

**JUSTICE COMMITTEE**

**CHILDREN (SCOTLAND) BILL**

**SUBMISSION FROM POLICE SCOTLAND**

The Children (Scotland) Bill aims to ensure the views of the child are heard in contact and residence cases, further protect victims of domestic abuse and their children in the family court. It also seeks to ensure the best interests of the child are at the centre of contact and residence cases and Children's Hearing, with further compliance to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in family court cases. The Bill also looks to change aspects of the Children's Hearing System, to regulate the register of child welfare reporters, curators ad litem and child contact centres.

The Bill clarifies the duties in relation to looked after children and their siblings, parental responsibilities and rights, and what other factors the court should consider. The Bill introduces a requirement on the court to investigate non-compliance with an order the Court has made in relation to residence and contact and ensures explanation of decisions are made to the child if it is in their best interests.

After considering the legislation within the Bill and its accompanying documents, it appears to be a positive influence in embedding the combined commitments all partners have in relation to Part 1 (UNCRC) and Part 9 (Corporate Parenting) of the Children & Young People Act 2014. Therefore Police Scotland are fully supportive of what it seeks to achieve.

Police Scotland  
13 November 2019