



Together
(Scottish Alliance for
Children's Rights)

REPORT & FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

for the year ended
31st March 2023

Scottish Charitable
Incorporated
Organisation (SCIO)
Charity number
SC029403

Registered Office:
The Melting Pot
15 Calton Road
Edinburgh
EH8 8DL

www.togetherscotland.org.uk
[@together_sacr](https://twitter.com/together_sacr)

CHAIR'S REPORT

The past year brought profound challenges for children, particularly those whose rights were already most at risk. As the cost-of-living crisis deepened, children's human rights faced ever-mounting challenges. Meanwhile, crucial legislation to enshrine their rights in Scots law remained out of reach.

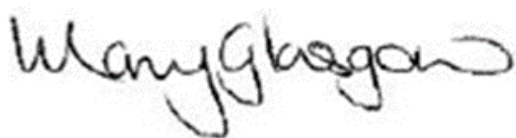
In these turbulent times, Together showed unwavering determination in its mission to ensure every child growing up in Scotland has their human rights respected, protected, and fulfilled. The enduring strength of our campaign bears testament to the energy and passion of children, young people, and our members, who steadfastly navigated the twists and turns of this journey. Special recognition is due to Arden, Omima, Beau, Daisy, Ally and Grace, whose exceptional advocacy before the United Nations in Geneva yielded almost 200 recommendations on how Scotland and the UK can better secure children's human rights. We are also profoundly grateful to the Rights Detectives – Ramiza, Oscar, Safiyah, Emma, Vange, and Daniel – whose investigations have shone a clear path for Together, the Scottish Government and public authorities as we move closer towards a new Human Rights Bill for Scotland.



3.

We know that 2023-24 will bring a busy program of work as we join with children, young people, and our members to drive forward implementation of the UN Committee's recommendations. We are also poised to launch the Skills & Knowledge Framework, which will support duty bearers to put children's rights into practice. We are confident that Together will rise to meet the challenges that the year presents, and we look forward to reporting on our progress in 2024.

Lastly, as Chair of the Board of Together, I would like to extend my personal thanks to Juliet and the excellent team she leads, and to the other nine committed Trustees who have generously contributed their time and expertise. I extend my heartfelt thanks to those stepping down at the AGM and extend a warm welcome to our new trustees.



Mary Glasgow
Chairperson



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Reference & Administrative Information

Charity Name: Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights)

SCIO

Charity Registration Number: SC029403

Registered Office:

The Melting Pot
15 Calton Road
Edinburgh
EH8 8DL

Trustees:

Chair: Mary Glasgow

Treasurer: Mairi McReynolds

Vice Chair: Susan Hunter

Board Members:
Rona Blackwood
Oonagh Brown (from September 2022)
Kevin Kane
Tracy Kirk
Laura Pasternak
Paul Sullivan (from September 2022)

Company Secretary: Juliet Harris

Bankers: Bank of Scotland
20/22 Shandwick Place
Edinburgh EH2 4RN

Independent Examiner: Philip Duncan

Volunteer Accountant: Ian J Douglas

About us

Together's vision is that all children growing up in Scotland have their human rights respected, protected and fulfilled.

Our journey began in 1996 when a group of children's organisations formed an informal alliance to promote children's human rights as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Together was formally incorporated as a company limited by guarantee on 8th September 1999.

Together has five core aims, as set out in our Strategic Plan 2019-24, which shape everything we do:




Law in Scotland is fully compliant with the UNCRC and other international human rights standards.

1



Law and policy in Scotland is fully implemented in line with the UNCRC and other international human rights standards.

