

Children in Scotland magazine



33 calls
10 themes
1 future...

Organisations and individuals from across the sector tell us why they're supporting our **Manifesto for 2021-26**

Background

Neurotransmitters are chemical messengers in the body, required for biological functions to occur. Their function is to transmit signals from nerve cells to target cells, in muscles, glands, or other nerves. Neurotransmitters are important in the foundation of biological functions, including muscular movement and neuropsychological development.

Paediatric neurotransmitter disorders are genetic disorders which occur when the body cannot synthesise, metabolise and catabolise (breakdown) neurotransmitters. There are a number of classes of neurotransmitters but here we will focus on monoamine neurotransmitter disorders which can affect levels of dopamine, serotonin, histamine, adrenaline and noradrenaline¹.

The Role of Dopamine & Serotonin

Dopamine sometimes known as the reward neurotransmitter also plays a key role, in muscle movement and coordination, memory, learning and behaviour.

Serotonin is an inhibitory neurotransmitter which helps regulate mood, sleep and the body's natural rhythms.

Absence or reduced levels of these neurotransmitters can lead to a wide variety of signs and symptoms. These can often be confused with other more common diseases seen in babies and young children for example cerebral palsy or epilepsy. Left untreated neurotransmitter disorders can lead to severely compromised neurological function.

Signs and Symptoms

Movement disorders – these are conditions which affect the way a child's body moves. There may be too much, or too little movement and the child may have problems with their balance and coordination. They may have uncontrolled jerky movements, experience repetitive facial movements, for example blinking, sniffing or coughing. Uncontrolled and sometimes painful muscle movements/spasms (dystonia) can also be present. Any of these may be confused with symptoms of epilepsy.

Decreased muscle tone – hypotonia or floppy baby syndrome, babies have little or no resistance to passive movements

Increased muscle tone – arms or legs are stiff and difficult to move this is called hypertonia.

Eye Involvement – There may be drooping of the upper eyelid a condition known as ptosis and an eye movement disorder called oculogyric crisis. Oculogyric crisis refers to dystonia in the ocular muscles. This manifests as bilateral elevation (rolling) of the eyes, backward and lateral flexion of the neck which can last for several hours and may be mistaken for an epileptic seizure.

Developmental delay – babies fail to meet any of their developmental milestones.

Autonomic dysfunction – this refers to problems with the part of the nervous system responsible for control of the bodily functions, such as breathing, the heartbeat, and digestive processes. Flushing maybe present along with nasal congestion, insomnia, irritability and crying.

Feeding difficulties – babies have difficulty feeding and gaining weight.

Red flag symptoms which might lead to suspicion of a neurotransmitter disease include:²

- *Difficulty waking in the morning*
- *Mixed movement disorder*
- *Autonomic dysfunction*
- *Involvement of the eyes*

What to do if you suspect a neurotransmitter disorder?

Many of these features that have been described can be seen in children who do not have a neurotransmitter disorder. However, if you notice a number or combination of these red flag signs and symptoms, then it is important that they are highlighted to the parent or primary care giver and encouragement given to have them reviewed by a doctor.

¹ <https://teachmeanatomy.com/nervous-system/components/neurotransmitters/> – accessed 09/07/2020

² Ng J, et al. Nat Rev Neurol. 2015;11(10):567–584

RECOGNISING NEUROTRANSMITTER DISORDERS



Paediatric neurotransmitter disorders are rare neurological disorders with onset during childhood¹



They are often misdiagnosed due to the presentation of neurological symptoms that overlap with those of other conditions^{1,2}



Motor symptoms are a prominent feature of these conditions due to deficiencies of dopamine and serotonin^{1,4}



Patients presenting with 'red flag' symptoms should be referred to a specialist for further diagnostic evaluation⁴



Differential diagnosis should be performed by a specialist paediatric neurologist and involves combining patient history, physical examination, biochemical tests and genetic analysis^{1,2,4}



Early and accurate diagnosis is important because many patients respond favourably to treatment^{2,5}

1. Brennenstuhl H, Jung-Klawitter S, Assmann B, et al. Inherited disorders of neurotransmitters: classification and practical approaches for diagnosis and treatment. *Neuropediatrics*. 2019;50(1):2–14. 2. Ng J, Heales SJ and Kurian MA. Clinical features and pharmacotherapy of childhood monoamine neurotransmitter disorders. *Paediatr Drugs*. 2014;16(4):275–291. 3. Siu W-K. Genetics of monoamine neurotransmitter disorders. *Transl Pediatr*. 2015;4(2):175–180. 4. Ng J, Papandreou A, Heales SJ, et al. Monoamine neurotransmitter disorders – clinical advances and future perspectives. *Nat Rev Neurol*. 2015;11(1):567–584. 5. Bindu PS and Taly AB. Neurometabolic disorders: A diagnostic approach. *Indian J Pract Pediatr*. 2016;18(2):48–60.

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To contribute to *Children in Scotland Magazine* contact Jennifer Drummond, Editor: E.jdrummond@childreninscotland.org.uk

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The magazine is one of our key member benefits but is currently being made available to everyone in the sector as part of our offer at this challenging time.

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Welcome...



Jennifer Drummond
Editor
[@jen_drum](https://twitter.com/jen_drum)
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...to a special Manifesto-themed edition of our magazine.

The end of the year always provides an opportunity to reflect, and 2020 is no different. The impact of Covid has been felt in every sector, affecting some more acutely than others, and has forced a collective stocktake of how things will, or could, look as we begin to move forward.

Children in Scotland's Manifesto 2021-26, launched in November, outlines what our vision for Scotland's children, young people and families is – and how we can get there over the next five years. It calls on politicians from all parties to act, urges a joined-up approach, and roots its calls in the fundamental rights outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and other human rights treaties. It unreservedly places children and young people at its core. They are, after all, the generation who will inherit the legacy we leave behind.

For many, the last nine months have meant personal changes that will extend beyond 2020, whether that be working arrangements, home

life, committing time to self-care or ensuring time to check-in with vulnerable members of our family or community.

Our Manifesto encourages us to take that same approach but look beyond our own circumstance, considering the bigger picture and the opportunity to work together to create a better society that is fairer for all. I'm proud to be part of an organisation that is working so hard for those who very often don't have a voice, or can be forgotten in an otherwise crowded political discourse.

We are delighted to have so many voices of support and solidarity, working towards our common goals, demonstrated throughout these pages of our Manifesto special. Their support, along with the other organisations and individuals who share our values, all contribute to advancing our vision of greater rights and equality.

Happy reading, enjoy the festive season whatever you do, and stay safe.

Drummond

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Lead news story

New campaign to tackle sexism and gender stereotypes in the media

Girlguiding Scotland's latest campaign aims to encourage girls and young women to challenge sexism and gender stereotypes in the media.

Created by their Speak Out Champions, the Media Mindful campaign is asking both traditional and social media outlets to stop reinforcing gender stereotypes. It calls for a commitment to a gender-sensitive approach when creating content, promoting a more diverse range of women and focusing on accomplishments and achievements rather than appearance, and urges social media platforms to have greater transparency on how girls and young women can report concerns.

As part of the campaign, the Champions, with support from the University of Strathclyde and Gender Equal Media (GEM) Scotland, have also created an activity pack designed to help girls develop media literacy skills.

Speak Out Champion, Leah Bartlett, age 17, said:

"As a group we realised that from a young age a lot of what we see in the media is unrealistic and this is having a negative impact on girls' happiness and mental health. We decided that we needed to take action. That's why we've developed the Media Mindful campaign to support girls and young women across Scotland to develop their resilience and think critically about the media they consume."

Professor Karen Boyle, director of Gender Studies at Strathclyde University, added: "We're so pleased to team up with Girlguiding Scotland to create this new activity pack all about supporting girls and young women to challenge how women and girls are portrayed and represented in the media. Equipping girls and young women with tools to critically engage with the media means we can help the next generation to navigate the pressures they face by what they read, watch and hear."

The campaign comes after it was identified that negative stereotypes were a key contributor to girls' unhappiness and poor mental health, and a prevalence of body image concern amongst girls and young women. Wider research by Girlguiding Scotland for their *Girls in Scotland 2020* report found that more than 50% of girls and young women aged 11-21 felt pressured to look different thanks to adverts online, and 68% said they believed newspapers, magazines and social media influencers needed to do more to stop reinforcing gender stereotypes.

