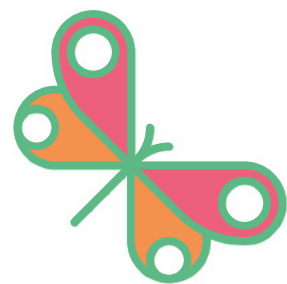


Essential reading for Scotland's children's sector

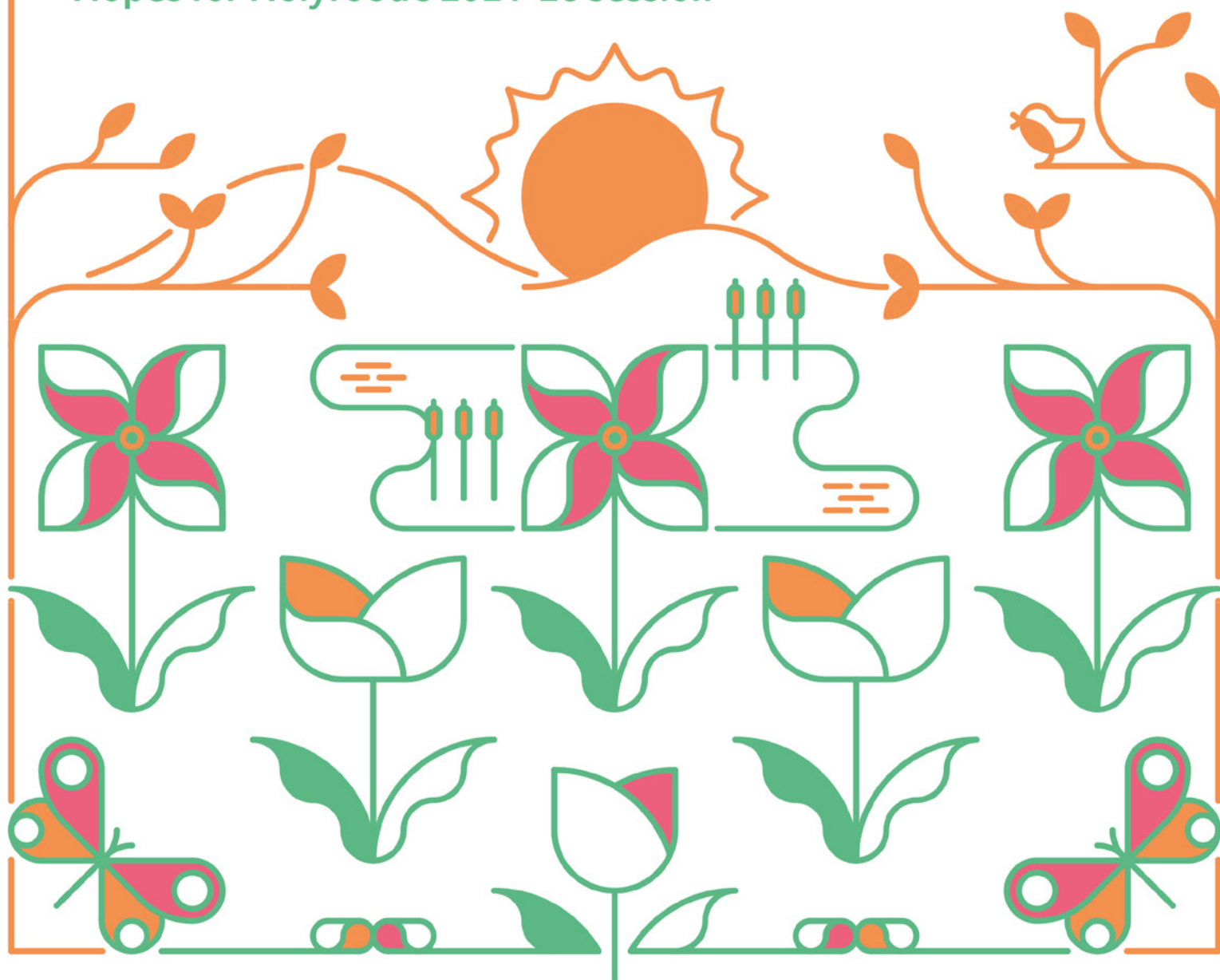
June - July 2021 Issue 201

Children in Scotland magazine



New beginnings

Jackie Brock on farewells and why the future's bright
The innovative dance project raising attainment
Hopes for Holyrood's 2021-26 session





Is he lagging behind?

is it Duchenne?



DUCHENNE IS A RARE, GENETIC, PROGRESSIVE, IRREVERSIBLE, FATAL DISEASE¹⁻⁵

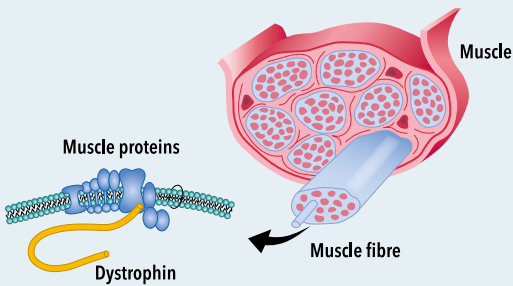
THE DEVASTATING IMPACT OF DUCHENNE

- Duchenne is characterised by progressive muscle degeneration with subsequent respiratory and cardiac failure, leading to early death¹⁻⁴
- Timely and accurate diagnosis can enable the patient and family to receive the care and support they need³⁻⁵

Clinical signs of Duchenne^{2,5}

UP TO 2 YEARS	3-4 YEARS	5-8 YEARS	UP TO 13 YEARS	AFTER LOSS OF AMBULATION
Delayed motor function, speech and cognitive delay	Difficulty jumping and running	Abnormal movements (e.g. waddling gait)	Loss of independent ambulation (increasing use of wheelchair)	Loss of self-feeding and respiratory, orthopaedic and cardiac complications

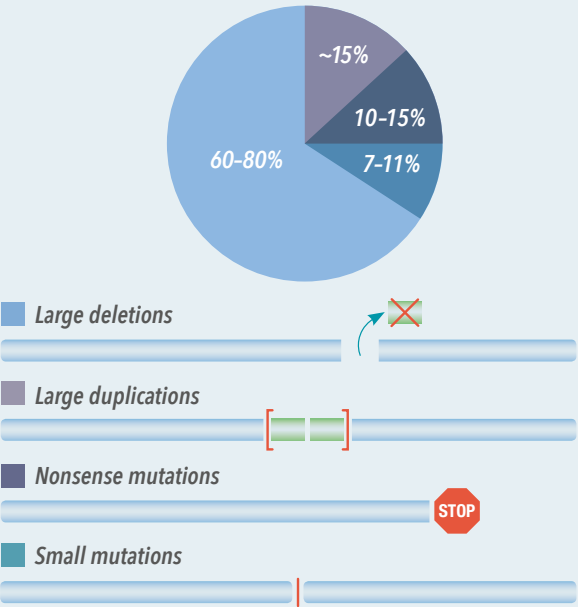
DUCHENNE IS CAUSED BY MUTATIONS IN THE DYSTROPHIN GENE ON THE X CHROMOSOME²



Adapted from Muscular Dystrophy Association.⁶

- Duchenne is caused by mutations in the gene that encodes **dystrophin**, an important component of the muscle cell membrane^{2,7}
- Mutations** in the dystrophin gene lead to the absence of, or defects in, dystrophin^{2,4}
- This results in ongoing muscle damage and replacement of muscle fibres by scar tissue and fat^{7,8}

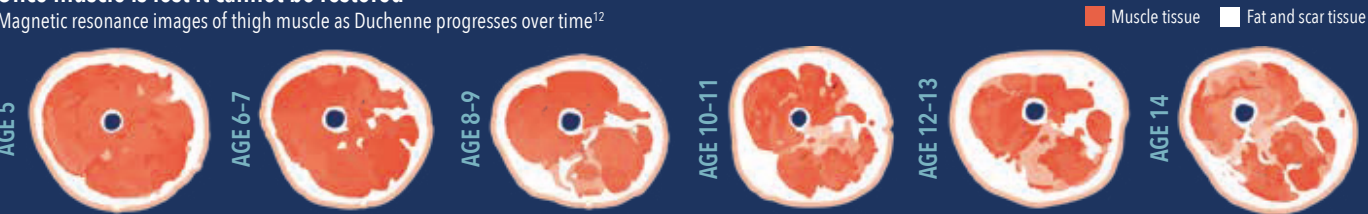
DUCHENNE IS CAUSED BY MUTATIONS IN THE DYSTROPHIN GENE¹



Adapted from Bladen CL, et al. 2015, Pichavant C, et al. 2011 and Kalman L, et al. 2011.⁹⁻¹¹

Once muscle is lost it cannot be restored

Magnetic resonance images of thigh muscle as Duchenne progresses over time¹²



Adapted from Sweeney HL, et al. 2014.¹²

For illustration only

WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT DUCHENNE MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY (DMD)

OBSERVE



KEY SIGNS OF DMD¹

Early signs may be present before the age of 2 years^{2,3}



Signs of muscle weakness



Not walking by 16-18 months



Cognitive and speech delay



Unexplained increases in transaminases



Evidence of Gowers' sign or toe walking (any age, especially <5 years old)

TEST



ORDER CREATINE KINASE (CK) TEST²⁻⁴

Elevated CK levels reflect muscle damage, therefore testing is recommended in primary care²⁻⁴

Elevation in CK warrants prompt referral to a neuromuscular specialist^{1,3}

REFER



REFER TO A NEUROMUSCULAR SPECIALIST¹

Diagnosis is confirmed through:

1. CLINICAL ASSESSMENT¹

Includes neuromuscular and skeletal examinations

2. GENETIC ASSESSMENT^{1,5-8}

MLPA detects large dystrophin gene mutations
Dystrophin gene sequencing detects small/single nucleotide mutations

