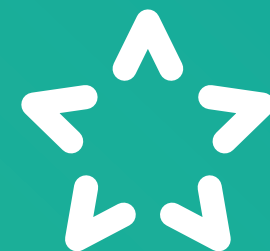




Our work in 2024-25

Children in Scotland's Achievement Report





Introduction

.....

The economic situation continues to be challenging, and against that backdrop we are extremely proud about what we have managed to achieve.

Our values of brave, kind, collaborative and open and fair, and our commitment to strengthening equality, diversity and inclusion underpinned all our work during 2024-25. Our values have been particularly important when we have needed to make difficult choices and decisions.

The strength of our work rests on the ability to bring together our membership with a wider network of people and organisations alongside the views of children and young people themselves. This collaboration is powerful and gives us the strength

to play a significant role in creating and implementing policies, processes and approaches that will give us a better chance of fulfilling the promise of UNCRC – that all children’s rights are fulfilled.

This report offers some highlights from the wide range of work that our dedicated team lead across the year. If you want to read further there is more information on all of our work on the [website](#). We are also pleased to hear from anyone who wants to learn more about what we do, so please do get in touch if there is anything you would like to ask or hear more about.

Dr Judith Turbyne,
Chief Executive





Our Strategic Plan (2023-28)

In 2024-25, our six strategic priorities continued to be at the forefront of our work, as we made strides towards a Scotland where all children have an equal chance to flourish.

- 1 Children and young people's views will be listened to, taken seriously and acted upon
- 2 We will deliver quality services that support children, young people, parents, carers and professionals
- 3 We will maintain and build on a strong and effective network with a vibrant membership at its core
- 4 We will lead and develop the children's sector workforce
- 5 We will influence policymakers to deliver on our Manifesto priorities
- 6 We will be an environmentally and financially sustainable organisation

In the following pages you'll read some examples of steps we've taken over the last year to achieve these objectives.