> Find out more the Media Mindful campaign on the [Girlguiding Scotland website](#)

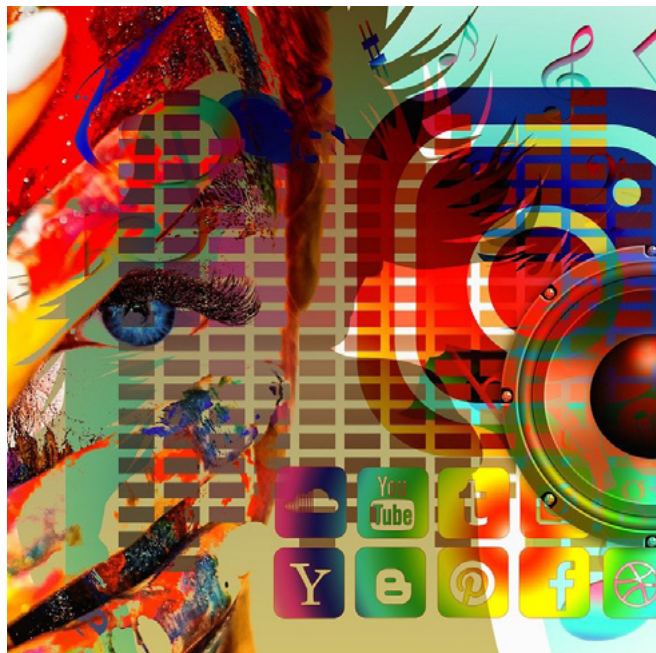
Funding, rights, travel and trade top concerns for young people post-Brexit

A group of children and young people have issued a series of calls about Scotland and the UK's future relationship with Europe as part of a landmark participation project.

The Children and Young People's Panel on Europe's report *Young Brexit Voices: It's Our Future Too*, gathers evidence and recommendations from a year of work looking at what impact leaving the EU might mean for them.

The key calls made by the Panel, which is supported by Children in Scotland and Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights), focus on maintaining EU funding, strengthening children's rights, protecting opportunities to work, study and travel abroad and supporting high standards for trade, particularly with imported food.

> Read the full report on the [Children in Scotland website](#)
> Watch a short film about the Panel's work and recommendations



Scottish Child Payment open for applications

Parents across Scotland are being urged to apply for a new child benefit due to start next year. The Scottish Child Payment will eventually award families a payment of £10 per week for every child they have under the age of 16.

The Scottish Government's Social Security Secretary, Shirley-Anne Somerville, said the Scottish Government was expecting "significant demand" for the payment, and so applications had been opened in November.

Paul Carberry, Director of Action for Children welcomed the payment and has urged eligible families to apply.

"The impacts of poverty are profound for Scotland's children, from poor mental health and wellbeing to poor performance at school", he said.

"The Scottish Child Payment will offer vital financial support for children, young people and their families. It can give back choice and dignity. We urge all those eligible to apply for this."

John Dickie of the Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland called the payment a "game-changer" when it was first announced in 2018.

The scheme was initially due to be implemented by the end of this year, but was delayed by the global coronavirus pandemic. The first payments are now due to be made in February 2021, with full roll-out by the end of 2022.

Glasgow pupils' video plea for supermarket

Pupils from Glasgow have taken the internet by storm with a documentary calling for a supermarket to be built in their local area.

It's Just Not Fair was created by young people at Castleton Primary School, in the Castlemilk area of Glasgow, to highlight the injustice of having no major supermarkets in the area.

It asks why the 14,000 residents of Castlemilk are required to take expensive and time-consuming trips outwith their local community, highlighting how impractical this is for many in the area.

They then call on some of the biggest supermarket chains across the country, including Aldi, Tesco, Asda and Morrisons, to 'make it fair'.

The school has been awarded the Best Documentary Audience Choice Award at the 2020 Into Film Awards. Into Film described the film as a "warm and witty rallying cry to the big supermarket chains."

Castleton teacher, Kirstie Wilkie, praised the children's efforts and urged the supermarket giants in the video to respond.

"They just want equity for Castlemilk", she said. "Maybe now someone will listen."

> View the award-winning video [here](#)

New anti-bullying toolkit for Scottish schools

A new resource to help tackle online bullying is being made available to schools across Scotland.

The Think B4 You Type toolkit, which provides guidance for adults and templates for anti-bullying messages, has been developed by NSPCC Scotland and anti-bullying charity respectme in collaboration with a group of young people.

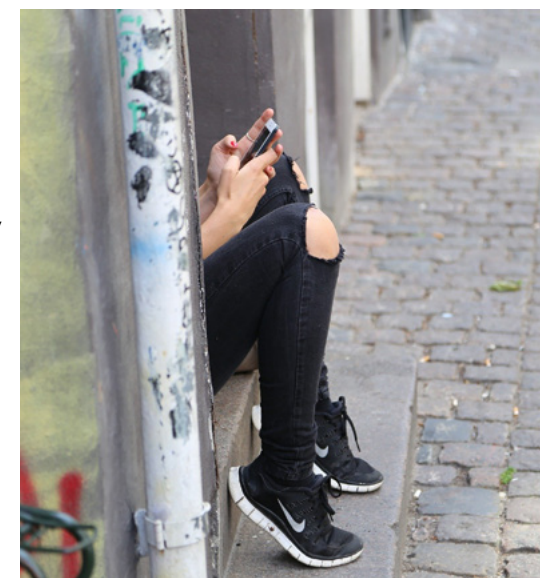
It builds upon previous activity by the charity, which worked with eight secondary schools in Angus to raise awareness of online bullying and find local, youth-led solutions.

Rachel Talbot, a pupil at Brechin High School in Angus, was on the advisory group for the original campaign and chaired the toolkit's virtual launch in November.

She said: "By working with our peers in our schools and sharing our own experiences, together we were able to create the Think B4 You Type campaign and make recommendations to Angus City Council regarding their anti-bullying policy in our schools."

"I believe the activities that we ran at school during anti-bullying week made everyone really think about the issue and the impact it can have on people's lives."

> Schools can download the toolkit for free at respectme.org.uk



National Qualifications 2020-21

Find out what you need to know about exams and coursework this year at:
www.sqa.org.uk/learner



Hope in hard times

Children in Scotland's recently launched Manifesto demands action from Scotland's political parties and calls for a fairer society with equality at its heart. *Amy Woodhouse* explains more, and over the next 20 pages organisations and individuals from across Scotland tell us why they are supporting our calls



Amy Woodhouse
Head of Policy, Projects
and Participation
Children in Scotland

Twitter
[@amywoodhouse](https://twitter.com/amywoodhouse)

In November, Children in Scotland published our Manifesto for 2021-26. It sets out our policy priorities for the next five years, identifying cultural, practical and legislative changes we think are necessary to improve the lives of children, young people and families living in Scotland. It also establishes the direction for our own work and reflects our vision that all children in Scotland have an equal chance to flourish.

In producing each of our 33 calls, we have endeavoured to be aspirational but realistic. Our asks of Scotland's political parties span a wide range of areas that affect the lives of children, young people and families, and are designed to cover both shorter-term goals and longer-term ambitions. We hope you find here principles, evidence and calls to action that they can champion.

We also hope you see yourselves in what we are calling for. We've taken our time to develop the Manifesto, engaging with our members at several stages, alongside our staff team, our Board and children and young people's advisory group Changing our World. We've also sought to draw from published evidence to inform our calls, and ground them in what we know works. These are all referenced throughout our Manifesto, but represent only a small range of the evidence that's informed the positions we've taken. Crucially, this includes evidence from children, young people and families themselves.

The Manifesto has been structured into 10 themes covering the priorities that emerged from our consultation process and reflecting our own strategic aims and project findings.

In each section you'll also find links to all the relevant Articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, in recognition of how children's rights are embedded throughout.

We are acutely aware we have published our Manifesto at a very unusual time, in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic. Things are ever-changing and it is difficult to imagine what life in Scotland post-pandemic may look like, or when or how restrictions will be lifted. With that in mind, it is important that we reflect on the huge challenges and difficulties the pandemic has placed on children, young people, families and the sector as a whole.

But we are also keen to look beyond this.

We want to think about what we can take from our experiences in 2020 to inform the future shape and structure of Scottish society. With incorporation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into domestic law around the corner, we have a wonderful opportunity to forge a society built on respecting and upholding the rights of all children. That is really something to take hope and strength from.

We're very proud and encouraged by the range of organisations who have already offered their support, and delighted that 10 organisations and individuals have chosen this edition to tell us why they are endorsing our calls.

Many thanks for your input, guidance and support. It is a privilege to work in a sector where so many share a common vision for improving the lives of children, young people and families.

Together we are a force to be reckoned with!

**"Thank you
for your
support.
So many in
this sector
share a
common
vision."**



Read the full Children in Scotland Manifesto for 2021-26 in full on our website childreninscotland.org.uk or published on our PageSuite platform [here](#)

Manifesto theme 1: Rights, Democracy and Our Place in the World

Our vision is that Scotland will be a welcoming, outward-looking country, that realises the rights of citizens and engages internationally to be a world leader on global issues.

The next Scottish Government has an essential role in realising children's rights, particularly following the introduction of the Bill to incorporate the UNCRC into Scottish law. Scotland must also continue to be a world leader in human rights more broadly whilst also continuing to welcome people from all over the world.

Call Provide adequate funding to meaningfully implement the UNCRC across public services, alongside a suite of policies and actions that will realise children's rights.

Call The Scottish Government to make sure that children and young people have a say in key Scottish Government decision-making processes, including Citizens' Assemblies.

