



# Children in Scotland Celebrating our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary



# Celebrating 30 years of Children in Scotland



As we celebrate 30 years of Children in Scotland, this milestone anniversary offers us an important opportunity to

reflect on the meaningful change our work has made to the lives of children and young people over the past three decades.

When I joined Children in Scotland in 2021, the country had been experiencing the effects of a pandemic for more than a year. Imagining I might find the people in the organisation feeling downbeat in the face of these challenges, I instead discovered an energetic and passionate team that faced challenges by regrouping and recentring on its core values. The passion for Children in Scotland's vision was very much alive and well.

This publication shares a brief history of how our vision and values came to be, recounting Children in Scotland's evolution

from a small network of voluntary children's organisations to the vibrant and committed organisation it is today.

In the following pages, we highlight a few of the many successes our team, and the wider children's sector, has achieved over 30 years. We are also celebrating the legacy that has been created by supporting children and young people to be voices for change, and shape their own future.

As we look ahead to the next 30 years, I'm incredibly proud to lead an organisation with such a strong reputation for its values-driven and collaborative approach. We have a lot more to do to achieve meaningful and long-lasting transformation but, whatever the future holds, we won't rest until all children in Scotland have an equal chance to flourish.

**Dr Judith Turbyne, Chief Executive**



# Successes in the sector

Children in Scotland's anniversary marks 30 years of sector development and successes that continue to shape our work. Here, we reflect on the key campaigns and legislative changes that have helped children and young people to flourish

## 1 Setting the stage for children and young people

The ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) by the UK in 1991 brought a new focus on embedding children and young people's voices in decision-making processes.

In 1999, closely following the formation of the Scottish Parliament, the Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP) was created, providing a platform for young people to debate the issues most important to them. SYP campaigns have included "Right Here, Right Now", which was part of sector-wide efforts to have the UNCRC fully incorporated into Scots law. Scotland followed a global trend for social transformation through youth activism, putting a spotlight on issues like climate change, anti-racism and LGBTQI+ rights.

In a further boost to children's rights, Scotland's first Children and Young People's Commissioner began work in 2004.

Read Gina's full blog at:  
[childreninscotland.org.uk/cisat30](https://childreninscotland.org.uk/cisat30)

Gina Wilson, Head of Strategy at the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland (below) recently wrote in a 30th Anniversary blog for Children in Scotland that:

*"One of the biggest changes in children's rights in this time has been a culture shift in awareness of children's right to participate – listening to children, asking them about and taking account of their views, ideas, and experiences. Our office has put participation at the heart of everything we do to make sure children's views are included and heard at all levels of decision-making."*



A succession of legislation promoting the rights and opinions of children and young people followed, including the lowering of the voting age to 16 in 2016 and the Children (Equal Protection from Assault) Act in 2019.

In 2017 the children's sector celebrated a hard-fought success

with the introduction of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 and in 2021 the Scottish Child Payment, initially granted to parents and carers of children under the age of 6 and later extended to those up to the age of 16, as part of measures introduced to tackle the cost of living crisis.

## 2 Early years and childcare in focus

Scotland's recognition of the significance of the early years in child development led to investment in the Family Nurse Partnership, which began in 2010. The popular Baby Box launched in 2017.

A steady but, as some argued, slow expansion of childcare provision was seen from the early 2010s as campaigners sought to increase parental choice and close

the attainment gap in early years settings. Provision was made under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, to increase entitlement to free early learning and childcare from 475 to 600 hours. Later, campaigns like Fair Funding for our Kids, supported by Children in Scotland, successfully evidenced the inadequacies in the system, and in 2021 the 1140 hours provision was rolled out.

## 3 Children's health and wellbeing

One of the most significant developments for child wellbeing was the introduction of Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) in 2006, which provided a framework for safeguarding and support. Its core principles have been embedded across the work of Children in Scotland and implementation continues to have a dedicated focus from the organisation and many in its network. In 2018, Children in Scotland took on management of the National Third Sector

GIRFEC Project (now called Supporting the Third Sector) which aims to ensure that the third sector be fully integrated with Community Planning Partnerships and contributes to the strategic planning of local children and family services.

The 2004 Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act (2004) highlighted the responsibilities of local authorities to identify, meet and keep under review the needs of the children

they are responsible for. The broad definition of Additional Support for Learning (ASL) within legislation has helped develop a recognition of the range of reasons children may need additional support in school. The Independent Review of ASL implementation was published in 2020 and Children in Scotland

has supported delivery of the subsequent ASL action plan. In November 2020, following years of campaigning, a further boost to the wellbeing of Scotland's young people came when it became the first country in the world to offer free period products, at settings including schools, colleges and universities.

