



Business Plan 2013-16 (v2)

Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights)

Princes House
5 Shandwick Place
Edinburgh
EH2 4RG

www.togetherscotland.org.uk

info@togetherscotland.org.uk

0131 229 3666

1. Background and history

Together was set up in 1996, as the Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights, with a remit to promote the full implementation of the UNCRC in Scotland. Together began as a small, informal network drawn from Scottish children's organisations. The impetus to create such a grouping came from the ratification of the UNCRC by the UK government in 1991. In ratifying the Convention, State Parties undertake to reflect its principles in UK policy and legislation and to make periodic progress reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) have a distinctive role to play in the reporting process, and given the differences in policy and legislation, even in a pre-devolved Scotland, there was clearly a need to consult with and draw Together the views of the children and young people's sector in Scotland. With financial support from Save the Children, the first NGO report was submitted in 2001.

The original informal grouping became a company limited by guarantee with charitable status in 1999. The founding Directors of the company were the senior officers of Save the Children, Barnardos and Childline and led to the formation of a Board of Directors which was drawn from a range of national children's organisations. Since its inception Together's purpose has been to act as the focal point for the non-government children's sector, working towards the full realisation of the Convention in Scotland.

The main activity of Together from 2007 - 2009 was driven by the reporting process to the UN Monitoring Committee for the implementation of the UNCRC. This involved:

- Consulting with NGO groups from around Scotland on the main issues to present to the UN Committee. This was conducted through consultation events held in Edinburgh in May 2006, followed up by another event in Glasgow in January 2007
- The production of a draft report, subject to further smaller consultation events in Edinburgh and Glasgow, resulting in a final report submitted to the UN Committee in March 2008. The final report was supported by 54 NGOs in Scotland
- Presenting oral evidence to the Geneva sitting of the UN Committee in June 2008 as part of the UK pre-sessional evidence session, followed up by sending two observers to the UK government evidence session in September 2008
- Liaising and meeting with other NGO groups from England, Wales and Northern Ireland in the lead up to the evidence sessions in Geneva and liaising and meeting with Scottish Government to inform the Scottish contribution to the UK evidence to the UN Monitoring Committee
- Contributing to the Scottish Government Partnership Group as part of the response to the UN Committee Concluding Observations published in October 2008 and working closely with Scottish Government in the preparation of the consultation on their response to the Concluding Observations, particularly in terms of professionals working with children and young people.

From August 2009, funding secured from the Scottish Government Children's Rights Team enabled Together to employ a National Development Officer and part-time Administrator to take forward the aims of the charity. As a result, in the 3 years since their appointment, Together has:

- **Published three annual State of Children's Rights reports.** These reports give a picture from an NGO perspective, of the State of Children's Rights in Scotland. Nearly 80 organisations were consulted in the production of the 2012 report alongside over 100 professionals working with and for children and young people. It has been disseminated across NGOs, Government, Scottish Parliament and throughout local authorities. The recommendations are used as a focus for discussion with the Scottish Government through the Scottish Children's Rights Implementation Monitoring group (SCRIM) and to inform Together responses to consultations.
- **Highlighted children's rights issues at an international level** by successfully bringing recommendations to the attention of the Human Rights Council through the Universal Periodic Review of the UK in May 2012 which have gone on to be accepted by the UK and Scottish Governments.
- **Hosted workshops and seminars** and made **presentations at events**, ranging from co-ordinating groups of Together members to consider Scottish Government consultations, speaking from a child-rights perspective at national conferences, contributing to members' conferences and seminars and lecturing at universities.
- **Contributed to a number of forums and steering groups**, providing a child rights-based focus to Children are Unbeatable and Scotland's Children's Sector Forum, and giving a Scotland perspective to the steering group of the Rights of the Child UK coalition.
- **Hosted over 10 regional seminars**, attended by over 400 professionals working with children, to raise awareness of the UNCRC at a local level and monitor its implementation across regions and sectors.
- **Increased membership** from both local and national agencies from **36** to **203** members and supporters.
- **Introduced a fortnightly e-newsletter**, read by over 850 subscribers, which relays the latest news on children's rights across Scotland.
- **Launched a website**, which contains a searchable online resource library through which research, training materials and the latest news on children's rights can be accessed. This is currently used by over 150 organisations every week.
- **Established functional governance structure**, appointing a range of Directors to the Board of Together in over the past three years, increasing the total number of Directors from six to currently nine. The Board of Directors bring a range of expertise from academics to child rights officers and directors of national NGOs.