3. MUSCLE BIOPSY¹

Detects the presence/absence of dystrophin protein*

*If genetic testing does not confirm a clinical diagnosis of Duchenne, then a muscle biopsy sample should be performed¹

MLPA, multiplex ligation-dependent probe amplification

CARE



EARLY DIAGNOSIS MAKES A DIFFERENCE:



Timely intervention may delay disease progression and complications^{1,2,8}



Access to emerging therapies and clinical trials²



Access to genetic counselling and family planning²

For more information about Duchenne visit www.TAKEONDUCHENNE.co.uk*
Make every day count



*Take on Duchenne is developed and funded by PTC Therapeutics

References: 1. Birnkrant D, et al. *Lancet Neurol.* 2018;17:251-267. 2. van Ruiten HJ, et al. *Arch Dis Child.* 2014;99:1074-1077. 3. Cialfoni E, et al. *J Pediatr.* 2009;155:380-385. 4. National Task Force for Early Identification of Childhood Neuromuscular Disorders. Developmental delay, do a CK. Available at: <https://www.childmuscleweakness.org/index.php/developmental-delay-do-a-ck> [accessed December 2018]. 5. Kalman L, et al. *J Mol Diagn.* 2011;13:167-174. 6. Dent KM, et al. *Am J Med Genet.* 2005;134:295-298. 7. Abbs S, et al. *Neuromuscul Disord.* 2010;20:422-427. 8. Laing NG, et al. *Clin Biochem Rev.* 2011;32:129-134.

Transforming Early Years

"Our parents are incredibly impressed with the environment, it has not only transformed our provision but also helped to deepen our understanding and develop our practice."

Catherine Hampson
EYFS Co-ordinator,
Stockport Grammar School

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Children in Scotland
Level 1, Rosebery House
9 Haymarket Terrace
Edinburgh, EH12 5EZ
info@childreninscotland.org.uk
childreninscotland.org.uk

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Editorial

Editor: Jennifer Drummond
Managing Editors: Chris Small and Catherine Bromley

Contributing Editor:
Lynn Gilmour (equalities & participation)

Advertising

Tracy Hope
thope@childreninscotland.org.uk

Design

Cover design and pages 16-17:
Angus Doyle

Joint Interim Chief

Executives: Sally Cavers,
Simon Massey and Amy Woodhouse

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The views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily the opinions of the editor or Children in Scotland.

Children in Scotland magazine will be moving online from summer 2021. To submit content for consideration, please contact Jennifer Drummond: jdrummond@childreninscotland.org.uk

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Members of Children in Scotland receive discounts on publications, training and conferences, plus a range of digital communications.

For information on joining contact: membership@childreninscotland.org.uk

Magazine access

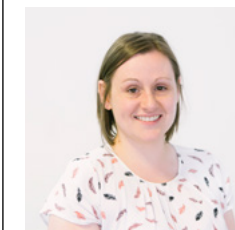
The magazine is one of our key member benefits but is currently being made available to everyone in the sector as part of our offer at this challenging time.

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Welcome...



Jennifer Drummond
Editor
[@jen_drum](https://twitter.com/jen_drum)
[#CiSMagazine](https://twitter.com/CiSMagazine)

After a particularly harsh winter and an unpredictable spring, it's heartening to see the signs of summer. The sun is out (for now) and nature is reminding us of the promise and opportunities of new beginnings. It feels apt to focus on this as we reflect on what's to come next.

With the SNP returned to Holyrood as the governing party following the May elections, the country is looking to them, and the rest of the MSPs in session six, to focus on recovery. Promises and commitments have been made around support for health, investment in education, a green recovery and economic stability.

We, along with the rest of the sector, have committed to working with new and returning MSPs to ensure that children, young people and families are placed firmly at the heart of decisions moving forward. Our Joint Interim Chief Executive, Amy Woodhouse, discusses this in this edition's lead comment (page 16). As a charity committed to equality and diversity it is good to see more representation in the chamber - but there is still a long way to go.

Children in Scotland is also undergoing some significant changes. In this edition we run our farewell interview with former Chief Executive Jackie Brock (page 8) with news due soon of who will be her successor. As an organisation we are preparing to say goodbye to our offices at Rosebery House in Edinburgh as we take up temporary residence elsewhere in the city, and this edition represents the last of Children in Scotland magazine in this format.

Last issue, we covered the development and progress of the magazine, led by myself and my previous editorial colleagues. Over more than 200 issues, we've firmly placed ourselves in the consciousness of the children's sector and our next steps will celebrate and build on that. It's been a joy to be the Editor of this magazine for the last nine years and I look forward to leading its evolution.

For the last time on these pages, happy reading!

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Catch up on key news from the sector (page 4), review our handy at-a-glance guide to the sixth session of the Scottish Parliament (pages 14-15) and find out more about Sandra Mitchell of the Resolve: ASL mediation service (Introducing, page 26). Don't forget to check out our upcoming webinars, listed on page 27.

Lead news story

Scottish child poverty rates at a five-year high, reveals study

Child poverty levels have continued to rise in every local authority across Scotland since 2015 according to newly published data. The research, conducted by Loughborough University on behalf of the End Child Poverty coalition, shows that in 2020 child poverty rates ranged from one in six in the Shetland Islands to as high as one in three in Glasgow.

Glasgow's statistics represent the biggest increase, rising from 27.1 per cent in 2014-15 to 32.2 per cent in 2019-20. East Renfrewshire saw the smallest rise in the five year period, increasing by 0.8 per cent.

John Dickie, director of the Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland, responded to the findings. Speaking on behalf of the group, he said: "Solid foundations have been laid in Scotland for future progress on child poverty, not least the introduction of the Scottish child payment and an increasing focus on action at local level.



"But this data is a stark reminder that child poverty was still rising in every part of Scotland, even before the pandemic struck. The challenge now is for government at all levels to use every power they have to boost family incomes and reduce the costs that struggling parents face."

Scotland's national child poverty levels are currently at 24 per cent. Whilst this is lower than both England (30 per cent) and Wales (31 per cent), campaigners say there can be no room for complacency if child poverty targets are to be met.

The End Child Poverty coalition has called for local powers on economic development, housing and financial support to be used to maximise income and reduce the costs parents face.

Mr Dickie continued: "The new Scottish Parliament must act on election promises to make tackling child poverty its top priority. Child poverty also needs to be a priority at local level. Local powers including over economic development, housing and welfare must be used to maximum effect to ensure all families have a disposable income fit for giving children a decent start in life."

The End Child Poverty coalition has also urged the UK Government to take action to boost child benefits and scrap plans to cut Universal Credit.

> [Children in Scotland is a member of the End Child Poverty coalition](#)
> ['Ending the inequality faced by young parents begins with us all'](#) [Comment](#), [Page 18](#)

Calls to add coding to the curriculum

A leading academic has suggested primary school pupils in Scotland should be taught coding as part of the new digital revolution.

Professor Thusha Rajendran, a developmental psychologist based at the National Robotarium in Heriot-Watt University, highlighted problem solving, abstract thinking and thinking at multiple levels of detail as key elements to coding. He has suggested they could be introduced and emphasised in primary school level learning, acknowledging that many of the core elements needed to learn coding are already taught across the curriculum.

His call comes as research highlights a growing skills crisis. Figures from the Learning and Work Institute show the number of young people taking IT courses has dropped 40 per cent since 2015, while fewer than half of UK employers believe those entering the workforce have the necessary digital abilities.

Incorporation of UNCRC delayed

Royal assent of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill has been delayed after the UK Government announced it would challenge the Scottish legislation in the Supreme Court.

The UK Government is arguing that the bill, which was passed unanimously in the Scottish Parliament in March, includes areas outwith the competence of the devolved government.

It has expressed specific concerns around section 6 of the Bill which focuses on ensuring public authorities comply with the convention. This has been suggested as having the potential effect of enforcing duties on ministers in reserved areas.

The Supreme Court will hear the arguments from both governments before choosing to uphold the bill or refer it back to Holyrood for amendment.

Three quarters of child protection investigations dropped

Previously unpublished data from the Scottish Government has shown a marked increase in child protection investigations. However, this increase was not reflected in the number of children placed on the child protection register in the same period, prompting fears that some investigations were unnecessary.

Professor Andy Bilson, an emeritus professor at the University of Lancaster, warned that the data suggests some of the investigations were conducted without due cause.

His data, correlated from 2012/13 – 2017/18 show a marked increase in the number of investigations conducted, but a fall in the number of children on the child protection register.

In 2017-18, a total of 14,106 child protection investigations were carried out, with 3,839 children placed on the child protection register. These figures indicate that approximately 73 per cent of investigations did not require further action.

Professor Bilson has also raised concerns about the disparity in rates across the country, meaning families in some local authorities were more likely to go through investigations that were subsequently deemed unfounded than others, a trend he is calling "justice by geography".

A Scottish Government spokesperson has said a revision of Scotland's National Child Protection Guidance will "support greater consistency in how statutory measures are used".

The full study is to be published shortly.

Charity urges incoming MSPs to make tackling homelessness a priority

Shelter Scotland has called on the Scottish Government to prioritise fixing Scotland's housing crisis during the new parliamentary term. The charity urged the SNP to meet the commitments outlined in their election manifesto, which pledged to build 100,000 affordable new homes within the next decade and committed to 35,000 of these being social homes.

It follows their latest campaign #BuildScotlandsFuture which urges for more social housing to be built. Whilst welcoming the commitment for the next parliamentary term, Shelter Scotland is raising concern that the commitment falls short of the minimum recommended from their research.

Alison Watson, Director of Shelter Scotland, said:

"Our campaign called for the building of 37,100 new social homes over the course of the next parliament. Our figure was reached by independent academic research.

"So, there is a shortfall of more than 2,000 social homes in the SNP's commitment. To some, this might not seem significant, but it will mean 21,000 households will not have access to a safe, affordable and secure home.

"We can only reduce housing need if the 37,100 number is reached so we are urging the new Scottish Government to match that call and up its target over the next five years. It is also imperative that these new social homes are built in the right places and are accessible to those in greatest need."

Along with their campaign to built new affordable housing, Shelter Scotland has also called for initiatives to tackle the number of empty homes, regulation to limit short-term lets and action to make the private rented sector more affordable.

> To add your signature to Shelter Scotland's #BuildScotlandsFuture petition, visit act.scotland.shelter.org.uk/build-scotlands-future



Interviews, research & campaigns

Unfinished business

Jackie Brock, who recently left the post of Chief Executive of Children in Scotland, reflects on her time with us, highlighting the importance of partnership working, the need to be innovative, why working in the third sector was 'liberating' – and her plans to finish what she started.

Interview by Jennifer Drummond



In April, after nearly nine years at the helm, Jackie Brock stood down as Chief Executive of Children in Scotland. During her tenure, she spearheaded the organisation's growth and development, responded to significant changes within the sector and contributed to legislative developments to enhance the lives of children across the country.

From the Childcare Commission to our 25 Calls campaign, our Manifesto for 2021-26 and the recently published *Being Bold: Building Budgets for Children's Wellbeing*, under Jackie's leadership Children in Scotland has been resolute in our ambition to give every child a chance to thrive. Pooling the knowledge and experience of our membership, we have highlighted where change is needed – and started the work towards achieving it.

Respected across the children's sector and by former colleagues in government, whilst head of Children in Scotland, Jackie has been a member of numerous taskforces and working groups. In 2014, she was commissioned to write an independent review of Scotland's child protection system, where her recommendations were universally accepted by then Education & Lifelong Learning Secretary, Michael Russell.

Representing perhaps one of the biggest shifts during Jackie's tenure, Children in Scotland has been at the forefront of leading and facilitating meaningful participation and engagement with young people. Recent activity including the Panel on Europe, First Minister's Question Time, the Inclusion Ambassadors, development of Changing our World advisory group and the appointment of young directors to our Board, have all ensured young people feel empowered to use their voices, and feel part of the process of contributing towards positive change.

Reflecting on her time with Children in Scotland, here Jackie highlights the importance of partnerships, the need to embrace innovation and why she is encouraging colleagues across the sector to be bold. >

Jen Drummond: You joined Children in Scotland as Chief Executive in 2012 and led the organisation for nearly nine years. What have you found to be most enjoyable about the role?

Jackie Brock: I was so excited to join Children in Scotland because I saw an organisation that was unique and leading the thinking about how we could change and improve the lives of children.

I loved being a civil servant, having had previous roles in both local and national government, but what was so liberating about coming to work for Children in Scotland and the third sector is the freedom to be clear about what should be happening and put forward proposals for change. That freedom we have in the third sector is such a privilege.

What I've loved about Children in Scotland is that we have always aimed to call out poor performance and where we can do better. We've worked hard to ensure our opinions reflect what the evidence tells us. It's not just based on my opinion or anyone else's, but on hundreds of our members, hundreds of people who have approached us through services like Enquire and Resolve, and conversations we've had across the sector. Pulling all that together has given us such a great reputation and platform that we can really be proud of. When Children in Scotland speaks, we are worth listening to.

The importance of partnerships

JD: Children in Scotland has always been positioned as the voice of the sector. Thinking back to when you first joined the organisation, does the third sector have a stronger voice now? Do you think the sector is listened to more?

JB: I think so. I believe the Scottish Government and local authorities do consider the third sector to be an almost equal partner, particularly when we are all united. There is leadership across the third sector that has really emphasised working together. That unified voice has been, and is, critical — otherwise those in power listen to the voices that they favour.

In 2018 we launched our 25 Calls campaign sharing our hopes and ambitions for future generations and driving forward real change. Those 25 calls weren't picked out at random. They were decided after a thorough development and engagement process with young people, our members and across the sector. The calls are broad, but the breadth is important because it highlights what really matters for childhood and positive development. Individual organisations absolutely have important roles to play in highlighting their specific focus area, but what our 25 Calls campaign and our recent Manifesto have shown with their cross-sector support, is that organisations recognise that working collectively increases our power and therefore the likelihood of achieving our ambitions.

That unity and togetherness must not be lost as we move into a really difficult period, post-Covid. There will be less money, there will be huge pressures, and the only way we can make sure the children's sector and therefore children and families are protected, is by working together in our shared interests, not just our organisational interests.

JD: Partnership working has certainly been vital in delivering some significant legislative changes over the years, from the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 to raising the age of criminal responsibility, securing equal protection from assault and UNCRC incorporation. What are the biggest changes you have observed?

JB: These legislative developments demonstrate why Children in Scotland values bringing together organisations to build at-scale coalitions. It's about recognising that everyone has something valuable to bring to the table. Sometimes we are the bridge, supporting members and bringing together networks to help drive forward change. Other times it is about leading debate and discussion and pushing forward an idea.

When we established the Childcare Commission in 2014, for example, it was to argue for investment in early years childcare. As a result, the Scottish Government increased the childcare entitlement for some two-year-olds and all three- and four-year-olds in their last term. For the UNCRC incorporation work we worked closely with Together who have the expertise, supporting them through our members and bringing together networks, including children and young people. So it's about identifying how we are best placed to develop these landmark changes seen over the last eight to ten years.

For me the biggest change has been the cultural shift to now include children and young people as equal partners and decision-makers in their own future. I'm incredibly proud of the record the organisation has in engaging children and young people in everything we do, including the recruitment of Children in Scotland's next Chief Executive. Years ago, this approach would have been seen to be radical. Direct engagement with young people wasn't common, and if it was, it was very tokenistic. There is still some bad practice out there but things have changed dramatically, and Children in Scotland has absolutely been at the forefront of this.

It also now impacts who we work with. If organisations are not serious about meaningful engagement, if they are simply doing it to tick the box, we make the judgement on whether we want to engage with that because it is not in line with our values. That's a far cry from how it was in the beginning.

There is no credible development now in any aspect of work, any policy or legislation, that will affect them that does not involve them. The children's sector, and certainly Children in Scotland, can be really proud of that transformation.

But I truly believe that the long-term improvements we want to see in children's lives can only be achieved through multi-agency working. We need better housing, more support for families that are struggling, more help when there is drug and alcohol abuse happening around children and young people. All of these are huge issues that we face in Scotland in terms of our inequalities. We have the means to overcome them, but it's about how we make it happen. It's difficult but we must work together. That needs to continue as we 'build back better' after the last 12 months, because those inequalities and challenges for our children's services remain and will become exacerbated.



Being Bold

JD: Is there an area where you would like to see faster or more significant progress? What needs to be a priority as we rebuild from the last 12 months?

JB: The last big project I was involved in with Children in Scotland was the work around the children's wellbeing budget, culminating in the *Being Bold: Building Budgets for Children's Wellbeing* report which was published in March. This work, with the Wellbeing Economy Alliance, Scotland's Dr Katherine Trebeck, Carnegie UK and Cattanach Trust, supported our Strategic Forum who had expressed their view that the causes of inequality remained largely untackled. They expressed frustration at measures they described as continual sticking plasters and argued that without looking at the causes, child poverty and the inequalities that come from that will never be sustainably dealt with.

To do this we need to fundamentally change the way Scotland budgets and prioritises its investment in children, young people and families. Until we do that, we will be nowhere close to meeting Scotland's child poverty targets. Indeed, with the economic forecast even worse than it is now, we need really bold action.

Being Bold provides that template. We must make sure that each of the 32 children's services partnerships have strong powers and influence and access to investment levers for localised decision-making. When that happens, we will begin to see

well-informed decisions at local level about schools, safer communities, child-friendly communities and family support services that work for local people.

Scotland has a wealth of fantastic national legislation but it can get lost at local level. We all agree one size

doesn't fit all but no-one seems to be able to pinpoint what appears to be preventing those sustainable improvements. This is not about a lack of local commitment, but something is not happening in relation to how local decision-makers are given the power and money and resources to implement the legislation.

There was complete sign-up to the Christie Commission Report in 2011 that we need to have decision-making devolved to the lowest possible level, but that's not happened in practice. If we can understand why we can begin to address those problems. We need to engage in honest conversation. Perhaps the third sector has a greater role in beginning to broker those conversations in the spirit of how we can do better, without placing blame.

"Enquire, Resolve, My Rights My Say and Reach are a testament to the quality of our work"

Reflections and looking to the future

JD: Can you share some of your highlights as Chief Executive?

JB: I know I've already mentioned it, but the big highlight is definitely our increased, meaningful engagement with children and young people. But going back to the element of freedom, Children in Scotland, with the support of our Board and our membership, has been able to take forward some otherwise quite radical thinking, for example the Childcare Commission, *Being Bold* and

our work with the Food, Families, Futures projects around holiday provision and for which we won awards for the quality of our partnerships. To have had the freedom and the support of our partnerships to say 'if nothing is going to happen, we will do it', is a huge privilege. If only we had a bit more money or it wasn't so hard to get funding for ideas, then we could have done even more.

It's also been a pleasure to watch the ongoing development of the organisation. Children in Scotland has continued to keep members informed and connected, even over this extraordinarily difficult period. The events we produce, providing the opportunity for people to both learn and also come together, representing the sector and meeting changing demands, is a credit to the team. The range of projects we are involved in through our Policy, Projects and Participation work, as well as the services we support such as Enquire, Resolve, My Rights My Say and Reach, is a testament to the quality of work we produce. We are a larger organisation now than when I started, in every sense of the word, and the quality of what we do is continually reinforced.

