

The UNCRC in Scotland

Incorporating the UNCRC into Scots law means that children's rights are protected and respected by local authorities and the government. It also gives children the right to go to court if they feel that their rights are not being enforced.

The UNCRC is also important as it provided the foundation for Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), a national approach to improving the wellbeing and outcomes of children in Scotland.

What Is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)?

The UNCRC is an international human rights treaty. Human rights are fundamental rights and freedoms that every person in the world is entitled to. Children have the same human rights as adults, as well the specific children's rights contained in the UNCRC.

Since the UNCRC was adopted in September 1990, 196 countries have signed up to it, including Scotland. The UNCRC is made up of 54 articles detailing children's rights and how governments must ensure that they are in place. They apply to all children under the age of 18, regardless of their nationality, ethnicity, gender, religion, disabilities or family background. In September 2020, the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill was introduced to the Scottish Parliament, which will directly incorporate the UNCRC into Scots law.



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United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) Children's Rights

Adult Information



The Importance of Children's Rights

Babies and young children are completely dependent on adults and need special protection to ensure that they are safe, healthy and educated. Children are individuals in their own right and must be recognised as such. Government policies, for example on education or health care, have a direct impact on children's lives. It is important that governments consider this when they are making decisions and consult children about their views. Children's voices must be heard and they should be encouraged to be active participants in society.



The UNCRC

The UNCRC contains 54 articles, covering social, political, economic, civil and cultural rights. All of the rights are interdependent and of equal importance. The UNCRC includes:

- the right to be registered at birth, to have a name and nationality, and, as far as possible, to know and be cared for by their parents;
- the right to the best possible health;
- the right to education;
- the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities;
- the right to protection from violence, abuse and neglect;
- the right to freedom of thought, belief and religion.

The General Principles are four articles that are highlighted as being of fundamental importance.

Article 2 - Non-discrimination

Article 3 - The best interests of the child

Article 6 - Life, survival and development

Article 12 - Respect for the views of the child and the right to be heard

Supporting Children's Rights

Articles 42 to 54 focus on the responsibilities that governments and adults have to ensure that all children enjoy their rights. Article 42 states that governments must actively work to ensure that children and adults know about the Convention. It is vital that children know about and understand the rights that they have. The government, local authorities, education staff, parents and carers all have a role to play in educating children about their rights and ensuring that they are upheld.



For further information on the UNCRC and children's rights, visit the [Unicef](#) website and the [Scottish Government](#) website.