2. Context and environment

2.1. Developments in Scotland

- **Children and Young People's Bill**

The Children and Young People's Bill is due to go through the Scottish Parliament in spring 2013. This will present a number of opportunities for Together and its members to influence the Bill as it passes through the Parliamentary process. Once the Bill is passed, any duty on Ministers and/or public bodies to further the rights enshrined in the UNCRC will need to be scrutinised thoroughly in its implementation. In addition, Together will be able to support the Scottish Government in any duty to raise awareness and understanding of the UNCRC. Together needs to consider the opportunities offered by the Bill and ensure these are reflected in discussions around strategic planning.

- **Scottish Human Rights Action Plan**

In 2013, the Scottish Human Rights Commission will be launching a Human Rights Action Plan for Scotland. This will be a roadmap that identifies gaps in human rights protection and provides a clear, coherent and systematic way of addressing those gaps. It will concentrate on ensuring a systematic approach to assure the realisation of human rights in practice. Together is already involved in its development and needs to provide a strong input as to how children's rights should be integrated across the plan. The National Action Plan will be reviewed in 2014 to coincide with the midterm review of the UK's UPR recommendations.

- **Independence referendum**

The independence referendum will take place in autumn 2014. This will provide an important political context to Together's work over the next 2 years. On an operational level, there is the additional context of 16 and 17 year-old being able to vote for the first time. This commitment is of real significance in terms of children and young people's rights and there may be a role for Together acting on behalf of members in holding the Scottish Government accountable in delivering its pledge in practice.

2.2. Developments across the UK

- **Bill of Rights Commission**

The final report from the Bill of Rights Commission is due in 2013. There is concern that any potential Bill of Rights could pose a threat to the existing Human Rights Act. Together will keep informed of developments and contribute where needed through the Rights of Child UK coalition.

2.3. International developments

- **UNCRC reporting**

The next UK Government report to the UN Committee is due in 2014. Backlogs at the UN Committee mean that this may be subject to delay. However, the Scottish Government is currently working towards this deadline until any amendments are announced. Together has agreed to work with coalitions across the 4-nations to produce a UK alternative report. Evidence from Together's State of Children's Rights reports will be used to inform the submission. Together is also having initial discussions with SCCYP and the Scottish Government to produce a model through which the views of children and young people can be used to inform all reports to the UN Committee.

- **UNCRC General Comments**

UNCRC General Comments reflect the Committee on the Rights of the Child's interpretation of the human rights provisions of thematic issues, including juvenile justice, the right to be heard and the rights of children with disabilities. The main purpose of a General Comment is to promote implementation of the UNCRC and assist governments in fulfilling their obligations. There are currently 13 General Comments to the UNCRC and in the coming 12 months, five more are likely to be published. The General Comments should be used to inform a wide range of Scottish Government consultations to ensure that children's rights are being properly taken into account; Together will assist with this process.

- **Universal Periodic Review (UPR)**

Together, alongside other children's NGOs, were successful in ensuring a number of children's rights recommendations were made in the 2012 UPR of the UK. The midterm review of the UPR takes place in 2014. There is an opportunity for Together and its members to continue to work with the Scottish Government to implement the recommendations and hold it to account in 2014 at the midterm review.

3. Mission, aims and objectives

Together works towards all children in Scotland being able to enjoy their rights according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and other human rights conventions.

3.1 Articles and Memorandum

The Articles and Memorandum of the Company state the purposes of the organisation are to:

- Promote the importance of children and young people's rights in order to highlight issues of concern to policy makers, the media and the general public, and to disseminate information on the UNCRC;
- Establish links with statutory agencies and other bodies to ensure the monitoring and promotion of the full implementation of the UNCRC in Scotland through policy and legislative mechanisms and good practice;
- Provide a focal point for NGOs in Scotland on children's rights issues, and in the preparation of reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on the progress of the UK governments implementing in the UNCRC.

A full copy of the Articles and Memorandum are included with the Business Plan.

3.2. Aims and objectives

Together's strength is in its membership and its role as a collective voice on children's rights. In order to work towards the proposed mission and to mainstream children's rights, Together must continue to extend its influence and engage further with key mainstream players. The key challenges to full implementation of the UNCRC across Scotland include apathy, the need for culture change and a lack of awareness among professionals, parents and children and young people. To overcome these challenges and achieve its mission, Together needs to undertake a specific programme of policy guidance, skills development and awareness raising.

