

Michael Russell MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Friday 25th May 2012

Dear Mr Russell

Re: Universal Periodic Review

I am writing on behalf of *Together* (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights) following yesterday's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the UK's human rights record. We welcome the steps that the Scottish Government took to engage with civil society in the lead up to the UPR and that Lord McNally's report took note of much of the progress being made in Scotland.

As I'm sure you know, the session raised a number of important issues including the extent to which the UK and devolved governments have turned the international commitments set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into reality for children across the UK. *Together* welcomes the many recommendations that outlined how further progress could be made across the UK to better implement the UNCRC. We're writing to ask for your support in influencing the UK Government's position to ensure these recommendations are accepted this coming Tuesday.

As in 2008, there were a number of recommendations on corporal punishment in the home and on juvenile justice which we would strongly urge the Scottish Government to support. In addition, there were several calls on the UK to ratify the UNCRC Third Optional Protocol – an issue we have been in correspondence with Kenny Macaskill MSP and Aileen Campbell MSP about and have their assurance that the matter is under discussion between the UK and Scottish Governments.

I would like to draw your attention to three other specific recommendations that highlight key issues of concern to *Together's* members:

- Children of prisoners:** Improve support for children with a parent in prison across the UK and devolved Governments (*Germany and Slovenia*)
- Child poverty:** Set a clear pathway and programme for achieving the objective of eradicating poverty by 2020 (*Norway*)
- UNCRC in domestic law:** Incorporate fully as a matter of urgency the principles and provisions of the UNCRC into domestic law (*Slovakia*)
- Any new bill of rights should preserve the protections of the Human Rights Act and include specific rights for children (*Hungary*)

We hope you agree with the need for the UK to accept these recommendations, particularly given the Scottish Government's commitment to children's rights and how strongly they chime with the 'next steps' identified by the Scottish Government in the recently published UNCRC progress report, 'Do The Right Thing'.

I would like to urge you and your officials within the Scottish Government to influence the UK Government's position to ensure these recommendations are accepted by the UK at the Human Rights Council this coming Tuesday.

We are keen to discuss the children's rights issues raised through the UPR process with the Scottish Government and will be in contact with your officials in the coming weeks. Do let me know if you have any questions or would like to meet to discuss this further.

Many thanks for your support.

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Morrison
Chair, Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights)

Cc: Aileen Campbell MSP , Minister for Children and Young People