



## Implementing and monitoring the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in Scotland - Seminar Series 2017

### Seminar Four - The UNCRC Going Forwards

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2017

Scottish Universities Insight Institute, Collins Building, Glasgow G1 1XQ

- 9.30–10.00am Registration with teas and coffees
- 10.00–10.20am Welcome and context  
**Professor Kay Tisdall, Dr Andressa Gadda - SUII project team**  
*Morning session Chaired by Bruce Adamson, Children and Young People's Commissioner*
- 10.20–10.35am Introduction and the Children and Young People's Commissioner's role in Scotland  
**Bruce Adamson, Children and Young People's Commissioner for Scotland**
- 10.35–11.05am An international perspective on the UNCRC going forwards in Scotland  
**Associate Professor Tara Collins, Ryerson University Canada**
- 11.05–11.20am Teas and coffees
- 11.20–11.50am Measuring the progress of children's rights in Scotland  
**Dr Morag Treanor, University of Edinburgh**
- 11.50–12.00pm Questions for the morning speaker panel
- 12.00–12.30pm Table Discussion: How do we measure UNCRC progress?
- 12.30–1.15pm Lunch  
*Afternoon session Chaired by the Glasgow Youth Council – Thomas McEachan, Joel Meekison and Suki Wan*
- 1.15–1.45pm Next steps for UNCRC implementation in Scotland  
**Professor Elaine Sutherland, University of Stirling**
- 1.45–1.50pm Looking ahead  
**Thomas McEachan, Joel Meekison and Suki Wan, Glasgow Youth Council**
- 1.50–2.45pm Table Discussion: Action planning
- 2.45–3.00pm Coffee break
- 3.00–3.15pm Presentation by the Minister for Childcare and Early Years  
**Mark McDonald MSP, Minister for Childcare and Early Years**
- 3.15–3.45pm Panel discussion  
**Mark McDonald MSP, Bruce Adamson and Juliet Harris**
- 3.45–4.00pm Closing remarks  
**Juliet Harris, Director of Together**  
**Thomas McEachan, Joel Meekison and Suki Wan, Glasgow Youth Council**



We will be using the hashtag **#CRCSScotland** for online discussions - everyone is encouraged to Tweet!



# Implementing and monitoring the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in Scotland: 2017 SUII Seminar Series

## Briefing 4: The UNCRC Going Forwards

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2017

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### Overview of the seminar series

This series of four one-day interdisciplinary and cross-sector seminars will seek to improve -- and address gaps -- in the implementation and monitoring of the [UNCRC](#) in Scotland. Each seminar will examine the UNCRC from the perspectives of law, practice, policy and next steps for implementation. The seminar series is being held in partnership between [Together \(Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights\)](#), the [Centre for Research on Families and Relationships \(CRFR\)](#) at the University of Edinburgh, and the [Centre for Child Wellbeing and Protection \(CCWP\)](#) at the University of Stirling. The series has been funded by the [Scottish Universities Insight Institute \(SUII\)](#).

### The dates

The seminars run as follows:

1. The UNCRC in Law: Friday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2017
2. The UNCRC in Practice: Monday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2017
3. The UNCRC in Policy: Monday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2017
4. **The UNCRC Going Forwards: Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2017**

### Context and aims of the seminar series

Since 2008, there have been significant and welcome legislative and policy developments in relation to children's rights. This includes the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 that places the UNCRC on statute for the first time, albeit falling short of the UN Committee's recommendation of full incorporation into law.

The 2014 Act requires Scottish Ministers to give due consideration to ways in which the UNCRC can be better implemented in Scotland. Whilst this is a welcome step, it does not ensure that the principles and provisions of the UNCRC are directly applicable and justiciable. Instead, Ministers have discretion as to whether they consider it 'appropriate' to further the UNCRC. Reporting duties on public bodies and Ministers under Part 1 of the 2014 Act provide a welcome and useful opportunity to mainstream children's rights into decision-making but fall short of requiring any action to implement the UNCRC.

