

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILEDUCATION COMMITTEE10 June 2021Report by Director of EducationPROGRESS REPORT ON IMPLEMENTING CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN EAST
RENFREWSHIRE**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. This report examines how children's rights are currently respected and ensured within East Renfrewshire. It highlights key actions taking place to further embed children's rights across the council and identifies the next steps which should be taken in light of the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill as introduced in the Scottish Parliament on 1 September 2020.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. Elected Members are asked to:
 - a. note current practice within East Renfrewshire underpinning and ensuring children's rights;
 - b. note and comment on the East Renfrewshire Children's Rights Report;
 - c. note the authority's key actions going forward to respect and ensure children's rights;
 - d. request that the Director of Education bring a further report to Education Committee setting out the potential implications and actions for the Council in the incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child into domestic law.

BACKGROUND

3. The United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1989 and it was ratified by the UK Government in 1991. It is the most widely ratified human rights treaty in the world. It sets out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all children, everywhere, are entitled to. The rights in the UNCRC are guaranteed to every child, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities or any other status.

4. The UNCRC consists of 54 articles. Articles 1 to 42 contain the substantive rights and obligations which States Parties must uphold and give effect to. These include the right to life, survival and development; the right to protection from violence, abuse or neglect; the right to an education that enables children to fulfil their potential; the right to be raised by, or have a relationship with, their parents and the right to express their opinions and be listened to. Articles 43 to 52 concern procedural arrangements for the signature, ratification and amendment of the UNCRC and the establishment of the CRC (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child) and the reporting process for States Parties.

5. The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities to report on the steps they have taken to secure better or further the effect of the UNCRC requirements. This requirement has been incorporated into the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill.

6. In East Renfrewshire, our Improving Outcomes for Children and Young People Partnership is committed to the promotion and protection of children's rights, in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The Children and Young People's Plan for 2020-2023 places children's rights at the heart of its vision and a rights based approach is embedded throughout.

REPORT

7. The East Renfrewshire Children's Rights Report (Appendix 1) outlines the steps we have taken in East Renfrewshire, through our partnership working, to promote, support and uphold children's rights. It goes on to define clearly what is entailed by children's rights, summarising the nature and role of the UNCRC and how its 54 articles are arranged into clusters and themes.

8. The work of East Renfrewshire to respect and ensure the rights of children and their families over the last three years has focused on a number of clusters which are outlined below in paragraphs 9 to 18.

9. General Measures of Implementation (Articles 4, 41, 42, 44(6)) East Renfrewshire Council, our Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) and Culture and Leisure Trust (ERCL) take full account of all national legislation, standards, plans, policies and strategies. We respect children's right to family life and to grow up loved, safe and respected so that they can reach their full potential. For those children who need additional support, we work with children and their families to assess their circumstances and make decisions with families.

10. General Principles, Civil Rights and Freedoms (Articles 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17) In our settings, pupil voice makes a positive contribution to the ethos and life of the school or centre and our annual Education Department questionnaires, highlight that most pupils agree that their school listens to their views and takes them into account.

11. Violence Against Children (Article 37a) Children and young people who experience domestic abuse have their basic right to a safe and stable home environment denied. The experience can have a profound and lasting impact on the emotional and social wellbeing of those affected. The East Renfrewshire Violence Against Women (VAW) Partnership is committed to the promotion and protection of children's rights, with a key focus on the prevention of inhumane treatment of children.

12. Family Environment & Alternative Care (Articles 5, 10, 11, 18(1 and 2), 19, 20, 21, 25, 27(4) 39) Our partnership with Children 1st Family Group Decision Making service supports families to create a safety network within their community and protects the rights of children to have their voices heard on decisions which impact their lives. It strengthens communities by enabling families to utilise their wider network to help keep their children safe and at home.

13. Through our Carers Act Implementation Group, we fund a Young Carer development worker post which has been successful in: raising awareness of the carer experience; increasing the number of identified young carers who are being supported by the East

Renfrewshire Carer Centre and in schools; increasing the number of children and young people with a Young Carer Statement and a Young Carer Grant.

14. Basic Health & Welfare (Articles 6, 18(3), 23, 24, 26 and 27(1-3)) East Renfrewshire's Community Planning Partnership (CPP) is committed to the promotion and protection of children's rights. The CPP recognises the right to social security for every child and supports families to achieve this right by increasing awareness of and take-up of benefits. Children have the right to live in conditions where they can flourish and we support parents and carers by providing assistance and support around nutrition, clothing and housing.

15. Education, Leisure and Cultural Activities (Articles 28, 29 and 31) Education policies promote equality and diversity and tackle discrimination and prejudice. Participation is a right; our schools and early learning and childcare settings promote empowerment. The promotion and protection of rights permeate every aspect of school life. Every pupil has at least one key adult they can speak to if they are worried about something or need advice. In our questionnaires, almost all children and young people (90%) agreed that they have someone they can speak to if they are upset or worried. The Community Learning and Development team supports the promotion and protection of children's rights. Youth Work involves working with young people in the community and in school around issues that matter to them.

16. Opportunities for children to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities are provided by East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust. They work with schools and other services to give free access to vulnerable children and young people in school holiday programmes, leisure centres, visual and performing arts programmes, and other activities.

17. Special Protection Measures (Articles 22, 38 and 39; 37 (a-d) 39 and 40; 32, 33, 34, 35 and 36; 30) East Renfrewshire's Intensive Services Children and Families Team respect children's right to family life and to grow up loved, safe and respected so that they can reach their potential. Our Child Protection guidance highlights the importance of seeking children's views as part of any child protection process. Our Signs of Safety approach is improving support for families by developing their own safety networks so that children can live with their parents safely.

18. The Champions Board aims to raise the profile and awareness of the needs of young people with care experience and to create a model of partnership working and co-production between young people and adult decision makers. Our Champions Board has been described as sector leading in its approach. Young people work alongside the Chief Executive, Elected Members and other senior council officers to raise issues that are barriers to their development.

19. The East Renfrewshire Children's Rights Report is available in a child-friendly version which is available to all families.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill

20. Through the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill, Scotland is the first country in the UK to directly incorporate the UNCRC into domestic law. It was introduced to the Scottish Parliament on 1 September 2020 and was passed unanimously on 16 March 2021. The new law is due to come into force 6 months after Royal Assent.

21. The UK Government has referred the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill to the Supreme Court.

22. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill aims to ensure that children's rights are protected, respected and fulfilled in Scotland to the maximum extent of the Scottish Parliament's powers. It seeks to ensure that there is a proactive culture of everyday accountability for children's rights across public services in Scotland. Public authorities will be required to take proactive steps to ensure compliance with children's rights in their decision-making and service delivery. Rights-holders will be able to challenge public authorities in the courts for breaches of their rights. This will mean that the structures within which decisions are made in Scotland must enable children and young people to be heard and take an active role in their own lives and communities.

23. Children and young people face additional barriers to realising their rights and accessing justice. In recognition of this some specific measures are provided for which remove barriers and build in greater accountability and transparency in relation to the proactive realisation of children's rights in practice. These provisions include giving power to the Children and Young People's Commissioner in Scotland to raise claims in the public interest and provision requiring the Scottish Ministers to make a Children's Rights Scheme.

24. The Bill says that:

- Public authorities must not act in a way that's incompatible with the UNCRC requirements.
- Courts will have powers to decide if legislation is compatible with the UNCRC requirements.
- Scottish Government can change laws to make sure they are compatible with the UNCRC requirements
- The Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland and Scottish Human Rights Commission will have powers to take legal action to protect children's rights.
- Scottish Government must publish a Children's Rights Scheme to show how it is meeting UNCRC requirements and explain their future plans to progress children's rights.
- Scottish Government must review how the Children's Rights Scheme is working each year.
- Other authorities listed in the Bill must report every three years on what they are doing to meet the UNCRC requirements.

