



**UNCRC: Draft Introductory Guidance
22nd September 2021
Children in Scotland**

1. How helpful did you find this introductory guidance in introducing you to the UNCRC and giving effect to children's rights in your practice?

We welcome this draft guidance to support public services staff and volunteers. It will be one way to support and develop knowledge and understanding of the UNCRC and support progress in giving effect to children's rights in policies and practice.

We would highlight the following as positive aspects of the draft guidance:

- relevant two reasons for public services given under How Do I Use This Guidance
- Articles are explained well
- positive Article 12 emphasis
- a focus on the role of parents
- explanation of rights and wellbeing
- the inclusion of relevant policies
- the details given in 'Sources To Aid Interpretation'
- the inclusion of UNICEF's Child Rights-Based Approach
- theory and guidance on the participation of children and young people
- information and guidance on CRWIAS

Over the course of summer 2021, Children in Scotland worked with 16 local authority Third Sector Interface (TSI) networks to support their knowledge and understanding of the UNCRC. We offered a supportive space for staff and volunteers to reflect on what implementation means for their own practice and to identify next steps for their work to ensure their policies and practices are grounded in a child rights approach. These sessions included representatives from public bodies, such as local authority staff and Police Scotland.

Based on this work and the feedback we gained we believe this draft guidance will be useful to those working in public services as an introduction to the UNCRC.

From our sessions we know that the participants appreciated:

- learning about the General Principles of the UNCRC
- focusing on the Articles of the UNCRC
- learning about the background to the implementation into Scots Law and human rights in Scotland

Some of the participants were very interested in discussing Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessments (CRWIAs). We believe public services will welcome the basic information about CRWIAs covered in this draft guidance and the links to useful resources.

Other participants highlighted participation of children and young people in decision-making as an area of relevance to their practice development. We believe public services will welcome the inclusion of some theory and guidance in this draft document.

2. Are there topics or questions, not currently covered in the introductory guidance which you would like to see addressed?

From our sessions with public service staff and volunteers over the course of summer 2021, we know many organisations and individuals have questions around the timeline of implementation and the steps involved. Staff and volunteers will welcome the inclusion of the Phases in this process.

We understand timelines change for many reasons, including the Supreme Court hearing. However, we would suggest the guidance includes clear timelines and steps for public services where possible. This will give organisations and individuals a useful framework.

3. Was the language of the introductory guidance sufficiently clear and accessible?

On the whole yes. We like the explanations of universal, inalienable, indivisible and interdependent under 'What Are Human Rights', for example.

However, we would make the following suggestions:

- on p3 under 'Consideration' this is a one sentence paragraph which can be challenging to read and understand. We suggest breaking this down into more sentences
- on p7 Articles are mentioned before they are explained on p8. Perhaps a phrase could be added in such as 'see below' to reassure readers?
- on p10 we would point out that capacity does not necessarily grow with age. Good examples of what it does depend on are

given, but we believe referring to age is not inclusive of some children and their additional needs

- on p12 we suggest explaining what a 'preamble' is
- the opening phrase on p21 under UNCRC Implementation Programme is quite dense. A more accessible introduction might be: *'Whilst the UNCRC Bill will make aspects of the UNCRC a legal obligation...'*.

4. Do you have any other feedback or suggestions to improve the introductory guidance?

From our summer sessions with TSI staff and volunteers we know that information documents like this are helpful, but not enough in themselves to support public services to fully realise children's rights in their practice. Different people learn in different ways and other forms of support such as films and animations, would be useful to many.

However, interactive experiences will best support public services and their progress in this area. We welcome reference to the 'Training Strategy' on p24. Training sessions with space to speak, reflect and plan with colleagues and other organisations have a very positive impact on staff and volunteers' understanding and confidence to apply their learning.

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