



Scottish Psychological Trauma and Adversity Training Plan Consultation February 2019

About Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights)

Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights) is an alliance that works to improve the awareness, understanding and implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and other international human rights treaties across Scotland. We have over 380 members ranging from large international and national non-governmental organisations (NGOs) through to small volunteer-led after school clubs. Our activities include collating an annual *State of Children's Rights* report to set out the progress made to implement the UNCRC in Scotland. The views expressed in this submission are based on consultation with our members but may not necessarily reflect the specific views of every one of our member organisations.

To what extent do you feel that the TTP is a useful document to support workforce training and development?

Answer: Don't know

Comment: The Training Plan would be strengthened by taking a rights-based approach, mapped against the [Common Core of Skills, Knowledge & Understanding and Values for the Children's Workforce in Scotland](#) ("Common Core").

This approach would ensure that guidance for those working with children is not fragmented into two strands, but rather follows a stronger, unified approach in which the Training Plan and Common Core values build upon and strengthen each other.

To what extent do you feel that the essential, key perspectives on trauma training and workforce development are represented in this document?

Answer: Not well represented (does not include children's rights)

Comment: Together has always been clear that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) provides the international legal framework through which Adverse Childhood Experiences can be prevented and their impacts mitigated. The UNCRC ensures that children and young people grow up happy, healthy, safe and loved, and that their views are taken into account in decisions that affect them. Scottish Government has made numerous commitments to furthering the UNCRC, including a commitment to incorporate the principles of the Convention into Scots law. Scottish Government should ensure that its commitment to preventing and mitigating the impact of ACEs fits within its broader commitment on children's rights. This can be achieved by ensuring that trauma-informed practice to prevent and mitigate the impact of ACEs takes a rights-based approach. Fundamentally, ACEs involve the violation of children's rights, a rights-based approach is therefore the most effective way of preventing and responding to them.

To take a rights-based approach, the Training Plan (and overarching Framework) should link to, and build upon, the Common Core. This document sets out the skills, knowledge, understanding and

values that everyone should have if they work with children and young people and their families. It is explicitly cross-referenced against the guiding principles of the UNCRC: (1) non-discrimination; (2) the best interests of the child; (3) the right to life, survival and development; and (4) respect for the views of the child. Central to the Common Core is that workers should build meaningful relationships with children and young people (and their families). This is crucial to ensuring that children and young people feel comfortable expressing their views (Article 12 UNCRC) and helps ensure that subsequent decisions respect their rights.

The scope for mapping the Training Plan (and Framework) against the Common Core is clear. There are several sections of the Plan which relate to children's rights but are not expressly identified as such. The Plan would be strengthened by making these connections with the UNCRC and Common Core explicit. For example, the five key principles of trauma-informed practice under the Training Plan could be underpinned by reference to the following Common Core values and their related UNCRC rights:

1. **Safety:** relates to Common Core values on understanding risks (A7), vulnerabilities (A5) and child protection procedures (A6) in line with the right to life, survival and development under Article 6 UNCRC.
2. **Trustworthiness:** relates to the central Common Core aim of building meaningful, trusting relationships with children, young people and their families (Context A).
3. **Choice:** relates to the Common Core value of supporting informed choices by including children and young people as active participants and listening to their views (A8-10) in line with Article 12 UNCRC.
4. **Collaboration:** relates to the Common Core focus on working actively with children and their families (A8-10), and ensuring collaboration between members of the children's workforce (Context B).
5. **Empowerment:** relates to the Common Core value of promoting resilience (A5) in line with the right to life, survival and development under Article 6 UNCRC; and the Common Core value of supporting children and young people to be involved in decisions affecting them (A8-10) in line with Article 12 UNCRC.

The Common Core can be implemented in a variety of ways, including self-assessment, employer actions (e.g. training) and national action. National actions include considering the Common Core when updating existing frameworks. Together understands that the Training Plan implements the overarching Transforming Psychological Trauma Framework. We would welcome increased reference to the Common Core and UNCRC when the Framework is next reviewed, ensuring it too takes a rights-based approach.

To what extent do you think that the TTP adequately emphasizes the contribution that experts by experience can make to trauma training and development?

Answer: Somewhat emphasised

Comment: Together welcomes the Training Plan's emphasis that we should learn from the views of those who have experience of trauma and that these views should be taken into account when developing strategies and through practice. In this respect, the Common Core emphasises that "children, young people and families are experts when it comes to their own lives and as workers we need to tap into their knowledge and views by building meaningful relationships with them".

Insofar as it relates to children and young people, the Training Plan could be strengthened by reference to Article 12 of the UNCRC. This article sets out children and young people's right to be heard and have their views taken seriously by adults. The UN Committee on the Rights of the child is clear that the participation of children and young people in the development, monitoring and evaluation of prevention and education strategies is essential to their effectiveness as it ensures their needs and views are reflected in practice (see for example CRC/C/GC/13, paras 3(e) and 39 on strategies for the elimination of all forms of violence). However, it is essential in this context that children and young people's views are obtained in such a way that protects them from any further distress, harm or stigma.

Please give recommendations as to how we might ensure that local implementation structures (new or existing) make effective use of existing training and development resources.

The Training Plan should more closely reflect the content of the Common Core and local implementation structures should be encouraged to read and apply the Training Plan (and overarching Framework) in line with the skills and values that the Common Core sets out.

If you have any other feedback on the Training Plan that is not captured in the sections above, please include this here

It is crucial that implementation of the Training Plan and overarching Framework is coupled with comprehensive procedures for monitoring, evaluation and review. This will ensure that an evidence-based approach can be taken to future evaluation and review of both documents. As mentioned above, Together supports that future reviews examine the extent to which the Training Plan and overarching Framework reflect the values and skills of the Common Core. Following this review, the documents should be amended as necessary to ensure they follow a rights-based approach.

For further information, please contact Maria Doyle, Legal Research Officer,
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