NEXT STEPS

25. An implementation group has been set up to work in partnership in order to assess, review and develop East Renfrewshire Council's readiness for the implementation of the UNCRC Bill. The group will audit and review current practice and create an action plan which incorporates best practice in order to ensure the council fulfils its duties related to children's rights. This action plan will be the subject of a future report to the Education Committee and Cabinet.

CONSULTATION

26. Ensuring children and young people are at the forefront of all developments is central to children's rights being embedded in public services. Approaches such as Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), How Good is OUR School and children and young people participation models provide opportunities for children and young people to be involved in decision making. To further enhance this, children and young people will be represented on the UNCRC Implementation Group in order to ensure their views are central to decision making for the introduction. The work of the Implementation group will ensure opportunities are taken to

consult with children and young people, parents and carers and other stakeholders through focus groups, questionnaires and drop in sessions.

FINANCIAL AND EFFICIENCY IMPLICATIONS

27. There are no financial or efficiency implications related to this report.

CONCLUSION

28. This is the first report relating to Children's Rights published by East Renfrewshire Council. It clearly confirms there is already a strong focus on children's rights. East Renfrewshire Council should build upon this good practice in order to prepare for commencement of the UNCRC Bill and therefore it is of vital importance that we consider potential implications of incorporation for the Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS

29. Elected Members are asked to:

- a. note current practice within East Renfrewshire underpinning and ensuring children's rights;
- b. note and comment on the East Renfrewshire Children's Rights Report;
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- d. request that the Director of Education bring a further report to Education Committee setting out the potential implications and actions for the Council in the incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child into domestic law.

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10 June 2021

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Local Government Access to Information Act 1985

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Appendix 1
East Renfrewshire Children's Rights Report

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Children's Rights in East Renfrewshire



December 2020

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Introduction

The [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) requires Ministers to consider and report on steps that can give further effect to the UNCRC - and to promote public awareness and understanding of children's rights, including amongst children.

In December 2018 the Scottish Government published an [Action Plan](#), setting out the activities to be undertaken until 2021 to progress Children's Human Rights. This Action Plan was developed with children and young people and key stakeholders and acknowledges the need for strategic actions that can deliver genuine transformational change in how children's rights are understood and experienced. A [progress report](#) on the first year of the Action Plan was published on 20 November 2019.

These actions included commitments to incorporate the UNCRC into domestic law; develop and deliver, through co-production, a programme to raise awareness and understanding of children's rights; develop a strategic approach to children and young people's participation; and to evaluate the Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment.

This report outlines the steps we have taken in East Renfrewshire to promote, support and uphold children's rights. Using the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) clusters is an internationally recognised approach to the implementation, monitoring and reporting of children's rights. The report is structured in that way, and broadly attempts to answer these questions:

- What do we provide in relation to this cluster of UNCRC articles?
- How are we progressing in this area of activity?
- What evidence do we have of outcomes for children and young people?
- How is our evidence informed by the views and experiences of children and young people?
- What next steps or actions do we need to take?

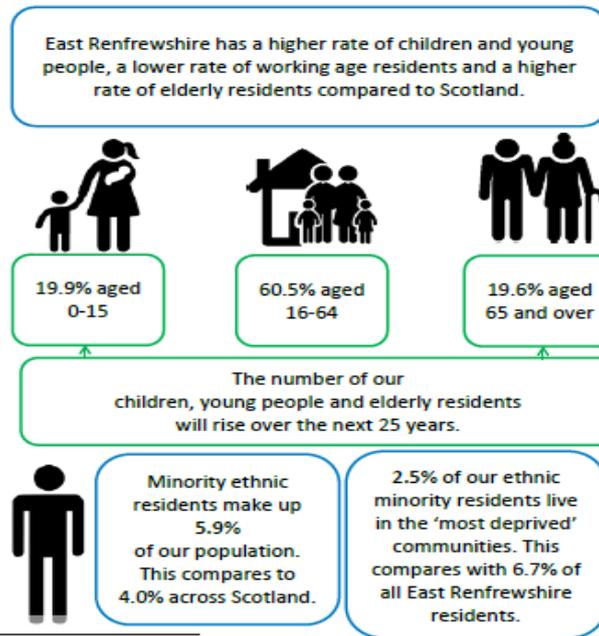
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East Renfrewshire

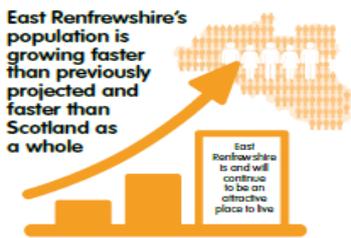
East Renfrewshire is committed to ensuring that children and young people are at the heart of decisions which affect them and effectively participate in wider civic society. This is important at both national and local level, including the Scottish Government, local authorities, community planning partnerships, health boards, schools, community councils and other places where decisions are made that will affect children and young people.

We are committed to ensuring the rights of and improving outcomes for all of our children and young people. We also understand our additional responsibility to protect the rights of particular groups of children and young people who experience barriers to success and achievement or whose rights are threatened by abuse or poverty.

Some key facts:



EAST RENFREWSHIRE'S POPULATION – WHAT TO EXPECT



The number of people living in East Renfrewshire is projected to increase by 7.6% by the year 2025 (this is higher than previous projection of 5.7% and higher than the Scottish rate of growth of 3.2%)



The two age groups that will grow the most



East Renfrewshire currently has the highest average household size in Scotland, but this is projected to shrink as more people live alone



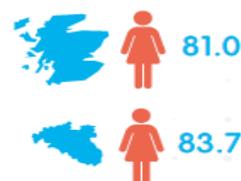
More houses are needed for three reasons