JD: Your next step involves taking up post as interim Chief Operating Officer with The Promise Scotland. What do you hope to do there and where you want to take it?

JB: There is no other organisation like Children in Scotland, but I am looking forward to supporting The Promise Scotland team in setting up as a new organisation, bringing the networks and relationships that I have in the sector and across local and national government to help The Promise fulfil its commitments. There are 80 calls to action and we have an obligation to meet them.

I used to work in what was called the 'Looked After Children team' in Scottish Government and we didn't make sufficient progress then, so it feels like it's a return to unfinished business. Things can change permanently for the better for care-experienced children but those changes, if we can get it right, will improve things for every child. So it's bringing so much of what I believe in at Children in Scotland to take what feels like a natural next step.

JD: Finally, is there any advice you wish you had been given before taking the job with Children in Scotland that you would like to pass on to your successor?

JB: Take time to really understand and appreciate the strengths of the organisation. Children in Scotland has an amazing platform for improvement and the evidence of that is how we have emerged from a really difficult year with improved and strengthened services that have responded to the needs of the sector. Take time to understand and value those.

It's also an organisation that is always open to new and innovative ways. Enjoy that liberating opportunity working for Children in Scotland gives you to really be brave and look at innovative and creative ways to identify ways to improve the lives of children.

I wish I had been able to be even more ambitious, but there are always still restrictions. I didn't appreciate how difficult or challenging it can be to work for an organisation that has to work hard to afford decent IT, decent training for staff or for time, money and resources to always fall short. Until that changes we might not be able to achieve what we want, but we can make sure we are travelling in the right direction.

Jackie Brock was Chief Executive of Children in Scotland from June 2012 - April 2021.

Photography © Phil Wilkinson

Joint Interim Chief Executives for Children in Scotland

Three members of Children in Scotland's Leadership Team have taken on the roles of Joint Interim Chief Executives following the departure of Jackie Brock.

The interim measures, approved by the Children in Scotland Board, see Sally Cavers, Head of Inclusion; Simon Massey, Head of Engagement and Learning; and Amy Woodhouse, Head of Policy, Projects and Participation, share the role of Interim Chief Executive until a new appointment is in post.

All will continue as department and service heads while carrying out their new executive responsibilities.

Upon taking up the role, effective from 1 May, Simon Massey said:

"This is a period of change for the organisation but Amy, Sally and I will be in post to give support and continuity for our staff, partners and wider network, and to focus on delivery of our strategic objectives.

"Our services, projects and learning programme continue as normal and we look forward to welcoming a new Chief Executive soon".



Sally Cavers



Simon Massey



Amy Woodhouse

Convenor of the Children in Scotland Board, Maureen McGinn CBE said:

"Jackie has been an outstanding leader of Children in Scotland but we respect the time is right for her to move on and for us to develop and progress with a new Chief Executive."

Interviews have now taken place for the post. Candidates who were selected for the shortlist attended a series of interviews with the Children in Scotland Board, a staff panel and members of Changing our World, Children in Scotland's young people's advisory group.

This is the first time the decision about a senior appointment at Children in Scotland has had the input of children and young people and staff.

The successful candidate will be announced shortly.

> Read Amy's leader comment, page 16

Campaign

Quality time

A parent-led movement is campaigning for more accurate information around school start deferrals, and increased funding for all eligible four-year-olds.

Diane Delaney explains more



The Give Them Time Campaign began in 2018 to tackle the discrepancies and inconsistencies in the application of law relating to discretionary deferral funding within Local Authorities across Scotland.

It was a response to hearing that parents seeking advice about their rights and the law around school starting age were being given inconsistent, and often inaccurate, information about the legalities of deferral. We heard that a number of parents had been told that their autumn-born children were not allowed to defer despite any child who is still age four at the school starting date having a legal right to do so under the Education (Scotland) Act (1980).

Frustration and a sense of injustice arose from an initially small discussion and over the next few months the group continued to grow. It was clear action was needed to address the inaccuracy and inconsistencies, and to ensure decisions made by local authorities were consistent and child-centred.

Current law and policy results in only a selection of children being eligible to gain automatic funding to defer at four years old. This is unfair and is likely to perpetuate existing health and education inequalities.

In addition, those who were successful in deferral faced a lottery for provision for their child for the

additional year of nursery. Funding for Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) is currently dependent on the month the child is born or whether the local authority approves the application. This means some families are unable to use their legal right to defer because they cannot afford to pay the deferral fees.

Campaign launch

In November 2018 we officially launched our campaign calling for a further year of nursery funding for all children legally deferring primary one start in Scotland.

This was underpinned by a call of action for a transparent, consistent and child-centred approach to be taken by all local authorities when considering discretionary deferral funding applications. Much of the anecdotal evidence provided by parents was verified following Freedom of Information requests to all 32 local authorities. It showed a range of approaches to decision making on so called "discretionary deferral" applications and varying success rates, with some as low as 13 per cent.

Initially, we targeted individual local authorities asking them to change their policy to now fund all discretionary deferral applications. This mission failed spectacularly. Campaign members and others wrote to the Education Convenor, Education Director and Chief Executive in all

local council areas. We asked them to change their policy as well as to update their published information to provide clear and accurate advice for parents on deferral. We also wrote to the majority of MSPs and local councillors asking for their support.

Whilst support from some MSPs brought motions to council meetings, no changes were ever implemented at local level. A switch in strategy to focus on national change through legislation gained the attention of the Minister for Children and Young People, Maree Todd, via one of our constituency MSPs. Positive discussions with the Scottish Government began. We provided all of our evidence and asked for support to change the discrepancies associated with current law and policies across the country.

We felt listened to for the first time.

False start

In December 2020, the Minister for Children and Young People announced that legislation would be brought in before the end of the parliamentary term ensuring fair funding for all four-year-olds being deferred. However, the law will not be fully implemented until 2023. Instead, the government intend to pilot the change across five local authorities to determine how best to fully roll out the new law by 2023.

It would appear our campaign goal has been achieved. However, the news of delayed implementation, and that the five pilot areas were already funding 100% of discretionary deferral applications, subdued our celebrations. The reality was that the unfair processes would continue unless local authorities decided to change their policies and provide the funding from their own budgets. All local authorities currently have the power to do this right now.

As it stands, a four-year-old is only guaranteed deferral funding if:

- They are born in January or February
- They live in the Highland Council area
- They live in one of the five pilot local authority areas - Angus, Argyll & Bute, Falkirk, Shetland or Scottish Borders

All other children born mid-August to 31 December will continue to be subject to a variety of challenges by their local authority to compete for discretionary deferral funding.

Many local authority deferral processes are hugely bureaucratic, time consuming and stressful. Some parents spend six months engaged in the process, with the support of other professionals, to still be unsuccessful. This is despite huge efforts made by parents to highlight that more time in an early years setting will promote and protect their child's health and wellbeing and enhance their learning and development.

With GIRFEC already embedded, and the UNCRC on its way, it is hard to understand why any authority or leader still presides over decisions that force children to attend school at four years old when international research and evidence suggests there is a benefit in deferred school start. It is also imperative that local authorities listen to parents and other professionals when the recommendation or the request is made.

There are more councils due to join the pilot from August

Give them Time campaign calls

• A further year of nursery funding for all children legally deferring primary one start in Scotland

At present, six Scottish local authorities have a policy to fund all successful deferral applications – Angus, Argyll & Bute, Falkirk, Highland, Shetland and the Scottish Borders.

• Automatic funding of all eligible deferral applications

Based on Freedom of Information requests, discretionary funding for a further year of nursery is requested for approximately 1100 children in Scotland annually. Councils fund an average of 81% of these, however the rate varies widely by local authority and can be as low as 13%.

• We urge for local authorities to invest in our children's health, wellbeing and education by truly working in partnership with children and families

Article 3 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) states 'adults must do what is best for me'. This should take into account the observation from the ADES Pre-Fives Sub Committee Guidance on Deferrals to Primary Education that some children are simply not ready for primary school and should be considered for a deferred pre-school place.

> Read more about the evidence behind the campaign on the Give Them Time website givethemtime.org/about/

Photography © Phil Wilkinson



2022, and we hope these will be reflective of some of the areas that have improvements to make. We will continue to campaign for better information and advice regarding deferral in Scotland, for a more consistent and transparent decision-making process and for funding for all those who are eligible and apply. We hope you will join us.

