



**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 to 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 services 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 too, 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)