

CPG on Children and Young People
Wednesday 25 November
12:30 – 14:00
Incorporation and COVID-19
Minutes
Chair: Brian Whittle MSP

Brian Whittle MSP	Fulton MacGregor MSP	Iain Gray MSP
Alison Johnstone MSP	Chris Ross	Sarah Rogers
Sarah Paterson	Kirsty Morrison	Adam Wilson
Sarah Robertson	Alice MacLachlan	Kelly Munro
Juliet Harris	Sara Collier	Abbie Stone
Maria Doyle	Catherine McDerment	Aaran McDonald MSYP
Helen Forrest	David MacKay	Orlaith Macaree
Kirsten Shield	Nicola Bell	Katie Reid
Amanda Burns	Brian Magee	Elaine Kerridge
Fiona Nicolson	Susan Hughes	Jayne Copeland
Joan Mowat	Linz Connell	Eddie Nisbet
Susanne Cameron-Nielsen	Jane Malcolm	Parisa Shirazi
Jennie King	Laura Colucci Gray	Gizeme Silistre
David Ashford	Gina Wilson	Paul Sullivan
Nina Collins	Elizabeth Lumsden	Ryan McShane
Sarah Anderson	Cathy McCulloch	Dr Christina McMellon
Alan Massie	Andrea McKenna	Cath Logan
Fiona O'Sullivan	Roslyn Neely	Kay Tisdall
Rosy Burgess		

1. Welcome and Intro

Brian Whittle MSP welcomed attendees to the meeting of the CPG. Brian identified that we would be covered the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill in the context of COVID-19 and identified that as a member of the Equalities and Human Rights Committee, he has been very involved in the Bill's progress so far.

Brian also noted that the CPG has been very involved in this topic and has covered it regularly over the last few years.

Brian explained that we would hear from speakers including Juliet Harris, Director of Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights), Abbie Stone and Aaran McDonald MSYP and members of Children's Parliament.

2. CPG Business

Previous minutes

The minutes from the previous meeting of the CPG were confirmed as accurate.

New Members

The CPG agreed to accept Joan Mowat, University of Strathclyde School of Education as an individual member of the group.

CPG Young Co-Convenors

Chris Ross, Children in Scotland provided a further update on the plans to work with another group of Young Co-Convenors for the CPG. Chris informed the group that this is likely to be held back until after Parliament reforms following the 2021 Scottish Parliament elections.

3. Setting the Scene – UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill & COVID-19 – Juliet Harris, Director of Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights)

Juliet Harris provided an overview of the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill and explained to the CPG that incorporation of the UNCRC into law is important because it make rights legally binding rather than these just being guidance.

Juliet highlighted the key role children and young people have played in pushing for incorporation of the UNCRC. She said that organisations like the Scottish Youth Parliament and Children's Parliament had been key in these campaigning.

She also explained that Incorporation is the next step in Scotland's incremental journey towards incorporation since the passing of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act in 2014.

Juliet also highlighted the importance of incorporation given the impact of COVID-19. She said that the situation had meant decisions had been taken without full consideration of children's rights and that incorporation could have prevented this.

Juliet has provided a copy of her presentation for members of the group. You can access this here:

https://childreninscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/CPG_25-11-2020.pdf

4. What do children and young people think:

- *Carers Trust in Scotland – Abbie Stone and Aaran McDonald MSYP*

Young Carers that worked with Carers Trust in Scotland spoke about why they think Incorporation of the UNCRC is important for supporting young carers. Both Aaran and Abbie recently gave evidence on the Bill to the Equalities and Human Rights Committee.

Aaran and Abbie highlighted that many UNCRC articles have particular importance for young carers. This included Articles:

- Article 2 – No discrimination
- Article 9 – Keeping families together
- Article 12 – Respect for children's views
- Article 13 – Sharing thoughts freely
- Article 15 – Setting up or joining groups

- Article 17 – Access to information
- Article 26 – Social and economic help
- Article 31 – Rest, play, culture and arts

Aaran and Abbie also shared a number of solutions to ensure that children's rights are embedded once the Bill becomes law. This included more training for adults working with children, accessible information and using and developing an app with information about children's rights.

You can access their presentation at the following link:

<https://childreninscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Young-Carers-CPG-Children-and-Young-People-updated-1.pptx>

- *Members of Children's Parliament*

Children who work with Children's Parliament shared a video talking about the impact of Incorporation and how they want to learn about their rights.

The children in the video said they thought Incorporation of the UNCRC would mean their rights were better protected and that they would have more people to speak to if they were broken.

They told us that they wanted to learn more about their rights and that school was a good place to learn more about this.

Members of Children's Parliament have also shared their views with the Equalities and Human Rights Committee.

You can access the video at the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3DLhJ6bD28M&feature=youtu.be>

5. Group Discussions

The CPG broke into a number of small group discussions and explored the following questions.

- Does COVID-19 change the case for Incorporation of the UNCRC?
- What can we do to ensure children can access their rights after incorporation?
- What needs put in place at all levels of government to ensure incorporation is a success?

A number of key points were identified under each question, a note of the key points is provided below. A full version of the discussion notes will be shared with members of the CPG.

We also agreed to send the notes to the Equalities and Human Rights Committee, Scottish Government and COSLA.

Does COVID-19 change the case for Incorporation of the UNCRC?

- COVID-19 has strengthened the case.
- Children have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic.
- Children's rights have not been prioritised during the pandemic

What can we do to ensure children can access their rights after incorporation?

- There needs to be an awareness raising campaign
- We need accessible information and guidance
- There needs to be opportunities for children and young people to continue to be involved in decisions that affect them
- We need to embed rights in schools and other services that work with children and young people
- We need to ensure local authorities and public bodies are engaged in this process

What needs put in place at all levels of government to ensure incorporation is a success?

- Communication about children's rights needs to be accessible
- We need to learn from other countries that are already doing well in this area
- We need to make sure we reach **all** children and young people
- There needs to be a consistent level of understanding of children's rights among decision makers.

6. Agree Actions and close

Following the group discussions, Ryan McShane suggested that local authorities and their importance to getting Incorporation right had been a common theme. Ryan suggested asking COSLA for an update from Local Authorities about how prepared they are for Incorporation.

Chris Ross, Children in Scotland also suggested inviting COSLA to a meeting of the CPG once the bill is passed to discuss the implementation of the Bill.

Action – The CPG will cover Incorporation again in the 2021 – 22 parliamentary term to discuss implementation of the Bill. COSLA will be invited to this meeting.

Action – The Secretariat will ask COSLA for an update on how local authorities are preparing for Incorporation of the UNCRC.

It was also agreed that the Secretariat would share the minutes and discussion group notes with to COSLA, the Scottish Government and the Equalities and Human Rights Committee.

Action – The minutes and notes of the meeting will be shared with COSLA, Scottish Government and the Equalities and Human Rights Committee.

Next meeting date

The next meeting date was not yet confirmed but will be held in late January/early February 2021