

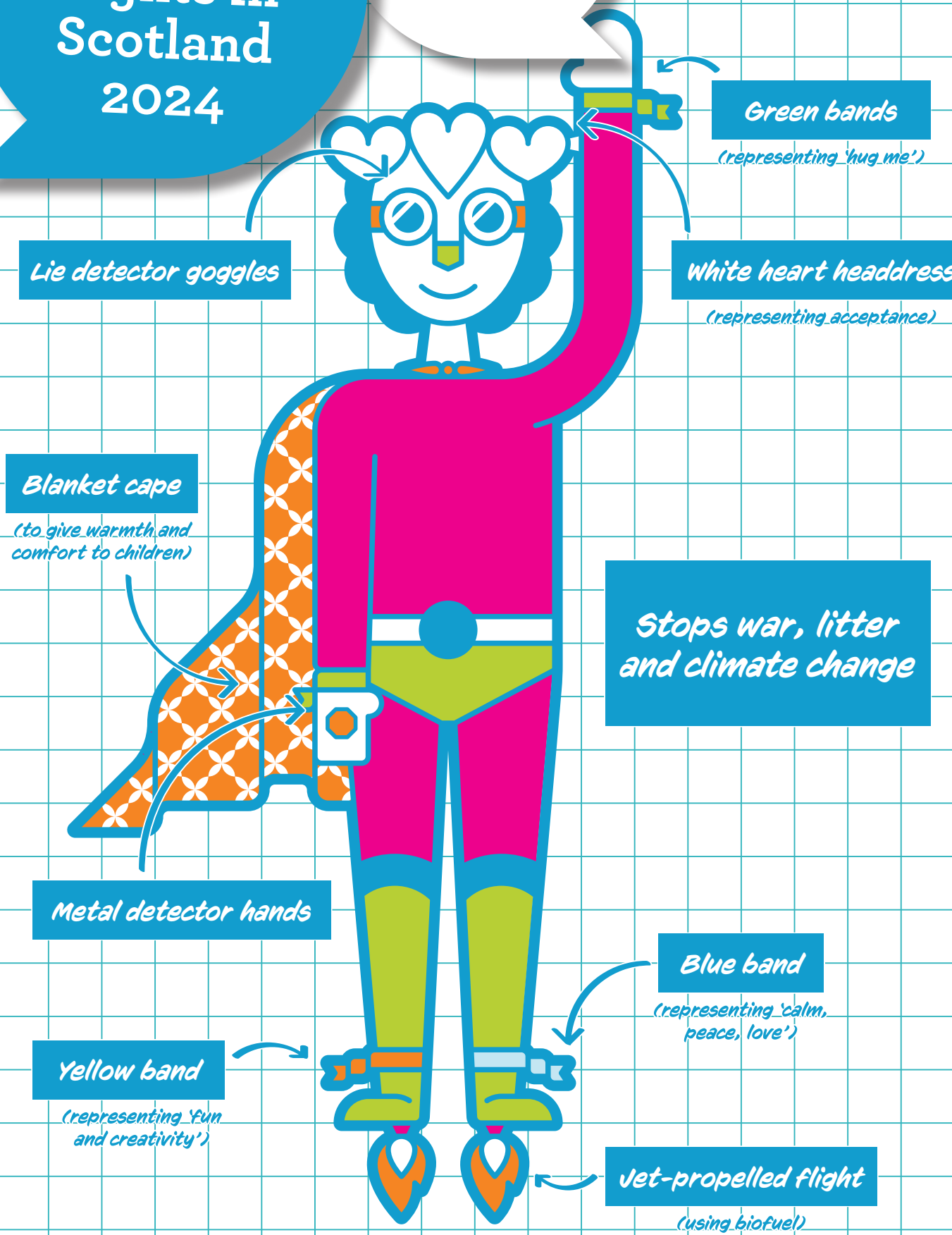


together

Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights

State of Children's Rights in Scotland 2024

Child-friendly version



Lie detector goggles

Green bands
(representing 'hug me')

White heart headdress
(representing acceptance)

Blanket cape
(to give warmth and comfort to children)

Stops war, litter and climate change

Metal detector hands

Blue band
(representing 'calm, peace, love')

Yellow band
(representing 'fun and creativity')

Jet-propelled flight
(using biofuel)

Our names are Gift, Jacqui, Judi, Maria and Shilla.