## 4 Keeping the Promise

In 2020, the Independent Care Review launched its findings after three years of listening to people across Scotland who had either personal or professional experience of the care system. The outcomes resulted in 'The Promise' – a commitment to ensure that care experienced children and young people would grow up loved, safe and respected.

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Writing about Children in Scotland's support for The Promise on its 30th Anniversary, Simon Massey, Head of Engagement and Learning, said:

*"In late 2016, Nicola Sturgeon, the then First Minister, announced 'an independent, root and branch review of the care system.' I jumped at the chance to get involved in the Independent Care Review, where I became a member of the Workforce Group. This turned out to be (and remains) one of the highlights of my working life – experiencing amazing leadership from Fiona Duncan, meeting and working with inspirational people through the groups, hearing from thousands of children, young people, families and professionals, and being able to make solid, evidence-based recommendations."*



Read Simon's full blog at:  
[childreninScotland.org.uk/cisat30](https://childreninScotland.org.uk/cisat30)



# A history of Children in Scotland

Here, we trace our timeline with key moments from the past 30 years. This is an abridged version of our history written by former Communications & Marketing Manager, Chris Small, now at Coalition of Care and Support Providers in Scotland

## 1993-2012

Formed in 1983 as a small network of voluntary organisations known as the Scottish Child and Family Alliance, the organisation was relaunched as Children in Scotland in 1993, with Dr Bronwen Cohen (right) at the helm.

Children in Scotland, in partnership with the then Scottish Council Foundation, published *Children, Families and Learning*, offering a new agenda for education through suggesting a review of when, where and how children learn.



# ENQUIRE



RESOLVE MEDIATION

To discover our full story visit:  
[childreninscotland.org.uk/  
about-us/our-history](http://childreninscotland.org.uk/about-us/our-history)

With the establishment of the Scottish Parliament, Children in Scotland advocated for children's rights and better provision for Additional Support for Learning.

This led, in 1999, to the ASL advice and support service, Enquire. This was followed in 2004 by the mediation service, Resolve, ahead of the establishment of the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence 2010.



REACH



## 2013-2020

Working with members, the organisation's new Chief Executive Jackie Brock (below) identified efforts to tackle child poverty, improve attainment, and reshape childcare as early priorities.

Children in Scotland benefited from developing 'on the ground' initiatives to test out policy at local level and gather persuasive evidence. Two projects – Food, Families, Futures (2015-2020) and Childcare and Nurture Glasgow East (also known as CHANGE, 2016-2020) – demonstrated what was possible if power was placed in the hands of decision-makers in local communities.

The launch of a new brand identity sought to spotlight the organisation's values and beliefs. Partnership projects grew and new services were introduced, including My Rights, My Say and Reach, responding to further developments in Additional Support for Learning legislation and an improved understanding of children's rights.

The charity focused on championing children and young people's rights and participation. As strides were made towards UNCRC incorporation, the organisation launched new guidelines about the principles of participation and engagement. Young people were newly appointed to the board and a children and young people's advisory group, Changing our World (above), was convened in 2017, becoming an integral force in the charity's decision-making.





## 2021 to today

Dr Judith Turbyne was appointed as the new CEO in June 2021 and, with a background in international development, brought a fresh perspective to the organisation and sector.

Navigating the monumental challenges of the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis, Children in Scotland drew on its convening power and partnerships to articulate how young people could best be supported. Equality became a more powerful feature of continuing development and improvement, with publication of a pledge and the introduction of targets for tracking progress in representation and awareness.

Throughout 2020, policy and communications staff drew on evidence from project and participation work and collaboration with partners to produce an ambitious and well-received Manifesto for the 2021-26 Scottish Parliament.

Having provided in-person professional development to strengthen the skills of the children's sector workforce for 27 years, the learning and events team abruptly shifted its programme online as Covid took hold. For more than two years, in-person events remained out of reach. The annual conference in November 2022 offered a long-awaited chance to reconnect with colleagues in-person.

In 2023, Children in Scotland celebrated 30 years, with Judith Turbyne marking the occasion by taking on the mountainous challenge of scaling 30 Scottish hills in seven days to raise awareness of the organisation's work.





# 30 years of collaboration

From Children in Scotland's early beginnings to where we are now, an integral factor for the success of our work has been collaboration with the many organisations, partners and individuals who share the vision that all children in Scotland should have an equal chance to flourish.