Call The Scottish Government to incorporate human rights treaties, including the Convention to End Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (UNCPRD) and United Nations Convention to End all forms of Racial Discrimination (UNCERD) to enhance the human rights protections of children, young people and their families.

Call The Scottish Government to bring forward legislation by the end of 2021 to raise the Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility to 16.

Call The Scottish Government to work together with the UK Government to develop policies and practice which benefit all people seeking asylum and host communities. This includes sufficient financial support to meet their basic needs, adequate housing and support for mental health, physical health and opportunities to connect with others.



Supporting comment: Scottish Youth Parliament

Children and young people deserve a seat at the table

Scottish Youth Parliament Chair, *Josh Kennedy*, responds to our Manifesto theme on rights and democracy, highlighting why continuous, meaningful engagement is key to an equal, fair and democratic society



Josh Kennedy
Chair, Scottish Youth Parliament and MSYP for Renfrewshire North and West

Twitter: @Official SYP

Young people's rights have, encouragingly, taken centre stage this past year. We, as a collective, have worked hard to ensure our voices are heard, whether this be through the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement, climate action, or SQA exam protests. Now as the UNCRC Incorporation Bill progresses through the Scottish Parliament, there is no doubt that Scotland is moving in the right direction in terms of young people's rights. But there is still a long way to go.

The enacting of this legislation will have a profound effect on Scottish society; however, this must be supported by credible action, and funding, which will work to transform Scotland into a truly rights respecting society.

Naturally, it's all well and good to say it will happen, but how does this work in action?

In June 2019, the Scottish Youth Parliament held a discussion day with MSYPs to identify how the rights of young people can be better actioned across society. Perhaps unsurprisingly, education was at the heart of our discussions.

Education on our rights cannot stop at primary school. It must be engaging and it must be statutory within our curriculum. UNICEF's Rights Respecting School award should not be a novelty, but a benchmark for schools in Scotland to achieve in young people's rights.

In addition, there is an onus on decision-makers to ensure that the discussion of children's and young people's rights is open and inclusive to ensure that everyone is involved. This discussion is key.

The issue of young people's rights cannot and should not end with the incorporation of the UNCRC into Scots law and the initial changes it brings are brought into place. There must be continuous meaningful engagement with young people on issues

important to them – the very basis of Article 12 of the Convention that we are binding in our law.

Scottish Youth Parliament embodies this in the work that we carry out. Often, through consultation (which we do a lot of!) we are helped to better understand the views and opinions of young people so we can advocate for what they want to change. This gives SYP a unique mandate to act on behalf of our constituents, and gives our advocacy weight when working with key decision-

makers across Scotland. We share young people's views with Cross-Party Groups, Scottish Parliamentary Committees, stakeholders, and many more!

We firmly believe that Scotland is a better place to live when its young people are fundamental to discussions of how we as a country move forward. As we begin to emerge in a post-Covid world, this has never been so important. Events like the Annual Scottish Cabinet meeting with children and young people underpins the value of our voice. Through it, we have raised key issues, including

the Incorporation of the UNCRC itself, which was on the back of SYP's successful 'Right Here Right Now' campaign.

Scotland is undoubtedly at a crossroads, as we approach perhaps the most important Holyrood election yet.

Children and young people in Scotland deserve a seat at the table. Only when young people are empowered, their rights will be fully realised and their voices properly heard.

> The Scottish Youth Parliament is a politically independent organisation representing the voice of young people. syp.org.uk

Manifesto theme 2: Poverty and Inequality

Our vision is that all children, young people and families should have enough money to live happy, healthy and fulfilling lives

All children, young people and families should have access to the financial resources they need to live, not just survive. However, rates of child poverty in Scotland have remained high over many years. Unless drastic action is taken, they are likely to grow further.

Call Ensure every worker, regardless of age, is paid the real living wage by the end of the next parliament. Potential increases to the value of the living wage to ensure wages rise with inflation should also be explored.

Call Apply a rights-based approach to anti-poverty policy which recognises and reflects the lived experience of those living in poverty and upholds their dignity.

Call Adopt all calls developed by the End Child Poverty Coalition



Supporting comment: PEEK

A dignity-based approach to poverty policy is crucial

Raising household income and addressing issues around housing will be key to tackling rising child poverty rates and inequality across the country. But we must move faster, urges *Michaela Collins*



Michaela Collins
Chief Executive
PEEK - Possibilities for
Each and Every Kid

Twitter: @PEEK_project_

Child poverty rates across Scotland remain consistently high. According to the Scottish Government's own poverty and inequality statistics, approximately 230,000 children across the country are living in poverty. This equates to almost one in four. Around 65% of these children live in working households.

These were the statistics before the global pandemic. Things are only going to get worse.

In some of the communities we support, as many as one in two children are impacted by poverty. We know children in our communities are going to bed cold and hungry. Every day we see the effects of poverty and we know many families are struggling. This simply isn't good enough. As families experience redundancy, less hours, more caring responsibilities and isolation as a result of Covid, we have witnessed a sharp increase in families reaching out to us for support and we expect this to continue.

"We know children in our community are going to bed cold and hungry"

Bold, ambitious and immediate action is required. This is why PEEK wholeheartedly endorses Children in Scotland's Manifesto, and specifically the calls designed to tackle poverty and inequality, which we believe will help and protect some of our country's most vulnerable.

Many of the families PEEK supports survive on low incomes and as a result of the pandemic have experienced financial instability. We encourage all employers to ensure they are paying a real living wage and not just the legally required bare minimum. By ensuring every worker is paid the real living wage, rising with inflation, the Scottish Government will make genuine inroads to tackling the problem of in-work poverty. The real living wage will make sure people in work earn enough to support themselves and their families.

We are acutely aware of the impact children's home environments have on their wellbeing. More high quality, affordable, accessible housing with improved environmental sustainability is required urgently to make sure children have a safe space to call home. Access to a home that is safe, warm, free from damp and other hazards to health is a child's fundamental right, as outlined in the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child. We believe this should also be a priority for the Scottish Government as we move forward.

Finally, we believe the Scottish Government should apply a dignity-based approach to anti-poverty policy. The voices of children and those with lived experience should be heard throughout every stage of policy development and implementation. Their input is invaluable in understanding the cause and effect of poverty, and should guide policy and investment for meaningful and sustainable change.

The calls outlined in the Manifesto are achievable, but it requires us all to continue to strive for the transformation that is needed. Children in Scotland, along with members, partners and the wider children's sector, must continue to work with children across the country to provide a platform for them to be involved in the decisions that shape their lives and continue to hold those in Scottish Government to account.

Conversations need to be had, decisions made quickly, and actions must be implemented faster to respond to the needs of children. Poverty and inequality impacts every aspect of children's lives and is affecting far too many children in our country.

Society must be bolder, more ambitious and quicker to respond if we are to ensure Scotland really is the best place for our children to grow up.

> PEEK works to enhance possibilities for children and people across Scotland, working in areas of high deprivation across Glasgow. peekproject.org.uk

Manifesto theme 3: Early Years

Our vision is that all children have the best start in life, and families have the support they need when faced with the challenges of raising infants and young children

There is a significant body of evidence which underlines the importance of early childhood development. It is widely acknowledged that what happens to children in the first few years of life is a key determinant of their future health, wellbeing, learning and employment outcomes.

Our calls in this area reflect what we know to be key to successful early childhood development including attachment and relationship-building, family support, early learning and childcare and inclusion.

Call Invest in a joined-up system of universal and targeted support services for families in the crucial first few years of life when children are aged 0-2. Relationship-based interventions must be a central point of this so that families receive the help they need early on to enable them to provide the best possible start for their children.

Call Deliver the early learning and childcare expansion by August 2021 to ensure high-quality, accessible and affordable childcare for all families. The expansion must reflect individual children's needs and deliver high quality experiences to improve outcomes for all children.

Call Prioritise inclusion in the early years and ensure that services are fully available and accessible to families of very young children with additional support needs.

This should include:

- good transition pathways in place to all Early Learning and Childcare services
- training available to all early years staff in all sectors on inclusive practice
- continued support through the ELC Inclusion Fund.



Supporting Comment: Early Years Scotland

A delay to funded childcare is a delay to enhancing children's lives

Investment must continue in the early years to narrow the poverty-related attainment gap, and ensure equity of access to good quality, affordable childcare and early learning opportunities, writes *Lorna Kettles*



Lorna Kettles
Policy Officer
Early Years Scotland

> Early Years Scotland is the national third sector organisation for children pre-birth to 5 years old.
earlyyearsscotland.org

Twitter: @earlyyearsscot

Early Years Scotland (EYS) is in a privileged position working for and on behalf of our members across the Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) sector, as well as providing vital direct services and support to children and families across Scotland, many of whom come from the most disadvantaged backgrounds in the country.

The calls within the Children in Scotland Manifesto resonate with the work we do on a daily basis. We are particularly pleased to see a focus on universal and targeted support for families with children aged 0-2 as a whole-family approach is something that underpins many of our own services.