We work for Together (Scottish Alliance for Children’s Rights). Together is a charity that wants to make things better for children.

We’ve been gathering stories from under-18s all over Scotland. We asked them to tell us about what life is like for them.

This will help us know how well children’s rights are being protected.



What are children’s rights?

Children’s rights are all about the things you need to grow up happy, healthy and safe. They are written down in a document called the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (or ‘UNCRC’ for short).



Who checks up on children’s rights?

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child is a group of experts that checks if governments are doing enough to protect your rights. They get information from babies, children, and young people, as well as organisations like Together. In 2023, they gave the UK, including Scotland, a big ‘to do’ list of things they should do to improve children’s rights. Our **#RightsOnTrack campaign** is all about making sure the Scottish Government does what’s on the ‘**to do**’ list.



Children’s rights and the law

The Scottish Parliament has passed a new law called the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024. This law says that everyone working for the government in Scotland – whether they work in schools, hospitals, social work, the environment, transport, or other areas – must follow the rights in the UNCRC. This means they have to make sure their decisions and actions respect and protect the rights of babies, children and young people.

Over 200 babies, children and young people shared their stories with us. Some of these were in writing, others were videos, sound clips or artwork.

Every story was unique, just like the person who created it.

We heard stories about:

- Life at home
- Life at nursery, school and college
- Life in the local community
- Life online
- Life in Scotland

Children and young people also shared their ideas about what would make things better.

This report is all about what we heard and what we've asked adults to do!



Artwork by babies supported by Art at the Start, University of Dundee

1. Life at home



What children and young people told us

Children and young people told us all about their homes, who they live with and what they enjoy doing.

Many feel loved and supported by their parents, carers, brothers, sisters, and even pets. They say they feel safest at home.

Sometimes life at home can be tough. Some children are going through family break-ups. Others might have a parent or carer who is in the army and is away a lot. Some children might not see their parent much because they are in prison. At times, it can be difficult for children to talk about their feelings and get help.

Some children say their homes are too small and they don't like sharing a bedroom. Some disabled children said it was too expensive to make changes to their home that would make life easier.

Even with these challenges, family and pets are really important. Children said more help could make home life better.

Ideas to help

Based on the stories, we asked Scottish Government and other adults to:

- *Make sure every child has a safe and comfy home.*
- *Help families when they need it – for example if they need money.*
- *Support all kinds of families, including foster families, ones with young carers, a parent or carer in the armed forces, or families with a parent in prison.*
- *Help children keep in touch with parents who they can't live with.*
- *Give children more say in decisions about their home life.*
- *Make it easy for children to share any worries they have.*

These things will help make sure every child feels happy and safe at home.



Find out more and see all the stories here!

2. Life at nursery, school and college



What children and young people told us

Young children say nursery is a fun place to explore, play and make friends. They like nursery staff who are kind and caring as it helps them feel safe.

Children want schools to be safe, welcoming places where they have a say in decisions. We heard about some of the difficult things that children are facing – like school buses being cancelled, bullying, and some children not getting the help they need. Children want more of a say in what they learn and other decisions about school. They feel it's important for teachers to listen, to be kind, get to know them and make school a welcoming place for everyone.

Young people at college enjoy getting to study subjects they love. They feel more free than they did at school but sometimes wish they got more help.

Ideas to help

Based on the stories, we asked Scottish Government and other adults (like teachers) to:

- ***Make sure children's rights are at the heart of all nurseries, schools and colleges.***
- ***Train people who work with and for children about children's rights.***
- ***Create fun and welcoming environments that celebrate children's differences.***
- ***Act quickly to stop bullying and make sure every child feels included.***
- ***Involve children in all decisions that affect them.***
- ***Create clear ways for children to share their worries or make complaints.***

These things will help make sure that every child feels listened to, valued and supported in their learning journey.



Find out more and see all the stories here!