Diane Delaney is campaign spokesperson for the Give Them Time campaign

> Find out more by visiting the campaign website givethemtime.org

> For information on school deferral visit the Scottish Government's Parent Club website parentclub.scot/articles/can-my-child-defer-starting-school

> Follow the Give Them Time campaign @GiveTimeScot

The 2021 Holyrood result in numbers

A visual and statistical guide to the new parliament



Voter turnout

63%

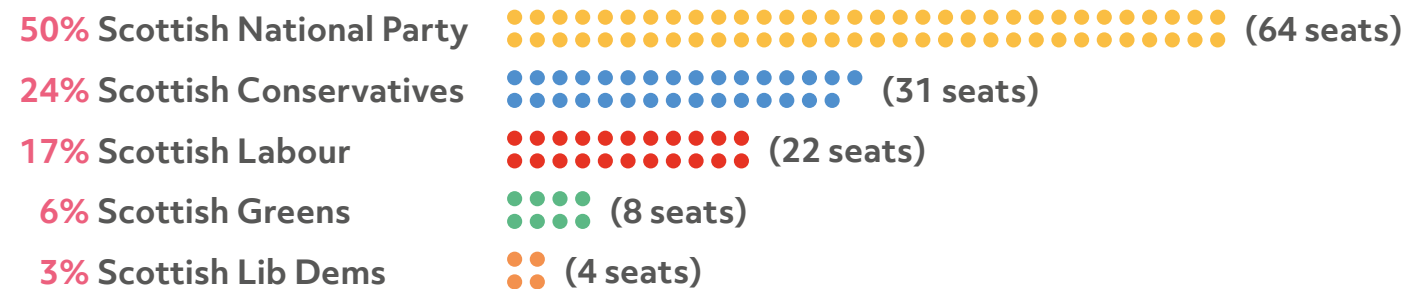
A record high for Holyrood elections



Parliamentary term

6th session
of the Scottish Parliament

Representation by party



Change in seats

3 of the 73 constituency seats changed hands, compared to 18 in 2016



Gender split

58 female MSPs – the largest number ever (44% of MSPs)



Significant cabinet appointments and key spokespeople



Clare Haughey
SNP

Minister for Children and Young People



Shirley-Anne Somerville
SNP

Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

To see the full ministerial team, visit the [Scottish Government website](#)

Photographs: Scottish Government



Disability representation



First ever wheelchair user elected to the Parliament

(Pam Duncan-Glancy, Scottish Labour)



BAME representation



First women of colour voted into Holyrood

(Kaukab Stewart, SNP & Pam Gosal, Scottish Conservatives)



Youngest MSP

23

years old – the age of the youngest MSP in Holyrood
(Emma Roddick, SNP)

Languages

12

languages used during the swearing-in ceremony
(English, Urdu, Canadian French, Scots, Gaelic, Orcadian, Doric, Welsh, Arabic, Punjabi, Shona, BSL)

Child policy priorities of the new Scottish Government include:



Poverty & Inequality

- Double the Scottish Child Payment to £20 per child per week
- Additional £100 support for low-income families
- Free school breakfasts and lunch for every primary school pupil in Scotland, all year round. This is due to be extended to primary 4 pupils in the first 100 days of government.



Early years

- Continued childcare expansion programme and work to deliver a wraparound childcare system.



Education

- Funding for councils to increase teacher numbers and classroom assistants.



Environment

- Commitment to making Scotland a net-zero nation by 2045.



Planning, resources and approaches

- Commitment to deliver a wellbeing budget, 'ensuring that all budget decisions benefit the wellbeing of people across the country'.

This list combines selected commitments made in the SNP's Manifesto and announcements by the new government. [Click here](#) to compare with our Manifesto



Oliver Mundell
Scottish Conservatives
Education



Michael Marra
Scottish Labour
Education



Ross Greer
Scottish Greens
Education, Culture and External Affairs



Megan Gallagher
Scottish Conservatives
Children and Young People



Martin Whitfield
Scottish Labour
Children and Young People



Beatrice Wishart
Scottish Liberal Democrats
Education

Comment, policy & analysis

Lead Comment

“Passing legislation is only one part of the story”



Amy Woodhouse
Joint Acting Chief Executive and Head of Policy, Projects and Participation
Children in Scotland

@amywoodhouse

“Good legislation is not enough. We can’t see passing a bill as the end goal.”

Amy Woodhouse argues that wellbeing must be at the heart of all decisions made by the new Scottish Parliament – and highlights why good legislation must be accompanied by effective implementation

We now have our MSPs for the sixth session of the Scottish Parliament. At the moment, national discussion is dominated by the implications of the election outcome and a returning SNP government and what it means for constitutional matters as well as a potential Indyref2. These debates are set to continue for months and years to come.

At Children in Scotland, we’ve been considering what the next parliament is likely to offer children and families, and how those in seats of government will address their needs and priorities. Parisa Shirazi, our Policy, Projects and Participation Officer provided some immediate reflections on some of the key commitments and opportunities in relations to rights, democracy and learning in a blog published on our website in May.

Parisa’s analysis shows that there is a lot to feel optimistic about. We’ve got cross-party consensus that addressing child poverty as well as poor mental health need further investment. As part of the End Child Poverty coalition, we called for a doubling of the Scottish Child Payment to £20 per week. Receiving cross party support for this is a very welcome and necessary step. The SNP, returning as the

governing party, has also made commitments to continue on its path to incorporating international human rights treaties. If achieved, this will bring benefits across society, reducing discrimination and supporting equity and equality. All this is exciting and positive.

The last parliamentary term saw a remarkable run of success in policy and legislation. The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 brought in an ambition to eradicate child poverty by 2030, the Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland) Act 2019 removed the defence of justifiable assault, giving children the same protection as adults, and the UNCRC Incorporation (Scotland) Bill was passed unanimously by the Scottish Parliament in March this year.

These were such positive steps and we can feel pride in these achievements, knowing the long years of campaigning that went into them. However, we cannot forget that passing legislation or creating a new strategy is only one part of the story. Implementing change on the back of new legislation or policy commitments is quite a different matter.

The independent review of the implementation of Additional Support for Learning Legislation published in 2020 all too clearly highlighted the gap that can exist between legislation and implementation. The ambitious targets we have around child poverty are evidence of this, currently sitting within a reality where child poverty statistics are going in the wrong direction. It is also impossible to forget that the commitments in party manifestos are made at a time when the country is still reeling from the coronavirus pandemic, which has in itself exacerbated some long-standing inequalities in Scotland.

One thing we can be sure of is that good legislation is not enough. We can’t see passing a bill or the introduction of a new strategy as the end goal, when implementation can make or break it. And implementation is the hard part. It’s where things get messy, caught up in

complex systems, bureaucracy, fatigue, money and capacity issues. But during this new beginning, with new parliamentarians in office at the start of a new parliamentary cycle, it is worth remembering that if we properly implement all the legislation, policy and strategy we currently have on the books, we would make great inroads into achieving the changes and ambitions we’re all calling for. New is not always necessary.

The difficulty is that a commitment to effective implementation of existing strategies was never going to be a vote winner. Party manifestos are expected to cover a huge amount of ground, and they can only do so at a very surface level, talking in bite-sized understandable commitments that speak to voters – increasing the number of this profession or investing X amount in a particular thing, for example. These commitments all individually may be specific, measurable and time limited, but it can be difficult to see what they all add up to as a coherent whole that will address the entrenched inequalities that persist in Scotland.

And a coherent approach is needed because, as we know, people’s needs and aspirations cannot be fully addressed without taking into account the reality of their whole lives – where they live, their physical health, their family’s strengths and challenges. Taking each issue or problem in isolation may do something to address some immediate concerns, but it won’t change the fundamentals. That this parliament better reflects the diversity of the Scottish population, in terms of race, gender and disability, gives me hope that the decisions it makes will be more grounded in an understanding of the complexity and intersectionality of people’s lives and experiences.

Furthermore, I suspect few entering parliament for the first time, or indeed those returning, want to focus on addressing problems in a solely reactive way. We want to, and need to, think about how we can enable children and young people to flourish and reach their potential now and for the long term.

With this in mind I am enthused by a small commitment, tucked away in the pages of the SNP manifesto. It reads:

‘We will deliver a wellbeing budget, ensuring that all budget decisions benefit the wellbeing of people across the country’

In our Manifesto for 2021-2026, Children in Scotland called for a comprehensive wellbeing budget by 2022. Wellbeing budgeting provides an opportunity to focus decision-making around outcomes and people, rather than targets and services. It also recognises wellbeing as a key driver for us as a country, rather than economic growth, thereby pointing to an ambition for a sustainable future built on reducing inequalities across society.

We believe, if done correctly, it could support that joined-up, holistic approach to policy making and implementation we have been lacking. Getting Scotland to this point will take no small effort. But if we are looking for hope and aspiration in this new parliamentary cycle, the enactment of a small pledge on page 48 of the SNP manifesto could be it.

> [Election aftermath](#) Read Parisa’s blog comparing the parties’ pledges to Children in Scotland’s own calls to improve children’s lives on our website [here](#)

> [Children in Scotland Manifesto 2021-26](#) Read our themes and calls in full [here](#)

> [Being Bold: Building budget’s for children’s wellbeing](#) Find out more about our wellbeing budget work [here](#)

First-time voter

“I feel I have contributed to my future”



For many young adults, the 2021 Holyrood elections was the first time they participated in the democratic process. First time voter, Amy Pavri, tell us about her experience.

My relationship with politics hasn’t always been the smoothest. I was under the impression it was something boring that adults would discuss at dinner parties after they ran out of small talk. Then, I turned 18 and became one of these adults that droned on about the political climate.

As I progressed through school I discovered that politics wasn’t some irrelevant nonsense that “didn’t affect me”. I realised I had a genuine passion for learning about the system I was soon to be immersed in. As I started to research more into the world of diplomacy and democracy, I uncovered some of the tragedies corrupt systems had created and I realised this was, inevitably, going to impact my future.

It’s true that delving into the world of politics can be daunting. It is increasingly difficult to possess a personal opinion without feeling as if everyone around you is going to tell you it’s wrong, particularly if you’re a young adult. Plus, there is the pressure of social media. Whilst social networks can be incredibly fast, informative sources, I can see how easy it is to get sucked into the toxicities of different platforms. It can sometimes be much simpler to form an opinion based on what you quickly read online as opposed to doing your own research.

Nevertheless, although it can feel like politics is divisive, it is not all negative. Studying party manifestos and understanding their positions has allowed me to discover and strengthen my own personal morals and values, and encourage personal growth. In addition, as a young woman I felt a definite sense of pride when standing for the first time at the polling booth, conscious of the suffering and horrors other females endured during the Suffragette Movement in order to secure our right to vote.

This year was my first time voting and, to my surprise, I was far more nervous than I anticipated. I was unsure whether I was to bring my voting card, worried they would send me away at the door. I tried hard to block out the pressures of social media. But the process was over in the blink of an eye. Once done, I walked out with a sense of fulfilment having felt I had contributed to my future.

I am very aware of the growing responsibility myself and my generation have on our shoulders. I am excited and can’t wait to learn more, further educate myself and continue to form my own beliefs without fear of judgement.