Our work in numbers

2,650

Children and young people we've worked with directly

£4,218

Total donations to Children n Scotland

1,414

Enquiries handled by the Enquire team

12,317

Delegates trained across our learning and events programme

8

Corporate partnerships

149

Referrals handled by Resolve

1,749

eLearning modules completed

57

New Members

57

Referrals to Additional Support Needs Tribunal Children's Views service

100%

Of Changing our World members felt their views were heard in our sessions

446

Total Members

60

Events run

18

Reports containing children and young people's views

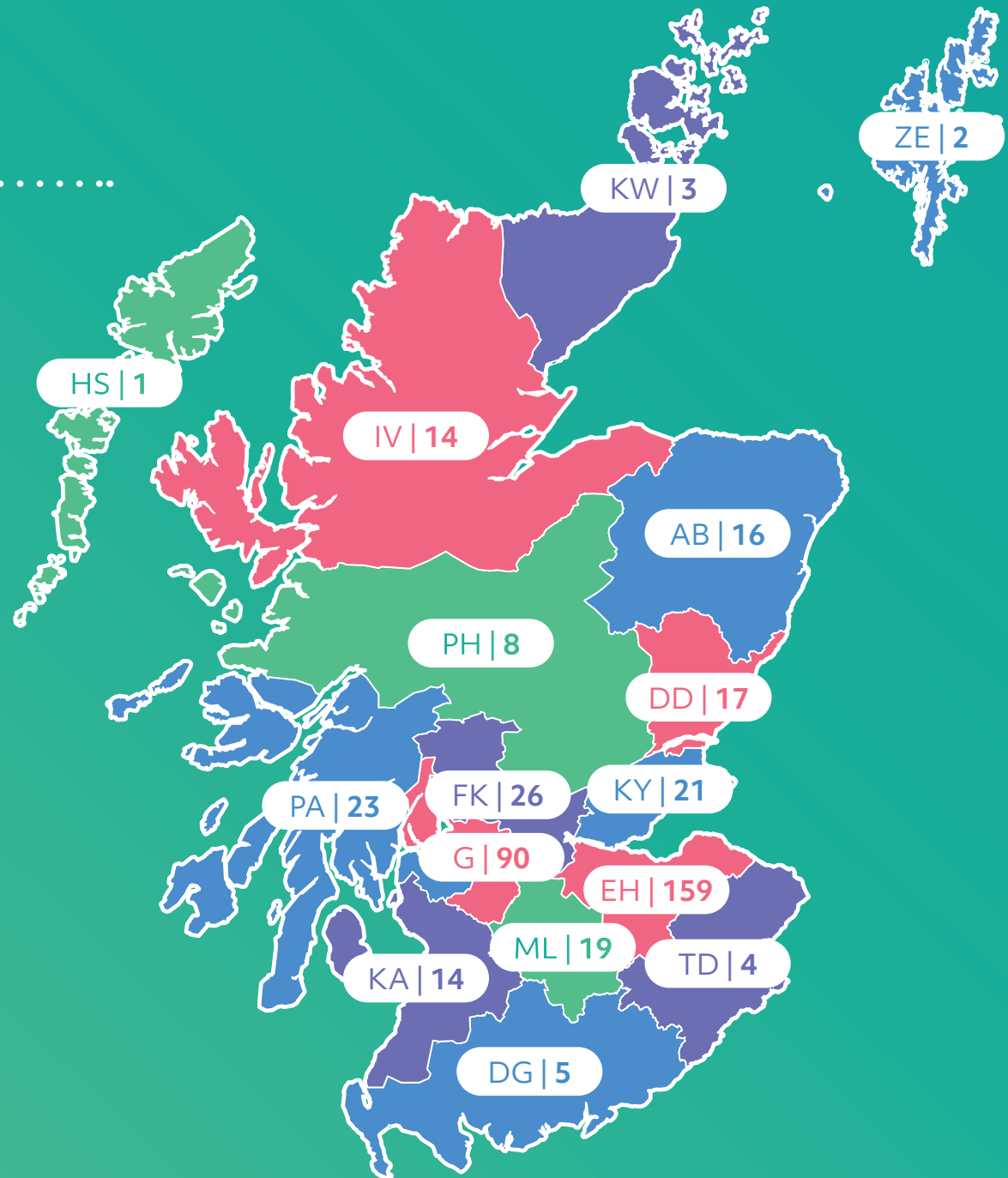
90,512

News emails sent to the sector



Where are our members?

- Aberdeen/Aberdeenshire (AB) | 16
- Dundee & Angus (DD) | 17
- Dumfries & Galloway (DG) | 5
- Edinburgh & Lothians (EH) | 159
- Falkirk/Stirling/Clackmannanshire (FK) | 26
- Glasgow/Dunbartonshire (G) | 90
- Na h-Eileanan Siar (HS) | 1
- Inverness/Inverness-shire (IV) | 14
- Kilmarnock/Ayrshire (KA) | 14
- Caithness/Sutherland/Orkney (KW) | 3
- Kirkcaldy/Fife (KY) | 21
- Motherwell/Lanarkshire (ML) | 19
- Paisley/Renfrewshire/Argyll & Bute (PA) | 23
- Perth/Perthshire (PH) | 8
- Scottish Borders (TD) | 4
- Shetland (ZE) | 2
- Outside Scotland | 23





Our policy work

From our involvement in the Scottish COVID-19 Inquiry, to helping shape education reform, 2024-25 was an incredibly busy year for Children in Scotland's policy activity, as we continued to embed children's voices in decision making at all levels.

Sustainable funding for the children's sector was a key focus area. In August, the Policy, Projects and Participation team responded to a Social Justice and Social Security Committee inquiry into third sector funding principles as part of the committee's pre-budget scrutiny. We offered Children in Scotland members an opportunity to feed into our response and we were pleased to receive 18 contributions with some impactful quotations highlighting members' experiences.

We were also able to share learning from our services, our work with the Children's Sector Strategic and Policy Forum, and evidence from our Supporting the Third Sector Project. We participated in a workshop run by the committee and gave evidence at the Scottish Parliament on 12 September. We also wrote to the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice and the Minister for Children, Young People and Keeping the Promise.

The Forum continues to build in strength. In December, members were pleased to meet with the First Minister to discuss embedding children's rights, policy coherence and doing things differently to deliver on child poverty targets. One takeaway task was to use the Forum to spotlight where policy incoherence is getting



in the way of investing in the eradication of child poverty.