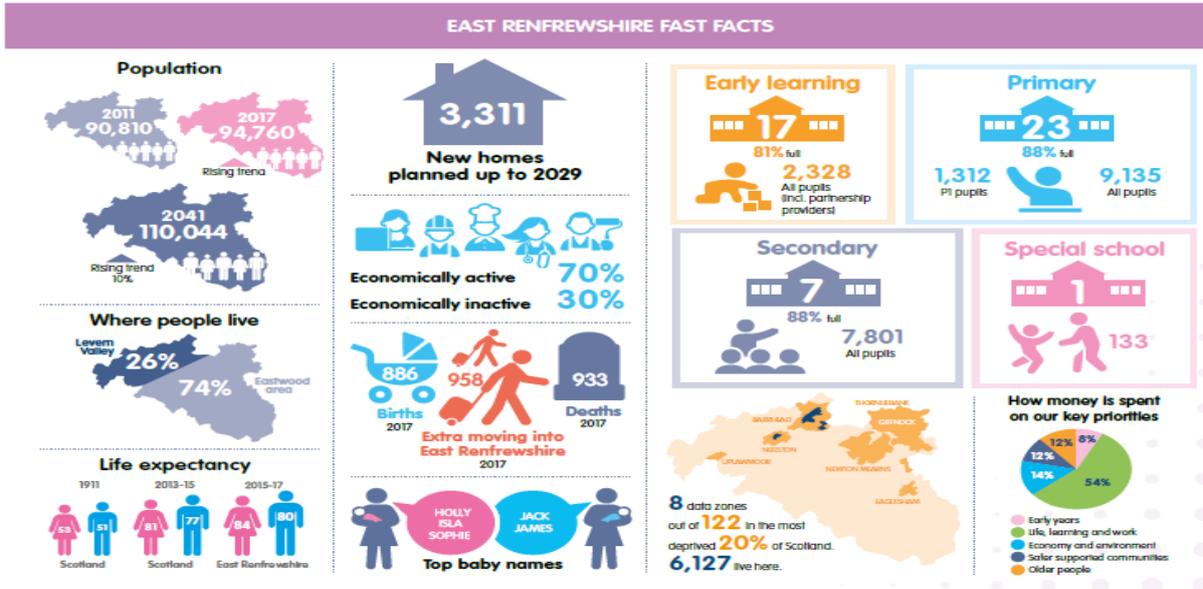


Demand will increase for services



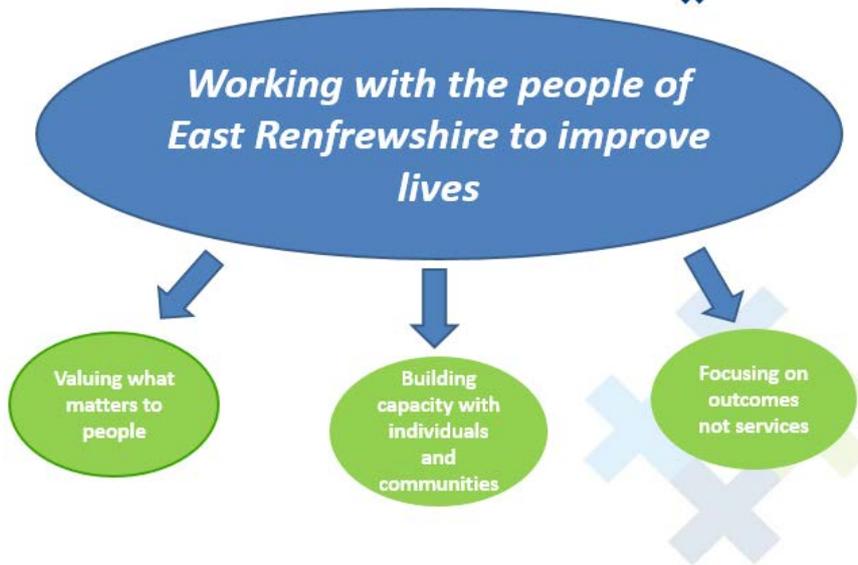
East Renfrewshire now has the highest female life expectancy at birth in Scotland, and the second highest male life expectancy





East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership was established in 2015. It manages a wider range of services than are required by the relevant legislation. Along with adult community health and social work and care services, we provide health and social work services for children and families and criminal justice social work. Our integrated health and social care management and staff teams have developed strong relationships with many different partner organisations. Our HSCP focuses on outcomes for the people of East Renfrewshire that improve health and wellbeing and reduce inequalities.

Our Vision



Our HSCP vision statement, “Working together with the people of East Renfrewshire to improve lives”, was developed in partnership with members of the community. This vision sets our overarching direction through our Strategic Plan. At the heart of this are the values and behaviours of our staff and the pivotal role individuals, families, carers, communities and wider partners play in supporting the citizens of East Renfrewshire.

General Measures of Implementation: Articles: 4, 41, 42, 44(6)

East Renfrewshire Council, and our Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) and Culture and Leisure Trust (ERCL) take full account of all national legislation, standards, plans, policies and strategies including those listed at the end of this report. All our departments and teams are committed to the promotion and protection of children's rights, in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). We ensure that our visions and values promote the rights of the child and that these are reflected in all our public documents and statements.

We respect children's right to family life and to grow up loved, safe and respected so that they can reach their full potential. For those children who need additional support, we work with children and their families to assess their circumstances and make decisions with families. We seek children's views on a wide range of issues using appropriate and inclusive tools. We routinely consult with children when new policies are being developed and reviewed.

**General Principles, Civil Rights and Freedoms:
Articles 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17**

We respect children and young people's rights to develop to their full potential in early learning and childcare settings, school, home and community. Our **Education Department** is committed to the promotion and protection of children's rights, in line with the UNCRC. Children and young people should have opportunities to express their opinion in matters that affect them so that they can become active participants in a democratic society.

In our settings, pupil voice makes a positive contribution to the ethos and life of the school or centre and can also lead to improved home and community life. We use a range of measures to seek children and young people's views about matters that affect them. From our annual Education Department questionnaires, most pupils (79% of 8048 surveyed 2017-19) agreed that their school listens to their views and takes them into account. Pupil voice is part of a system that values and respects the views of all members of the school community. In the same questionnaires, almost all pupils (90%) agree that "staff treat me fairly and with respect". Our settings take inclusive approaches to participation, having moved from pupil "council" to "parliament" models where all pupils have chances to participate in decision making. Most pupils (89%) agree they have opportunities to take part in school committees and groups. This develops confidence, values and skills for learning, life and work such as co-operation, negotiation and communication. Our settings track, recognise and celebrate the successes and achievements of all learners. Most pupils (84%) agree that their school recognises and celebrates their personal achievements.

Whole setting approaches ensure that rights underpin the curriculum and are embedded in learning and teaching. We are developing learner participation across school life; pupils benefit from a range of positive outcomes and most (77%) believe they are given the opportunity to influence what and how they learn. Parents also have increasing opportunities to engage with establishments and to participate in their children's learning. We are committed to promoting equalities and reducing the impact of child poverty, and learner participation has been highlighted as a feature of high achieving schools serving disadvantaged communities.

All our settings take a "You Say, We Do" approach to seek the views of learners on the quality of: learning and teaching; relationships within the setting community; health and wellbeing; success and achievements. Pupils have been trained to observe lessons and provide feedback on the quality of learning and teaching. There are regular opportunities for pupil representatives to meet with the Director of Education and share their views on issues relating to matters such as the curriculum, learning and teaching, and pastoral care.

Woodfarm High School – A Rights Based Approach to Learning

Pupils experience a rights-based approach to learning in Woodfarm High School and learn about rights in all contexts of the curriculum. Extra-curricular opportunities, such as the Amnesty International Group and Fair Trade Group, develop global citizenship skills and take active roles in protecting rights.

The Pupil Parliament enables pupils to lead activity that improves the school community and learning environment. Article 12 forms the basis of the Pupil Parliament vision, and rights are displayed prominently across the school. Parliamentary committees are linked to staff committees, giving them a formal place in school structures. The Parliament is representative, with increasing participation of boys and pupils from more deprived backgrounds and a proportionate representation of ethnicity. In a survey, all pupils agreed that the parliament has a positive impact, and 84% believed that staff encouraged pupils to take lead roles in committees.



The diversity of the school community is celebrated through a range of events and groups. The *Equal Generation* group provides a safe space for LGBTQ+ pupils and allies, and promotes inclusion and equality through whole school celebrations such as LGBT History Month. The *Making Sense Of...* programme allows pupils to explore cultural and religious diversity through pupil-led experiences, supported by a range of community partners. *Making Sense of Respect* featured a showcase of cultural diversity, with pupils sharing traditional clothing, craft, art, music and dance.



The Pupil Parliament Achievements Committee has introduced strategies to promote and celebrate pupil and staff achievement. The *Shout About Success* campaign gathered views and gained funding to hold a *Woodfarm Winners Festival*. Woodfarm TV is produced by pupils and shares achievements on a whole school level in a unique way.

The *Learning Ambassador* programme allows pupils to participate in self-evaluation activity. Pupils are trained, using *How Good Is OUR School?*, and conduct lesson observations and focus groups using their observation checklist. Feedback is shared with staff and pupils, and informs school improvement planning. Ambassadors presented a seminar at the 2019 Scottish Learning Festival in recognition of their sector leading work. One ambassador noted “I’ve learned observation, listening and teamwork skills which will help me for life” and another said “this has helped me to grow as an individual, I am a lot more confident, more mature and able to look at things analytically”. The PSHE curriculum has also been audited by pupils and learning and teaching in this subject area was redesigned to reflect pupil voice.

Teachers are supported to reflect on learner feedback through enquiry, as pupils observe their lessons. This promotes a culture in which staff and students learn together. Pupil voice is also at the heart of the *Teacher Leadership Academy*. Learners meet with teachers to provide feedback on their initiatives to ensure their work impacts on learning experiences.

Woodfarm High School is a Rights Respecting Gold School. UNICEF commented “pupils are exceptionally knowledgeable about rights and confident in linking them to learning and to their everyday lives ... pupil voice is excellent in both the range of opportunities available and in the impact. There is a genuine sense that pupils play a significant role in strategic decision-making.” The school’s rights based approach was recently identified as sector leading by the Equality & Human Rights Commission and evidence is to be included in a forthcoming national report.