Further steps can and should be taken to give legal effect to the UNCRC at both UK and devolved levels. In June 2016, [the UN Committee made 150 recommendations](#) outlining how the implementation of the UNCRC across the UK needs to be improved. Together's [2016 State of Children's Rights report](#) collated evidence from over 380 NGOs and professionals working with and for children to outline how the UN recommendations should be taken forward in Scotland. It is clear from this report that children's lived experiences of their rights remains patchy. This seminar series aims to explore how civil society, children and young people, and academia can work with government to ensure the full implementation of children's rights across Scotland.



## Seminar Four – the UNCRC Going Forwards

This fourth and final seminar will bring together the learning, experience and proposals of the previous three seminars in order to develop a shared and sustainable model to take forward children's rights in Scotland.

The morning session will examine accountability mechanisms in monitoring the UNCRC in Scotland with input from Dr Morag Treanor from the University of Edinburgh on indicators and measuring progress, and international perspectives from Associate Professor Tara Collins from Ryerson University, Canada. The afternoon session will look at next steps for Scotland in which we will welcome back Professor Elaine Sutherland from the University of Stirling on moving forward UNCRC incorporation across law, practice and policy.

There will also be an opportunity to hear from Bruce Adamson who has recently stepped into the role of the Children and Young People's Commissioner for Scotland, and from Mark McDonald, Minister for Childcare and Early Years. Mark McDonald MSP will present and take part in a panel session through which he will reflect on discussions held throughout the afternoon and set out his view of what actions can be taken forward by the Scottish Government to further the UNCRC in Scotland.

Delegates will be encouraged to work with us to develop action points for taking forward the UNCRC in Scotland.

## Seminar Four - speaker abstracts

### Championing Children's Rights

Bruce Adamson, Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland

The Office of the Commissioner was created to make a real difference - creating an independent, high-profile and influential post. A core element of Scotland's commitment to the practical application of the UNCRC, the Commissioner's role is to promote and safeguard the rights of children by bridging the international human rights framework and the domestic implementation of those rights. In this presentation, Bruce Adamson, Scotland's new Children and Young People's Commissioner, will set out his vision for the next 6 years, and discuss how scrutiny and accountability will play a key role in ensuring Scotland's human rights obligations are met. Highlighting the importance of the international legal framework, he will examine the key levers for change and highlight the importance of involving children and young people, especially those who have been most marginalised, in accountability and decision making processes.

### An International Perspective on the UNCRC Going Forward in Scotland

Associate Professor Tara Collins, School of Child & Youth Care, Ryerson University, Canada

How should Scotland continue to advance children's rights and who should be involved? This presentation will recommend that the focus be upon the general measures of implementation of the UNCRC, which determine the status of children's rights within a jurisdiction. Five measures will be explored, namely: budgeting; plans of action; monitoring; education, awareness and training; and coordination. Drawing on various international examples, it will highlight the importance of processes, mechanisms and the range of actors/entities in order to advance the UNCRC going forward.

### Measuring the progress of children's rights in Scotland

Dr Morag Treanor, Lecturer in Social Policy, University of Edinburgh

We know that there is widespread commitment to children's rights in Scotland and we have learned that realising these rights through policy and practice will be challenging. With this in mind, how will we know if, when and how the children's rights landscape in Scotland changes? How will we know what and when progress has been made?



This presentation looks at how data can be used to improve the monitoring of the UNCRC in Scotland. In particular, it will discuss ideas for indicators and outcomes and how change can be measured and monitored.

### How do we improve implementation of the UNCRC in Scotland?

Professor Elaine Sutherland, Professor of Child and Family Law at the University of Stirling and Distinguished Professor of Law at Lewis & Law School in Portland, USA

Undoubtedly, progress has been made in bringing Scots law and practice into conformity with aspects of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. More remains to be done, however, if the law and the lived experience of all children and young people in the country are to reflect the Convention as a whole. Drawing on the themes of the previous seminars – policy, law and practice – this presentation will address the controversial issue of incorporating the Convention itself, before offering strategies and specific steps that can be taken to secure all of the rights guaranteed to them by the UN Convention for children and young people in Scotland.