In this context, Together has identified the following aims and objectives for the period 2013-16:

<u>Aim</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Objectives</u>	<u>Activities</u>
Promote awareness and understanding of the UNCRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-governmental organisations and special interest groups (for example Child Policy Officers Network, Scotland's Children's Sector Forum, Children are Unbeatable) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to increase our membership base to make it broadly representative of the children's sector across Scotland and keep up-to-date and fulfil information needs of members; Highlight new developments and resources available to support practitioners within geographic, thematic and sectorial areas; Facilitate the participation of children's organisations in monitoring the implementation of the UNCRC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use membership matrix to identify gaps in membership coverage; Maintain watching brief through networks to identify reactive and proactive opportunities for Together; Produce fortnightly e-newsletter and maintain up-to-date website; Host and attend seminars to gather and disseminate information on the implementation of the UNCRC across Scotland; Actively engage a wider audience in Together's work including education, health and social work.
Promote and monitor implementation of the UNCRC across local and national government .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public bodies, including the Scottish Government, local authorities, Education and Health sectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform and influence the development of government legislation, policy and practice. Monitor and assess Scottish Government's progress in fully implementing the UNCRC across local authority areas, issues and sectors; Promote greater awareness of good practice of the UNCRC beyond existing membership and engage with wider stakeholders including health and education sectors and community groups to create partnerships for strategic influence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to the Scottish Children's Rights Implementation Monitoring (SCRIM) group to monitor and assess Scottish Government's progress in implementing the UNCRC, using the 2008 Concluding Observations, CRC General Comments, Do the Right Thing and the State of Children's Rights report as a framework; Feed a specific UNCRC focus into relevant Scottish / UK Government consultations using NGO research and experience and CRC General Comments; Gather information from children's organisations across Scotland through seminars and an annual State of Children's Rights survey. Proactively focus desk research on key issues.
Report on progress on the implementation of the UNCRC and work for full implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UN Committee, Human Rights Council, other UN and European Treaty Bodies, UK and Scottish Government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and tackle key obstacles/levers of change to improve implementation of the UNCRC; Hold UK and Scottish Governments and other duty-bearers to account on their 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write and disseminate a broad-based annual State of Children's Rights report reflecting on evidence provided by members and networks across themes and geographic area; Use learning from the State of Children's Rights report to inform reports to other international

		<p>implementation of the UNCRC.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight successes and areas to improve UNCRC implementation on an international level 	<p>conventions;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use UPR process to ensure continued accountability of the Scottish and UK Government to implement CRC Concluding Observations and UPR recommendations.
<p>Establish & maintain good governance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Companies House, OSCR, Scottish Government, Together members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet Companies House and OSCR requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan annual Board training event and follow up on actions; • Develop and update appropriate policies and procedures.
<p>Ensure financial stability and sustainability of funding.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Companies House, OSCR, Scottish Government, Together members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Finance Subgroup to produce monthly management accounts; • Identify funding sources and develop and submit funding proposals

4. Together's services

The aims and objectives detailed above will be fulfilled through the provision of the following services:

4.1 Online resources

Together's website (www.togetherscotland.org.uk) contains the latest news, events, case studies and resources on children's rights in Scotland. It provides a hub, through which children's organisations can access resources, training materials and share experiences of children's rights. In the coming year Together's online presence will be developed to include a Twitter feed and Facebook page to raise wider awareness of Together's e-newsletter and resource library and attract further supporters.

4.2 E-newsletter

A fortnightly e-newsletter was launched in March 2010. It contains the latest news on children's rights, events, funding opportunities and consultations. Most articles included in the e-newsletter are submitted by members, encouraging the sharing of information and best practice around children's rights. The readership of the e-newsletter is currently made up of nearly 1000 professionals with an interest in children's rights. In the next year, the e-newsletter will focus more strongly on developments at a UN level that can support the implementation of the UNCRC in Scotland, including the new General Comments. It will also highlight wider opportunities for members and supporters to contribute a child rights focus to a range of Scottish Government consultations in line with the proposed duties of the Children and Young People Bill.

4.3 Annual State of Children's Rights Report

Together has established a pattern of publishing annual in-depth "State of Children's Rights" reports; 3 have been published to 2012. The report gives an annual picture, from an NGO perspective, of the State of Children's Rights in Scotland. It looks at the progress being made, and obstacles encountered, in progressing the UN's Concluding Observations of 2008. It also looks into the progress being made against the Scottish Government Action Plan, "Do the Right Thing". In producing the report, Together follows the UN reporting guidelines and consults widely with children's organisations across Scotland. The findings and recommendations of each report will be used as a focus for discussions with Scottish Government in improving the implementation of the UNCRC in Scotland. Previous and forthcoming State of Children's Rights reports will be used to feed into the next UK-wide NGO report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

4.4 Affiliated issue networks

At a national level, Together will continue develop affiliations with a number of 'issue' based networks. It is recognised that on many of the issues that Together is concerned about, there are already well established networks. Together is already involved with the Rights of the Child UK Coalition (ROCK), Scotland's Children's Sector Forum and Children are Unbeatable. This involvement ensures that these networks are supported in:

- Promoting the UNCRC to their stakeholders;
- Issue based monitoring of UNCRC implementation, ensuring their issues are raised in Together annual "State of Children's Rights" report;
- Issue based influencing on UNCRC implementation.

Together will continue to build links and affiliations in the coming 3 years.