3. Life in the local community



What children and young people told us

Children and young people told us all about the highs and lows of life in Scotland's cities, towns and countryside. They like spending time with friends, being out in nature and visiting parks. Youth clubs offer safe spaces to meet, relax and try new things – but they worry about funding cuts.

Transport is really important. The free bus pass helps young people visit friends and get to activities. However, some areas don't have enough buses, or they're always late. Lots of children and young people want safer paths and more cycle lanes so they can walk, cycle and wheel more.

Children and young people also shared about feeling judged by adults because of their age. Some are worried about safety – especially girls and young women. A big worry is people using drugs or drinking in public.

Overall, children and young people want cleaner, safer spaces to enjoy.



Ideas to help

Based on the stories, we asked Scottish Government and other adults to:

- ***Make children's rights a key part of local planning and decision-making.***
- ***Keep public spaces clean and well-maintained for everyone.***
- ***Make sure all children have equal access to community spaces and activities.***
- ***Make sure there are safe, welcoming spaces for girls, disabled children, and other children whose rights might be at risk.***
- ***Help refugee and asylum-seeking children feel part of the community.***
- ***Give children a say in designing public spaces and services.***
- ***Make it easy for children to report problems and have their views heard.***

These changes will help children and young people feel safer and more supported in their communities.



Find out more and see all the stories here!

4. Life online



What children and young people told us

Being online is part of everyday life for many children and young people. It helps them connect with friends, learn new things, relax and have fun.

Managing screentime can be tough. Some spend over six hours a day online, especially as they get older. Children and young people tell us that too much time spent on screens can affect other parts of their lives.

Many children and young people are worried about things like cyberbullying, harmful content, companies using their information and strangers online. They want to feel safe and think social media companies could do more to protect them. It's also important for parents and carers to talk openly about screentime and good safety habits.

Children and young people want to enjoy the good things about being online while being protected from harm.

Ideas to help

Based on the stories, we asked Scottish Government and other adults to:

- *Put children's rights first in all online rules and actions.*
- *Teach parents, carers and teachers about children's online rights and safety.*
- *Make online safety rules clear and easy to understand.*
- *Make sure children who need extra help to get online can get this.*
- *Take stronger action against online hate, like racism, sexism and bullying.*
- *Help children learn about their rights and how to stay safe online.*
- *Get children involved in helping to create and improve online spaces.*
- *Make sure online platforms set up easy ways for children to report problems or worries.*
- *Make sure companies protect children's information and right to keep things private.*

These changes will help children and young people enjoy all the good things about being online, while also keeping them safe.



Find out more and see all the stories here!

5. Life in Scotland



What children and young people told us

Children and young people told us that there are lots of things they like about living in Scotland. They love the nature, landscape, free university and free buses. However, there are also lots of things they want to change.

They want a fairer Scotland where everyone's rights are protected and everyone can achieve their best. Many feel that poverty and discrimination are making it hard for some children and young people. They also feel that children and young people's views are often ignored and want that to change.

Children and young people also told us about global issues too – like tackling climate change and putting an end to wars and violence. They want Scotland to be a green and safe haven.

Overall, children want a Scotland that celebrates diversity, where people support each other, and where every child is valued and included.

Ideas to help

Based on the stories, we asked Scottish Government and other adults to:

- ***Build children's rights into all decisions in Scotland.***
- ***Give parents, carers, teachers and leaders training on children's rights.***
- ***Help children learn about their rights and support them to defend them.***
- ***Take action on poverty so that all children can succeed.***
- ***Make sure Scotland is a welcoming space for everyone, no matter who they are.***
- ***Involve children in all decisions that affect their lives – and listen to their views.***
- ***Make sure adults give feedback when children share their thoughts.***
- ***Make it easy for children to report problems and get help when they need it.***