### Children and young people's project

Throughout the series, a team of members of the Glasgow Youth Council and MSYPs have been working with us to write child-friendly briefings to inform a fantastic creative project run in partnership with the Children's Parliament. The children from Children's Parliament will create a set of artwork panels, depicting how they interpret key messages from the series and what they think should be done to further the UNCRC in Scotland. This work will be displayed in Scottish Parliament, placing awareness and understanding of children's rights in the centre of decision-making environments.

The members of the Glasgow Youth Council and MSYPs present at the seminars will also be providing input to the short video being made by Young Scot, to give their perspectives on what they have heard throughout the day and how they see key issues impacting on children and young people.

### More information about the organisers of this event

- [Together](#) (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights)
- [Centre for Research on Families and Relationships](#) (CRFR) at the University of Edinburgh
- [Centre for Child Wellbeing and Protection](#) (CCWP) at the University of Stirling

For further details on the seminar series, visit the following pages or contact Liz Millership on 0131 337 9015 / [liz@togetherscotland.org.uk](mailto:liz@togetherscotland.org.uk)

- [Eventbrite organiser page](#)
- [SUII information page](#)
- [Together's webpage for all seminar outputs](#)



## Implementing and monitoring the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in Scotland – Seminar Series 2017

### The UNCRC Going Forwards: Biographies in order of appearance

#### Professor Kay Tisdall and Dr Andressa Gadda – Opening remarks

Kay Tisdall is Co-Director of the Centre for Research on Families and Relationships (CRFR) at the University of Edinburgh and Professor of Childhood Policy in the School of Social & Political Science. She is Programme Director of the MSc in Childhood Studies, which is based on children's human rights and provides an intensive interdisciplinary degree addressing theory, policy and research. Current research projects include a cross-national partnership on monitoring children's participation in child protection and recent publications are within *the International Journal of Children's Rights*, the *International Journal of Human Rights*, and the *Journal of Social Policy*.

Andressa Gadda is a Research Fellow at the University of Stirling's Centre for Child Wellbeing and Protection. Her research focus is on the lives of children and young people and their families. Substantive topics include looked after children and young people; children's rights; child protection; social work practice; and family adversity.

#### Bruce Adamson – Morning Chair

Bruce is a lawyer who has over 20 years of experience in children's rights. Originally from New Zealand, he moved to Scotland in 2002. A Member of the Children's Panel for 13 years, he has worked directly with vulnerable children and their families, listening to their experiences and making decisions about their safety and wellbeing. Mr Adamson has been on advisory boards for several public authorities and civil society organisations and is a former Chair of the Scottish Child Law Centre. As legal officer at the Scottish Human Rights Commission, he was central to the development of law, policy and practice covering the broad spectrum of children's rights. In 2013, he was the United Nations Representative for the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, representing institutions from over 100 countries to improve human rights in Scotland and across the world. Mr Adamson has acted as an international expert for the Council of Europe, the European Union and the OSCE. Working in emerging democracies in the Western Balkans and Ukraine, he has helped to improve the situation for children in some of the most challenging situations in Europe. He has also been a member of several international projects, including one on the reform of the European Court of Human Rights and another on increasing the ability of national parliaments to act as human rights guarantors.

Most recently, Bruce has been appointed as the new Children and Young People's Commissioner for Scotland.

#### Associate Professor Tara Collins – Morning speaker

Tara M. Collins is Associate Professor in the School of Child & Youth Care at Ryerson University in Toronto, Canada. She has a Ph.D. from the University of London and has worked on international children's rights since 1996. Her professional experience includes work for: universities in Canada and Ireland; Canadian federal government and Parliament; and the Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children. Research interests include child and youth participation, child protection, monitoring, anti-violence efforts in schools, CRC general measures, business, and rights-based approaches.



## Dr Morag Treanor – Morning speaker

Morag is a lecturer in social policy with a special focus on quantitative methods at the University of Edinburgh. Her research uses longitudinal data to explore the impacts of poverty on children's outcomes and, the impacts of family, peer and social relations on child and maternal wellbeing for those living in low socioeconomic circumstances. Her research uses birth cohort data, mainly the Growing Up in Scotland study and the Millennium Cohort Study data. Morag also has a special research interest in measurement and indicators in relation to children and works with indices of child wellbeing and material deprivation. She is currently undertaking research to quantify and measure abstract concepts such as respect, dignity and equity.

