



**WE LISTEN, WE SUPPORT,
WE TAKE ACTION**
for Scotland's vulnerable
children and families

Scottish Parliament Public Petition PE1548 - National Guidance on Restraint and Seclusion in Schools

For 130 years, as the RSSPCC and now as CHILDREN 1ST, we have campaigned for every child in Scotland to enjoy a better start in life and for no child to grow up in fear of abuse and violence. We will continue to be a strong public voice for vulnerable children and young people in Scotland, listening to them, to influence public policy and attitudes. Then, now and for another 130 years, as long as Scotland's children need us.

CHILDREN 1ST has 63 local services and five national services across Scotland, and we work closely with many local authorities as well as working in partnership with other organisations. All our services are child centred and the children, young people and families we support are key partners in all aspects of our work.

CHILDREN 1ST are pleased to be able to comment on the Scottish Parliament Public Petition PE1548 - National Guidance on Restraint and Seclusion in Schools. We fully support the call for national guidance on restraint and the need for an independent regulator to monitor the support and care given in non-educational areas including the evaluation of the use of restraint and seclusion of children with special needs in local authority, voluntary sector or private special schools. While our services do not specifically work to support children with disabilities and special needs, we consider that such guidance and regulation in this area is vital to ensure these vulnerable children's rights are upheld and their support needs are appropriately met.

We support the call for restraint to be a last resort and consider it important that any guidance created focuses on the prevention of the use of restraint with it only being used as a last resort where it is safer to do so, than not to.

Therefore the new national guidance should reference preventative measures such as the need for staff members to familiarise themselves with the individual children they are caring for and their specific needs. It should highlight the importance of understanding routines for some individual children, and include information about appropriate handovers when staff members change, ensuring continuity. These measures can help prevent the need to use restraint. It would also be useful for guidance to recommend that staff review and learn from any incidents of restraint after they have occurred with a view to help staff avoid having to use it in the future and enabling the needs of children to be met.