



Minister for Children and Young People
Maree Todd MSP

17 March 2021

Dear colleagues,

We are delighted to confirm that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill (the Bill) was passed unanimously yesterday.

The Scottish Government is committed to a revolution in children's rights and we believe that is precisely what this Bill delivers. By incorporating children's rights into Scots law, we will deliver a fundamental shift in culture that will transform the life chances and outcomes for children and young people and ensure that Scotland can truly be the best place in the world to grow up.

The Bill is a direct result of children and young people, and those that work to support them, campaigning for their rights over the past decade and beyond in Scotland. There are too many individuals to name but most recently Together, the Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights, and the role of the Children's Commissioner have been instrumental in helping to shape the legislation into the world-leading Bill that was passed yesterday. So many of you have helped us deliver a Bill that's comprehensive in its scope, maximalist in its reach and give children's rights the highest level of protection within Scotland's constitutional and legal framework. We are deeply grateful to everyone who has played a part in this journey and we wish to congratulate every child and organisation that has challenged and helped us to get to this important point on our rights journey.

Your tenacious efforts to deliver for children and young people have led us to the position where we can now transform the realisation of children's rights in Scottish society. This is a moment of great joy and we hope you have been able to celebrate it, as we have done. It is a testament to your commitment and passion that this historic accomplishment has been achieved. Children in Scotland will have a much brighter future as a result and we wish to express deep gratitude to you in supporting this.

The Scottish Government recognises that participation and engagement by children and young people is essential to the realisation of all rights in the UNCRC. We will continue to engage with rights holders directly and through organisations such as Children's Parliament, Scottish Youth Parliament, Young Scot and others in the development and delivery of an implementation plan in support of the Bill.

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We are grateful to our public authorities for their support in the development of the Bill. Since last year, engagement with colleagues across the public sector, in the context of the pandemic, has been challenging. Despite this, it is wholly reassuring and affirming that public authorities, from justice partners to local authorities and health boards, have demonstrated overwhelming support for this progressive step in the realisation of children's rights in Scotland, now and for the future.

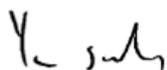
We recognise the challenge facing public authorities to be fully operational on commencement, particularly in the context of the other considerable pressures which they currently face. We welcome the commitment since Stage 2 of our partners in public authorities to work with my officials and others to ensure that this can be delivered in line with the Bill's objective. The Scottish Government will ensure that accessible guidance, training and other materials are put in place as part of the implementation programme to assist public authorities to get ready for commencement. We remain committed to maintaining the collaborative partnership which has been developed throughout the Bill's progress into commencement and wider implementation.

The Bill does not, however, represent the end of the journey in making children's rights real. The Bill will commence 6 months after Royal Assent, so we expect this to be October 2021. It will put in place a strong framework for the protection and progressive realisation of children's rights. It will require the continuous consideration and prioritisation of children's rights in law, policy and practice. That is where the real change for children and young people will come from and it is incumbent upon us all to ensure that the Bill's ambitions are translated into real life improvements in the lives of children and young people in Scotland and that children are empowered to know and enforce their rights.

With our collective leadership, including empowered children and young people, we are confident that Scotland will become an exemplar of embedding children's rights in practice. Scotland's children deserve nothing less than to make Scotland the best place to grow up.

The Bill as amended at Stage 3 and the accompanying documents can be found on the Scottish Parliament's website [here](#). If you would like to speak to the UNCRC Implementation Team you can get in touch by emailing UNCRCIncorporation@gov.scot.

Yours faithfully,



JOHN SWINNEY



MAREE TODD

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