Amy Pavri is 18 years old. She voted for the first time in the 2021 Scottish Parliament elections.



Ending the inequality faced by young parents begins with us all



Satwat Rehman
Chief Executive
One Parent Families
Scotland (OPFS)

Twitter: @OPFS

A new campaign calls for an end to the 'young parent penalty' but we all have a responsibility to challenge the discrimination young parents face, writes *Satwat Rehman*

Among the many flaws of Universal Credit, one of its lesser publicised quirks is that it removes an exemption for single parents under 25 years which has enabled them to be paid the adult rate of benefits, in recognition of the costs of caring for a child alone.

As a result, when a young single parent has to move to Universal Credit — for example when their child turns five and they can no longer claim Income Support — they are up to £66 worse off per month. This is a drop of around 20% in financial support — typically with no warning from the DWP that they'll be receiving less.

This is what we are calling the 'young parent penalty', because there is no justification for making this cut to support. It is an arbitrary decision to treat young parents and their children as less worthy of adequate social security than those over 25 years old. This flies in the face of the evidence which shows that children in single parent families are nearly twice as likely to live in poverty, while children born to women under 20 are at a 63% higher risk of poverty.

This is a reserved, UK-wide policy, but as a new Scottish Parliament begins it is important to reflect on how all of us can challenge the unfair misconceptions and inequalities faced by young parents in Scotland. Policies like this do not exist in a vacuum, and the impacts on children and families are far too stark to simply sidestep as something we — and our Scottish Parliament — can do nothing about.

There are around 17,000 single parents under 25 in Scotland. This is about a third of all young parents, and just over 10% of all single parents. As a small and commonly stigmatised population, it is perhaps unsurprising (albeit wrong) that their voices and experiences often go unheard. But it is shame on us all that our society continues to fail to break down the barriers that they and their children so often face.

It is not only in social security that young parents come up against inequality. The fact that women in education, including apprenticeships, do not have the same maternity rights as those in employment makes it harder for young mums to escape the poverty they are trapped in and to reach their potential.

We also know care-experienced young women are significantly more likely to become young mums. Improving the support they receive as parents is vital to preventing generational care. Ending generational poverty is an integral piece of that puzzle, as recognised by The Promise in its plan for 2021-24.

There is also evidence that mothers aged 16-24 are much more likely to experience poor mental health. This is a group of young people who are likely to require more, not less, support, and making sure that happens should be a top priority for newly elected (and re-elected) MSPs.

Earlier this year, IPPR Scotland recommended that the Scottish Government consult on introducing a lone parent premium to the Scottish Child Payment. Measures like this, or a premium targeted at young parents, could help mitigate some of the inequality faced by those who are penalised by the UK social security system.

The 'young parent penalty' is just one symptom of a system which overlooks the needs of young parents, especially young single parents. Too often, they are written off and looked down upon. But we know from experience that, with the right support, young parents can raise and love their children just as well as any other parent.

To gain momentum for change in addressing inequality in policy, we need to start by changing the conversation and giving young parents the respect they deserve. That's something every one of us has the power to do.

"Children in single parent families are twice as likely to live in poverty"

> Children in Scotland is one of the original partners supporting the campaign to #EndtheYoungParentPenalty

> Sign the petition on the One Parent Family website. Find out more

"Progress is being made on the ASL action plan and will continue with pace"



Jan Savage
Chair of the Additional
Support for Learning
Implementation
Group (ASLIG)

Jan is also the Director of
Charity and Membership
at Enable Scotland

Twitter: @Jan_Enable

Despite challenging circumstances, there is a continued commitment to deliver the recommendations made in the ASL Review. *Jan Savage* explains more

When the Additional Support for Learning Implementation Group (ASLIG) recommended that the Scottish Government commission an Independent Review of Additional Support for Learning delivery in Scotland it was to help understand the reality of provision and receive recommendations on actions that will deliver tangible change, based on the experiences of pupils, parents and teachers.

The Review's author, Angela Morgan, made 17 core recommendations across nine key themes: Vision and Visibility; Mainstreaming and Inclusion; Maintaining Focus; Resources; Workforce Development and Support; Relationships between schools and parents; Relationships and Behaviour; Understanding Rights; and Assurance Mechanism. The Scottish government responded with the Additional Support for Learning Action Plan, accepting the recommendations of the review and committing to the actions outlined.

The group does not underestimate the significant impact that the pandemic has had on all children and young people, their families and the professionals who support them. That is why during the pandemic, ASLIG have prioritised progressing the government's action plan. As with most things this last year, whilst Covid-19 has had an impact on how we are able to take this work forward, progress is being made, and will continue with pace.

The ASL Review was clear that children and young people's participation, co-creation and collaboration is key to ensuring that additional support for learning is implemented effectively. It rightly highlighted, as the report's overarching recommendation, the need to strengthen support and structures for amplifying their voices, and actively listening to their views. ASLIG fully endorses this approach and the actions set out in the Action Plan to realise this ambition. We recognise the benefit it will bring in supporting the improvement

of the experiences of children and young people with additional support needs and support their right to express their views, feelings and wishes.

We have focussed on working with the Inclusion Ambassadors, facilitated by Children in Scotland, to support their development of a national vision statement for success in learning and education for children and young people who have additional support needs.

The vision statement will be theirs, as it should be, and we anticipate that this will be published shortly — in a format designed by them of course!

In terms of programme management, we have also been progressing our work to agree robust implementation and outcome measures set against each recommendation in the action plan. This will help monitor and drive progress against the actions and will be reported on later this year.

We continue to oversee progress of the other measures set out in the ASL Action Plan. This includes the work of a short life working group which has been established to review the use of co-ordinated support plans (CSPs). The group is considering the key issues and barriers to effective implementation of the legislation related to CSPs and will work collaboratively to address and overcome them. They will report their findings to ASLIG to inform next steps.

One of the central elements of the review is reframing how we measure and celebrate achievement for children and young people who have additional support for learning needs. ASLIG is currently leading the development of a measurement framework seeking to value and increase visibility of the diverse range of achievements that children and young people achieve and develop a mechanism to ensure that these are fully recognised and celebrated.

"During the pandemic, we have prioritised progressing the government's action plan"

> The Inclusion Ambassadors are a group of secondary school aged pupils brought together to identify what works and what doesn't for pupils with additional support needs. To find out more about their work visit childreninscotland.org.uk/inclusion-ambassadors/

> Find out more about the work of ASLIG on the Scottish Government webpages gov.scot/groups/additional-support-for-learning-implementation-group/

ONLINE TRAINING COURSE PROGRAMME JUNE-NOVEMBER 2021

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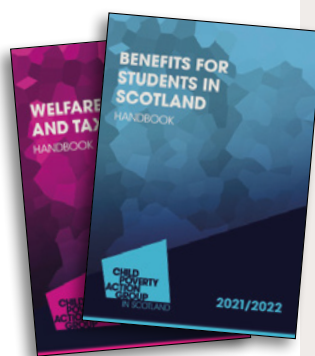
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Contact

0141 552 3303

pchalmers@cpagscotland.org.uk

cpag.org.uk/scotland

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CPAG in Scotland's welfare rights service is funded by the Scottish Government.

JUNE

8	NEW Attendance allowance – an introduction
9	Students and benefits – an update
10	Looking up the law online
15-16	Benefits for EEA nationals
22	Payments for children in Scotland
23	Benefits overview

AUGUST

18	Scottish social security – an introduction
19-20	Mental health and benefits
24	Universal credit – transferring from benefits and tax credits
25-26	QBC – making the most of your calculator

SEPTEMBER

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14	NEW Child disability payment
21	How to challenge decisions – mandatory reconsiderations and other tactics
22-23	NEW QBC – making the most of your calculator
30	NEW Limited capability for work in universal credit

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6-7	Universal credit and students
21-22	Social security law update
26	Universal credit – an introduction
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NOVEMBER

2-3	Benefit basics in Scotland
9-10	Universal credit for ill health and disability
11	Kinship carers and the benefits system
16-17	Benefits for non-EEA nationals
18	Students and benefits – an update
23-24	Benefits for EEA nationals
25	NEW – Child disability payment

■ INTRODUCTORY ■ STANDARD ■ EXPERIENCED

+ Dates from December 2021 through to March 2022 available at cpag.org.uk/scotland/training

People, projects, perspectives

In the climate hot seat

In April, Scottish party leaders were quizzed by young people on how they will actively address environmental issues. Panel member, **Anna Balmain**, reflects on some of the promises made

Climate change has consistently been raised as one of the biggest issues for young voters in Scotland, meaning the environmental hustings held in April was a vital opportunity for Scotland's political leaders to share how they are prepared to act against climate change.

The leaders from Scotland's five main political parties attended the virtual event, which was organised by YouthLink Scotland along with young people representing youth organisations across Scotland, including Children in Scotland. Questions were submitted live to the leaders by a youth panel who were joined at the event by 85 young Scots watching along from home. Although the event was conducted online in order to meet the restrictions still in place, it still had a debate-like feel and those watching from home participated by commenting and sending in questions.

Five main climate topics were covered: Nature Emergency, Youth Voice, Emissions and Waste, Food Justice, and Climate Change and Targets.

Climate friend or foe?

The politicians were questioned on what policies they will bring in to achieve the land use change needed to tackle the nature and climate crises.

Douglas Ross, Scottish Conservatives, spoke about his party's proposed "Dedicated Nature Bill" (for the next parliamentary term) that should "protect those species that are under threat". He also discussed increasing tree planting across Scotland.



Nicola Sturgeon, SNP, also discussed tree planting and identified she wanted to see an increase of "about 25% on tree planting" and, talking about peatlands, "a quarter of a million hectares (over the next few years) restored."

Leaders were also asked directly "What is your plan for climate action over the next five years?", with calls for specific details on plans to tackle how climate change disproportionately affects minorities and disadvantaged groups.