We were pleased we could take more concrete steps in developing work on UNCRC and how to use it as a tool that can help leverage significant change in areas of interest to members. We will work closely with Together and Clan Childlaw to develop a strand of work that will use the more legal side of UNCRC to collaborate on, and constructively campaign for, change that will have a stronger impact on the fulfilment of children's rights.

The Forum has also been active in discussions around fair funding, engaging with Scottish Government on this topic and collaborating with SCVO.

Our work around education reform continued with the publication of Changing our World's **Education and Learning Evidence Paper** in October. This report pulled together members' unique experiences of education in Scotland and explored their hopes and recommendations for the future of the Scottish education system. The report received a positive response, including from the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland.

This report (along with existing evidence) will guide our work around education reform in the year ahead. The Scottish Government's Education (Scotland) Bill passed stage one in a debate in Scottish Parliament just before Christmas, however significant amendments are expected at stage two. Children in Scotland, along with Children's Parliament, Scottish Youth Parliament and Young Scot will be working to support children and young people's participation in the education reform process.



“The current economic situation is making it difficult for all of us. But a crisis can be a good starting point for doing things differently, for having the difficult conversations, for being brave. And that starts now.”

“We are keen to contribute nationally as a Forum to this work, and we will be seeking to ensure that we engage both bravely and constructively. Our babies, children, young people and their families deserve nothing less.”

Dr Judith Turbyne,
Chief Executive, Children in Scotland

Members of the Children's Sector Strategic and Policy Forum, chaired by Children in Scotland, meet with First Minister John Swinney to discuss children's rights and child poverty



Training & Events

This year, Children in Scotland's diverse events programme has offered a wide array of learning opportunities for professionals across the children's sector. Covering topics from safeguarding to the UNCRC and hosting sector-leading conferences, the programme has catered to a broad range of interests and needs – while also providing free events for our members.



Photo: Ben Winger



Event in focus: Annual Conference 2024

.....

A celebration of learning, connection and hope

Children in Scotland's Annual Conference 2024 brought together over 450 delegates, speakers and exhibitors at Murrayfield Stadium, Edinburgh, for two days filled with joy, inspiration, and connection.

With a packed programme of keynotes, workshops, and networking opportunities, our flagship event offered something for everyone working across Scotland's diverse children's sector.

A recurring theme was the financial strain facing third sector organisations. Speaking on day one, Chief Executive, Dr Judith Turbyne, highlighted the urgent need for change:

"The cost of living crisis – on the back of the pandemic – has meant that we've been functioning in crisis mode for quite a long time. We know what a serious impact this is having on children, young people, families, carers, and the organisations that support them."

"But I believe in the power of facing a crisis and using it as a lever for change. There is always hope, and if we work together, we can make change possible."

This message of hope continued on day two, with Natalie Don-Innes MSP, Minister for Children, Young People and Keeping the Promise, sharing her vision for making Scotland the best possible place for children to grow up.

Other highlights included a keynote from Jimmy Paul, Head of the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit, who called for greater inclusion of children's voices in discussions about school violence. A panel on AI and children's rights sparked important conversations about the safety of chatbots and AI-generated content.

Workshops ranged from stop-motion filmmaking inspired by UNCRC incorporation to exploring links between live music and mental health.

Adding a touch of joy, the charity Pets As Therapy delighted attendees with a visit from Zola the dog – a very welcome guest who happily received cuddles between sessions.

"The Children in Scotland Annual Conference was a great way to connect with practitioners in the field and promote our service. Our team enjoyed the chance to engage and came back with renewed confidence and lots of ideas and connections."

Conference delegate



"The conference is an opportunity to share experiences and celebrate successes, and it is hugely important for our work to keep the promise to have a place to come together, share best practice and think about different ways of doing things."

"I find it extremely helpful to be in a room with different people working for children and young people, being able to listen to each other and work with different opinions."

Natalie Don-Innes MSP, Minister for Children, Young People and The Promise and keynote speaker at Children in Scotland's 2024 Annual Conference



Serving children, young people and families

.....