Our Stay Play and Learn model aims to narrow the poverty-related attainment gap in Scotland. We work with babies, eligible twos, P1s, young parents and within prisons across Scotland, targeting programmes in areas where need is greatest. The benefits for both parent and child of playing and learning together in a friendly and stimulating setting is evidenced as this is transferred naturally into the family home and everyday life. This type of family-focused approach continues to be extremely effective in ensuring children have the best start in life.

But for this type of approach to be successful there needs to be a consideration of, and communication with, a range of agencies, including access groups, that benefit the whole family. There is real value for both parent/carer and child in engaging in experiences such as baby massage, Bookbug and toddler groups, for example. However, Covid has placed real pressure on these activities with many struggling to reopen and sustain services since restrictions were eased. The effect of this is twofold – not only do those running these groups lose their livelihoods, but parents and carers have fewer options for engagement with their peers at this crucial stage, increasing the risk of loneliness, isolation and poor mental health. We fully support all efforts to ensure that support for families with very young children continues in the way that meets their needs.

“We see first hand the importance of positive interactions and support in the early years”

In addition, the planned extension of funded early learning and childcare hours was intended as a means to further support families and early years development and we have been involved in preparations for the expansion in a number of ways. The decision, therefore, to delay full roll-out of the statutory duty to provide these hours, whilst understandable given the circumstances, was disappointing. Preparations, such as increasing staff numbers, enhancing or extending property, and investing in a range of additional resources, were well underway in settings throughout the country. This announcement also came at a time of real uncertainty within the sector, particularly for private, voluntary and independent (PVI) colleagues, whose anxieties were already heightened due to closure as a result of Covid.

Some local authorities are continuing with their plans, offering full funding to all eligible children in their area. However, this is creating something of a postcode lottery, as not all councils are able to commit to offering the full funded entitlement as yet. We therefore echo the call to ensure full roll-out of 1,140 hours across all local authorities by August 2021. One of the key principles of this policy was to ensure equity of access to high quality ELC. A delay to this is a delay to enhancing and improving the lives of children in Scotland. Access to 1,140 hours has the potential to significantly narrow the educational attainment gap and challenge both child poverty and poverty overall. It is therefore not fair or equitable that some children are able to access this opportunity when others cannot.

As an organisation, we see first-hand the importance of positive interactions and support in the earliest years of a child's life. We would encourage all political parties to take heed of the calls about Early Years in this Manifesto which will make a real difference to children and their families, not just in their early years but throughout the course of their lives.

Manifesto theme 4: Learning

Our vision is all children and young people in Scotland achieve their learning potential

We are calling on Scotland to have an integrated and holistic approach to learning that supports all children to achieve their potential. Our calls emphasise the importance of wellbeing, needs-based tailored support, play-based learning, improved transitions and increasing capacity of the workforce.

Call Wellbeing should be the central focus of Scottish education. A review of Curriculum for Excellence should be undertaken to explore how wellbeing, relationships and play can be fully embedded in the delivery of education. Recommendations from the review should be implemented before the end of the next parliament.

Call The Scottish Government should learn from the Finland experience and introduce a 'hobby premium' to ensure that all children and young people in Scotland have free access to a hobby or activity of their choice within or around the school day.

Call Ensure a diverse workforce supporting the learning of children and young people. Funding must be adequate to operate at a capacity to meet the needs of all children and young people.

This should include:

- A commitment to returning specialist provision for children with additional support needs to 2010 levels by 2021. This includes schools, Support for Learning teachers, Speech and Language therapists and Educational Psychologists
- A commitment to raising the esteem and value of Pupil Support Assistants within the education system through providing clarity over their remit, and provision of appropriate training, support and supervision
- Publishing a comprehensive Youth Work Strategy and committing adequate funding to fully integrate Youth Work, Community Learning and Development, home link workers and other forms of learning with formal education.



Supporting comment: Harmeny Education Trust

For children to flourish they need the right support, at the right time

With Scottish Government statistics recording nearly 216,000 Scottish children as having Additional Support Needs, ensuring that they are included and experience a high quality education must be a priority, argues **Mandy Shiel**



Mandy Shiel
Head of Education
Harmeny Education Trust

> Harmeny Education Trust offers specialist education services, both on a day and all year round residential basis, for children aged five to 14. They work with children and young people with complex Social Emotional and Behavioural Needs. They are currently looking to develop services for young people beyond the age of 14.
harmeny.org.uk

Twitter: @HarmenyEd

This year has brought about unprecedented circumstances which are likely to have an enormous impact on all of our children's wellbeing and learning. However, I remain optimistic for the years ahead. I am encouraged by the strong focus on meeting the learning needs of all of Scotland's children, evidenced by recent work by the Scottish Government. The 'Promise', the Review of, and subsequent Action Plan for Additional Support for Learning as well as the plans to fully incorporate the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child all speak highly of national priorities and intentions.

At Harmeny, we place a large emphasis on our children being 'ready to learn'. We listen to their views, making certain we know who, and what, will help them to develop their inherent strengths and shine. But for this to happen, children must be supported by the right people, at the right time and for the right length of time.

Solid foundations for learning are based on strong relationships. For children to achieve their potential, it is important they have the correct support available. We have seen first-hand the impact of positive, nourishing relationships. Supporting a speech and language therapist on-site has improved our children's ability to communicate not only verbally but also on an emotional level, and we strongly support the call for increased investment in these, and other specialist services, across the education landscape. Having these specialist services available in mainstream schools will also make huge inroads in ensuring children with additional support needs feel included in all aspects of their learning. We also need to increase the learning opportunities and funding for support staff in all learning settings.

We know transitions can be one of the most overwhelming experiences for children with Additional Support Needs. We believe there needs to be an introduction of Support for Pupils staff at primary schools to ensure holistic planning for children identified with Additional Support Needs in their early stages of life and learning, which will aid in the transition throughout a child's educational journey, as highlighted by Children in Scotland. It is also crucial that their anxieties are heard and shared.

The Curriculum for Excellence has revolutionised how children learn, encouraging a focus on playing, identifying interests and being creative. With an increased emphasis on Health and Wellbeing, staff will be able to promote values for lifelong learning which will ensure our children grow and develop into citizens of Scotland who will flourish whilst living and leading in a prosperous country. Wellbeing should be at the centre of all we do in education, and in the very early stages of life every child must experience the state of being comfortable, healthy and happy.

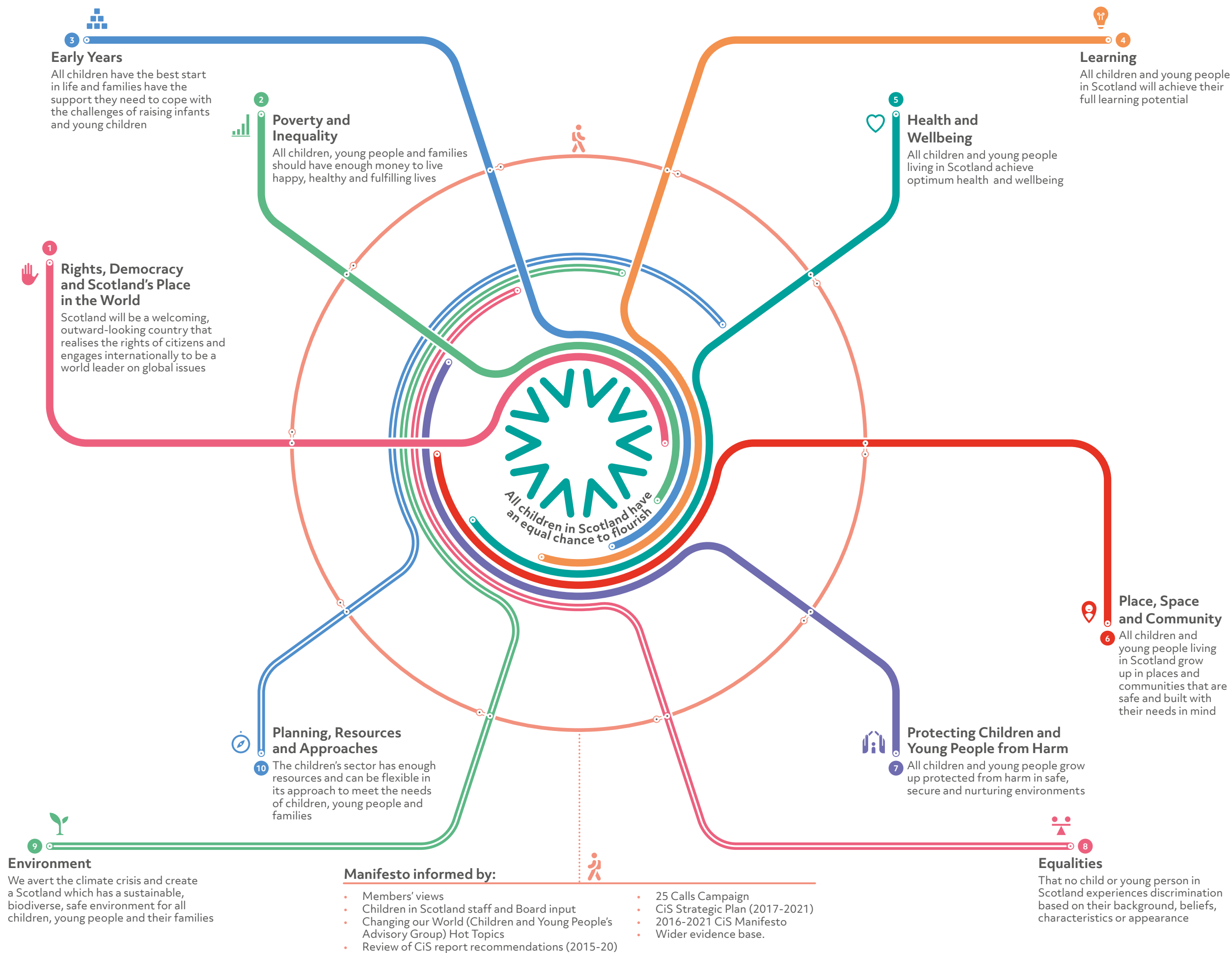
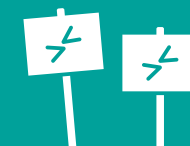
In this context it is important to understand the positive impact of play. Aside from bringing joy, play also allows children to use their creativity while developing their imagination and dexterity and their physical, cognitive and emotional strength which they will need to face future challenges. A study in Finland identified that breaktimes for all children should be longer than 20 minutes to allow for the real benefits of play to have an effect on the endorphins within a child's body. This then has a positive influence on their readiness and motivation to learn in school. The importance of time for play is often recognised and encouraged, but we agree it should be considered to be a more integral part of the school day. We would encourage taking a step further and consider introducing play therapists and increasing play opportunities within individual schools and across cluster primary schools. This will especially enhance the wellbeing of children with Additional Support Needs.