Anas Sarwar, Scottish Labour, talked of his ambition but warned Scotland could not do it alone, saying "Yes, I want us to be ambitious. Yes, I want us to be leading from the front. Yes, I want us to be world leading in Scotland, but we've also got to try and inspire international co-operation if we are going to challenge climate change."

Referencing the government's Climate Justice Fund, which is designed to help tackle the effects of climate change on the poorest and most vulnerable countries, Nicola Sturgeon told the young people gathered that she wanted to "double that that over the next few years".

Willie Rennie, Scottish Liberal Democrats, offered support for the Fund saying Scotland needs to "help other countries to deal with their carbon issue" and assist with the transition to new, more environmentally friendly forms of energy.

When asked when they think Scotland should stop producing fossil fuels the response varied, although there was continued reference to a 'Just Transition'. Patrick Harvie, Scottish Greens, identified hopes of fossil fuel extraction ending in Scotland in the next ten years and Anas Sarwar referred to Net Zero 2045 as "our deadline".

All parties also committed to banning all single-use plastic.

The Climate Hot Seat event was one of the only events to bring together all of Scotland's party leaders to discuss Scotland's journey to combatting the climate crisis. Young people have consistently raised climate change and environmental issues as a key concern for both the immediate and longer term future. This event helped shine a spotlight on how parties each plan to address some of the issues. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to be involved. We, as young people, intend to hold them to their promises.

Anna Balmain, 13, was a member of the panel representing Children in Scotland

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Time to step up

Linzi McLagan shares how an innovative dance programme for school-aged children has increased attainment and improved health and wellbeing



In January 2017, YDance (Scottish Youth Dance) launched a new initiative designed to support the national goal of improving attainment. Closely linked to the Scottish Government's Attainment Challenge, *Shake It Up* was a large-scale, four-year education programme focusing specifically on reducing the attainment gap between advantaged and disadvantaged children in Glasgow, North Lanarkshire, West Dunbartonshire and Clackmannanshire.

Funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, over the programme lifespan *Shake It Up* reached approximately 5000 pupils and increased engagement across a range of subjects. The *Shake It Up* sessions covered a range of curriculum areas including numeracy, literacy, health and wellbeing, and social sciences, all explored through dance. Two full-time Dance Education Artists in Residence worked across six primary schools in our partner areas, delivering sessions in close partnership with teachers to ensure subject benchmarks were met, using dance as an intervention to support learning through a new kinaesthetic approach.

Running alongside the delivery programme, the Robert Owen Centre for Educational Change at Glasgow University conducted a research and evaluation study. The evaluation, published at the end of 2020, revealed that the *Shake It Up* programme was seen by most teachers as having a positive impact on pupils'

wellbeing. This was often expressed in terms of improved social skills and better self-confidence and perceptions of peers, skills and abilities which were transferable to situations outwith the *Shake It Up* sessions. Among the younger pupils, the programme was most frequently reported as a good help in relation to feeling happier at school (64%), getting on better with their teacher (62%) and remembering facts about subjects (60%).

Teachers commented on how the *Shake It Up* learning process provided a different perspective to classroom teaching, helping pupils to better conceptualise the topics and knowledge in different, but complementary, ways. One headteacher stated that improvements in pupils' literacy was observed for those involved with the programme, particularly those learners from areas in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 1 and 2.

The programme had also proven very helpful in promoting the learning engagement of pupils with social and emotional needs. One pupil who was otherwise not engaged with school had enjoyed the programme so much he later joined an after-school dance club and won a local authority award.

The findings also highlighted the importance of working collegially with schools to ensure a positive experience for all involved. Collaboration with teachers was imperative in the success of the programme. Through

Shake It Up, the Dance Education Artists in Residence and primary school teachers were given the opportunity to work together, using a range of teaching styles, creative ideas and perspectives of delivering multiple subjects through dance in the classroom.

At YDance, we are continually developing our learning, teaching and assessment strategy through an ongoing evaluative process. Considerable work has taken place to expand our knowledge and understanding within education to ensure we provide high-quality creative dance sessions and career-long professional learning (CLPL) opportunities which complement the current curriculum and good practices identified within schools.

Next steps

YDance has been awarded additional funding from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation to continue the *Shake It Up* legacy with our next project *Step It Up*.

This programme will work in partnership with a further six primary schools in other areas of Scotland. *Step It Up* aims to improve engagement, attainment and overcome barriers to learning and will further develop the different ways teachers can use dance and a tactile learning approach to support and challenge pupils in deprived areas to achieve their potential.

This project will primarily focus on developing teachers' confidence, skills and knowledge in dance as a cross-curricular tool. Through practical sessions and continual professional development, 18 teachers and two dance artists will take part in an experiential learning journey led by pedagogy, reflection and evaluation.

This year, lockdown has had a significant impact on children and many young people found barriers and challenges to learning as screens became dominant in our lives. As the novelty of online learning has worn off, we can't help but notice that overall morale, motivation

and engagement has dropped. Children are more likely to watch TV, surf the internet and play with friends in a virtual domain than take part in a class. Perhaps the lack of social integration has hindered motivation to engage in learning within the virtual domain as community energy and humanistic interaction are key motivators within many learning environments.

As children return to school, we must consider ways for them to reconnect with learning, the building, staff, each other, and themselves. Adopting an embodied active approach to learning can not only promote physical activity but help children improve curriculum-based outcomes that support student achievement. In the recovery phase of the pandemic, we cannot afford complacency and should encourage young people to focus on their overall wellbeing rather than commit their full attention to catching up with their academic achievement.

Through the findings of *Shake It Up*, we hope to promote the tangible benefits of using the arts within education, and specifically highlighting the beneficial factors of using dance as an educational tool. Adopting a kinaesthetic based approach to learning that improves the physical, social, emotional and intellectual

outcomes of our youth has been proven to improve their overall engagement. Following the pandemic, the power to take action and support young people's health, wellbeing and intellectual development lies within the school management, teachers and parents. Activities such as dance that encompass community, cognitive development, active learning, creativity and fitness can help develop the physical, social and emotional landscapes of our future generation.

Linzi McLagan is Head of Education for YDance

> To find out more about the work of YDance (Scottish Youth Dance) visit their website <https://ydance.org>

> Read the *Shake It Up* Programme Evaluation Final Report [here](#)



> Images © Paul Watt Photography

Sowing the seeds

A mindfulness toolkit designed for early years children aims to improve focus, sleep and bring calm. Christina Cran explains more

The World Health Organisation estimate 20 per cent of young people worldwide experience mental disorders. This is shockingly high, but in reality the figure is likely to be much higher, as a number of conditions may go undiagnosed.

It is widely agreed that support for rising mental health problems is currently insufficient, with numerous reports highlighting poor or delayed interventions. In Scotland, we are all too aware of long waiting lists for mental health support.

Most of the data currently available is from pre-Covid times. It is expected the statistics will paint an even bleaker picture once the last year has been taken into account. In the first seven weeks of lockdown the NSPCC reported delivering 17,000 counselling sessions to children worried about their mental health and wellbeing.

The long-term impact of the coronavirus pandemic is expected to be felt for years to come. Indeed, the Children and Young People's Commissioner, Bruce Adamson, has said every child in Scotland will need additional mental health support due to lockdown. The problem is clearly not going away. With growing pressure on the NHS who are already struggling to provide sufficient CAMHS services, we believe mindfulness should be implemented at an early years level and as part of the curriculum to help address the growing need.

Mindfulness has been scientifically proven to improve mental health prospects and research shows introducing these practices in schools and universities can improve a variety of outcomes, including physical, mental and social wellbeing. This could play a role in preventing depression, anxiety and stress. But the missing link is planting and nurturing these seeds of mindfulness and meditation in pre-school children.

At Wee Seeds, our bespoke digital wellbeing toolbox is designed to help parents and professionals plant seeds of positive mental wellbeing in the early years through mindfulness, meditation and movement exercises. Our exercises are user-tested, 'grown-up friendly' and easy to use. We guide adults to feel confident taking part in mindfulness and discussing feelings alongside their children, with activities designed to be completed together.

There's limited research on the impact of mindfulness on this age group but what evidence there is shows improvement in focus, attention, sense of calm and kindness.

In 2019 we conducted a trial with 23 nurseries across the UK. Over a period of 6-8 weeks they integrated our digital toolbox into their curriculums and reported back how this was working in a nursery or early learning setting. This, along with testing from a parent group, showed:



Image supplied by Wee Seeds

- 75 per cent of parents noticed a positive change in their child (and themselves) after using Wee Seeds
- Calmness was the benefit most identified by parents and nursery staff using Wee Seeds exercises with children in their care
- 77 per cent of parents and 50 per cent of nursery practitioners reported children were more focused
- 56 per cent of parents in our pilot survey reported Wee Seeds had made a difference to their child's sleeping patterns.
- 100 per cent of users in the pilot launch study reported a positive change on the family unit after using Wee Seeds.

One parent said: "I think of it [Wee Seeds] as a mental vaccination against challenges that my kids will face in the future, to instil early preventive tools for developing calm, balance and positive mental wellbeing. Particularly important with the challenges they've faced during lockdown."

The importance of encouraging positive mental health and growth has been emphasised by those working directly and indirectly with young people for some time. Now, as we emerge from the shadow of Covid-19, we believe the Wee Seeds toolkit can do just that, starting at the earliest opportunity. It provides the tools and resources for parents, carers and early learning professionals to help encourage mental wellbeing, whilst equipping our youngest generation with the coping mechanisms needed to navigate through life. We need to plant the seeds now, in order to see the benefits in years to come.