## Our members

Our members sit at the heart of the work we do and have done for the past 30 years. Whether participating in our policy work, attending our forums, engaging with our training and events, writing blogs for our website or articles for our magazine, we've been inspired by our members' commitment to sharing knowledge, creating best practice, and influencing positive change for children and young people across Scotland.

*"We are a very small charity with limited income streams, so having the opportunity to engage with Children in Scotland through our free membership has been invaluable."*

Highland Action for Little Ones

*"From campaigning to make children's voices heard in the rooms where decisions happen, to making sure the needs of young people are remembered in Scotland's policy landscape, working together for the benefit of Scotland's children is a privilege. We know that there are children who are freer and happier because of the work of Children in Scotland over the past 30 years, and we look forward to continuing to work together going forward."*

Scottish Women's Aid

*"Being able to talk to such a knowledgeable team about a project we are developing while at the planning and recruitment stage was invaluable."*

The Teapot Trust

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the inspirational network of individuals and organisations that have worked to better the lives of children and young people across Scotland over the past 30 years.



As a member of Children in Scotland you have access to our full range of member benefits including exclusive content and publications, training and events, networking opportunities and financial discounts. To find out more about becoming a member, please visit [childreninScotland.org.uk/membership](https://childreninScotland.org.uk/membership)

## Our staff

Whether championing children's rights, amplifying the voices of young people or connecting the sector, our talented workforce has helped create real change through determination and hard work.

*"A great thing about my job is actually being with people and seeing pressures relieved after positive discussions."*

Sandra Mitchell,  
Mediation Manager – Resolve

To celebrate 30 years, staff members wrote blogs about their experiences at the organisation. Read them at [childreninScotland.org.uk/cisat30](https://childreninScotland.org.uk/cisat30)

## Our board

With a diverse range of skills, knowledge and experience, Children in Scotland's board has offered support and strategic direction to the organisation since its inception. It's important that the views of young people are included at all levels, and for almost a decade young board members have brought invaluable perspectives to the heart of the organisation's decision-making.

*"From the beginning, I have valued being treated as an equal partner. I'm never seen as "just a young person", and my knowledge and skills are valued just as much as everyone else around the table."*

Rachael Hatfield,  
Board Director

*"From my first experiences of working in children's services Children in Scotland was omnipresent. Let's keep that alive and shine a light on the fantastic work in the sector where listening is always key."*

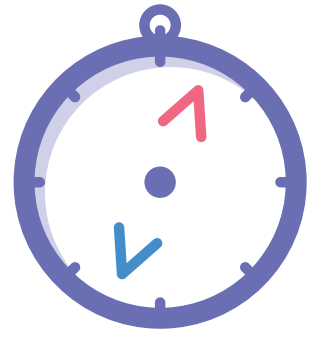
Billy Anderson,  
Head of Services



*"At Children in Scotland, equality, diversity and inclusion really do inform how we live and breathe our values. By placing our members at the heart of everything we do, I am confident we will have a further three decades ahead of us, driving that all children have an equal chance to flourish."*

Steven Sweeney,  
Board Convener

# Looking to the future



## Reflecting on our past, we can look more boldly towards our future and what can be achieved over the next 30 years

Earlier this year we launched our organisational strategy for the next five years, which reinforces our commitment to acting on children's views, influencing policymakers and maintaining an engaged and diverse membership. Alongside this we have a Manifesto, with learning, rights and democracy, economic planning and the environment leading our calls for change. To find out more, visit [childreninscotland.org.uk/about-us](https://childreninscotland.org.uk/about-us)

Although so much of the future is unknown, we can say with certainty that children's voices will remain at the heart of our work. We asked our children and young people's advisory group, **Changing our World**, if they could envision life for children 30 years from now, what would they hope to see? Here's what they had to say:

- Resources and opportunities for all children regardless of disability, health condition, form of education (home or school), size of family, or any factor outwith their control
- Climate change will be a thing of the past
- Children will learn about what they enjoy and care about, be empowered to stand up for what they believe in, and feel confident in their transition to adulthood
- Less homelessness
- Better research will be available about how mental health affects different groups of people
- Better support for people with addictions and more research on vaping
- Fewer hate crimes and young people feeling safer in their communities
- LGBTI+ rights will be improved
- Better access to education, with reviews of exams and qualifications
- Better public transport, especially for schools, with bus passes made available more widely.



A young couple is walking past a red brick house. The house has a 'Sold' sign in the window that says 'Yopa' and '0330 818 2828'. The couple consists of a man in a tan jacket and a woman in a tan jacket and blue jeans. They are walking on a path in front of the house, which has a large green hedge in front of it.

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