ENQUIRE

Enquire is the national advice service for additional support for learning. In the 25th year of the service, we've been reflecting on how much we continue to achieve for children and young people with additional support needs, their families, and professionals who support them.

This year's highlights have included amazing feedback on the impact of our helpline, making a real difference to parents and carers in particular in feeling informed and empowered.

Our Enquire and Reach websites continue to grow and develop, with improvements made through the year to the volume

and quality of information resources. We've held numerous online and in person events, many in partnership with other expert organisations, to deliver the highest quality information and advice. Our comms work has also gone from strength to strength, helping us to keep reaching more people. Supporting the Inclusion Ambassadors and the My Rights, My Say Young Advisors has also been key to making sure children and young people's views and experiences are guiding what we do.



RESOLVE MEDIATION

2024 saw Resolve celebrate 20 years of delivering mediation to families and education staff across Scotland. It was also our busiest year to date as we dealt with over a hundred referrals, delivered mediation awareness sessions, facilitated training, and continued to liaise with our local authorities where we provide mediation.

Our very skilled team worked tirelessly to listen, support, and assist our users in their individual situations and our biggest reward is when these people tell us they have been heard. Mediation continues to be extremely successful in resolving disagreements for children, families and staff while alleviating all the stresses and worries that conflict can bring.

Planning and hosting a study visit for six students and two professors from the United States was a

huge achievement. The purpose and of the visit was to offer opportunities to analyse and compare service models in Scotland and the US, including inclusion practices, family-professional partnerships, child plans and assessments processes.

During this time, we were warmly welcomed into early years and primary establishments in South Lanarkshire where we met some incredible children and dedicated staff. Some very special moments to treasure.





My Rights, My Say

2024-25 has been the busiest year ever for the My Rights, My Say – Children's Views service. We received 120 referrals, 22 of these for capacity building with local authorities, the rest for direct work with children and young people. Through our direct work we have (among other things) supported 43 children through the Additional Support Needs tribunal process and supported 13 children around non-attendance.

We finished our participation work with East Renfrewshire and have

started a new project with Clackmannanshire. We have also forged strong working partnerships with the National Complex Needs Network and have presented sessions to ASLO, East Dunbartonshire, Dundee University and many others. We continue to represent the voices of children and young people on several working groups.

Our team has grown and now counts (in addition to the service manager) seven self-employed associates, a participation officer, and a participation and comms officer. All our staff have worked incredibly hard to keep up with the increasing demands on the service.

"I'm forever grateful for you coming out to speak to her. I feel it's massively helped her feel heard and that she can actually open up to adults without being judged."

Parent on the My Rights, My Say service





Youth advisory groups

One of our key priorities is to ensure that children and young people's views will be listened to, taken seriously and acted upon – and this means that they influence policy and practice at Children in Scotland and beyond.

Here are a few of the advisory groups that have shaped our work in 2024-25.



Changing our World

Changing our World members (previous page) are aged 8-25, all with different backgrounds, ideas, experiences and views. In 2024-25 they developed a paper on Education and Learning, one of their hot topics. The group also helped plan Children in Scotland's Annual Conference, and won a Children's Health Award for their contribution to advancing the healthcare rights of children and young people in Scotland.

Inclusion Ambassadors

The Inclusion Ambassadors is a group of secondary school-aged pupils who each have a range of additional support needs and attend a variety of school provision. This year, the Inclusion Ambassadors created a report on relationships and behaviour in schools by analysing their experience in their respective environments.

Crown Estate Scotland's Future Forum

This group allows children and young people to inform and influence Crown Estate Scotland's work, helping to ensure that their activity takes account of a range of opinions and perspectives. In 2024-25 the group worked on the key topic of renewable energy in order to influence the Crown Estate's work in this area.

My Rights, My Say Young Advisors

Our young Advisor group has flourished and now has nine amazing members, all of whom help us shape our My Rights, My Say services and propel their own work with educational psychologists across Scotland, resource development and lively discussions with decision makers – we are incredibly lucky to have them.