So, let's take ownership of the new policies and practices that aim to improve the lives of our most vulnerable children, invest in the resources to ensure they get the specialist support the need, and focus on having *fun* in and beyond the classroom. Such endeavours will improve the outcomes for all Scotland's children.

"We see first-hand the impact of positive, nourishing relationships"



Children in Scotland Manifesto for 2021-26



Theme 1:
Rights, Democracy and Scotland's Place in the World

Theme 2:
Poverty and Inequality

Theme 3:
Early Years

Theme 4:
Learning

Theme 5:
Health and Wellbeing

Theme 6:
Place, Space and Community

Theme 7:
Protecting Children and Young People from Harm

Theme 8:
Equalities

Theme 9:
Environment

Theme 10:
Planning, Resources and Approaches


Shared values

Manifesto theme 5: Health and Wellbeing

Our vision is all children and young people living in Scotland achieve optimum health and wellbeing

Children in Scotland have some of the worst health in Europe, thanks, in part, to a range of complex and interconnected social and economic factors. Increasing rates of mental health issues amongst young people, compounded by the Covid-19 pandemic, continues to also be of concern.

We believe there needs to be more investment in intervention, prevention and health and wellbeing related education.

Call Invest in mental health prevention and early intervention for children and young people to stop problems deteriorating to the extent they require specialist CAMHS services.

This must include:

- Targeted support for groups at risk of poorer mental health
- Wider, year-round access to mental health-improving universal services such as sport, youth work, play and the arts
- Perinatal mental health/family support
- Counselling, peer support and other talking therapies.

Call Ensure that personal and social education (PSE) classes provide honest, non-judgemental opportunities to discuss health and wellbeing and are co-designed with children and young people, as called for by our children and young people's advisory group Changing our World

Call Publish a series of rights-based wellbeing outcomes and indicators for children, young people and families to give future direction to policy action to improve the health and wellbeing of children, young people and families living in Scotland.



Supporting comment: Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health

When we get health and wellbeing right, our investment is rewarded

Supporting health and wellbeing amongst our children and young people is imperative both for personal and societal benefits, but will only be achieved with a whole-system approach, writes Professor Steven Turner



Professor Steven Turner
Scotland Officer
Royal College of
Paediatrics and Child
Health

> The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health is a member organisation which aims to transform child health through knowledge, innovation and expertise. rcpch.ac.uk

Twitter: @RCPCHScotland

The ten themes outlined in the Children in Scotland Manifesto resonate clearly with the themes within the 2020 RCPCH State of Child Health, which considers child health outcomes and data trends across the UK.

Our findings align particularly well with the priorities outlined in the health and wellbeing section of the Manifesto. In this theme, the Manifesto calls for commitments to invest in prevention and treatment of mental health illness and this is very welcome. Before the pandemic there was a well-recognised unmet burden of anxiety and depression in our children and young people; this burden is no lighter as we approach the anniversary of the first Covid lockdown.

Children in Scotland also calls for opportunities for children and young people to discuss health and wellbeing in schools and for co-ordinated policy actions aimed at improving health and wellbeing. Child health and wellbeing is the product of a "whole-system" approach; it takes a village to raise a child. The route to health and wellbeing includes many aspects of society and government external to the NHS, e.g. education, transport policy, town planning and law and order and positive outcomes are only achieved when every cog in the wheel works to support the other and the overall aim.

Obesity is the exemplar for why a whole-system approach is required.

Obesity is the response of a healthy child to an unhealthy environment. It is also intertwined with mental health issues and poverty. Preventing and treating obesity is not as simple as managing diet and exercise – although these are of course important. To effect a change on diet and exercise we need to change our lived environment, namely readily available, cheap and healthy food and exercise as part of daily living. Social norms also need to change. We need to stop offering praise for a clear plate or rewards or bribes in sugar or chocolate.

The only way Scottish Government will meet its target of reducing childhood obesity to 7-8% by 2030 is if a child health

perspective is adopted across all aspects of national and local government.

And we have good reason for optimism.

Scotland has proven that we can make changes which improve the health and wellbeing of its children and young people. We have a proud history of protecting our children from the harmful effects of secondhand smoke; social norms and behaviours around smoking have been transformed by bold legislation, multidisciplinary and interdepartmental working and investment. *Getting it Right for Every Child* sets out the nation's principles and values on children's rights, and should be key to achieving optimum health and wellbeing for our children and young people. When it is introduced, the government's Child and Young Person Health and Wellbeing outcome framework will complement the recent incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child into Scottish law. Such a whole-system approach should be key to ensuring that Scotland is the best place on the planet to grow up.

The last 12 months, which have included both a global pandemic and Brexit, have shown we will always face challenges. To navigate both these known and unknown challenges we need a population who are physically and mentally well. When we get health and wellbeing right in children, our investment is rewarded in a few short years by a healthy, resilient workforce who can support the economy and their own families.

We commend the themes and vision within the Children in Scotland Manifesto and urge the incoming government to take note, not just of the health and wellbeing calls, but to aspire to all the themes within.

"Scotland has evidenced we can make changes to improve the health and wellbeing of its children and young people"

Manifesto theme 6: Place, Space and Community

Our vision is that all children and young people living in Scotland grow up in places that are safe and built with their needs in mind

Where children live has significant impact on their outcomes. It is not just about families and the choices they are able to make. It is written in the communities of where they live: the quality of buildings, levels of pollution, access to green or play space, opportunities for healthier life choices, travel connectivity, feeling safe from crime and feeling connected.

Based on research, and our own work with young people about the communities they live in, our Manifesto 2021-26 calls for the following:

Call Build rights-based communities around the things children and families need, using UNICEF Child Friendly Cities as a framework across small communities, towns and cities. The Scottish Government must ensure that local authorities have the guidance and financial resources to make this happen.

Call Ensure all families have access to high quality, affordable housing by improving the quantity, quality and environmental sustainability of the social housing supply in Scotland.

Call Increase planning restrictions on off-licences and betting shops near to schools, playgrounds and other places where children gather.



Supporting comment:: Professor Niamh Shortt

Not all neighbourhoods are equal

The places we spend our time in are integral to our health, wellbeing and life chances. To create positive spaces for communities we need to change the narrative and listen to what they need, writes *Professor Niamh Shortt*



Professor Niamh Shortt
Professor of Health Geographies
University of Edinburgh

Twitter: @NiamhShortt

Places are not just containers of our daily lives. They shape all that we do and in turn, through our activities, political engagement and actions, we shape the places around us.

Evidence suggests that places can shape our health and wellbeing, and our life chances. For example, the presence of a busy road may lead to greater levels of air pollution. Research tells us that around 40,000 deaths a year in the UK are linked to air pollution. Evidence also suggests that those living in greener areas report better health than those in less green areas.

Aspects of the social environment can make daily life choices easier, such as access to childcare, food availability, access to good quality schools and accessible play areas. In addition, aspects such as social cohesion or neighbourliness, will also have an impact. Do people look out for one another? We should also consider social norms around health-related behaviours; do most people in the neighbourhood smoke or drink excessively? All of these features can shape childhood experiences within a neighbourhood, for better or for worse. But we know not all children have the same experience and not all neighbourhoods are equal.