Violence Against Children: Article 37(a)

Children and young people who experience domestic abuse have their basic right to a safe and stable home environment denied. The experience can have a profound and lasting impact on the emotional and social wellbeing of those affected. The **East Renfrewshire Violence Against Women (VAW) Partnership** is committed to the promotion and protection of children's rights, with a key focus on the prevention of inhumane treatment of children. A comprehensive programme of activities responds quickly to domestic abuse and gives a pathway of support to women and children. East Renfrewshire now hold monthly Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) and all high risk victims and children have action plans which aim to reduce risks through multi-agency support.

Gender based violence training is embedded in the East Renfrewshire Public Protection training calendar; our workforce is now more able to identify violence against children and young people and respond effectively. Two qualified trainers lead our Safe and Together programme, resulting in better safety planning for children and adults. A recent campaign highlighted child sexual exploitation, sharing information with key groups in the community who are now more able to recognise young people at risk of being sexually exploited and report concerns. The implementation of Safe & Together and MARAC by East Renfrewshire has been recognised as a key example of good practice in the recent Scottish Government and COSLA Equally Safe Year Three Update Report.

Rape Crisis Scotland deliver sexual violence prevention programmes in most of our secondary schools and a range of resources, including video and zines, have been co-produced with young people affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence. Through participation, young people inform our response to gender based violence. Positive gender roles are promoted and young people develop an understanding of safe, healthy and positive relationships from an early age. They are more able to recognise and challenge violent and abusive behaviour. Young people affected by gender based violence access therapeutic support through our social work Children and Families Team, Women's Aid and Rape Crisis Scotland.

The **Women's Aid** Children and Young People Support Service aims to alleviate the negative impact of domestic abuse on children and young people allowing them to live safer and happier lives. We achieve this through therapeutic and emotional support, safety planning, advocacy, family focused support, group activities and play opportunities. The service is based on listening to children and young people and taking their views seriously with a strong focus on participation.

Women's Aid Video Project

A small group of young people came together to produce a short film capturing their experiences of domestic abuse and their thoughts and feelings. They were keen to assist others in the same situation and wanted to share how they coped and what had helped them.

The young people took charge of the production and direction; shared ideas about what the important messages would be; developed a script; and appointed various roles such as actors, narrator and director. The young people decided to act out domestic abuse situations that reflected their own experiences and this was unexpectedly powerful and cathartic for them. Young people gave their thoughts on who to speak to and what helped them, for example Cedar group work, Women's Aid support and supportive teaching staff. The project was a very positive experience for all the young people involved – they reported feeling more confident, empowered and listened to. They were delighted that their video would be shared widely via social media and at WASLER AGM. <https://youtu.be/ks4IC-KYnpQ>



Family Environment & Alternative Care:
Articles 5, 10, 11, 18(1 and 2), 19, 20, 21, 25, 27(4), 39

In our HSCP, we always work with families to ensure children can live with their parents where possible. We support families to create a safety network within the community so that they can live with minimal support and intervention from professionals. Our partnership with the **Children 1st Family Group Decision Making** service enhances this work by protecting the rights of children to have their voices heard on decisions which impact their lives. We prioritise families without statutory involvement as a preventative early intervention that gives families the power to make decisions. Family Group Decision Making strengthens communities by enabling families to utilise their wider network to help keep their children safe and at home.

Where children cannot live safely with their parents, we always explore other family members who may be able to care for them so they can maintain their family identity. We recognise the important role played by kinship carers in providing secure, stable and nurturing homes for children who cannot be cared for by their birth parents. Kinship carers are assessed and approved by a **Kinship Panel** and receive ongoing support from social workers to carry out their role. We have improved timescales for securing permanent placements for children as we understand the importance of a stable, secure home.

Children and parents are involved in meetings where the Child's Plan is co-produced, and children's views are at the heart of all decision making. We respect and uphold children and families' right to confidentiality and we provide information for children about our systems and processes in formats which they can access.

The right to a healthy family life is recognised and supported by the **Children 1st's Family Wellbeing Service**. Supporting the whole family, this service helps families recognise and develop the resilience and positive relationships that keep children safe and happy. Children, young people and their families design their own work plans and provide ongoing feedback of their experience within the service.

Through our Carers Act Implementation Group, we fund a Young Carer development worker post which has been successful in: raising awareness of the carer experience; increasing the number of identified young carers who are being supported by the **East Renfrewshire Carer Centre** and in schools; increasing the number of children and young people with a Young Carer Statement and a Young Carer Grant.

Basic Health & Welfare : Articles 6, 18(3), 23, 24, 26 and 27(1-3).

The **School Nursing Team** works closely with the **Youth Intensive Support Service** and **Children and Families Social Work Team**, providing targeted support and interventions to predominantly care experienced young people and vulnerable families. The School Nursing Service takes a multi-agency approach to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and young people. Therapeutic relationships are central to the ethos of School Nursing. We assess emotional health and wellbeing based on a strength based approach, always ensuring that a child's voice and their rights are respected and heard.

School Nursing Team – Isla's Story

Our school nursing team aligned with the Youth Intensive Support Team in July 2019. This followed consultation with care experienced Champions Board members, who identified the need for relationship building with health to give easier access to a range of health services that met their needs. Through a focus on partnership working, relationship building and early intervention we aimed to get better at understanding the needs of our young people. We have

built our skills in supporting children and young people with their emotional health and wellbeing and developed a suite of mental health interventions including Lets Introduce Anxiety Management (LIAM).

Isla (not her real name) was quickly identified as needing support with emotional health by her pastoral care teacher and her social worker. She was self-harming, not engaging with school and involved in risk taking behaviour. This predominantly stemmed from family issues and being a carer for her mum. We worked in partnership with Isla and her family, key school staff and social work to plan support. The rights of the young person were at the heart of the plan.

Isla was placed in foster care after a point of crisis in her life, giving her the space and time in a safe and nurturing environment to make some positive choices of her own. At this time Isla clearly voiced that she did not want to return to her mother's care. She wanted to be a normal teenager doing normal things and not be a carer for her mother. The school nurse helped Isla to develop positive coping skills to manage her anxiety. We were able to act as an advocate by supporting Isla to express her views where she felt she wasn't able to. She engaged with the LIAM programme and felt she benefited greatly from it.

Isla continued to express that she did not want to return to her mum and this view was respected at all times. Contact with mum did resume when Isla was ready, she became re-engaged with education and flourished in her foster placement. Isla benefited greatly from being heard and respected, which ultimately improved her outcomes.

This is an example of partnership working in East Renfrewshire where we honour every child's rights to be safe and respected so that they can reach their full potential.

Children and young people accessing the services of the **Speech and Language Therapy** (SLT) team often face greater barriers than others in securing their rights. Communication skills are an essential part of our development and impact on every part of our lives. We need speech, language and communication skills to develop and manage our emotional lives, and to form healthy relationships.

The SLT team works with education settings to promote positive communication environments, and our staff promote positive engagement for children and young people. We support children and young people to gather informed consent around their treatment and make decisions about appropriate treatment, ensuring the most vulnerable children have a voice. This is the foundation for other services to promote equality and tackle discrimination and prejudice.

Experiences in early years have a profound impact on an individual's future experience of health and wellbeing. Health professionals give children and young people the opportunity to express views in matters that affect their lives. The **Health Visiting Team** focus on relationship building with families and listening to the voice of the child to ensure that all needs are being assessed and met.

East Renfrewshire's **Community Planning Partnership** (CPP) is committed to the promotion and protection of children's rights. The CPP recognises the right to social security for every child and supports families to achieve this right by increasing awareness of and take-up of benefits.