Suicide Prevention Youth Advisory Group

This group brings together young people affected by suicide and poor mental health, providing a meaningful space to inform and influence policy around suicide prevention. It acts as an advisory group for Suicide Prevention Scotland, supported by Children in Scotland and the University of Stirling. This year the group have explored key issues for young people including peer support, help-seeking behaviour, the development of the United to Prevent Suicide Social Movement and crisis support.

"I feel like I am changing the narrative on suicide by having open and honest conversations with people, whether through work done with the Youth Advisory Group, in my work roles or just in my personal life. By having these conversations and not dancing around the topic, I feel it helps to make it less taboo and easier for people to speak about and reach out when they need it. While we have come a long way in terms of suicide prevention in the last few years, I think there is still a long way to go to ensure people feel like they can reach out and that they will be able to access support. Even just having that one person you know you can turn to when you're in distress can make the world of difference."

Jess, Suicide Prevention Youth Advisory Group Member



Project in focus: Access All Arts

.....

In 2024-25, Children in Scotland were funded by Creative Scotland to deliver a third round of the Access All Arts Fund.

The Access All Arts Fund was developed in 2021 as part of the Nurturing Talent Fund: New Routes programme. In its first year, the Fund aimed to support young people with disabilities or additional support needs to apply for arts funding, in recognition that these young people were part of a community currently under-represented in applications to Creative Scotland's existing youth funding strands.

The following year, Children in Scotland worked with a panel of children and young people to deliver a second round of the fund,

broadening the remit to include children and young people experiencing a wide range of barriers to accessing art and creative opportunities. A total of £68,000 was awarded to young applicants in 2021, and a further £86,000 was distributed in 2023.

In its third year, the Fund has continued to support children and young people across Scotland to access arts funding and develop their creative interests. The fund was open from 19 September to 3 November 2024, receiving 148 submissions from children and young people between the ages of 11 and 25.

In February 2025, Children in Scotland distributed £65,095.40 to 88 successful

"It has really eased my worries and left me more free to experience things fully. I don't have to worry about my family struggling to afford things for me as much, as it enabled me to pay for them myself"

Access All Arts Fund participant

applicants, supporting a range of creative projects and interests such as drama, music, photography, dance, drawing and painting and textiles.





Project in focus: Supporting the Third Sector (STTS) Project

.....

The Supporting the Third Sector Project (STTS) supports Third Sector Interfaces and third sector partners to become more involved and influential in local and national planning and decision making, thereby improving outcomes for children, young people, and families. It aims for the third sector to be fully integrated with Community Planning Partnerships and contribute to the strategic planning of local children's and family services as equal partners.

The success of the STTS Project relies on strong partnerships with colleagues across the sector, including the Scottish Government, the Children Services Planning Partnerships, Children in

Scotland members, the Strategic Forum, Third Sector Interfaces, as well as the input of the wider sector.

Children in Scotland spearheads this partnership activity through its hosting of the TSI Children's Services Network and TSI Commissioning and Procurement Peer Support Group, delivery of the STTS Newsletter, and input to consultation responses from Children in Scotland that promote the views of both the third sector and the children and young people they work with.

In the past year, Children in Scotland also delivered some key outcomes for the STTS project.

STTS Survey

In 2024 we explored the role of the third sector in Children's Services Planning in an STTS Project survey. It looked at sector involvement in Children's Services Planning arrangements in the 30 Children's Services Planning Partnerships across Scotland. The survey identified a range of challenges and made recommendations with the aim of strengthening partnership working.

Report: Third sector participation in Children's Services Planning

In 2024, Children in Scotland created the *STTS Self-evaluation Tool: How Good is our Third Sector Participation in Children's Service Planning?* Our 2025 report focused on intensive locality support delivered in three localities supporting the implementation of the tool.

Working across Aberdeenshire, Dumfries

and Galloway and Glasgow, the project supported Children's Services Planning Partnerships to consider the role of the third sector in children's services planning.

Learning from across the three areas has clearly demonstrated the positive impact of the self-evaluation process on relationships between the third sector and statutory partners. This has stimulated a shared understanding of Children's Services Planning, developed relationships and created clear opportunities for engagement.

[Click here for the report](#)





Consultancy in focus: Children's Hospices Across Scotland (CHAS)

.....