Put simply, neighbourhoods that are more deprived have worse health than neighbourhoods that are less deprived. But importantly there is a health gradient. This is not just seen between the least deprived and the most deprived neighbourhoods, but each neighbourhood does progressively worse on the social gradient. Places can either promote or damage health and these places are not equally shared. More healthy environments are most often found in more affluent neighbourhoods, with the converse also true, that more unhealthy environments are most often found in more deprived neighbourhoods. We then see vast health inequalities between these two places. A baby boy born now and growing up in the most affluent areas of Scotland can expect to live for 13 years longer than a baby boy born and growing up in the most deprived areas.

So, what can be done?

First, we need to recognise that these differences between neighbourhoods are not natural. Places are shaped by political and economic decisions that in turn shape the lives of those who live in them. A few years ago, the World Health Organisation published a report exploring the fundamental causes of health inequalities. They called these causes the Social Determinants of Health and concluded that the “unequal distribution of health-damaging experiences is not in any sense a ‘natural’ phenomenon but is the result of a toxic combination of poor social policies and programs, unfair economic arrangements, and bad politics.”

Second, we need to give children a say in how our neighbourhoods are shaped and how they can be changed to improve children's lives. Recent work by Children in Scotland aimed to do just this and their participative research project on health inequalities, involving children aged 10-18 living in areas of high deprivation, developed a set of recommendations to create communities that could better support health and wellbeing. Their call to build communities around the things children and families need will require further engagement with the most important stakeholders – the people who live and grow in these communities.

Third, we need to recognise the importance of tackling unhealthy commodities and the influence that these have on children's experiences. These unhealthy commodities, including alcohol, tobacco, highly processed foods and gambling, can shape our high streets and our behaviours. This Manifesto calls for us to focus on this, with particular reference to alcohol and gambling.

Finally, we need to shift the public rhetoric away from a focus on personal choice and bad behaviours as drivers of health inequalities. Instead we need to move towards focussing on the role of broader structures in shaping the life chances of people and their ability to engage in healthy lifestyles. This shift includes a focus on place and the creation of environments that can support health and wellbeing because all young people deserve to grow up in a neighbourhood that supports their health.

“Places are shaped by political and economic decisions that then influence the lives of those who live there”

> Professor Shortt was an academic partner on Children in Scotland's Health Inequalities: Participative Research into the Role of Communities project.

[Read more about the project here](#)

[Read the final report, published in January 2020, here](#)

Manifesto theme 7: Protecting Children and Young People from Harm

Our vision is that all children and young people grow up protected from harm in safe, secure and nurturing environments

Growing up in poverty, or being exposed to violence, neglect or parental substance misuse can have a significant and long-term impact on a child's life. Over the past few years there has been a noticeable change in how we respond to vulnerable children and young people at risk, involved in offending, or needing our care and protection.

Our increasing understanding of the impact of trauma and a focus on rights-based responses is welcome, but we have more to do.

Call Invest in relationship-based family support. A coherent national approach is necessary to guarantee that all families receive the support they need for as long as they need it, and to ensure families do not fall through the cracks of a piecemeal network of support services.

Call Fully implement the Independent Care Review findings and recommendations by 2030, in line with the timescales set out in the reports.

Call Learn from findings of approaches, such as the Scottish Barnahus pilot led by Children 1st, supporting children and young people who have been victims or have witnessed violence. Commit to implementing and funding a national approach.



Supporting comment: Children 1st

Our systems need to be redesigned to help heal

Children 1st is one of the organisations piloting the Scottish Barnahus model. Mary Glasgow tells us why we need to overhaul our care and judicial systems to better protect children and young people – and ensure their recovery



Mary Glasgow
Chief Executive
Children 1st

Twitter: @children1st

> Read more about learning from the Barnahus model and how it will be piloted in Scotland [here](#)

It is completely intolerable that the systems which are supposed to provide care and justice and protect the rights of children who have experienced crime can cause them greater trauma, harm and distress. We urge every political party to adopt Children in Scotland's Manifesto commitment to learn from the findings of the Scottish Barnahus pilot to support children and young people who have been victims or have witnessed violence and to implement and fund a national approach to Barnahus.

Day in and day out, children tell us that instead of feeling protected by the criminal justice system in Scotland, they are let down. Designed by adults for adults and rooted in the Victorian era, Scotland's system of justice retraumatizes children. It asks them to repeatedly tell their story to a number of different professionals, involves complex and confusing procedures, long delays and compounds their trauma and distress.

One child victim told us how intimidating it is to be asked to go to a police station. They said: "You walk in through those big automatic doors. Then there's two doors and a big long wooden bench. So even, uncomfortable, just uncomfortable, uncomfortable to sit on, freezing because of the automatic doors, very cold and yeah, scary. Very scary, very, very scary."

Then, when a child's terrible journey through the justice system is complete, they are left with little or no support to recover from their experiences.

The impact can last a lifetime.

That's why Children 1st, along with Victim Support Scotland, Children England and University of Edinburgh and £1.5m funding from the People's Postcode Lottery Dream Fund, are developing Britain's first ever 'Child's House for Healing', due to open in the West of Scotland next year.

Based on a European model of justice for children called the Barnahus – translated as "children's house" – the Child's House for Healing will be a child-friendly, safe and welcoming place for children to go to, as an alternative to courts, social work offices and police stations.

The Child's House for Healing will bring health, justice, social work and recovery services under one roof. The Scottish Barnahus pilot is supported by the Scottish Government, and local police, health and social work services who share our vision of ensuring that systems always heal and never harm. Most importantly it is a real opportunity to transform our systems of justice, care, support and recovery so that they wrap their arms around some of the most vulnerable children in Scotland, ensuring they can recover from experiences that most of us would find unimaginable. Instead of children's lives being blighted and their futures destroyed by trauma and abuse, children will recover from their experiences and feel safe and happy again.

As we develop the Child's House for Healing we will use a test, learn and develop approach to show how this vision can be realised for children in every part of Scotland. This will enable the roll-out of Barnahus nationwide across the country, realising children's rights to care, protection, justice and recovery wherever they live.

One mum summed up the difference the Child's House for Healing will make: "I think that (having a Barnahus) would be much more helpful (emotionally) because all of the buildings we have gone to have been horrific", she said. "Not just us but everyone after us has to experience that, at the end of the day these things are never going to be all flowers, but they can be done in a better way, for sure."

The Scottish system, as it stands, is traumatic for children and young people to experience. Along with Children in Scotland, we urge for cross-party support for and investment in the Scottish Barnahus model, recognising the difference it will make to young victims of crime and witnesses to violence.

"The Child's House for Healing will be a child-friendly, safe and welcoming alternative to courts, social work offices and police stations"

Manifesto theme 8: Equalities

Our vision is to ensure that no child or young person in Scotland experiences discrimination based on their background, beliefs, characteristics or appearance

Discrimination is still sadly prevalent in Scotland in many forms. Recent reports from organisations such as the Equality and Human Rights Commission, NSPCC and LGBT Youth Scotland reveal disheartening statistics and stark warnings. We know many of these issues stem from structural inequality and ongoing inequity in society that we believe can, and should be tackled.

Call Undertake Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessments on all policy relating to children and families, contributing to the development of Scottish Government policy that improves the lives of everyone with protected characteristics.

Call Bring forward an action plan to diversify the children's sector workforce and the Scottish Government workforce by the end of 2021.

Call Bring forward legislation to reform the Gender Recognition Act to make it easier for trans people to apply for a gender recognition certificate.



Supporting comment: Equality and Human Rights Commission

We don't want a return to normal. Normal created these inequalities

When we consider the future of Scotland, and the next sitting of the Scottish Parliament, we need to strive to 'build forward' with a fairer and more equal society for all, argues Dr Lesley Sawers



Dr Lesley Sawers
Equality and Human Rights
Commissioner for Scotland

> Find out more about the work of the Equality and Human Rights Commission in Scotland at equalityhumanrights.com/en/commission-scotland

Twitter: @EHRCSotland

"Action needs to be taken to meet different needs, remove disadvantage and encourage greater representation"

To say that 2020 has been challenging is quite the understatement. The social and economic consequences of the coronavirus pandemic will be felt for the foreseeable future and may very well frame the experiences of this generation and many more to come.

In response, the next Scottish Parliament must be bold, brave and ambitious in pursuing action to ensure that 'building back better' includes eradicating the stark inequalities in our society that are not new, but which the pandemic has helped us to see more clearly. We do not want to see a 'return to normal'. 'Normal' created these inequalities. What comes next and how we 'build forward' must be different.

At the Equality and Human Rights Commission it is our job to help make Britain fairer by safeguarding and enforcing the laws that protect people's rights to fairness, dignity and respect. We believe that when equality is considered from the start of policy development, and when policies are co-created with the people who will feel the impact most keenly, the outcome is more robust, higher quality and ultimately a more equal society.

