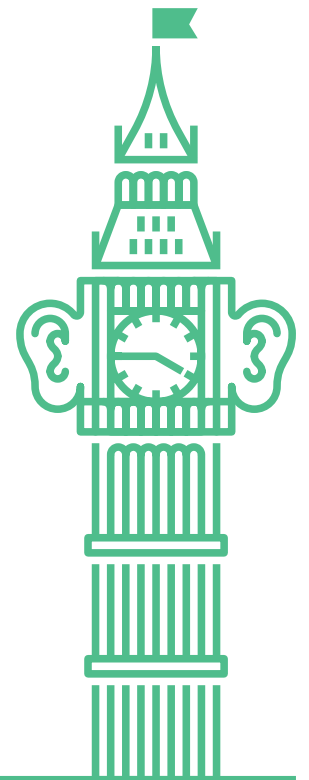


#UKChildManifesto



Children in Scotland Manifesto




for the next UK Government



Children in Wales
Plant yng Nghymru



Our manifesto for the 2019 UK General Election:

-  identifies four key areas we believe the next UK Government, and MPs elected to the new parliament, should focus on to ensure the needs and rights of children and young people across the UK are prioritised
-  makes 14 specific calls (supported by 16 partner organisations) which, if acted on, we believe would lead to improvements in children and young people's experiences of rights, equality and wellbeing across the UK
-  has been shaped by the priorities of our members and partners; research and evidence across key child policy areas; learning from our projects; our 25 Calls campaign and the views expressed by the children, young people and families we work with.

Supported by:



Rights and democracy



Our calls

- > Extend the vote to 16 and 17 year olds in all UK elections – local elections, general elections and referenda¹
- > Fully incorporate the UNCRC and wider international human rights treaties into UK law.



All children and young people have the right to a say on matters that are important to them (Article 12, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child)².

Extending the opportunity for 16 and 17 year olds to vote in all polls is a vital part of realising their rights. This would build on the successful implementation of votes for 16 and 17 year olds in Scottish parliamentary elections, local council elections and referenda.

But even if this is achieved, further action will be required to ensure that the rights of all children and young people are formally recognised in legislation.

That's why we encourage the new UK Government to follow the commitment made by the Scottish Government and fully incorporate the UNCRC into UK law and make a commitment to incorporate wider international human rights treaties to provide specific protections in relation to disability, race, girls and women, prevention of torture, and broader economic, social, cultural and environmental rights.



¹ <https://childreninscotland.org.uk/call-5-16-and-17-year-olds-must-be-able-to-vote-in-all-uk-polls-brex-it-proves-this-is-a-civil-rights-issue/>

² <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>



Supported by:



Child Poverty

Our calls

- > Reverse the benefits freeze
- > End the two-child limit
- > End the benefit cap
- > End the reduction in housing benefit
- > Readopt legally binding targets to reduce child poverty
- > Accept the findings and recommendations of the UN Special Rapporteur's report on Extreme Poverty.



The 2018 report by the UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights³ identified austerity measures and a punitive social security system as key factors influencing growing rates of child poverty across the UK.

Research by the Equality Trust⁴ has highlighted a very high level of income inequality in the UK compared to other developed countries. The UK has also seen a significant rise in in-work poverty over the past 25 years⁵, which is extremely concerning.

Close to 40% of children and young people are predicted to be living in the grip of poverty by 2021⁶. In a wealthy nation like the UK, that any child should be living in poverty is completely unacceptable.



³ <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/41/39/Add.1>

⁴ <https://www.equalitytrust.org.uk/scale-economic-inequality-uk>

⁵ <https://www.ifs.org.uk/uploads/WP201912.pdf>

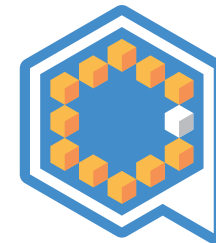
⁶ <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/41/39/Add.1>



Supported by:



Children and young people's place in Europe



Our calls

Recommendations made by the Children and Young People's Panel on Europe⁷ about EU funding; opportunities to work, study and travel abroad; and the economy, trade and jobs:

- Continue EU funding 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
- Continue opportunities to work, study and travel abroad: Visas should not be required for travel inside the EU. This must be supported by continued co-operation on security to ensure young people are safe from crime
- Retain all workers' rights granted by the EU. The Panel wants Scotland to be a world leader in the way workers are treated.



No one living in the UK and currently under the age of 20 – about 23% of the UK population – voted in the 2016 referendum on EU membership.

Many millions of children and young people have had no say whatsoever in the UK's future relationship with Europe despite the fact that, in the words of one of the Panel on Europe members, they are the generation “who will be affected the most” by Brexit.

The next UK Government has a responsibility to ensure the decisions they take are in the best interests of those too young to vote. We therefore urge them, and all newly elected MPs, to ensure that their positions on Brexit meet the priorities of children and young people, as reflected in the recommendations of the Panel⁸.

We also urge them to engage with what the Panel has said about ‘tackling uncertainty’: the need for more child-friendly information to be available in order to help young people make informed choices about Brexit.



⁷ https://childreninscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Brexit_FINAL_nobleed.pdf

⁸ https://childreninscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Brexit_FINAL_nobleed.pdf

The Children and Young People's Panel on Europe is a landmark participation project supported by Children in Scotland and Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights). Members of the Panel, aged 8-19, have advised the Scottish Government on the issues they would like to be considered as part of Brexit negotiations with Westminster and the European Union. The Panel's calls cited here are from their report *Listen to us*, published in February 2019. The next phase of the project has started and runs to June 2020.



Supported by:



The Climate Crisis



Our calls

- > Support the work of the Scottish Youth Climate Strikers⁹, who urge the UK Government to commit to a specific target of achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2030
- > Commit all UK Government Departments to tackling the Climate Emergency¹⁰
- > Use examples and evidence from young people-led climate change campaigns to inform development of policy and legislation at local and national level.



The 2015 Paris Agreement¹¹ outlined the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C. In 2018 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change¹² confirmed that a path still exists to achieving this. But the window for success is rapidly closing.

Children and young people across the world have taken to the streets in huge numbers over the last year to protest about the lack of meaningful action by governments to address these targets.

Parties must demonstrate in detail how they are going to be held accountable for achieving these commitments. Environmental pledges must be reflected in all other policy proposals, not in isolation. A move away from a focus on GDP to an emphasis on wellbeing as an expression of economic success must underpin this.



⁹ <https://climatestrike.scot>

¹⁰ <https://foe.scot/climate-general-election-2019/>

¹¹ <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/what-is-the-paris-agreement>

¹² <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/oct/08/global-warming-must-not-exceed-15c-warns-landmark-un-report>





About Children in Scotland

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.



Visit childreninscotland.org.uk to find out more, support our work or make a donation.