Christina Cran is Founder of Wee Seeds

> Find out more about Wee Seeds on their website weeseeds.co.uk or email weeseedsmeditations@gmail.com

Forest View Residential Houses

As part of child and youth care charity Kibble, Forest View Residential Houses provide nurturing accommodation and therapeutic support for children aged 5 - 12 with experience of trauma. Our two individual houses, Tay and Ness, offer beautiful four- and five-bedroom accommodation alongside a therapeutic primary school. Set in Lochwinnoch, Forest View is surrounded by trees, rugged landscapes and stunning wildlife.

Enquiries can be made to referrals@kibble.org.

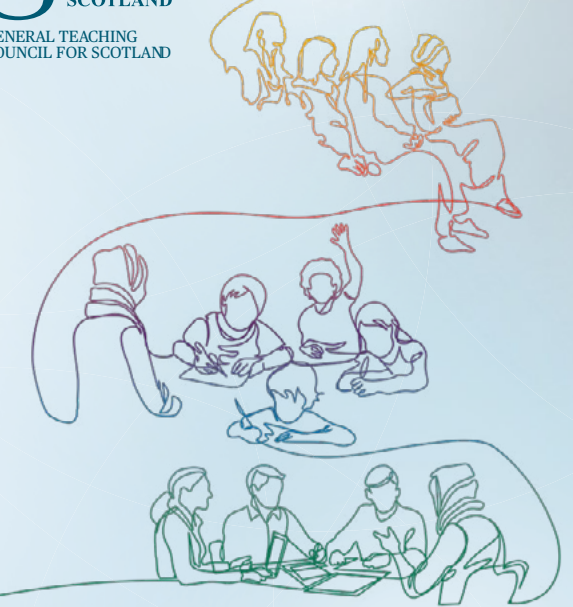


www.kibble.org @KibbleCharity | KibbleGroup

Kibble Education and Care Centre:
Scottish Charity No SC026917 Registered in Scotland No 158220

gtc
SCOTLAND
GENERAL TEACHING
COUNCIL FOR SCOTLAND

**Professional Standards
for Scotland's Teachers**



The Professional Standards for Teachers have been refreshed and restructured following extensive engagement with teachers, partners, and children and young people.

The Professional Standards provide a framework that supports what it means to become, to be and to grow as a teacher in Scotland.

[Read the Professional Standards](#)

Early Learning and Childcare Early Learning & Childcare (ELC) Inclusion Fund

Are you a registered funded provider of early learning and childcare (ELC) in Scotland and have a child/ren in your care with additional support needs?

The Scottish Government Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Inclusion Fund provides grants to early learning and childcare settings to support children with additional support needs in Scotland access their funded early learning and childcare.

We expect the next round of the fund to open for applications in September 2021. ELC settings and childminders received funding for one-off adaptations, equipment, resources and training.

The response to the COVID-19 pandemic may have had an impact on some children's existing additional support needs and may have resulted in the emergence of additional support needs in other children. This fund could be used to support these needs.

For further information or to be added to our email mailing list for the ELC Inclusion fund contact: inclusionfund@childreninscotland.org.uk

The ELC Inclusion Fund is funded by Scottish Government and administered by Children in Scotland.

childreninscotland.org.uk

Twitter: @cisweb | #ELCInclusion

Children
in Scotland



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Introducing...

"It's not about right or wrong, but about bringing people together"

Sandra Mitchell explains how our mediation service places communication, trust and respect at the heart of discussions to reach mutually agreeable solutions in the best interests of the child.



Sandra Mitchell
Mediation Manager
Resolve: ASL mediation Service

> To find out more about the work of Resolve, and to access downloadable information sheets, visit <https://childreninscotland.org.uk/our-work/services/resolve/>

> Read the independent Evaluation Report here <https://childreninscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Resolve-Evaluation-Report-2019.pdf>

> If you need mediation services and think Resolve may be able to help, contact Sandra and the team by email resolve@childreninscotland.org.uk

Resolve: ASL mediation service has been delivering independent mediation within the Scottish education sector since 2004. We work with parents, carers, children, young people, education staff and various practitioners to find mutually agreeable solutions and resolutions.

Our mediation approach is a collaborative way of assisting people to resolve and repair disputes, relationships and communication issues. It is not about who is 'right' or who is 'wrong'. We look at the present and the future rather than the past, and bring together those who know the child or young person best.

Mediators do not judge or propose solutions. They facilitate a controlled and balanced conversation through questioning, encouraging people to listen to each other's perspectives and explore issues, options and ways forward. The mediation atmosphere provides a safe place to have these cordial, constructive discussions. It is not combative. A skilled mediator supports and fosters good communication, trust and respect. These are all key to positive discussions leading to agreeable outcomes.

We would always recommend mediation is considered as early as possible in any dispute when people have stopped talking. We know the impacts that disputes and broken relationships can have on everyone's wellbeing, stress levels and time. However, our skilled and experienced mediators are on hand to provide a way to elevate these impacts in a respectful and trusting manner.

In many cases the mediation meeting is the opportunity to 'reboot' the relationship or communication. This in turn allows the issues to be addressed and we see this as an extremely successful and important outcome. There are times when sharing and hearing information at the mediation meeting mean key people find solutions that had not been considered or even thought possible. It is also important to note that mediation agreements are not imposed upon people. They are mutually agreed outcomes which have proved to support and re-establish relationships between families and schools.

A recent independent evaluation recognised our services as mitigating negative impacts of cost, time and trauma. It also acknowledged mediation as an essential way to achieve positive outcomes to benefit children and their education whilst retaining positive partnerships. We often do not hear from people once their disputes are resolved but we see this as very positive as if things were not working we are quite sure they would contact us again!

A new publication for the children's sector

We are launching a brand-new publication for the children's sector in autumn 2021. Offering in-depth analysis, learning and innovation from projects across Scotland and profiles of the organisations and individuals enabling change, the new publication will be available free to our members, and by subscription.

> To join us in membership and be one of the first to receive our new publication contact Tracy Hope via thope@childreninscotland.org.uk

June 15	Vicarious trauma and self-care Jan Montgomery Tuesday, 15 June, 10:30am
June 21	Child protection for all: an introduction and refresher NSPCC Scotland Training and Consultancy Monday, 21 June, 10am
July 6	Mindfulness work with children and young people Jan Montgomery Tuesday, 6 July, 10:30am
July 13	Supporting children and young people who internalise their distress Jan Montgomery Tuesday, 13 July, 10:30am
July 21	Supporting children and young people who self-harm Penumbra Wednesday, 21 July, 10:30am
Aug 4	Leadership & management: attunement in leading, developing and mediating Sandra Strathie, Glen Strathie Partnership Wednesday, 4 August, 10:30am
Aug 10	Solution-focused approaches to bereavement, trauma and loss Steve Sweeney Tuesday, 10 August, 3pm
Aug 24	Child Protection Officer training NSPCC Scotland Training and Consultancy Tuesday, 24 August, 10am

Webinar series

MORE THAN MY TRAUMA

INTERNATIONAL CHILD TRAUMA CONFERENCE

Each of our first five is led by a different Scottish organisation, focusing on a select area of their expertise.

Dr Bruce Perry will join us for the final session, exploring a topic chosen by you

Thursday 27 May, 1.30-3pm: Lessons learned from implementing a large-scale, trauma-informed 5-year project.

Thursday 24 June, 1.30-3pm: Reflective practice in trauma-informed care.

Thursday 29 July, 1.30-3pm: Play, love and relationships.

Thursday 26 August, 1.30-3pm: How our trauma journey has influenced participation, policy and partnership.

Thursday 30 September, 1.30-3pm: Moving from trauma-informed to creating safe, healing, nurturing environments.

Thursday 28 October, 2-4pm: Dr Bruce Perry - you'll have the opportunity to shape what Dr Perry explores in this session.

Booking will give you access to all six More Than My Trauma sessions.

Book now via
eventbrite

Trouble Sleeping?

Our sleep support courses help educators and professionals working with children and teenagers to raise awareness of the benefits of a good night's sleep and provide support for families and children experiencing difficulties sleeping.

[@sleepscotland](#)
[@sleepscot](#)
[@SleepScotland](#)

To find out more and get involved in a range of courses to help make a difference to young people's lives, get in touch by dropping us an email training@sleepscotland.org
Or by using the contact form on our website: <https://www.sleepscotland.org/contact-us/>



Road Safety is a Skill for Life

As most people use roads on a fairly regular basis, it is important to make sure that we do so as safely as possible. Sadly, the road environment still represents one of the highest causes of accidental death to our young people. It is crucial, therefore, that road safety learning is considered a key life skill, and that it should not just be about school-based learning through Curriculum for Excellence, but also about everyday life within our communities. Many schools across the country incorporate road safety learning into curriculum work very effectively. However, for this learning to be meaningful, it has to continue outside school. As adults, we need to take on the responsibility of leading by example and demonstrating to our children and young people that what they've been learning at school can be easily put into practise crossing the road, on the bus, in the car, on the pavement, cycling to school.

Road Safety Scotland (RSS) provides free road safety learning resources for all ages and stages of a child's learning. All resources, available online, are linked to Curriculum for Excellence, encouraging active and experiential learning. Throughout the COVID pandemic, RSS has continued to promote its learning resources through social media platforms, focusing on supporting parents, carers and teachers, by signposting to activities on our websites. As we move out of lockdown, RSS will continue with the messaging supporting families and teachers, and ensure that all road safety learning resources are high quality and age-appropriate.

Scotland's new Road Safety Framework to 2030 has recently been launched and developed with an ultimate vision of "Scotland to have the best road safety performance in the world". The journey to achieving this vision will also include ambitious targets where the number of people being killed or seriously injured on our roads will be halved by 2030. RSS will be one of many partners who will continue to contribute to the outcomes to deliver the vision.

Please visit www.roadsafety.scot/learning to find out more about RSS resources.



Road Safety
SCOTLAND