The Equality Act places a duty on public authorities to think about the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic. The duty helps to focus minds on avoiding discriminatory policies and practices. What it also aims to do, which is often overlooked, is to make decision-makers think about what they can do to tackle the long-standing structural inequalities facing disadvantaged groups, such as disabled, older, ethnic minority and LGBT people and women. Their interventions must recognise that people experience structural inequalities because of their membership of these groups, and they emerge before birth, accumulate and compound throughout someone's life. They cannot be addressed through increased choice or opportunity alone. Action needs to be taken to meet people's different needs, remove disadvantages and encourage greater participation and representation.

When properly done, an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) can lead to better outcomes for disadvantaged groups. But done poorly – or as a mere tickbox risk-avoidance exercise – it often leads to policy and services that don't meet the needs of different communities and which perpetuate structural inequalities.

EqIAs are a useful tool to highlight where issues or problems may arise, where policy outcomes might differ and be unequal for different groups, or where the legislative ambition doesn't align well with the reality of people's lives. But they need to be used effectively, and as one of many tools in the toolbox. If we are to eradicate the significant inequalities that stubbornly persist, public policy-makers and service providers need to set themselves ambitious equality outcomes that will help to change the lives of the most disadvantaged groups in our society. They need to prioritise the structural inequalities that they can help to remove, commit to taking action and understand the impact that their actions are having so that they can continue to drive forward change.

Scotland has the opportunity, the capability, and the ambition to tackle inequalities and become a fairer, more prosperous and inclusive society. Tackling inequality is not a 'nice to do' – it should be the defining mission of public servants and the people's government. This takes on new importance as we emerge from the coronavirus pandemic. We have a window of opportunity to embrace doing things differently and build a better society for the future.

More than ever before, we need progress to be accelerated and a bold programme of work that wrestles with the complex, nuanced and structural inequalities that people in Scotland are living with every day. We all have a responsibility to ensure that progressing equality is at the heart of all decisions made by the next government, because if our collective vision is of a Scotland which is truly the best place in the world to grow up, to live and to work in, then starting with fairness and equity is the only option.

Manifesto theme 9: Environment

Our vision is we avert the climate crisis and create a Scotland which has a sustainable, biodiverse, safe environment for all children, young people and their families

The climate crisis is one of the most critical issues affecting the world today, yet progress has been alarmingly slow. In recent years issues relating to the environment has galvanised children and young people, but we need a society-wide response which encompasses both behavioural change and environmental education. We stand with children and young people, including the Youth Climate Strikers, in urging the Scottish Government to be more proactive in their response to the climate crisis and ensure a fair and just transition to a greener society.

Call Embed education about climate change in the curriculum, in line with a wider review of Curriculum for Excellence. Children and young people from all backgrounds should be informed and be able to critically engage in discussions on climate change and wider environmental issues.

Call Publish a revised Climate Change Plan and take the necessary steps to ensure legally binding targets on greenhouse gas emissions in Scotland are met. This includes a 75% reduction in emissions by 2030 and a clear pathway to net zero by 2045.

Call Improve air quality in locations where children live, learn and play. A school air quality monitoring and education scheme should be introduced to measure air quality, educate children and families about this issue, and reduce children's exposure to harmful pollutants.



Supporting comment: Friends of the Earth Scotland

Young people have put climate justice on the agenda

Caroline Rance highlights the role children have played in getting people to take notice of environmental issues, why the next five years will be crucial in achieving climate change targets and how our calls will help get us there



Caroline Rance
Climate & Energy Campaigner
Friends of the Earth Scotland

Twitter: @FOEScot

In 2019, young people across the world raised the rallying call for climate justice. Worried about the future they would inherit from older generations, children walked out of their classrooms and took to the streets, pushing climate change and the need for urgent action up the political, public and news agendas.

On one of those global days of action, the Scottish Youth Climate Strikers organised Scotland's largest ever climate march – galvanising over 40,000 people into action on a sunny September afternoon. Young and old together, the crowd in Edinburgh streamed past the Scottish Parliament where, just five days later, MSPs were due to vote on a new climate law.

Politicians bowed to the public pressure and voted through much stronger action than they had originally planned (although still short of what science shows is needed) setting a new target in law for reducing Scotland's climate emissions by 75% by 2030 and reaching 'net-zero' emissions by 2045. The next five years are now crucial for meeting these targets which our young people had a key role in setting.

The new Scottish Government and parliament elected in May will be responsible for laying the foundations of a fairer, greener future and ensuring we meet those climate targets. That's why Children in Scotland's Manifesto call for the next government to set out a climate plan is so important.

Cutting climate emissions by 75% in 2030 is the goal, but the Climate Change Plan must be the roadmap that will get us there. In it, the new government must set out the actions they will take to make sure that every home in Scotland is well insulated, energy efficient and powered on renewable energy. It must set out how they will drive our transport away from polluting petrol and diesel vehicles to cleaner vehicles, greener public transport and making it easier and safer for more people to walk and cycle.

Petrol and diesel cars are not just putting out carbon emissions into the atmosphere, but deadly air pollution that has a devastating effect on young people's health. Children and young people exposed to air pollution are at risk of respiratory conditions like asthma and reduced lung growth, and increased likelihood of a range of health problems that may affect them later in life such as heart attacks and stroke. This is why the Manifesto call to improve air quality in places where children live, learn and play is particularly important. The next Scottish Government will be responsible for implementing Low Emission Zones in cities to keep the dirtiest vehicles out of city centres, but they must also make public transport cleaner, greener and accessible, and not just in our cities but in rural areas too.

"A green recovery from the pandemic will help ensure opportunities for young people"

Climate change will be a key issue for today's young people throughout their lives, so it is right that it should be part of the curriculum so they are adequately equipped to engage in discussions about decisions that affect their futures.

Climate change is not just an environmental issue. Actions to reduce climate emissions will also improve young people's health and wellbeing, through having cleaner air, warmer homes, better public transport and a more connected society. A green recovery from the pandemic, with climate action at its core, will help to ensure good opportunities in training and green jobs for young people when they leave school.

We are proud to support Children in Scotland and the calls of young people, to work together in ensuring the next Scottish Government and parliament delivers a greener, healthier, better Scotland for all.

> Friends of the Earth is Scotland's leading environmental campaigning organisation.
foe.scot

Our vision is that the Scottish children's sector has enough resources and to be flexible in its approach to meet the needs of children, young people and families.

The public and third sectors have faced significant financial pressure in recent years, exacerbated recently by the global coronavirus pandemic. Over the last decade, the Scottish Government has committed to a more preventative spend approach, but wide inequalities still exist. We need consistent, quality financial support to reduce child poverty, and investment in services that support families and give children the best possible start in life.

We need to learn from the current situation, building upon issues with inequality of access to resources and support. An economic model that supports growth over wellbeing will not work for children and families. Decisions made now must prioritise health and wellbeing, connection and belonging.

Call Produce a comprehensive Wellbeing Budget by 2022 budget. This will ensure that the annual Scottish budget is designed and implemented with the goal of improving the wellbeing of all citizens in Scotland, including children, young people and families.

Call Ensure sustainable funding for children's services across statutory, third and private sectors, across all five years of the next Scottish Parliament.

Call Support the children's sector to achieve a fully values-driven workforce through refreshing commitment to the Common Core of Skills, Knowledge and Understanding and Values for the Children's Sector in Scotland.

Call Expand the Strategic Participation Framework to ensure the ongoing, meaningful engagement of children and young people in all policymaking by 2022. This must be funded appropriately and support engagement in line with the UN Committee's basic requirements for meaningful participation.



Supporter: Carnegie UK Trust

We need to overcome our implementation deficit disorder

Scotland has world-leading legislation but consistently fails to deliver. If we were to start making public budgets with children's wellbeing in mind, transformation might come, writes Jennifer Wallace



Jennifer Wallace
Head of Policy
The Carnegie UK Trust

Twitter: @CarnegieUKTrusts

Planning, resources and approaches is one of the final themes in Children in Scotland's new Manifesto for change. It's likely many readers will skim over these recommendations, or perhaps even skip them completely. Few of us campaigning for children's rights get overly excited about the minutia of budget lines and the policy appraisal methods used by our governments.

But we should because Scotland has a bad case of implementation deficit disorder.

We have world-leading legislation in several fields including climate change, homelessness and public health but our outcomes, and particularly those affecting children and young people, are stubbornly resistant to change.

The National Performance Framework that guides the work of the Scottish Government included six Outcomes that relate directly to children and young people measured by 14 indicators. The wellbeing of children is not improving for any of the indicators that we have data for. And this data all comes from before the pandemic so we should not realistically anticipate improvements for some time.

The children's sector has much evidence on how to improve these outcomes by investing earlier in children's lives and on acting in a joined-up and preventative way to improve lives. But this evidence fails to shift the emphasis of intervention further upstream. There are many reasons for this but one of the clearest is our inability to shift the money towards things that we know would have a medium to long-term impact. In an era of consistently strained finances, it is understandable that money is channelled towards things that can see instant and immediate results. But this is losing sight of the long game.