4.5 Seminar series

The structure of Together will be developed between 2013 and 2016 with the development of regional seminars involving local agencies who work with children and young people. Through the seminars, Together aims to:

- Promote the UNCRC at regional level
- Monitor regional UNCRC implementation
- Influence regional UNCRC implementation

The regional activities will be specifically targeted at areas where there are few Together members and/or little input into Together's State of Children's Rights report. They will also be held in areas both proactively and at the request of local members. Together will engage with all sectors working with children: education; social care; health; and the voluntary sector. Where appropriate, seminars will be organised around specific themes and by piggy-backing existing networks.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

Together is part of a wider network of organisations providing for the fulfilment of children's rights in Scotland. As such, all of its work will necessarily be done in partnership with other agencies. The work of SCCYP and the Scottish Human Rights Commission (SHRC) are particularly relevant here and provide opportunities for joint engagement. This presents challenges in terms of measurement however, the annual monitoring of implementation will provide useful information regarding the progress (or otherwise) made against the UN Monitoring Committee Concluding Observations, 2008. In this respect, the overall success of Together will be judged by:

- increased awareness of the UNCRC by civil society in Scotland
- evidence of implementation of the UNCRC in practice evidenced by both policy and practice change

Together's National Development Officer will produce a bi-monthly report for the Board, outlining progress against each aim according to the following monitoring framework. The Board will assess this report at bi-monthly Board Meetings. An annual progress report will be produced in April of each year, which will inform the development and revision of the Business Plan.

<u>Aim</u>	<u>Monitoring Method</u>	<u>Measure</u>	<u>Timescale</u>
1. Promote awareness and understanding of the UNCRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member questionnaire • Annual e-newsletter survey • Feedback from website • Website analytics • Broadening of membership/participation in events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative data • Quantitative data • Anecdotal data • Increased number of hits/users/time spent on website • Membership matrix / event report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing • Annually (Feb) • Ad-hoc • Monthly • Ad-hoc
2. Promote and monitor implementation of the UNCRC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event evaluations • Follow up of SCRIM group actions • Comparison of progress made between State of Children's Rights report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative data • Actions completed • Evidence of improved good practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ad-hoc • Six-monthly • Annually (Sept)
3. Report on progress on the implementation of the UNCRC and work for full implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Findings of State of Children's Rights report • Advocacy matrix 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of improved good practice • Ongoing monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annually (Sept) • Ongoing
4. Establish & maintain good governance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular productive Board meetings • Compliance with Memorandum and Articles • Companies House / OSCR requirements met 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of actions being completed • Evidence of compliance • Evidence of compliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bi-monthly • Ongoing • Annually (Oct)
5. Ensure financial stability and sustainability of funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval of annual report and financial statements • Appropriate income secured 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accounts successfully examined and accepted by Companies House • Evidence of income secured 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annually (Sept) • Ongoing (Apr)

6. Resources

6.1. Office accommodation

In January 2013, Together will be moving offices. Between August 2009 and January 2013, Save the Children has been able to supply in-kind desk space for two members of Together staff. Save the Children is expanding its services and will no longer be able to offer this in-kind support. Together will be moving to Children in Scotland's office and will have to pay rental costs at a market rate. There will be capacity within this office for three desk spaces so Together will be able to expand its use of volunteers and interns.

6.2. Staff

From August 2009, funding secured from the Scottish Government Children's Rights Team enabled Together to employ a National Development Officer and part-time Administrator. Over the past three years, Together has developed its services and remit and now has a need for a full time Policy and Communications Assistant. This role will support the National Development Officer in developing briefings for members looking at a range of Scottish Government proposals through a children's rights lens. It would also enable Together to respond to a broader range of Scottish Government consultations and provide expertise on progressing a children's rights approach. Given the forthcoming Children and Young People's Bill, UNCRC reporting round and new UN Committee General Comments, it is key that this role is put in place in April 2013 to give Together and its members the opportunity to contribute effectively to these many new developments. Together proposes that this new role is self-administrating and that some of the tasks undertaken by the previous administrator are delegated to trained volunteers.

6.3. Interns

Over the past two years, Together has made increasing use of interns. In 2012, two part-time interns from Edinburgh University supported the development of the State of Children's Rights report and advocacy for the Universal Periodic Review. Together will once again recruit two interns from January to summer 2013 to support the development of the State of Children's Rights report. No salary is paid but interns receive basic expenses.

6.4. Volunteers

Together has recruited a qualified accountant to act as a Finance Volunteer, supporting the staff with the production of the monthly management accounts, training staff and volunteers on the use of Together's financial systems and advising the Finance subgroup as requested. A bookkeeping volunteer is being trained and will take up a part-time role in January 2013. Together is committed to recruiting and training volunteers as needed in line with its volunteering policy.