's rights are most at risk of falling through the web of protection?

Children and young people told us that the following people's rights might fall through the web of protection and gave us some examples:

“

Children and young people

“Bullying is like being at war with people”

*“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

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

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

“

Black, Brown and minority ethnic people

“We should be treating everyone with kindness”

“

Children and young people living in countries at war

“When there is a war and you can't get resources”

“

Disabled people

“Not getting to go to as many things and activities”

“Teachers shouting at pupils with additional support needs or bullying them”

“Disabled people should get to go into places first”

“

Older people

“Sometimes my Nana needs help with things like technology”

“Help with food packages if they struggle with cooking”

“

LGBTQ+ people

“There should be more education on LGBTQ+ issues in schools”

“And safe spaces at work and in school”

“

Care-experienced people

“It can be harder for women and girls in schools, as stigma is a big thing. You can get mocked for having lived experience, being care experienced, or for being different”

“

People in conflict with the law

“On Friday nights, there’s so much drinking, drugs, and violence. It’s not safe to be in certain parts of the town after 10pm”

“Blaming young people for vandalism”

?

Who should help and what should they do?

Children and young people told us that lots of different people should help them if their rights are broken. The top of the list is teachers, parents and family members and other important people are emergency services like doctors, nurses and the police and other people in power. Friends were mentioned a lot too!

They also told us some of the things adults could do to help children when their rights get broken. Here is some of their ideas:

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





Children and young people had a LOT to say about the right to a healthy environment!

- “No deforestation”
- “A clean environment”
- “Ensure wildlife is safe” “No fast fashion”
- “Have more WIND TURBINES”
- “Remove plastic from the ocean”
- “Plant crops such as fresh veg and trees”
- “No animal abuse”
- “Repair broken things or ask someone to repair it”
- “Repurpose things”
- “Reduce our carbon footprints”
- “Switch to renewable energies”
- “Less airplanes and no private jets!”
- “More train travel”
- “Bike lanes are shoddy and infrequent – cyclists don’t have enough space”
- “Lots of bins and have them frequently collected”
- “Ramp access to buildings”

The children and young people we spoke to said it was also important to treat people with dignity and respect as part of having a healthy environment.

- “Ensure that villages, towns and cities are safe for women and children”
- “No child labour to mine the parts for electric cars”
- “END RACISM”
- “More respect for elderly and children”





Children and young people's advice to Scottish Government about the new law...

- Use lists, pictures, infographics and lots of different ways to help make sure babies, toddlers, children and young people know about, and understand the new law.
- Make sure issues raised by children and young people are shared with appropriate government departments (e.g. transport).
- Create easy, safe and supportive ways for children and young people to complain when their rights are broken.
- Involve babies, toddlers, children, young people and adults in every stage of making the new law.
- Set up a group to make sure Scottish Government do what they say they are going to do for this new law. Children and young people should be able to contact this group if they need help.

The Human Rights Bill Team,
Scottish Government,
Edinburgh,
Scotland





Thank you to all the children and young people who took part in our Investigations!



The Detectives and some of the adults at their residential in Dundee

For more information about the Rights Detectives click here

Email: info@togetherscotland.org.uk

Tel: **0131 510 1565**

Follow us on X (Twitter): [@together_sacr](https://twitter.com/together_sacr)

Web: togetherscotland.org.uk

Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights) is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), charity number SC029403.

Registered Office: The Melting Pot, 15 Calton Road, Edinburgh, EH8 8DL



together

Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights