



# Our work in 2018-2019

Bringing voices together, influencing change

## About us

Giving all children in Scotland an equal chance to flourish is at the heart of everything we do. By bringing together a network of people working with and for children, alongside children and young people themselves, we offer a broad, balanced and independent voice. We create solutions, provide support and develop positive change across all areas affecting children in Scotland.

We do this by listening, gathering evidence, and applying and sharing our learning, while always working to uphold children's rights. Our range of knowledge and expertise means we can provide trusted support on issues as diverse as the people we work with and the varied lives of children and families in Scotland.

### Overview

2018-19 has been a busy and fast-moving year for us here at Children in Scotland.

During the past year we changed our voice and look, and in autumn 2018 we drew on the lessons from this to launch our 25 Calls campaign, marking our 25th year as Children in Scotland. This innovative project, based on issues our Changing our World advisory group told us were important to them, included

working in partnership with 50+ individuals and organisations across the children's sector in Scotland to produce a powerful set of proposals for change.

2018-19 again saw us deliver a wide range of services, projects, consultations and campaigns – too many to list in the space I have here but a number are included within this report. Highlights for me have been First Minister's Question Time Next Generation, the CHANGE programme and the launch of the Early Learning & Childcare Inclusion Fund, while our Learning & Events programme and Membership Service have reached more people than ever.

I am so proud of what our Children in Scotland network has achieved over the past year and, looking to the future, what I know we will go on to achieve through our shared commitment to improving the lives of children in Scotland.

### Jackie Brock

Chief Executive, Children in Scotland



# Project and service highlights

Bringing voices together, influencing change

# GTCS: Professional Standards for Teaching

As part of the refresh of the Professional Standards for Teaching, we were commissioned by the General Teaching Council for Scotland to engage with children and young people. The project aimed to place the views and experiences of children and young people at the heart of the key document setting the standards for the teaching profession in Scotland.

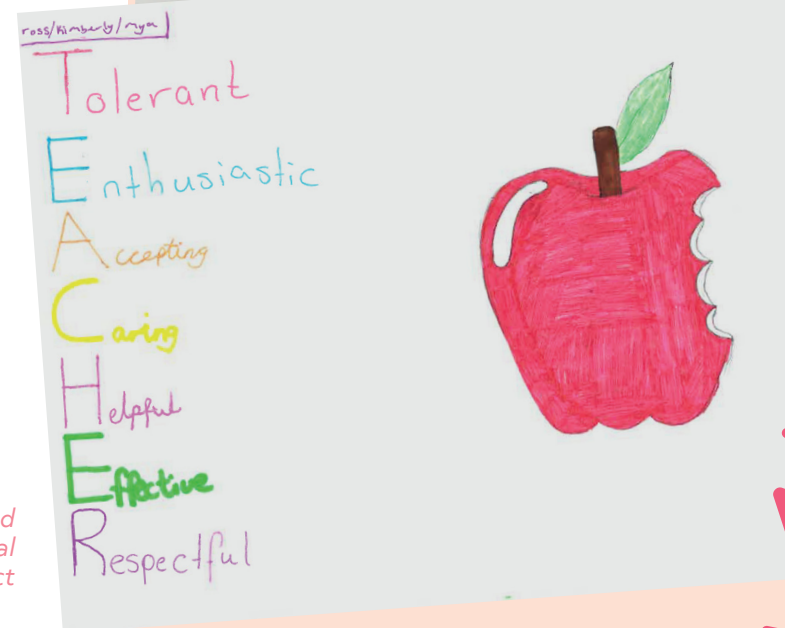
Children in Scotland engaged with 591 children and young people aged 5-18 from across Scotland. Working in five schools, we used a range of methods to develop a resource that could be completed in school, in youth group situations or at home, and an online survey.

We identified four key thematic areas that captured the qualities that children and young people felt a good teacher should have:

- Nurturing
- Rights respecting relationships
- Professional skills and knowledge
- Positivity and energy.

Children and young people were clear that teachers need to find a balance across these four themes, and that they should not shout!

We have recommended to the GTCS that the findings from our research are directly reflected in the refreshed Professional Standards. We also recommended that children and young people are provided with opportunities to be involved in the ongoing review of standards in teaching. We highlighted ways the findings could be used to support ongoing improvement processes and be reflected in Initial Teacher Education.



Right: Illustrations by pupils we consulted as part of our GTCS Professional Standards for Teaching project



## Children and Young People's Panel on Europe

Children in Scotland worked in partnership with Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights) to support the Children and Young People's Panel on Europe.

We worked with 19 children and young people from across Scotland to make sure their voices were heard in the Brexit negotiations. The Panel made recommendations to the Scottish and UK governments about the issues they felt were most important to them as we left the EU.

The Panel chose to focus on five key areas to make their recommendations:

- EU Funding
- Opportunities to work, study and travel
- The economy, trade and jobs
- Rights
- Tackling Uncertainty.

The Panel engaged directly with the Cabinet Secretary for Government Business and the Constitution, Scottish Leaders Forum, the Scottish Government's Standing Council on Europe and the Cross-Party Group on Children and Young People to discuss its concerns.

The Panel's report was published in February 2019. Key recommendations include:

- Continued contribution to Erasmus+ by the UK and Scottish governments, allowing young people to study, volunteer and participate in youth work projects in the EU and young people from the EU to study, volunteer and participate in youth work projects in the UK.
- Visas should not be required for travel inside the EU; this must be supported by continued co-operation on security to ensure that young people are safe from crime.
- UK Government should keep all workers' rights that the EU gives to workers – the Panel wants Scotland to be a world leader in the way workers are treated.

Panel members also want all children, young people and their families to learn more about their human rights, and expressed concern about a lack of child-friendly resources to help them make informed choices about Brexit and our future relationship with the EU.

*Right: Members of the Panel on Europe visited the Scottish Parliament in November*





## Heritage Hunters

In the Year of Young People 2018, Children in Scotland undertook an extensive project across Scotland called Heritage Hunters, funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, Martin Connell Trust and The Hugh Fraser Foundation. We worked closely with children and young people on six different projects across Scotland involving a range of youth and heritage partners.

The project aimed to:

- provide opportunities for children and young people to access heritage, especially those who may experience barriers to heritage
- develop relationships between children and young people and heritage partners so they could learn from each other
- improve children and young people's participation and engagement with heritage, including their role in decision-making in this sector.

The project additionally aimed to support staff within heritage settings to develop and refine their skills, allowing them to develop their own participative

approaches to meaningfully engage with children and young people.

Participants increased their understanding of heritage throughout the project, coming to see it as something personal and significant to their lives.

The project culminated in a final celebration and knowledge exchange event in February 2019, bringing all of the projects and partners together to share their experiences and learning.

Young people involved in the project said:

*"Heritage is basically something that everyone has but is kind of hard to explain."*

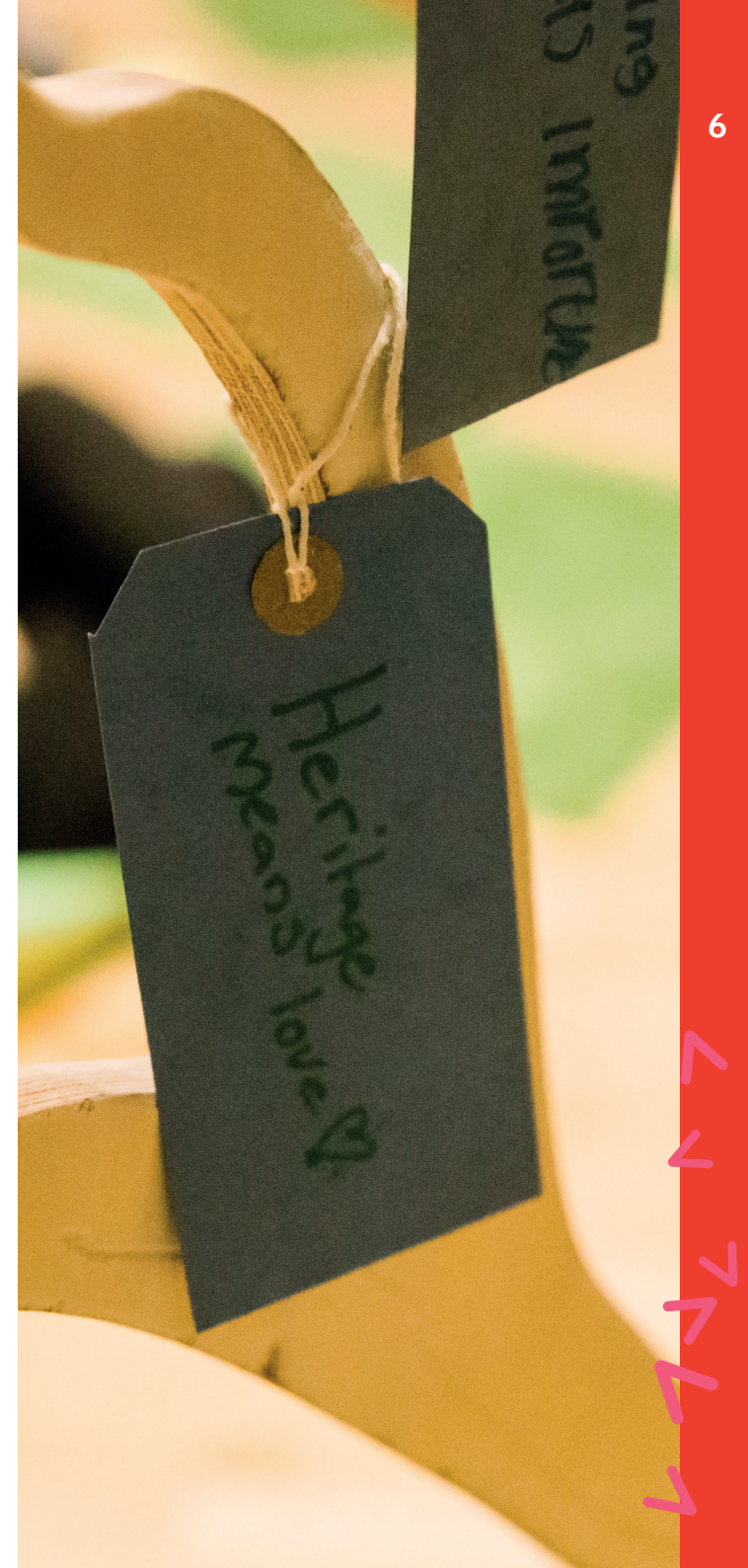
*"Everyone's heritage is different."*

*"things that are special."*

*"Heritage means you have something that means a lot to you."*

*"Heritage is something that defines you."*

*Right: A message about what heritage means for one young person, from our project celebration event in February*





## FMQT Next Generation

FMQT Next Generation, run in partnership with YouthLink Scotland, is the first project of its kind, giving children and young people from across Scotland the opportunity to come together and ask the First Minister questions that matter to them.

The project is co-designed by ten children and young people on the design team and a further nine who were part of the online design team. The design team had a key role throughout the project, including all elements of event planning and delivery and selecting the questions for the First Minister.

The first event took place on 12 September 2018 with 100 children and young people attending, with representation from 39 organisations who work with children and young people.

The event was broadcast live on STV's *Scotland Tonight*, with questions covering topics including:

- Mental health – prevalence of mental ill health and medical approach to treatment
- Education – homework provision
- Health – cost of sanitary products
- Equalities and rights – teaching young people to be tolerant
- Politics – political education in schools
- Help and support – life skills for young people
- Housing – care experienced young people living independently
- The future for children and young people

*Right: Members of the FMQT Next Generation Design Team met Nicola Sturgeon at Bute House in June 2018*



## National Third Sector - Getting It Right For Every Child

Children in Scotland became the host of the National Third Sector GIRFEC (NTSG) Project in April 2018. The project supports third sector organisations to become equal and valued partners in the children's services planning process which leads to improved children's outcomes at national and local level.

The project consists of three key strands:

- We support third sector organisations to improve capacity and capability to contribute fully to their local children's services plan.
- We influence children's services planning and delivery using evidence gathered and shared by the third sector.
- We promote the good practice of engagement of children, young people and families in the design, planning and delivery of children's services.