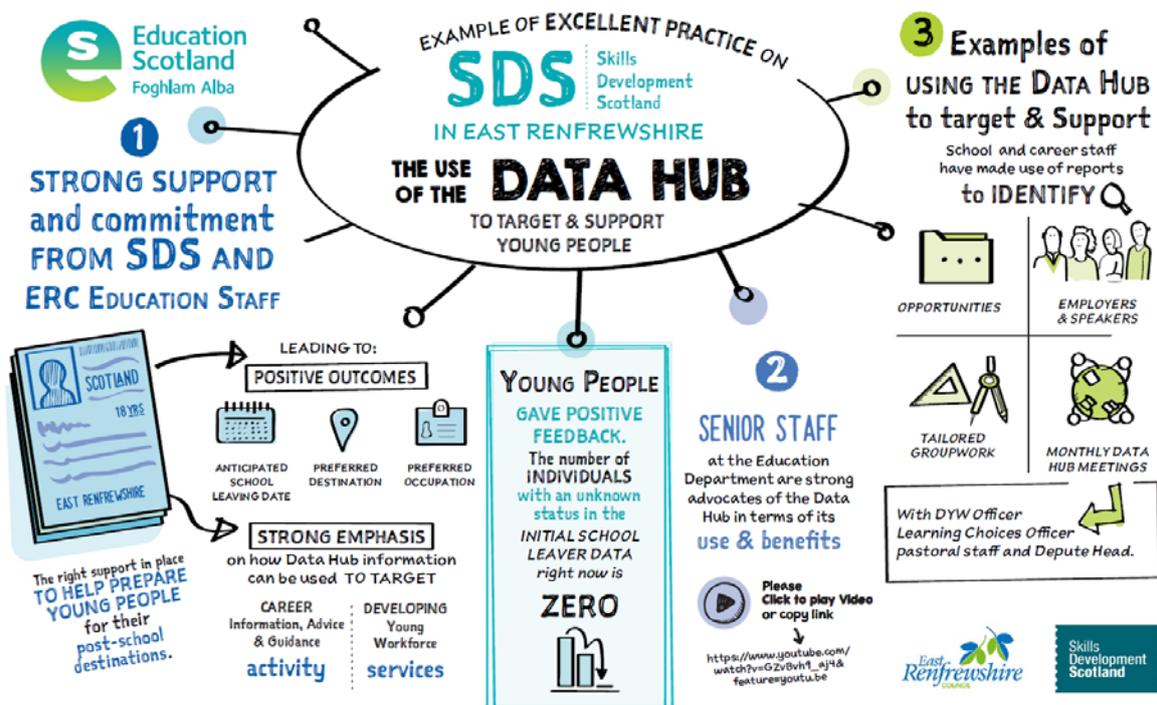
We provide information and advice to vulnerable families on maximising household income, welfare rights and housing options. We have set up a direct referral process between the Health Visiting Team and the **Money Advice and Rights Team**, where a dedicated worker has been employed to focus on Children and Early Years. A Health Visitor is now able to make a direct referral with the family, ensuring appropriate support is provided faster. **Dental**

Health Support Workers support families with children under 5 years old, through *Childsmile* home visits for families living in the poorest communities and first time parents. We promote financial wellbeing services at immunisation clinics in Eastwood and Barrhead Health Centres, engaging families who might otherwise be unknown to us.

The CPP acknowledges the right of children to live in conditions where they can flourish, and supports parents and carers by providing assistance and support around nutrition, clothing and housing. We have established a *Food Share* initiative with no referral process, and we distribute food bank vouchers to families experiencing food poverty. We support a local community *Back to School Bank* to provide free school uniform items. We provide financial advice and support to a *Young Mums Network* group. We promote nursery places for all vulnerable 2 year olds and have introduced 1140 hours of early learning and childcare for all eligible 2, 3 and 4 year olds from August 2020.

Education settings play a crucial role in securing the best possible outcomes for children and young people who are living in poverty. All settings have introduced initiatives to reduce the **Cost of the School Day** and remove financial barriers to children experiencing all aspects of the curriculum. The Money Advice and Rights Team support financial inclusion work in local primary schools for children, parents and staff.

All our secondary schools work with the University of Glasgow to widen access to higher education, delivering programmes which allow senior pupils to gain adjusted course entry offers. We have also made innovative use of the National Data Hub to develop our *No One Left Behind* strategy; this has led to increasing levels of positive leaver destinations with the latest figures (18-19) reporting initial leaver destinations of 97.5% and follow up destinations of 96.7%, with an annual participation measure of 96.7%. Further information about how our use of the data hub impacts on young people can be found below.



Education, Leisure and Cultural Activities: Articles 28, 29 and 31.

Ensuring a positive education experience for all children is central to their wellbeing and future life chances, but some children face greater threats to their rights and more barriers than others. **Education** policies promote equality and diversity and tackle discrimination and prejudice. Participation is a right; our schools and early learning and childcare settings promote empowerment. The promotion and protection of rights permeate every aspect of school life.

Education settings have a crucial role in securing the best possible outcomes for children and young people who have additional support needs. Staff work with a range of partners to support children and young people, and their families, who are facing barriers to participating fully in the life of the school community, or who's right to be well cared for is being threatened by abuse or poverty. We provide a nurturing environment and ethos where positive relationships flourish and experiences across the curriculum ensure the highest possible levels of success and achievement. Pastoral care teams promote the interest of identified children and young people in line with the guidelines provided through the East Renfrewshire GIRFEC framework. Children's views are always central to assessment and planning. Every pupil has at least one key adult they can speak to if they are worried about something or need advice. In our questionnaires, almost all children and young people (90%) agreed that they have someone they can speak to if they are upset or worried. Pastoral care teams assess wellbeing concerns by asking key questions and, working with families and key partners, they take action to coordinate any support required. They are supported through regular ASN and Child Protection Coordinator meetings and GIRFEC and Corporate Parenting Forums which are led by the education department.

The **Community Learning and Development** team is fully committed to the promotion and protection of children's rights. Youth Work involves working with young people in the community and in school around issues that matter to them. The goal of youth work is to ensure all young people have skills for life, learning and work and in East Renfrewshire we address a wide range of issues including health, education, employment, citizenship, anti-social behaviour and crime. We target programmes and support to those young people with additional support needs and in the most vulnerable groups, who are most in need of our services. Youth workers play a crucial role in providing a positive link between work within schools and the activities that young people are involved with in the community.

Young people are supported to direct their own learning and feel confident in influencing decision making and programme content, so that services address their needs, goals, interests and aspirations. With our support, young people often support and mentor others, volunteer in their communities and commit time to projects. We support our *Youth Voice* groups and MSYPs to engage with young people across East Renfrewshire and represent their views both locally and nationally. Our delivery is inclusive and responsive to the needs of all young people, based on openness, dialogue, willingness to change and commitment to equality. We believe all young people deserve equal respect, dignity and opportunity.

We track participation in all programmes. We recognise and celebrate the successes and achievements of all young people specific to their own abilities, needs and aspirations. This ranges from celebrating participation in a youth club to recognising the attainment of a Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award.

Sexuality and Gender Acceptance (SAGA)



SAGA (Sexuality And Gender Acceptance) is the first community-based, youth led LGBTi Youth Group in East Renfrewshire. Young people have worked alongside youth workers to establish a supportive, safe and accepting environment for LGBTi young people to meet, share experiences, develop new skills and take action. The group has been running for four years with 124 young people engaging in this time. The group have been involved in many activities and awareness raising events both locally and nationally.

The group noted that youth work staff would benefit from developing their skills, knowledge and confidence to effectively support LGBTi young people. The group created and delivered a workshop to 15 youth workers to develop their practice. The workshop was bespoke and informative, allowing staff to learn different terms and definitions that are widely used in the LGBTi community. The young people were clear that no question was wrong, allowing staff to explore myths, facts and discuss opinions.

The group worked in partnership with secondary schools to review language that was acceptable and unacceptable when working in groups or lessons with people who identify with the LGBTi community. They also worked with East Renfrewshire Council to organise a coffee morning for their local community. This event raised awareness of LGBTi young people, celebrated LGBT History month and showcased the impact of the youth group's volunteering in their local community. The event was attended by over 70 members of the community and also raised funds for LGBT Youth Scotland.

Members of the group raise the LGBT Pride flag every year as part of the council's Pride celebrations. The group also presented at these events, speaking about provision in the area and the opportunities their group provides. They attend local and national LGBTi events that celebrate and promote their community while networking with other groups from across Scotland.

The group have been active in a range of initiatives throughout lockdown. They worked with local councillors and other organisations to plan and host a virtual Pride march. They created a *Coming Out* guide for parents and carers to provide information, tips and guidance on how to support a child when they choose to identify within the LGBTi community. They are also developing a peer support hotline where members of the community can receive advice, information and support.



In 2019, the group were awarded the Ray McHugh Humanitarian award for their outstanding work in promoting and supporting the rights of LGBTi young people.

The **East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust** is fully committed to the promotion and protection of children's rights. Opportunities for children to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities are provided across our communities. The Trust is the main provider of cultural and artistic activities in East Renfrewshire and works with local community based groups to promote access to activities in Visual and Performing Arts, Digital Learning, Sport and Physical Activity. They work with schools and other services to give free access to vulnerable children and young people in school holiday programmes, leisure centres, visual and performing arts programmes, and other activities. Recently the Trust launched the *For Your Entertainment (FYE)* scheme, in partnership with HSCP, which encourages care experienced children and young people and other vulnerable groups to access free activities.

The Trust's education and training programme includes an extensive primary school Play Leadership programme and a comprehensive Sports Leadership Academy programme for senior phase pupils with links to national qualifications and work opportunities within the Trust.

The **Inclusive Support Service** believes that children and young people should always have opportunities to express their opinion in matters that affect their lives. We model behaviours that young people should expect and our engagement with young people supports the development of self-respect, self-determination and confidence. Children are supported to make genuine choices and exercise their rights in matters that affect their daily lives.

Children's wishes and opinions are core to the team's ethos. We engage with children and young people on all aspects of their daily life such as food, drink, activities and personal care needs. Where there is a difference in expectations of a child and their parent we work in partnership to ensure the best outcomes for the child. The structure of our holiday programmes, clubs and individual supports allow children and young people to exercise their rights to play, rest and receive appropriate support. We have adapted the UNCRC articles so that in practical situations we reinforce the understanding of individual rights. Communicating can be challenging in itself for some of our young people. While supporting skills development in this area, we reinforce through our actions that their contribution is of value. We provide consultation sessions where young people provide feedback using a variety of communication tools such as talking mats, visual aids, AAC devices and voting boxes. This feedback, using a 'You say ... We do' approach, influences service change.

Inclusive Support Team – Dominic's Story

Dominic is a young man brought up in a home where his rights have been supported and advocated for from birth. This is particularly important given the potential impact his learning disability could have on accessing rights. Dominic's evolving capacities have been nurtured both by home and school. He attends Isobel Mair School where he develops friendships, plays and learns and makes meaningful choices throughout his day. Being non-verbal, Dominic uses an augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) device to communicate

Choice for many young people was affected by the lockdown measures during COVID-19. For Dominic, accustomed to being included and allowed to make choices in preparation for events, the move to lockdown was traumatic. Not only was he denied physical access to school, but some of the rights and freedoms he had previously enjoyed at home were curtailed. Coming from a place where provisions were made to ensure his voice was heard, Dominic became frustrated and vocal. He would repeatedly prepare his school bag and place it at the front door and point to school on his communication aid. Dominic's parents noted his positive reactions to familiar faces and the delivery of support activity boxes. Dominic's mother commented on "how much he needs the support that he is provided outside the family in order for him to choose to play and be included in the community".



The Inclusive Support Team and Isobel Mair School, along with partners from Children's Services, worked with the family to support Dominic's return to school, initially on a part-time basis. This helped Dominic realise that the familiar life of the school community was still available to him. His mother noted that "my child knows that, when he attends school and the after-school supported activities, the teachers and inclusive support staff know what his needs are and can respond to them; when he needs the toilet, when he wants to play, when he wants not to play. When his needs are not responded to appropriately, he gets distressed".

For Dominic, his right to express his views have been promoted and supported, leading to positive benefits for him and his family.

Special Protection Measures:**Articles 22, 38 and 39: 37 (a-d) 39 and 40: 32, 33, 34, 35 and 36: 30**

East Renfrewshire's **Intensive Services Children and Families Team** are committed to the promotion and protection of children's rights and their full participation in matters affecting their lives. We understand that some children, young people and families need additional support to overcome problems and circumstances that are affecting their lives.

We respect children's right to family life and to grow up loved, safe and respected so that they can reach their potential. For those children who need additional support, we work with children and families to assess their circumstances, and we make decisions with families. Our Child Protection guidance highlights the importance of seeking children's views as part of any child protection process, and we fully implement this aspect of guidance. We work with our partners to ensure that any concerns about children are shared and investigated quickly and fully to ensure their safety. We are piloting a Holistic Trauma Approach to Joint Investigative Interviews based on the European Promise quality standards. This model will ensure that interventions consistently improve experiences for children and their families. Our *Signs of Safety* approach is improving support for families by developing their own safety networks so that children can live with their parents safely. This means that families have ownership of their plans and take responsibility to ensure children are safe.

Signs of Safety

We started to use the *Signs of Safety* approach with a family at a stage where they had been involved in social work for a number of years. The children had periods of being on the child protection register and at the point of this intervention were in foster placements. They had experienced domestic abuse and the older children had made allegations about mum's partner. The children and mum had experienced substantial trauma as a result of the abusive relationship and past experiences. There was a risk that living with mum again was not going to be possible for any of the children.

The Signs of Safety approach embeds rights based practice as the children's voice is central to



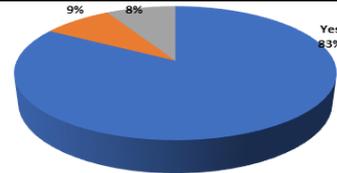
planning, therefore upholding children's right to be heard and also their right to family life whenever possible. Using the *Three Houses* tool allowed us to explore the children's views. This was important for the primary school age child who had struggled the most with their relationship with their mum. The anonymised three houses (*on the left*) was the first time they had been able to confidently articulate that they wanted to live with Mum forever, but that people from their past couldn't be part of their lives. The child turned the page over and drew the small angry face (*on the bottom right corner*) again to emphasise how scared they were of their mum's previous partner. This was a pivotal period of change for both the children and mum but also for the plan.

Using these tools allowed the children's views, both fears and hopes, to be shared with all those who were helping to keep them safe. Using the children's voices to build a plan within a family network ensured the children's safety and protection in the longer term. The children were returned to and have remained in their Mum's care where they appear to be thriving. All children are attending nursery and school and are enjoying relationships with family members and friends.

All Child's Assessments and Plans explicitly take children's views into account. We use a range of age appropriate tools to gather the views of children and our social workers develop positive relationships with children and their families, allowing them to seek views and reflect these in decision making. We also commission advocacy services from **Partners in Advocacy** and **Who Cares? Scotland** who support children and young people to articulate their views.

Children 1st were commissioned to undertake and report on a survey of families who have been subject to child protection processes. Findings showed that children and families feel increasingly engaged in the process. This graphic, taken from the report, is evidence that children feel engaged in these processes.

I was able to express my views and they were listened too.



The **Youth Intensive Support Service** supports children and young people who are at risk of accommodation, placement breakdown and hospitalisation due to poor mental health. The team also support young people who are looked after, in continuing care or aftercare. Our ethos is to support young people and to ensure their rights are upheld and promoted. We have established a *Champions Board* in partnership with care experienced young people, corporate parents and the Life Changes Trust. The Champions Board is based on relationships and participation and places young people at the centre of decision making forums that affect them. Our Champions Board has been described as sector leading in its approach. Young people work alongside the Chief Executive, Elected Members and other senior council officers to raise issues that are barriers to their development. They have helped to shape the provision of the school nursing service, made changes to Housing policy and gained free access to culture and leisure services. The Champions Board are now regularly consulted with by their Corporate Parents to help shape Policy and Practice. They have also influenced the establishment of care experienced traineeships through our innovative *Family Firm* model.

We have also introduced a *Mini Champs* group based on the Champions Board model, where younger care experienced children between the ages of 7 and 13 meet regularly to participate in activities and share their views. There is a trauma-informed focus on care identity, increased understanding of care and reduction of social isolation. The Mini Champs meet fortnightly and engage in a range of activities negotiated by the children. The group organised a very successful event in the National Portrait Gallery where they created an art show focusing on identity.

The **Intensive Family Support Service** works with families to strengthen the safety and wellbeing of children. We provide intensive parenting support to reduce risk to children and to strengthen relationships and understanding within families. Along with the Youth Intensive and Family Support Services, we focus on strength based approaches. We aim to be transparent and honest in our engagement and interactions with our children, young people and families. As a statutory social work service we also recognise that there can be a perceived power imbalance in our interventions and discussions. This places more responsibility on all our staff to be aware of and uphold children's rights.

Champions Board

The Champions Board aims to raise the profile and awareness of the needs of young people with care experience and to create a model of partnership working and co-production between young people and adult decision makers. A key element to this is relationship building between young people and adult Champions and they have attended a number of team building events together such as pizza making, bowling, outwards bounds weekends and solving a murder mystery on the streets of Glasgow!



The Champions Board website showcases the work of the Champions Board and provides information on a range of services along with links to external support and advice. This website was co-produced by young people who helped design art work and decide on content. The website launch in October 2019 was attended by young people and adult Champions and included a performance from young people involved in a guitar group, as well as a vocal performance from one of our young Champions.

The Champions Board worked together around the theme of mental health. They identified barriers to accessing existing services and the difficulties they can have engaging with adults. The young people produced a drama performance called *Journeys* and performed this to their Corporate Parents. The young people used this to highlight their need for time, patience, understanding and above all relationships with those supporting them.

The Champions Board were respected and listened to by adult decision makers. An outcome of this was the School Nursing Service becoming based within the Youth Intensive Support Service where they have been able to build relationships, gain trust and get to know care experienced young people. This has helped to remove barriers to accessing mental health support and has created a flexible service shaped around the needs of young people.

The young people are growing in confidence, expressing their needs and contributing to co-production of services with their Corporate Parents. One care experienced young person commented that “the Champions Board has given me a voice to impact important things that affect my life within East Renfrewshire. It has given me a sense of community and relationships with adults that are responsible for change”.

The Mini Champs group use various forms of participation to engage and share views, one of which was an exhibition in partnership with National Galleries of Scotland, called *Character Building*, looking at what makes us the people we are and how others view us. The exhibition opened at the National Portrait Gallery where families, carers and corporate parents attended with the group.



Richie Cumming, Outreach Officer at National Galleries of Scotland, commented: *“It was a real privilege working with the Mini Champs. The powerful portraits they produced were bold and vital, providing gallery visitors and staff an insight into these young people’s strength of character. Their insightful comments on historical artworks during their visits to the gallery and the conversations generated throughout the project, highlight the importance of communal, creative and cultural experiences we have all been missing out on this year.”*

How are we doing?

These are some of the positive outcomes of the work that has taken place over the last three years to promote and uphold Children's Right, which have been identified by members the Children's Services Participation Group through discussion with children, young people and key partners during the compilation of this report.

- Children and young people feel valued and respected within their educational setting and wider community.
- Children and young people show high levels of engagement, empowerment, and commitment to education.
- Children and young people experience high levels of achievement and attainment.
- The attainment gap between learners from more and less deprived backgrounds is closing.
- Young people are securing more positive school leaver destinations.
- Children and young people are increasingly able to access relevant, effective and integrated services.
- Children and young people are developing an understanding of safe, healthy and positive relationships from an early age.
- Children and young people are able to recognise and challenge violent and abusive behaviour.
- There is more refuge accommodation for women and children affected by domestic abuse.
- Our workforce is more able to identify violence against children and young people and respond effectively.
- Children and young people are experiencing better kinship care placements.
- The right to a permanent secure home is being secured quicker and the experiences of children in these placements is improving.
- An increasing number of young carers are being supported by the East Renfrewshire Carer Centre, in partnership with our schools, and are taking up the Young Carer Statement and Young Carer Grant.
- Children and young people with complex support needs are more involved in making decisions over their futures and what their services look like.
- Children and young people with additional support needs, and their families, are being assessed in a more person centred way.
- Families in East Renfrewshire are being supported to maximise their income.
- Children and young people are active participants in the co-creation of wellbeing and safety plans.
- Children and young people are participating in a wide range of youth work programmes with opportunities to achieve accreditation.
- Families are supported to develop their own safety networks so that children can live with their parents safely.
- Children and their parents' views are sought and any plans are developed in partnership with them. They have ownership of their plans and take responsibility for developing their own safety networks to ensure children are safe.
- We have a better understanding of families' experiences of how we work with them and a baseline from which to measure our ongoing performance and improvement.

How do we know?

Supporting data and evidence which was used to inform this report included:

- Education Department local authority questionnaires – summary of pupil responses.
- School Leaver Destination data.
- Unicef Rights Respecting Schools Awards summary of educational establishment activity.
- HSCP Child Protection data.
- HSCP Signs of Safety evaluation data.
- Children 1st annual reports.
- East Renfrewshire Equally Safe National Performance Framework.
- Chief Officers Public Protection Report
- VAW Partnership Reporting.
- Report on views of young people of using SDS.
- CLD achievement data.

The following national and local policies, strategies and action plans inform the approaches that we take to improve how we promote and uphold children's rights.

National:

[Children \(Scotland\) Act 1995](#)

[Equality Act 2010](#)

[Children's Hearings \(Scotland\) Act 2011](#)

[National Parenting Strategy 2012](#)

[Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#)

[National Child Protection Guidance 2014 \(Scotland\)](#)

[National Youth Work Strategy \(2014\)](#)

[Getting it Right for Looked After Children and Young People Strategy 2015](#)

[Fairer Scotland Action Plan 2016](#)

[Abusive Behaviour and Sexual Harm Act 2016](#)

[Equally Safe: National Strategy 2016](#)

[The Kinship Care Assistance \(Scotland\) Order 2016](#)

[Carers Scotland Act 2016](#)

[Trafficking and Exploitation Strategy 2017](#)

[Child Poverty Scotland Act 2017](#)

[Domestic Abuse \(Scotland\) Act 2018](#)

[National Performance Framework 2018](#)

[National CLD Plan \(2018\)](#)

[No One Left Behind: Next Steps for Employability Support 2018](#)

[Health and Social Care Standards \(2018\)](#)

[Child Rights Wellbeing Impact Assessments \(CRWIA\) Guidance 2019](#)

[Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report 2019](#)

[Independent Care Review \(2020\)](#)

[Developing a Culture Strategy for Scotland 2020](#)

[Support for Learning: All our Children and All their Potential \(2020\)](#)

Local:

East Renfrewshire's Children and Young People's Plan 2020-23

Signs of Safety Implementation Plan 2018-22

Fairer East Ren Plan 2018-20

Local Improvement Plan 2019-22

Fairer East Ren Plan 2018-20

East Renfrewshire Violence Against Women Delivery Plan 2020

Promoting Education Opportunities and Improving Outcomes of Care Experienced Children and Young People in East Renfrewshire (Education Corporate Parenting Policy)

Healthier Minds Framework

What will we do next?

We are committed to children's rights being at the heart of all policies and procedures that affect their lives. Through compiling this report and examining the evidence that informed it, we are now clearer about what we need to do next and how the views of children and young people will be at the heart of our journey.

We have ensured that a rights based approach is embedded in our East Renfrewshire Children's Plan 2020-23. As a workforce we will improve how we communicate and seek children's views in ways which meet their needs. We will engage with children & young people to monitor our progress over the next three years and in particular:

- We will set up a UNCRC Implementation Group, which will include representation of young people, to oversee implementation of all relevant aspects of the UNCRC Bill.
- The Education Department will discuss progress with our Primary and Secondary Pupil Councils.
- The Education Department will conduct annual questionnaires with our pupils, parents / carers and staff. These questionnaires will ask for views on rights and participation.
- HSCP will continue to engage with children and young people who use our services in a manner which enhances the ability of all to communicate their views. We will monitor implementation through caseload management and review.
- The Community Learning and Development team will consult with MSYPs and the Youth Voice forum.
- We will work with children and young people to ensure that information is shared with them in an accessible way, through our Children's Services Participation Subgroup.
- We will seek the views of children and young people subject to legal measures through a new system for formally gathering their views.
- We will continue to promote advocacy services for children and young people and act on feedback provided through these services.
- We will continue to increase participation levels in our Champions Board and Mini Champs and we will consult regularly with members.
- We will introduce a Champions Board for our children and young people with complex support needs.
- We will embed the involvement of disabled children and young people in development by utilising existing services such as Inclusive Support to involve all children and young people.
- We will utilise a wide range of technologies to gather the views of children and young people with complex additional support needs.