We have strong internal safeguarding policies and procedures which we review regularly. On the strength of that work, we delivered consultancy work to several organisations this year, including Children's Hospices across Scotland (CHAS).

Children in Scotland has had a long-standing relationship with CHAS, regularly delivering commissioned training on child protection. In 2023, this partnership evolved into a consultancy project focused on reviewing CHAS's child protection and safeguarding processes.

This successful piece of work involved working in partnership with CHAS to undertake a comprehensive

review of organisational systems, balancing various identified needs while operating within the legislative framework and ensuring a trauma-informed approach throughout.

The revised Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedure was formally approved by the CHAS Clinical Care & Governance Committee in April 2024. Feedback included: *"It puts us in a much firmer position regarding child protection" and "really clear about our explicit responsibilities in child protection."*

To support implementation, we developed bespoke pre-recorded training sessions tailored to CHAS staff and

volunteers. These were introduced as part of both induction and ongoing training programmes.

"Our partnership with Children in Scotland has ensured external scrutiny in the development of all of our child protection and safeguarding work, which has resulted in us having a workforce that are up to date and confident in child protection."

Nicky Bridges, Associate Director for Outreach (Safeguarding lead), CHAS



Children's Hospices Across Scotland



Reports and resources

Children in Scotland plays an important role in providing resources to the children's sector, helping to achieve our vision that all children in Scotland have an equal chance to flourish. These resources are delivered through project work, partnerships, eLearning, and direct engagement with children and young people. Here are some of the key documents and learning materials we've delivered in 2024/25, outside of our learning programme.

Publications

- [Meaningful Participation and Engagement of Children and Young People: Children in Scotland's Principles and Guidelines](#)
- [Inclusion Ambassadors' Relationships and behaviour summary paper](#)
- [Inclusion Ambassadors' Primary School Pilot Report](#)
- [Success Looks Different Awards Year 2 Report](#)
- [How good is our third sector participation in Children's Services Planning?](#)
- [Changing our World Education and Learning Paper](#)



- [Creating a Healthier Scotland for Everyone workshop: Engagement with children and young people on health-harming products and the commercial determinants of health](#)
- [Inclusion Ambassadors' Inclusive school environments – beyond the classroom summary paper](#)
- [Empowering young voices: the impact of children and young people's advisory groups on national organisations](#) (Research paper from Katie Gilmartin)

Consultation responses

- [Education, Children and Young People Committee's Call for Views on Education Reform \(August 2024\)](#)
- [Learning Disabilities, Autism and Neurodivergence Bill \(April 2024\)](#)
- [Enquire and My Rights, My Say: Learning Disabilities, Autism and Neurodivergence Bill \(April 2024\)](#)
- [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(Incorporation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2024: Statutory Guidance on Part 2 & 3, section 18 \(May 2024\)](#)
- [Social Justice and Social Security Committee Pre-budget 2025-26 scrutiny – Third sector funding principles \(August 2024\)](#)
- [Enquire: Education \(Scotland\) Bill: Response to short call for views \(August 2024\)](#)
- ['Moving on from care into adulthood \(Oct 2024\)](#)
- [Defining a universal definition of 'care experience' \(Jan 2025\)](#)
- [Youth Work \(Scotland\) Bill \(Feb 2025\)](#)
- [Finance and Public Administration Committee: Inquiry into the Scottish budget process in practice \(March 2025\)](#)

Free eLearning Modules

- Recognising and supporting vicarious trauma
- Let's talk trauma: a guide for young people and professionals
- #KeepThePromise Learning Programme Module 1: Understanding care experience and the role of pupil support staff
- #KeepThePromise Learning Programme Module 2: Practical approaches for supporting care experienced pupils
- #KeepThePromise Learning Programme Module 3: Creating positive care experienced communities within schools



Our values

Our values set out Children in Scotland's beliefs and qualities.

They have been shaped by our staff, board, children and young people in our advisory group Changing our World, and our members.

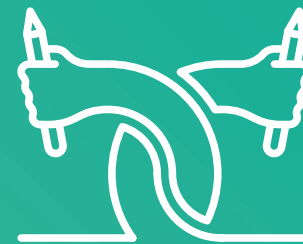
We use them to guide how we work and as a way of keeping us accountable.