## The Glasgow Youth Council – Afternoon Chairs

### Thomas McEachan

Thomas is MSYP for Glasgow Pollok and has been an MSYP since 2013. Many of Thomas' members motions have focussed on the rights of children and young people, with particular focus on the issue of child poverty. Thomas is a Scottish Youth Parliament Trustee and holds the Board portfolio for Communications, and is the former Convener of the Culture and Committee and Media Committee. Thomas also represents the Southside of Glasgow in the Glasgow Youth Council where he has been a member since 2012. Outside of SYP, Thomas is studying Journalism and Politics and is currently starting his own podcast on issues that matter to young people.

### Joel Meekison

Being a member of the Glasgow youth Council for the last two years, Joel has worked on numerous events including the organising and chairing of the Lord Provost's International Women's Day. He has just finished Hyndland Secondary School, to start university this year to study public relations and media. Alongside this and his increasing work in youth advocacy, he is an award-winning debater. And hopes to find some time in the future for his pursuit of ten years Explorer Scouting, not to mention plans on changing the world or just being a young person.

### Suki Wan

Suki Wan is an elected member of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYP) for Glasgow Shettleston and has sat on the Executive Committee of the Glasgow Youth Council for the past two years. She is the Deputy Convener of the Equal Opportunities and Human Rights Committee within SYP and is committed to advocating for equalities and human rights throughout her work.

## Professor Elaine Sutherland – Afternoon speaker

Elaine E. Sutherland is Professor of Child and Family Law at the Law School, University of Stirling, Scotland, and Distinguished Professor of Law at Lewis & Clark Law School, Portland, Oregon, spending six months of the year researching, writing and teaching at each. She has lectured on child and family law around the world and, in addition to her work in the Scottish and US domestic contexts, has long pursued her interest in the international and comparative dimensions of child and family law. One aspect of that was establishing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Implementation Project (CRC-IP) which brings together an invited group of respected child law scholars from around the world on a regular basis to offer critical analysis of the implementation of the Convention, one article at a time.

She is the author of some 100 articles and book chapters, many reflecting her comparative and international interests. These interests are also the focus of two of her more recent books, *The Future of Child and Family Law: International Predictions* (2012) and *Implementing Article 3 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: Best Interests, Welfare and Well-being* (2016), both published by Cambridge University Press. Other publications concentrate on Scots child and family law and, most recently, they have addressed reform of the law on



adult relationships, child-parent relationships, child protection and juvenile justice. Yet other publications are concerned with more general developments in contemporary Scots law and its history.

#### Mark McDonald MSP, Minister for Childcare and Early Years – Afternoon speaker

Mark was born 7 June 1980 in Aberdeen, North East Scotland. Educated at Dyce Primary School and Dyce Academy, Mark went on to gain an MA in Politics from the University of Dundee and an MLitt in Strategic Studies from the University of Aberdeen.

From 2003 to 2011, Mark worked as a Parliamentary Assistant to MSP's Richard Lochhead, Maureen Watt and Nigel Don. He was elected to Aberdeen City Council in 2007, representing Dyce, Bucksburn and Danestone. Mark was later elected to the Scottish Parliament in 2011 from the North East Scotland regional list.

A by election in April 2013, saw Mark selected as the SNP candidate for Aberdeen Donside, where he resigned his regional seat. He was returned to the Scottish Parliament as MSP for Aberdeen Donside on 20 June 2013 and again on the 6th May 2016. Mark was subsequently appointed to his current position as Minister for Childcare and Early Years by the First Minister.

#### Juliet Harris – Afternoon panel and closing remarks

Juliet is the Director of Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights) and leads the organisation in promoting and monitoring the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) across Scotland. This includes working with Together's membership of nearly 350 children's organisations and professionals to produce an annual State of Children's Rights report, liaising with government and parliamentarians to further children's rights in policy and practice and reporting on progress to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. Juliet's previous experience includes six years tackling the destitution and poverty of refugees and asylum seekers, alongside a number of roles with charities working in the field of health and homelessness. Juliet has an LLM in International Human Rights Law.