Highlights in 2018/19:

- We co-ordinated a Third Sector Interface (TSI) Network which has met twice this year with 15 TSIs involved.
- We facilitated opportunities for third sector organisations to discuss and influence key policy areas such as GIRFEC; Strategic Children's Services Planning and Commissioning; Attainment Challenge; Child Poverty and System Change.
- We delivered five thematic training events with 119 delegates engaged.
- We worked with THE ALLIANCE and local partners to deliver GIRFEC and Wellbeing workshops. We distributed 139 Wellbeing resources.
- We keep people informed via our monthly e-newsletter (358 subscribers) and social media (400 new followers).

A key development was the undertaking of a national survey and interview process. Our aim was to consider the third sector's involvement in the Children's Services Planning process and how this could be improved. The survey was disseminated throughout the third sector and interviews were undertaken with half of the Third Sector Interfaces in Scotland.

The findings have formed an important basis for our work going forward and will allow us to make recommendations to the Scottish Government on behalf of the Third Sector about Children's Services Planning. Our ongoing work will provide targeted support and training for the third sector, to better enable organisations to be involved in children's services planning and to engage the voices of the children, young people and families they work with in the process.

*"The GIRFEC wellbeing tools will help our team to re-focus and plan for the youth work partnership as well as the CYP joint services to think more strategically."*

- Third sector representative,



## Not Included, Not Engaged, Not Involved Report

Children in Scotland worked in partnership with Scottish Autism and the National Autistic Society to carry out research into the experiences of autistic children and young people in Scotland's schools.

The project involved a survey of parents and carers of autistic children and young people who had experienced time out of education in the last two years. We received 1417 responses from parents and carers to the survey, highlighting the scale of the issues faced by autistic children and young people in Scottish education.

The project reaffirmed that the impact of children and young people missing school should not be underestimated. Respondents told us about the range of damaging effects this had on their child's health and wellbeing and on the learning and the wellbeing of their family.

The report included nine key calls for action to improve the experiences of autistic children and young people in Scottish education.

Following publication, the partner organisations engaged with the Scottish Parliament to highlight the issues raised by the report and a debate was held in Holyrood about its findings, attended by the Deputy First Minister, John Swinney. Mr Swinney agreed to convene a round table to look at call five, addressing the issues of knowledge and skills reported by parents and carers.

Stakeholders attending the roundtable discussed the content of initial teacher education and ongoing professional development. A working group was then established to agree a common baseline for Initial Teacher Education and a continuum of support for professional development.

The partners are also tracking progress against each of the nine calls over the 12 months since the publication of the report and are continuing to campaign for changes for children and young people.

*Right: the Not Included... report found that many autistic young people had been unlawfully excluded from school*





## Enquire

- Enquire responded to 1,476 enquiries.
- Our *Parents' Guide to Additional Support for Learning* was distributed to over 3,000 parents, carers and professionals.
- Our Advice for Parents webpages were viewed more than 40,000 times

*"The parents' guide has changed my life"*

– parent

- Every MSP in Scotland received information promoting children's rights to additional support for learning.
- For the first time Enquire and My Rights, My Say held a free learning day for Pupil Support Assistants in Renfrewshire in March 2019. One hundred and twenty staff attended presentations and workshops on how to recognise and support children and young people who internalise distress and how to react and respond to bullying behaviour.
- Of those who responded, 100% thought that overall the event was excellent or very good.

*"I felt the whole day was useful, informative and enjoyable. I haven't had such good professional learning in a long time!"*

– Pupil Support Assistant

- Enquire's new infographics containing advice for parents on unlawful exclusions reached more than 39,000 people on Facebook
- We continued to represent Scotland as the National Co-ordinator on the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, attending bi-annual meetings and promoting Scotland's involvement in the Agency to key stakeholders and Scottish activity to the Agency.

*"Thank you very much for your email and for all your assistance. The information contained is very helpful. Enquire have been a huge support to me on a number of occasions. My queries have always been dealt with in a sympathetic, informative and professional manner. Thank you!"*

– Parent and caller to Enquire

*Right: Fraser Kerr, who contributed a blog about stammering to Enquire*





## Reach

- Reach offers advice to children and young people about issues affecting them in school and explains their rights to feel supported, included, listened to and involved in decisions at school.

Highlights include:

- Three new animations about children's rights to have a say in decisions about their support and how to access help to share their views.
- New blogs written by pupils on dyslexia, autism and stammering.
- A new Relationships section was added to the Reach website following feedback from children that this was a topic they wanted more information about.

## My Rights, My Say

- Every secondary school in Scotland received a poster and information about the extension of the rights of children with additional support needs aged 12-15.
- Our factsheet on the extension of children's rights was downloaded more than 770 times.
- My Rights, My Say has worked in partnership with three local authorities and the University of Edinburgh to raise awareness about the support My Rights, My Say can offer to children aged 12-15 with additional support needs.

*Right: A still from one of Reach's new animations*



## CHANGE

Childcare and Nurture Glasgow East (CHANGE) continued to build on the work carried out during the first two years of the project. There was a focus this year on using the findings from our community engagement work to develop plans to expand the level of childcare provision in our project area. This included childcare for children up to age two, school-aged childcare, and childminding.

This was supported by the work of the CHANGE Hub. The Hub brings together professionals from across our project area to look at the systems change required to support children and families. Current work being done by Hub members includes small tests on access to information, low-cost food and support for mental health.

Geraldine Millar, Headteacher of St Paul's Primary in Shettleston and a member of the CHANGE Hub, commented: *"It has made a huge difference. It's got all of us talking. You don't have time within the school / working day to raise your head and think 'what can we do?' The CHANGE project was then introduced and it meant people saying to each other, 'what do you do?' and asking 'how could we do that better?'"*

## Resolve

Mediation service Resolve handled 45 cases from its 15 local authority contracted partners and one from Stirling who come to us on an ad hoc basis.

Client quotes:

*"Mediator was very insightful and understanding. I very much appreciated their expertise of the process and how this could make me feel as I had under-estimated this. I felt well supported as my feelings/emotions that I had previously tried to keep a lid on unravelled."*

*"Mediator supported me to allow myself to validate my feelings in relation to what had happened and gave me a safe place to talk through my feelings/worries – thank you."*

*"Although I was apprehensive before beginning this process if I was ever asked by a colleague regarding mediation I would recommend this without hesitation. Very grateful my colleague and I had the mediator working alongside us to resolve a difficult situation for both parties."*

*"Mediator is nothing short of amazing!"*

*"Excellent communication throughout."*

*"Without mediation I doubt we would have achieved the excellent outcome we did."*

Resolve was also involved in:

- ASL presentations to Parent Forums
- ASL Update and Challenging Conversations training sessions to local authority teams
- Consultation regarding ASL policies and procedures with an independent school
- Consultation and supervision sessions for child protection officers and frontline ASL staff in local authorities.



# Influencing policy and legislation

We use evidence from children, young people and our members, alongside research to influence policy and legislation across a range of areas relevant to the lives of children and young people.

## Giving Evidence (including roundtables etc)

In 2018-19 we contributed to 19 consultations held by the Scottish Government, the Scottish Parliament and wider civil society to ensure that the rights and wellbeing of children and young people were being upheld/met. Topics included the Scottish National Standardised Assessments, the Equal Protection from Assault (Scotland) Bill, the Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Bill and the Child Rights Action Plan.

## Parliamentary Liaison

Children in Scotland continued to build on our good relationships with parliamentarians to develop ideas and influence policy-making.

We were represented at the Scottish Liberal Democrat and Scottish National Party conferences and discussed the importance of children and young people's participation and engagement on decision-making. (Attendance at other party conferences occurred in the previous financial year).

We also gave oral evidence to the Scottish Parliament Education and Skills Committee on the Scottish National Standardised Assessments, contributed to a Year of Young People roundtable held by the Health and Sport Committee and gave evidence to the Independent Review of P1 Assessments.

We continued our role as the co-secretariat for the Cross-Party Group (CPG) on Children and Young People at the Scottish Parliament and hosted five meetings across the year with more than 230 attendees. The topics covered included Brexit, mental health and Grandparents' Rights to Contact. Following these meetings, we have engaged with relevant Scottish Government Ministers and Scottish Parliament committees to inform them of the discussions at the CPG.

