



**NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED**

**Public Board meeting**

**27 November 2024**

**Item 10**

**THIS PAPER IS FOR APPROVAL**

**SCOTTISH AMBULANCE SERVICE CHILDRENS RIGHTS REPORT 2020-2023**

**Lead Director**

Dave Bywater, Lead Consultant Paramedic & Interim Director of Care Quality & Professional Development

**Author(s)**

Andrew Carruthers, Associate Director of Care Quality & Professional Development

Rhona Robb, Head of Public Protection

**Action required**

To seek approval from the Board for publication of the Scottish Ambulance Service Children’s Rights Report 2020-2023.

**Key points**

1.1 The [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#) is an international treaty which sets out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights which all children up to the age of 18 years automatically have, regardless of their circumstances. The UNCRC must be seen as a whole: all the rights are interdependent, and no right is more important than another.

1.2 The Children & Young people (Scotland) Act 2014 part 1 placed a duty on all specified listed authorities to publish a report every 3 years to demonstrate the steps taken in the reporting period, steps they have taken to uphold and promote Children’s Rights. The Scottish Ambulance Service initial Children’s Rights Report 2017 - 2020 was published in 2023. This work was paused in the Covid pandemic and as part of that retrospective catch up this second report undertaken by Scottish Ambulance Service has now been concluded.

1.3 Subsequently in 2024 as the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 received Royal Assent on 16 January 2024, the statutory duty to report has been further enshrined in Scottish Law. Part 2 (duties on public authorities) and Part 3, section 18 (reporting duties of listed public authorities) of this Act came into force 6 months after Royal Assent on 16

	July 2024 and this provides further statutory requirements for this reporting activity moving forward. The third reporting period for Children’s Rights reporting will be 2023 - 2026 with the first initial report under the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 due in March 2026.
<b>Timing</b>	Presented for Board approval at the November 2024 Board meeting.
<b>Associated Corporate Risk Identification</b>	–
<b>Link to Corporate Ambitions</b>	This paper relates to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will work collaboratively with citizens and our partners to create healthier and safer communities</li> <li>• We will improve population health and tackle the impact of inequalities</li> <li>• We will provide the people of Scotland with compassionate, safe and effective care when and where they need it</li> <li>• We will be a great place to work, focusing on staff experience, health and wellbeing</li> </ul>
<b>Link to NHS Scotland’s Quality Ambitions</b>	This paper is aligned to and supports all three of NHS Scotland’s quality ambitions to enable our workforce to provide safe, effective and person centred care.
<b>Benefit to Patients</b>	Clear transparent contribution by the Scottish Ambulance Service gives the Scottish Government, multiagency partners and public assurance that we are committed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake our statutory duties now under part 3 section 18 of the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 to report on a three yearly basis commencing on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026, monitoring and driving our progressive realisation of children’s rights;</li> <li>• Increase awareness across our service and with all staff of the rights of Children and Young People to have a voice, working in partnership with communities and specifically Children and Young People to help realise our ambitions to become an Anchor Institution.</li> </ul>
<b>Climate Change Impact Identification</b>	This paper has identified no impacts on climate change.
<b>Equality and Diversity</b>	The specified workstreams included in this report are a wide variety of service guidance and reporting as well as direct work undertaken with people, communities and populations. Each individual SAS team or department will have undertaken focused EQIA assessments and/or public consultations for their individual work streams.



**Scottish  
Ambulance  
Service**

Working in Partnership with Universities



# Children's Rights Report

**2020 - 2023**

# Content

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>Pg 2</b>
<b>2. What the UNCRC is all about</b>	<b>Pg 2</b>
<b>3. UNCRC Incorporation History and need for Annual Service Reporting</b>	<b>Pg 3</b>
<b>4. General Principles of UNCRC</b>	<b>Pg 3</b>
<b>5. Our Progress and Key Developments towards Implementation</b>	<b>Pg 4</b>
<b>6. Our Services “To Do” List.</b>	<b>Pg 7</b>
<b>7. The Promise Scotland</b>	<b>Pg 8</b>
<b>8. Conclusion</b>	<b>Pg 8</b>





# 1. Introduction

In this second SAS report on Children's Rights, as Scotland continues to adopt the United Nations Conventions of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) through the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill, we continue to assess our readiness to act, reflect on the work we are doing across a range of partners and are using this to inform our next steps.

Although our work was paused in 2020 due to the Covid 19 Pandemic, this period gave us a greater insight into the needs of Children and Young People

as they started to talk about their experiences of the pandemic and the impact of this time on their emotional health, physical health and overall wellbeing. The data and evidence indicates that Children and Young People were affected by all socio-economic aspects of pandemic and this has allowed us to review our current practices and look at emerging needs to start to co-create new opportunities.

Recognising our unique role in the health care system we continue to plan how we will support the full implementation of Children's Rights and further develop our services to meet the future Urgent and Emergency care needs of Children and Young People across Scotland as well as supporting more widely our role as a Corporate Parent, upholding The Promise and creating opportunities as an Anchor Institution in our communities specifically for Children and Young People.



## 2. What is the UNCRC all about?

UNCRC is an international treaty that sets out specific Human Rights for all children up to the age of 18 years old. The UNCRC consists of 54 articles that make up Children's Rights recognising the importance of childhood and the unique needs of children. It sets out civil, political, economic social and cultural rights that all children are entitled to. All Governments and Public Authorities and services should work together to make them available to all children.

Under the terms of the treaty, all Public Services are required to meet children's basic needs and help them reach their full potential. Central to this is the acknowledgment that every child has basic fundamental rights. These include the right to:



Life, survival and development (article 6)



That all services and professionals should act in the best interests of the child (article 3)



Right not be discriminated against (article 2)



Right to be heard (article 12)



Right to be protected from violence, abuse or neglect (article 19)



Right to receive an education that enables them to fulfil their potential (article 28).



Right to be raised by, or have a relationship with their parents (article 9).

### 3. UNCRC Incorporation History and Need for Annual Service Reporting

The Scottish Government has unanimously agreed to the general principles of the UNCRC and has sought to enshrine this into Scottish Legislation. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill was approved in the Scottish Parliament in 2021. A revised bill was in the final stages of parliamentary reconsideration in December 2023 and is expected to be fully incorporated in early 2024. This will make Scotland the first country in the United Kingdom to directly incorporate UNCRC into domestic legislation.

The welfare and protection of all children in Scotland is underpinned by The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and Children (Scotland) Act 2020. The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 further addresses a range of areas relating to the wellbeing of Children and Young People and directly sets out the duties of Public Bodies in relation to the UNCRC, particularly the need for annual reporting by these services. The 2014 Act places a duty on specified Public Bodies, including SAS, to report every 3 years on the steps they have taken in that period to uphold Children’s Rights and develop rights-based care within their services.

### 4. General Principles of UNCRC

As mentioned previously there are 54 articles that make up the UNCRC treaty. Within this there are 4 core articles - known as the ‘General Principles’ and we are continuing to focus on these four guiding principles to guide our approach, develop our service further and demonstrate our reported evidence of how we have upheld Children’s Rights and our plans for future improvement:



Children’s rights to be applied without discrimination (Article 2)



For the best interests of the child to be acted upon at all times (Article 3)



All children have the right to life, survival and development (Article 6)



The right for all children to express a view and have that view taken into account (Article 12)

Furthermore, all 54 Articles can be considered in three main headings, and this helps guide and inform our development work regarding Children’s Rights.



Provision – What services we provide for children and young people.



Protection – How we protect children and young people from harm.



Participation – How we give children and young people a voice.

## 5. Our progress and key developments towards implementation

SAS now has an Executive Director of Care Quality and Professional Development who is responsible on behalf of the board, for a wide portfolio. This portfolio includes UNCRC Implementation, Anchor Institution ambitions, Public Protection, Corporate Parenting and The Promise.

Our key service values underpin and inform this work and our universal approach to service delivery for the people of Scotland. These values are:

- ▷ Care and Compassion;
- ▷ Equality, Dignity and Respect;
- ▷ Open Honest and Responsible
- ▷ Quality and Teamwork.



This Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights and The Scottish Government published "Scotland's To Do List" which updates on specific areas of the UNCRC Incorporation bill that children can expect services to be developing.

Several areas of practice are identified in the "To Do" list for development in health services, we have aligned our work alongside these key directives for health care:

**The Government should make sure that all children have access to good Health Professionals and healthcare settings to get the care that they need for their physical and emotional wellbeing:**

**Provision – what services we provide for Children and Young People**

**We are: Improving access through better Mental Health Pathways:**

Over the next 12 months we are developing an innovative co-produced project. Young Minds Saves Lives (YMSL),. The YMSL Project will see the creation of a training programme to develop local school children as Youth Health Ambassadors focusing not only on immediate life-threatening situations like cardiac arrest but also on local high priority healthcare issues, including falls management, stroke, diabetes, and drug harm. The project is also aimed to engage and encourage young people to consider career opportunities in SAS and wider health careers, raise awareness and educate the community regarding access to healthcare pathways and wider population health including preventative and anticipatory care.

## **Provision – what services we provide for Children and Young People**

We are: Improving our understanding of why and how Children and Young People access emergency care services:

We recognise that some trauma and adverse childhood experiences can influence Children and Young People's decision making and experiences. We have appointed a Paediatric Liaison Nurse to look at why some Children and Young People call 999 and how we can improve our responses to them contributing to multiagency supportive processes and improve communication with primary care colleagues.

**We have: Employed a specialist team of staff to manage vulnerable groups with complex care needs.**

In 2022 we ran a pilot project to look at the calling profiles of our most frequent users. This project identified that some patients struggled to access care appropriate to their mental and physical health care needs resulting in them having to access emergency care more often.



As part of on-going service wide improvement to support all children accessing our services our Paediatric Liaison Nurse for Children will identify all Children and Young People categorised as frequent callers. This post holder will ensure that these Children and Young People are adequately supported, and their thoughts, feelings and experiences are taken into consideration so that SAS is able to effectively contribute to multi-agency care planning crucially recognising, responding and referring those children and young people identified at risk of harm, abuse or neglect.

**Children should have a say in decisions about their healthcare and should provide age-appropriate information and educational opportunities to support them to do this.**

**Participation – How we give Children and Young People a voice**

**We are: Improving our community education services.**

We have started to improve our engagement with schools and young people across Scotland. As part of this work, we want to implement a more formalised process for our operational staff to visit more classrooms and engage in community events. We are creating an updated portfolio of educational resources for staff to use when attending these community engagement events. The work with Young Minds Save Lives will help inform our future approaches and developments.



## Participation – How we give Children and Young People a voice

**We are: Engaging with a Youth Forum's and participation networks to help inform the service about the needs of children and young people in the future.**

Adopting a participation network form of involvement, we have been able to engage with individuals, service users and third sector organisations, to consider how our service is accessible for everyone. The Youth Forum was specifically consulted on the procurement of a new air ambulance provision in Scotland. Also working collaboratively with the youth network of the Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB) we were able to get valuable insight into how accessible the service would be for partially sighted and blind children and young people and other groups with a range of disabilities and needs.



The participation network has allowed us to work with Young Scot on a reverse mentorship opportunity with our executive team. This involved the executive team in SAS to receive first hand feedback from Young People discussing our 2030 Service Strategy and our desire to continue to provide all service users with the right care, at the right time and in the right place regarding scheduled and unscheduled care services that are available to everyone including Children and Young People.

We are also working with Who Cares? (Scotland) to explore ways to create a work experience program to raise the aspirations of Young People and present them with employment opportunities.

Moving forward we will continue to work closely with the Youth Forum and the Young People from our participation network, to ensure that services, still in the research and development phase of design, can gather the views and listen to the voice of Children and Young People to inform our future service developments focusing particularly on how services work for young people across the country.

**The Scottish Government should work closely with all vulnerable groups when making decisions that affect healthcare, in particular transgender children, disabled children, refugees, and children whose families are in financial hardship.**

## Protection – How we protect Children and Young People from harm

**We are: Investing in our Public Protection Teams and capabilities:**

Since 2021 we have been investing in our Public Protection Team aiming to raise the profile of some of our most vulnerable groups and communities. We have appointed a Clinical Effectiveness Lead for Adult Protection and a Clinical Effectiveness Lead for Child Protection and together these

key roles will help to improve knowledge, skills, and competencies of our colleagues. We are aligning the work to the Strategic plan as we progress towards 2030.

We have changed how we educate our staff to recognise and respond to those service users and individuals we identify at risk of harm, abuse or neglect in our communities. Furthermore, we have changed our internal and external referral processes, ensuring that all vulnerable groups including Children and Young People are more quickly identified for support and information is effectively shared with our multiagency statutory partners.

## 6. Our Services “To Do” List.

The UNCRC is the cornerstone that underpins Policy and Legislation concerning the rights of Children and Young People in Scotland. The Convention changed the way children are viewed and treated, ensuring that they are seen as human beings with a distinct set of rights and values of their own. Recognising, respecting and promoting the rights of Children and Young People is key to our future service developments and will support improving better health outcomes for all.

To promote this, we will continue to:

### **Educate**

- ▶ Raise awareness of our staff, volunteers and stakeholders on understanding Children’s Rights and how we can support all children to have their rights upheld.
- ▶ Educate our staff, volunteers, and stakeholders to recognise, respond and refer our most vulnerable service users. Ensuring that their knowledge gives them the confidence and competence to make Child Protection referrals to our partner agencies.
- ▶ We will educate our staff, volunteers, public and service users about the UNCRC bill and how it applies to them when they are in our care.

### **Collaborate**

- ▶ We will strengthen our engagement and participation in our national and local communities so that the voices and needs of our service users are prominent in the actions of our organisation.
- ▶ We will promote partnership working through effective collaboration and communication with partner agencies. Working together will further support the development of pathways, processes and systems to ensure that the Children and Young People of Scotland have their rights listened to, respected and upheld.

### **Lead**

- ▶ We will continue to work collectively with other Public Services to promote Children’s Rights in every aspect of our service and meaningfully include and/or consider rights of Children and Young People in our service development and delivery.
- ▶ We are aiming to develop our workforce to create a leadership role and team that will oversee our statutory obligations regarding Children’s rights, The Promise, Corporate Parenting and GIRFEC

## Innovate

- ▶ We will continue to connect people, services and communities to deliver digital and data solutions supporting best value and integrated delivery of care to our communities ensuring they are accessible to all.

## 7. The Promise Scotland

The Promise Scotland's mission is to support the transformation of how Scotland cares for all of its children and families, ensuring that Scotland's care experienced children 'grow up loved, safe and respected so that they realise their full potential'. Working towards the values embedded in The Promise Scotland, the Scottish Ambulance Service will work towards ensuring that Children's Voices are at the heart of everything we do and that the views and experiences of children and adults and those working alongside them – will inform how our future services are planned and delivered.



We recognise that ultimately, building strong, positive and respectful relationships is what matters to Children, Young people, Families and our workforce. With this in mind we will create and build strong relationships with community groups and services to guide and inform how we do our work.

## 8. Conclusion

We are fully committed to promoting and supporting the implementation of the UNCRC in every aspect of our work. Working together will further support the development of pathways, processes and systems to ensure that the Children and Young People of Scotland have their rights listened to, respected and upheld. Scottish Ambulance Service will continue to work with partner agencies such as Young Scot, Who Cares? (Scotland) CELCIS and wider networks supporting Children and Young People to ensure that we are informed and at the forefront of developments in the future.

### Further Information

If you wish further information on the contents of this report or wish to find out more information, then please e-mail: [sas.corporateaffairs@nhs.scot](mailto:sas.corporateaffairs@nhs.scot)

**EQIA Template** – (for when Board/Committee has to **approve** or **endorse** a proposal/policy and is the decision maker)

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER FOR BOARD EQIA REPORTING

- Complete the questions from the EQIA and present as an appendix to the proposal/paper. You may use the template or provide a narrative that includes the information (aim to keep this within one A4 page).
- Include key points in summary in the cover paper.

		<b>Answer</b>	
1.	Have you considered equality and equality impact on different groups and issues.	Yes/No	If the answer is no, the proposal is not ready to come to the Board or Committee.
			If yes, go to Q2
2	What form did this take?	<p>This Children’s Rights report is a summary of activities undertaken across a range of SAS services to demonstrate how SAS upheld and promoted Children’s Rights during the time frame of 2020-2023.</p> <p>This report fulfils our Statutory reporting obligation under Part one of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. United Nation Convention Rights for the Child underpins this legislative direction and focuses on equality for all populations including minority groups and those with protected characteristics.</p>	
	Equality Impact Screening	Yes/No	
	Equality Impact Assessment	Yes/No	
	Other	The specified workstreams included in this report are a wide variety of service guidance and reporting as well as direct work undertaken with	



		people communities and populations. Each individual SAS team or department will have undertaken focused EQIA assessments and public consultations for their individual work streams.	
3	What consultation did you undertake? Specify which protected characteristics groups were included.	N/A	Go to Q4
4	Did you identify any equality impact? - For any group - Across any of the three “needs”	Yes/No	If yes Go to Q5 If no go to Q8
5	Describe the nature of the impact, which “need” is involved, and which groups were affected. Specify if the impact was positive, adverse or neutral.		Go to Q6
6	Did you identify any adverse impact?	Yes/No	If you answered yes, Go to Q7. If no, go to Q8.
7	What mitigations have been put into place to reduce adverse impact? Please specify how this will reduce the impact and how the proposal/policy has been changed.		Go to Q8
8.	What opportunities are there to enhance equality for any of the protected characteristic groups or others? Please specify these and say how the proposal has been changed to incorporate these.	This report fulfils our statutory reporting duty and allows for this to be publicly shared. Ongoing continual improvement plans and required statutory reporting requirements underpin and inform future development of how SAS can uphold and promote Children’s Rights on an ongoing basis.  This will be reflected in the tri-annual reporting now required under section 18 of the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 and the next version of this reporting will be required to be published and submitted to Scottish Government	Go to Q9

		ministers on or as soon as practicable after 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2026.	
9	Are there monitoring arrangements to monitor the impact of the proposal/policy? Describe the monitoring arrangements or explain why none is required.	Yes/No  As above.	Go to Q10
10	Do you consider the Board or Committee has enough information to understand the equality impact of the proposal and to use this to inform their decision?	Yes/No	If the answer to Q10 is no, the paper is not ready to come to the Board or Committee.  If the answer is yes, sign off the template or alternative report.

Signed: 

Rhona Robb

Title Head of Public Protection & Child Health Commissioner

Date: 08/11/2024