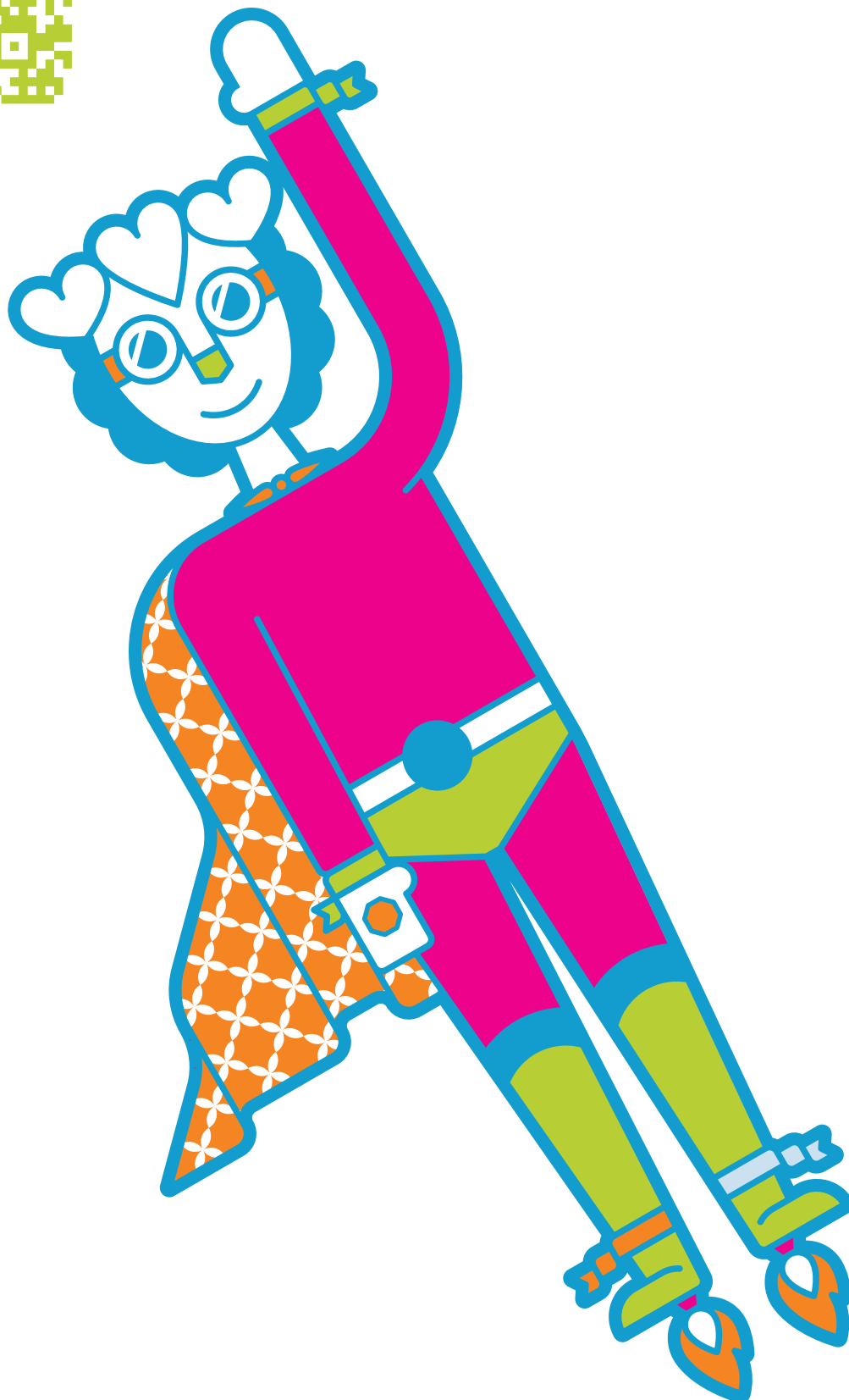
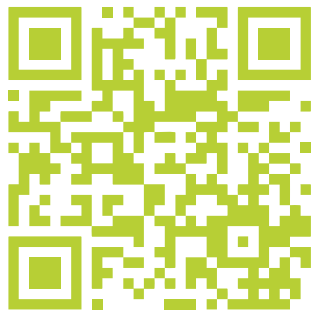
These changes will help to make Scotland a place where every baby, child and young person can grow up in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding.

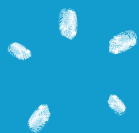


Find out more and see all the stories here!

Share your views!

We'd love to know what you think about this report. Scan the QR code to share your views or email us at myrights@togetherscotland.org.uk





together

Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights

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