*Right: Year of Young People Youth Ambassadors celebrate the impact of the year*



## Membership of working groups

Children in Scotland staff are active members of several national groups working to affect real change to policy of relevance to children and young people. For 2019, these include:

- The Independent Care Review
- Mental Health Task Force
- Getting It Right For Every Child Leadership Programme.
- Disabled Children & Young People Advisory |Group
- Advisory Group Additional Support for Learning
- Early Learning & Childcare Strategic Forum.

## Supporting our members

Across the year we have continued to develop opportunities for our members to contribute to strengthening the children's sector in Scotland.

Our Children's Sector Strategic and Policy Forum has continued to present opportunities for our members to engage directly with the Permanent Secretary, Leslie Evans and Scottish Government Director of Children and Families, Michael Chalmers.

We also hosted a range of Voices Forum events across the year on Brexit,

the Planning (Scotland) Bill, our 25 Calls campaign and inequalities in education. Our Voices Forums support our members to influence our policy positions and us to take their views forward in discussions with government. They have also provided them the opportunity to engage with the Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland's Place in Europe, Andy Wightman MSP and the Head of the Attainment Challenge Unit at the Scottish Government.

*Right: Our Head of Inclusion, Sally Cavers, talks to members at a Voices Forum event*





## What our members have told us about being part of Children in Scotland

*"Membership of Children in Scotland is very important in connecting policy priorities to a wider network of professionals within the children's sector to help enact positive change for people with learning disabilities."*

Kenneth Fleming,  
Engagement &  
Influencing Manager,  
Scottish Commission  
for Learning Disability

*"Being part of the Children in Scotland network offers an excellent opportunity to connect with like-minded third sector organisations and to hear their latest ideas on improving the lives of kids in our country."*

Jordan McKenna,  
ENABLE Scotland

*"Membership is so valuable to us as an organisation. We know we are part of a wider community of people working to make a difference to children across Scotland and we benefit enormously from the expertise of the training team. I am also excited about the international conference on trauma that we are part of organising with a group of Scottish organisations and Children in Scotland."*

Joanna McCreadie, Seamab

*"These courses are always good when you have a diverse set of delegates who you can share experiences with and hear about different settings."*

Delegate,  
Inclusiveness for all:  
challenging gender  
stereotypes and  
building healthy  
relationships in early  
primary settings

*"It was an amazing course that impressed me with its context and gave me an insight about the ACE study and the importance of resilience in children."*

Delegate, Resilience  
film screening

*"Really good, interesting, engaging and confirms the things that I already know, with evidence to back up, and practical tools to use."*

Delegate, 5 Ways  
to Wellbeing

*"It's a great platform for sharing information and good practice, and learning about the latest developments. The work of Children in Scotland has had a positive impact on the lives of many young people and Kibble Group is delighted to offer its support."*

James Gillespie, Kibble Group



## Our partners

### Parenting across Scotland

Parenting across Scotland is a partnership of charities which offers support to children and families in Scotland. It became a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) in 2017 and implemented its new structure during 2018-19. They continue to be hosted at Children in Scotland and receive administrative support from us.

Children in Scotland is a member of Parenting across Scotland.

### The National Parent Forum of Scotland

The Forum works in partnership with national and local government and other organisations involved in education and child wellbeing issues to ensure that parents play a full and equal role in education. The overall aim of the organisation is to help every child to maximise their potential through their school life.

During 2018/19, NPFS worked closely with Scottish Government on the development and implementation of its action plan for parental engagement and involvement, Learning Together, and on the Empowering Schools reforms. NPFS also participated in the Scottish Education Council, Children and Young People's Mental Health Task Force, Early Years Strategic Forum and around 50 other national groups, ensuring an authentic parent voice is heard at the top level of Government.

Other highlights from the year include the continuing work with partner organisations such as Time for Inclusive Education, Scottish Booktrust, Skills Development Scotland and NHS Scotland on a range of projects. NPFS volunteers spoke at 22 conferences and responded to 12 national consultations.



# Meaningful participation and engagement with children and young people

We provide opportunities for children and young people to communicate about the issues in their lives and offer creative solutions

## “Fueled by a desire to change society, we shall not back down.”\*

Our participation work is underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the rights of the Child (UNCRC), in which Article 12 states that children and young people have the right to have an opinion and for adults to listen to them.