Which is why the Children in Scotland Manifesto calls on the Scottish Government to take budgeting decisions based on what will improve outcomes for children, young people and families and make their human rights a reality.

Scotland has been taking steps to link budgets to wellbeing outcomes but to date these have been limited to thinking about how to assess new budget spend. We want to urge the Scottish Government to go further and make a more fundamental shift in how we think about budgeting for outcomes to one that focuses on life stages rather than categories of services. Rather than look at the additional spend available once all current activity is financed and then allocate that to the 'best' programme, we want to explore what happens when you look at the totality of spend on one population group – our youngest children. Our initial conversations suggest that even getting an answer to the question 'how much do we spend on young children' is complex and challenging. It is simply not how we think about public budgets and accountability.

But we have to start somewhere.

The Finance Committee of the Scottish Parliament first started calling for better linkages of the budget to outcomes in 2000. Children in Scotland, Carnegie UK Trust and Cattanach will make detailed recommendations on how to develop outcome-based budgeting for children in early 2021 based on research being undertaken by Dr Katherine Trebeck of the Wellbeing Economy Alliance. We hope that by following the public pound directly to our youngest citizens, we can better understand what we can do to make sure that, in future, our collective efforts to improve children's wellbeing add up to more than the sum of their parts.

> The Carnegie UK Trust seeks to improve the lives and wellbeing of people throughout the UK carnegieuktrust.org.uk

"We help make decisions to support young people in Scotland"

Changing our World, our young person's advisory group, has helped shape Children in Scotland's priorities, values and work since 2017. They play a key role in the delivery of many of our participation projects and their 'hot topics' were central in the development of our Manifesto. *Elaine Kerridge* explains



^ Members of CoW attend a Children in Scotland networking event



^ Presenting at the first EU conference on children's participation



^ A Changing our World session held at the Children in Scotland offices

We believe it is essential to listen to children and young people about the issues that will have an impact on them. This is true now more than ever. Children in Scotland is pleased to have been able to continue our direct work with children and young people, including our varied projects and our children and young people's advisory group Changing Our World (CoW), since the national lockdown was enforced in March.

Our approach has been informed by what has worked (or what hasn't) for the young people we engage with, and has led to us developing a mixed method approach, using both digital and non-digital methods so our engagement work is as inclusive as possible.

We have encouraged our Changing our World young people to talk about the impact of lockdown, and how they felt. Common adjectives included 'weird', 'stressful' and 'very confusing' – sentiments we can all share! In our discussions, CoW highlighted concerns over people's mental health, education and the economy. But as the weeks went on, there were some positives found in the situation, such as making pizza with families. We also thought more globally, recognising the positive effect on moving climate change forward, for example.

Members of Changing Our World have achieved so much in lockdown. They have supported the recruitment of new staff, met with Scottish Parliament Equalities and Human Rights Committee members on the incorporation of the UNCRC into Scots law, were on a guest panel at a renewable energy festival, took part in the 2020 SQA Review and are currently involved in the 2020 Environmental Hustings meetings. They have had a key role in developing the Children in Scotland Manifesto 2021-26 with their 'hot topics' and hopes for the future central to our 10 themes.

Words by Elaine Kerridge, Policy Manager - Participation and Engagement, Children in Scotland

"I like being in Changing our World because it's a comfortable, accessible and safe place to have my say about important issues that affect young people"
Olive

"I love being part of Changing our World because I can speak with an open-minded group of young people and help make decisions to support other children and young people in Scotland, working with a wonderfully supportive and helpful group of adults who are always interested in what we have to say. We are part of something bigger and are a true team always striving to improve the lives of children and young people in Scotland"
Anna

NEXT EDITION: Our next issue of Children in Scotland Magazine will be available in February 2021

Want to contribute? If you have a campaign, project or new resource you would like to share, or would like to be considered for our comment section, contact jdrummond@childreninscotland.org.uk

Advertise with us. Contact thope@childreninscotland.org.uk to find out about our competitive rates.



Go Safe with Ziggy!



Road Safety Scotland's 'Go Safe with Ziggy!' campaign helps equip children up to six years old with the skills, knowledge and attitudes that will help keep them stay safe now and in later life.

The Scotland-wide learning resource teaches vital road safety skills through fun, easy and engaging videos, games and activities. Many will be familiar with the much-loved series of colourful Ziggy books, which explores important road safety themes such as holding hands, safe places to cross, and safety in the car.

With learning resources available to Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) centres and Primary 1 classes, the 'Go Safe with Ziggy!' campaign aims to encourage and inspire young children – and the adults around them – to go on their own road safety journey while playing, talking and reading together.



Learning resources

★ Big book sets

Teaching packs containing Ziggy stories in big book format are available for ELC centres and Primary 1 classes or any community setting where parents/carers attend with their young children.

★ Little books

Early Learning and Childcare centres and Primary 1 classes are invited to order the little books for children to take home on an annual basis.

The series of Ziggy books includes the following titles:

Ziggy and the Lollipop // Ziggy's Halloween Wish
Ziggy Visits Granny // Ziggy Goes Zab-a-ding-a-Wheeee
Ziggy's Sunny Holiday // Ziggy and Maggie Start School
Ziggy's Sports Day

To order, visit roadsafety.scot/books

★ 'My Journey with Ziggy' pack

This resource pack is designed to support the important link between home and school. The pack comprises a cuddly Ziggy soft toy and a simple journey diary in a bright reflective drawstring bag. Every ELC and Primary 1 class teacher can receive a pack by taking the class out for a walk and following up with an interactive Ziggy's Big Day Out online activity.

Find out more on roadsafety.scot/ziggys-big-day-out

★ Online resources

Finally, a diverse range of engaging activities, videos, stories and interactive games can be found on roadsafety.scot/learning/early/go-safe-with-ziggy

Scotland's Childcare Sector the hidden Heroes – a message from Maree Todd

There are many people in Scotland to thank for their efforts this year, but I am going to focus on a group who haven't made the headlines and often don't see themselves as heroes – the childcare community across Scotland. A loving, resilient and professional workforce who dedicate their lives every day to ensure that Scotland's children are cared for, nurtured and are able to thrive.

For obvious reasons I haven't been able to visit nurseries, childminders and other childcare settings for most of this year. I really miss you all and I look forward to the day – hopefully in the not too distant future – when I'll be able to see staff, children and families face-to-face.



Looking back on 2020 I feel a strong sense of community and togetherness, something I've felt from #TeamELC since becoming Children's Minister. While the COVID-19 pandemic continues to dictate much of our work and lives, it's important to focus on the positives where we can. It is well known that I am a lover of the outdoors and it warms my heart to see the spotlight shining on the benefits of being outdoors more – something we've built into all of our practice in ELC. Throughout lockdown we have seen thousands of families benefit from the **Virtual Nature School** – one of the many ways practitioners and settings used new and innovative practice to continue to engage children and families.

COVID-19 hasn't meant work has stopped on our commitment to deliver a high quality ELC expansion for children and families in Scotland – with thousands of children already benefiting from the expanded offer and thousands more benefiting in the coming months.

We will always remember the year 2020, the COVID-19 year. It's been tough and exhausting but we can look ahead to 2021 in hope as we welcome the news of a vaccine and start to think about going back to 'normal' – whatever 'normal' may look like. I look forward to continue to work with you all in making Scotland the best place to grow up.

A spotlight on Childminders

Childminders in Scotland – playing a key role in supporting family



Although COVID-19 prevented the delivery of many children's services for a number of months, childminders were able to remain open to support key workers and vulnerable children – 1000 did so within strict guidance to ensure their safety and that of the families they were supporting.

Responding to the national emergency, the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) innovated and secured a grant from the Wellbeing Fund to provide physical support to vulnerable families unable to access other services. This was particularly important for those facing poverty, domestic violence, for children with additional support needs and for those 'on the edge of care'.

Childminders provide a high quality, nurturing, home-based environment. SCMA used the learning from its Community Childminding services, which have supported over 900 vulnerable families in Scotland in the last three years alone, to develop its Wellbeing Service.

Vulnerable children were carefully matched with childminders in their local area and could go along for a few sessions each week to a safe space away from their stressful home environment, as well as providing respite for parents who may have been suffering from poor mental health, social isolation or had no other access to support networks during that time.

Janine Ryan, Head of Childminding Services at SCMA, said: *"The Wellbeing Service was so important for supporting our most vulnerable children and families and we can't thank our childminding workforce enough for their overwhelming dedication and willingness to welcome additional children and families into their homes during the height of lockdown."*

Feedback from referral agencies and the parents themselves was extremely positive, with one stating *"the service was a God send to me and my son loved it there"* and another describing it as *"a really helpful service during a really rough time"*.

Funding for our Wellbeing Service has now come to an end, but Community Childminding is still going strong. For further information, please visit childminding.org/community-childminding