Strengthening equality, diversity and inclusion is an overarching commitment that informs all our values.



Brave

We are champions of children's rights. We take a lead in empowering children and young people and improving lives. We do this with creativity and determination.



Collaborative

We believe in inclusion and we work in partnership. The participation of children, young people and their families, our staff, members, the workforce and our wider network inspires us and is central to achieving our vision.



Open and fair

We are committed to accessibility and honesty. We share our learning, evidence and new ideas. Integrity, balance and respect underpin everything we do.



Kind

We care about people and the environment, and the impact our work has on both. Empathy and trust are key in our approach and how we connect with others.



Our donors and partners

Our sincere thanks to the organisations and individuals who helped us to deliver our work in 2024-25

- Kibble (Annual Conference sponsors)
- Road Safety Scotland (Annual Conference sponsors)
- Yopa (Annual Conference sponsors and wider corporate partnership)
- Harmeny Education Trust (Annual Conference sponsors)
- Enlinea
- St Philips Residential School
- Nigel Bruce Charitable Trust
- Belway Homes
- All those who donated to the Kiltwalk
- All those who gave an extra donation when they booked a course





How you can help us help children across Scotland

Financial pressures are hitting the sector, and this is no exception at Children in Scotland.

With rising costs across the board, our core government funding is consistently being squeezed to meet our basic operational needs.

Your support, whether private or corporate, enables us to go further – shaping children's policy, delivering vital services, and ensuring children's voices and rights remain central to the decisions that affect their lives.

There are many ways you can support our next steps towards a Scotland where all children have an equal chance to flourish:

- [Donate to Children in Scotland](#)
- [Become a member](#)
- Set up a [corporate partnership](#)
- Check out our [advertising and promotional opportunities](#)
- [Commission us](#) to support your training, participation, projects, fund management and more
- Take on a fundraising challenge on behalf of Children in Scotland
- Join Children in Scotland for a fundraising event.



To find out more about any of our fundraising or partnership opportunities, please contact:
info@childreninscotland.org.uk



Give as you Live
Donate

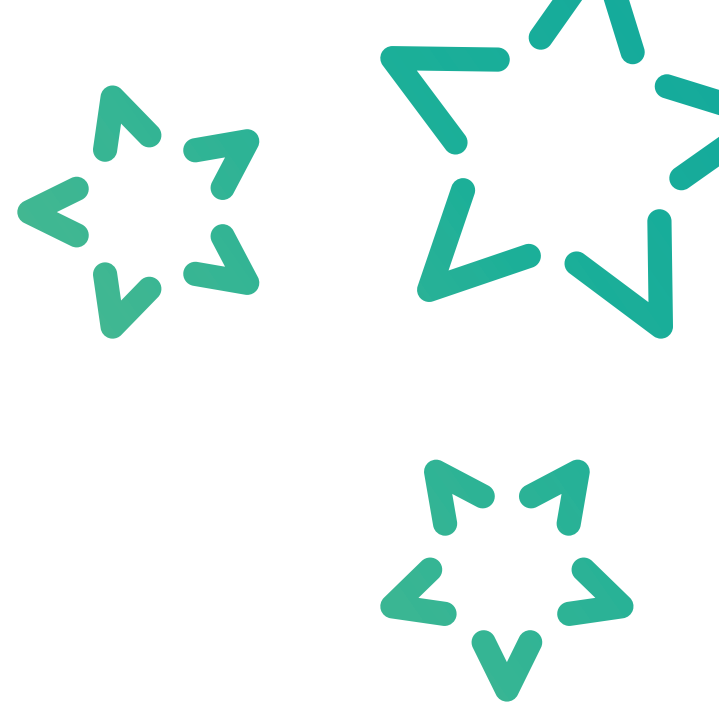


Thorn House
5 Rose Street
Edinburgh
EH2 2PR

childreninscotland.org.uk

info@childreninscotland.org.uk

0131 243 2781



A company limited by guarantee registered in Scotland, SC083383

A charity registered in Scotland, Charity No. SC003527