This year we have embedded good practice across the organisation and disseminated this across the sector. We have built on our own skills and expanded our offer to support practitioners to engage children and young people in decision-making processes.

- Our children and young people’s advisory group, Changing our World, is now in its second year and is a well-established aspect of our work. The members’ opinions and experiences influence our own policies and practices and help us to amplify children’s voices nationally and internationally.

- We have used our Principles & Guidelines to strengthen the children’s sector in Scotland and beyond, supporting and developing good practice. We have delivered:
  - Our annual free members’ event on children and young people’s participation
  - Tailor-made sessions for specific members
  - A full-day session with third sector interface partners delivered through the National Third Sector GIRFEC Project.
  - Two sessions with heritage and youth work partners, through our Heritage Hunters project.

*Right: Members of our Changing our World advisory group discuss their contribution to the 25 Calls campaign*

*\*From a poem by Ellie, a member of Changing our World*

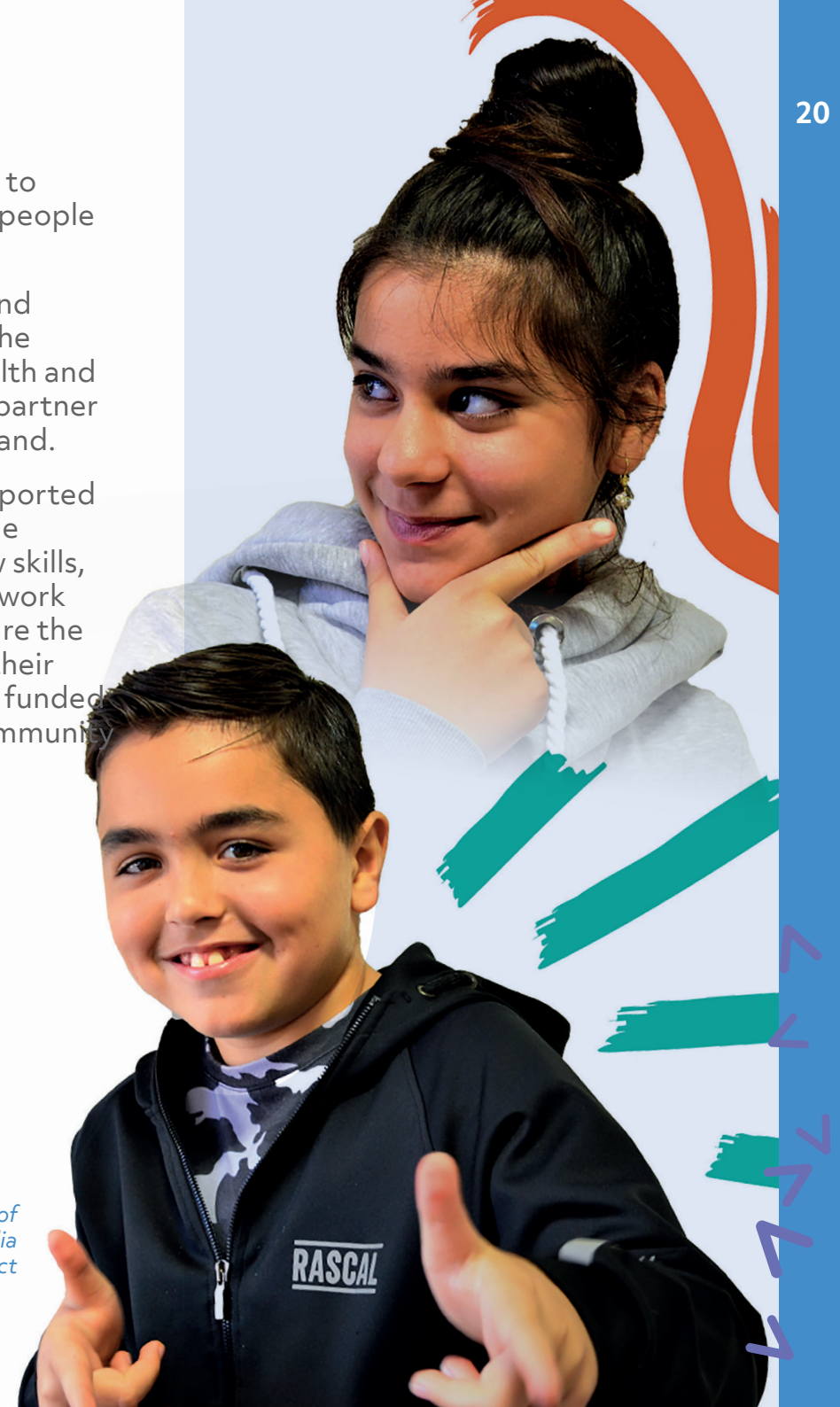


## Amplifying diverse voices and views

We have also worked with more than 1300 children and young people through our projects to gather their views and opinions on a range of topics to ensure these are heard in decision-making processes

- We continued to engage children and young people in our Food, Families, Futures project, ensuring their voices and experiences are heard in the ongoing development and delivery of local holiday clubs.
- We worked with Corra Foundation to ensure that children and young people were involved in the development of the Listening Fund and the decisions about who received funding from this.
- We worked in partnership with Young Scot, Scottish Youth Parliament and Children's Parliament to deliver the Scottish Learner Panel. The Panel worked with eight schools across the country to engage children and young people in decisions about Scottish education.
- We worked with Young Scot to support children and young people to design the new Baby Box.
- We supported 40 children and young people to reflect on the importance of space for health and wellbeing and learning with partner Architecture & Design Scotland.
- Young Media Voices has supported 18 children and young people across Scotland to learn new skills, create multimedia content, work with media partners and share the stories that matter most in their communities. This project is funded by The National Lottery Community Fund and Children in Need.

*Right: Members of our Young Media Voices project*





# Strengthening the children's sector

We deliver multi-disciplinary training, events, campaigns and resources for our members and the wider children's sector. This provides opportunities for networking and platforms for expert voices to bring information, advice and insight to enhance knowledge and strengthen practice

## Events

2018-19 saw us deliver 250+ events including:

Four conferences –

- Child and adolescent mental health in the digital age
- Children in Scotland annual conference
- Biting back: transforming food experiences for Scotland's children
- Making a difference: a day of learning for pupil support assistants.

We ran 28 seminars and 82 training courses on subjects including child protection, early years, education, additional support needs and health and wellbeing.

Our events were attended by more than 5,300 delegates and 200 contributors from 974 organisations. In addition to holding events in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow, we also held events in towns across the country, from Alloa to Inveraray and Crook of Devon to Kintore.

The furthest afield we held an event was Helsinki, as we ran two more much-coveted Finland study trips. These were attended by 70 attendees from the fields of health, early years, education, social work, family support, youth justice and youthwork.

*Right: Delegates on our study visit to Helsinki, September 2018*





## Campaigns

In October 2018, marking our quarter century, we launched our national 25 Calls campaign, which we have continued to promote through 2019. This ambitious campaign brings together diverse voices from across the sector to propose how children can experience greater equality and strengthened human rights.

The calls cover four themes:

- Strengthening rights and participation
- Supporting children, families and communities
- Challenging inequalities
- Improving education, skills and learning experiences.

Researching and creating the campaign calls, we spoke to people who work with children every day, researchers on children's development, charities who stand up for children's rights, schools and nurseries, parents and carers, and children and young people themselves.

Since the campaign launched with the publication of a special edition magazine in October 2018, we have published a further 20 articles from leaders in the children's sector and beyond, responding to the issues raised in the initial campaign. Our campaign has also featured in the national press, including *The Herald*, *Commonspace*, *The Scotsman*, *The National* and *Third Force News*.





## Growing our membership

Our membership reached 566 by the end of March 2019 covering all parts of the children's sector in Scotland – local authorities and other statutory organisations, charities, corporate, business and social enterprises have all signed up to our values and to improve the lives of children in Scotland.

Our diverse member organisations received a range of benefits, including six editions of the relaunched *Children in Scotland Magazine*, access to 20+ free member events, invitations to networking opportunities, access to our policy-focused members forums, free advertising and exclusive policy briefings.

If you would like to become a member, please visit our website:

[childreninscotland.org.uk](http://childreninscotland.org.uk)



Things that  
make me happy

Illustration  
by Marcus, a  
member of our  
young people's  
advisory group,  
Changing  
our World.