A SUMMARY OF THE UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD



ARTICLE 1 (definition of the child)

Everyone under the age of 18 has all the rights in the Convention.

ARTICLE 2 (non-discrimination)

The Convention applies to every child without discrimination, whatever their ethnicity, sex, religion, language, abilities or any other status, whatever they think or say, whatever their family background.

ARTICLE 3 (best interests of the child)

The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.

ARTICLE 4 (implementation of the Convention)

Governments must do all they can to make sure every child can enjoy their rights by creating systems and passing laws that promote and protect children's rights.

ARTICLE 5 (parental guidance and a child's evolving capacities)

Governments must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents and carers to provide guidance and direction to their child as they grow up, so that they fully enjoy their rights. This must be done in a way that recognises the child's increasing capacity to make their own choices.

ARTICLE 6 (life, survival and development)

Every child has the right to life. Governments must do all they can to ensure that children survive and develop to their full potential.

ARTICLE 7 (birth registration, name, nationality, care)

Every child has the right to be registered at birth, to have a name and nationality, and, as far as possible, to know and be cared for by their parents.

ARTICLE 8 (protection and preservation of identity)

Every child has the right to an identity. Governments must respect and protect that right, and protect the child's name, nationality or family relationships from being changed unlawfully.

ARTICLE 9 (separation from parents)

Children must not be separated from their parents against their will unless it is in their best interests (for example, if a parent is hurting or neglecting a child). Children whose parents have separated have the right to stay in contact with both parents, unless this could cause them harm.

ARTICLE 10 (family reunification)

Governments must respond quickly and sympathetically if a child or their parents apply to live together in the same country. If a child's parents live apart in different countries, the child has the right to visit and keep in contact with both of them.

ARTICLE 11 (abduction and non-return of children)

Governments must do everything they can to stop children being taken out of their own country illegally by their parents or other relatives, or being prevented from returning home.

ARTICLE 12 (respect for the views of the child)

Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. This right applies at all times, for example during immigration proceedings, housing decisions or the child's day-to-day home life.

ARTICLE 13 (freedom of expression)

Every child must be free to express their thoughts and opinions and to access all kinds of information, as long as it is within the law.

ARTICLE 14 (freedom of thought, belief and religion)

Every child has the right to think and believe what they choose and also to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Governments must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents to guide their child as they grow up.

ARTICLE 15 (freedom of association)

Every child has the right to meet with other children and to join groups and organisations, as long as this does not stop other people from enjoying their rights.

ARTICLE 16 (right to privacy)

Every child has the right to privacy. The law should protect the child's private, family and home life, including protecting children from unlawful attacks that harm their reputation.

ARTICLE 17 (access to information from the media)

Every child has the right to reliable information from a variety of sources, and governments should encourage the media to provide information that children can understand. Governments must help protect children from materials that could harm them.

ARTICLE 18 (parental responsibilities and state assistance)

Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their child and should always consider what is best for the child. Governments must support parents by creating support services for children and giving parents the help they need to raise their children.

ARTICLE 19 (protection from violence, abuse and neglect)

Governments must do all they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.

ARTICLE 20 (children unable to live with their family)

If a child cannot be looked after by their immediate family, the government must give them special protection and assistance. This includes making sure the child is provided with alternative care that is continuous and respects the child's culture, language and religion.

ARTICLE 21 (adoption)

Governments must oversee the process of adoption to make sure it is safe, lawful and that it prioritises children's best interests. Children should only be adopted outside of their country if they cannot be placed with a family in their own country.

ARTICLE 22 (refugee children)

If a child is seeking refuge or has refugee status, governments must provide them with appropriate protection and assistance to help them enjoy all the rights in the Convention. Governments must help refugee children who are separated from their parents to be reunited with them.

ARTICLE 23 (children with a disability)

A child with a disability has the right to live a full and decent life with dignity and, as far as possible, independence and to play an active part in the community. Governments must do all they can to support disabled children and their families.

ARTICLE 24 (health and health services)

Every child has the right to the best possible health. Governments must provide good quality health care, clean water, nutritious food, and a clean environment and education on health and well-being so that children can stay healthy. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

ARTICLE 25 (review of treatment in care)

If a child has been placed away from home for the purpose of care or protection (for example, with a foster family or in hospital), they have the right to a regular review of their treatment, the way they are cared for and their wider circumstances.

ARTICLE 26 (social security)

Every child has the right to benefit from social security, including financial support and other benefits, to families in need of assistance.

ARTICLE 27 (adequate standard of living)

Every child has the right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and social needs and support their development. Governments must help families who cannot afford to provide this.

ARTICLE 28 (right to education)

Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free and different forms of secondary education must be available to every child. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity and their rights. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

ARTICLE 29 (goals of education)

Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.

ARTICLE 30 (children from minority or indigenous groups)

Every child has the right to learn and use the language, customs and religion of their family, whether or not these are shared by the majority of the people in the country where they live.

ARTICLE 31 (leisure, play and culture)

Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.

ARTICLE 32 (child labour)

Governments must protect children from economic exploitation and work that is dangerous or might harm their health, development or education. Governments must set a minimum age for children to work and ensure that work conditions are safe and appropriate.

ARTICLE 33 (drug abuse)

Governments must protect children from the illegal use of drugs and from being involved in the production or distribution of drugs.

ARTICLE 34 (sexual exploitation)

Governments must protect children from all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation.

ARTICLE 35 (abduction, sale and trafficking)

Governments must protect children from being abducted, sold or moved illegally to a different place in or outside their country for the purpose of exploitation.

ARTICLE 36 (other forms of exploitation)

Governments must protect children from all other forms of exploitation, for example the exploitation of children for political activities, by the media or for medical research.

ARTICLE 37 (inhumane treatment and detention)

Children must not be tortured, sentenced to the death penalty or suffer other cruel or degrading treatment or punishment. Children should be arrested, detained or imprisoned only as a last resort and for the shortest time possible. They must be treated with respect and care, and be able to keep in contact with their family. Children must not be put in prison with adults.

ARTICLE 38 (war and armed conflicts)

Governments must not allow children under the age of 15 to take part in war or join the armed forces. Governments must do everything they can to protect and care for children affected by war and armed conflicts.

ARTICLE 39 (recovery from trauma and reintegration)

Children who have experienced neglect, abuse, exploitation, torture or who are victims of war must receive special support to help them recover their health, dignity, self-respect and social life.

ARTICLE 40 (juvenile justice)

A child accused or guilty of breaking the law must be treated with dignity and respect. They have the right to legal assistance and a fair trial that takes account of their age. Governments must set a minimum age for children to be tried in a criminal court and manage a justice system that enables children who have been in conflict with the law to reintegrate into society.

ARTICLE 41 (respect for higher national standards)

If a country has laws and standards that go further than the present Convention, then the country must keep those laws.

ARTICLE 42 (knowledge of rights)

Governments must actively work to make sure children and adults know about the Convention.

The Convention has 54 articles in total. Articles 43-54 are about how adults and governments must work together to make sure all children can enjoy all their rights, including:

ARTICLE 45
Unicef can provide expert advice and assistance on children's rights.

OPTIONAL PROTOCOLS

There are three agreements, called Optional Protocols, that strengthen the Convention and add further unique rights for children. They are optional because governments that ratify the Convention can decide whether or not to sign up to these Optional Protocols. They are: the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography; the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict; and the Optional Protocol on a complaints mechanism for children (called Communications Procedure).

For more information go to unicef.org/uk/crc/op