2



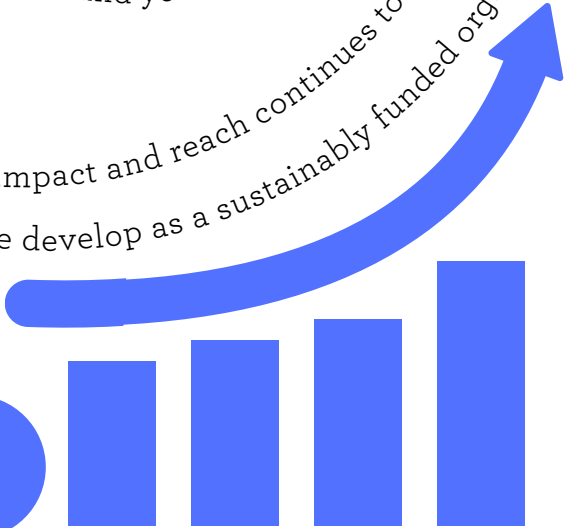
Children & young people experience a culture change in which they are listened to, respected & are able to influence the world around them

3

Scotland is recognised internationally & in UK as a pioneer & an innovator in taking forward children and young people's human rights.

4

Our impact and reach continues to grow, and we develop as a sustainably funded organisation.



5

About us

Together relies on grants and membership payments to cover operating costs. Throughout 2022-23 we made progress towards our aims with funding from the Scottish Government Children's Rights Unit, Children and Young People Early Intervention Fund and other donations from our membership. We also received funding for short-term projects from the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland.

This funding enabled Together to continue employing four full-time staff (Director, Legal & Policy Manager, Development Manager, Policy and Communications Assistant) and three part-time staff (Business Support Officer, Project Officer and Membership Outreach Assistant). It also enabled us to continue employing a part-time Policy and Communications Intern. Project funding for The Rights Detectives (a group of children who are working to influence the new Human Rights Bill for Scotland) enabled Together to continue engaging the services of a Participation Consultant.



Promoting child rights-focused law



Law in Scotland is fully compliant with the UNCRC and other international human rights standards.



9.



What have children said about promoting child rights-focused law?

Incorporating the UNCRC

Children and young people continued to call for urgency in bringing their rights into law. In February 2023, Together supported Members of Children's Parliament and Scottish Youth Parliament (#TeamScotlandUN) to share their concerns directly with the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in Geneva:

"Children's rights are important as children are treated so unfairly... the delay [in incorporating children rights in law] is an example of children not being taken seriously"

"Human rights should always transcend political divisions. I hope decision-makers will come together to enshrine our rights in law immediately."



"In the time it is taking to protect young people's rights in law, many young people, who have campaigned for this issue their entire childhood such as myself and Daisy, have missed the opportunity to experience the benefits of their campaigning as they are no longer children. In taking this long to protect our rights in law, the Scottish Government have denied many young people their rights. In Geneva, team Scotland will be raising this issue with the UN Committee."

These quotes come from members of #TeamScotlandUN - [read their full report here](#) and [accompanying blog here](#).

Bringing other human rights treaties into our law

Together supported The Rights Detectives to share their views on the difference incorporating other human rights treaties might make for children and young people's lives. The Rights Detectives felt that new laws to uphold human rights could help make Scotland a more diverse place, ensure disabled people have all of their rights, combat racism and sexism, and help strengthen protection for the environment amongst other things. The Rights Detectives shared the findings of their investigations with Scottish Government to help shape its plans for a new Human Rights Bill.

“people with disabilities would get better care”

“It would make our country more safe, it would be safer because there would be less problems”

“It would impact the young people of Scotland in the long term as we would grow to unlearn the prejudice taught to us by the older generations who did not have these rights in place when they were young and likely did not have the opportunity to mix with people from different backgrounds”

“It would make Scotland a better place overall with less disadvantages, especially for women as things like pay gaps would be taken away.”

“could lead the way for further social change, making people love their country more, encouraging self-expression and stopping climate change.”



HIGHLIGHTS OF 2022-23



Law in Scotland is fully compliant with the UNCRC and other international human rights standards.



Promoting child rights-focused law

To achieve this, we will:

- Advocate for the full incorporation of the UNCRC and other international human rights standards into Scots and UK law.
- Identify where Scots law falls short of the standards enshrined in the UNCRC and advocate for legislation that meets and exceeds international human rights standards.
- Influence and inform new legislation brought forward by the Scottish and UK Government to ensure it meets international human rights standards.

Promoting child rights - focused law

What did we do?

Campaign to make children's human rights the law

Together continued its passionate campaign to bring children's UNCRC rights into Scots law. We amplified children and young people's calls for urgent action to address the UK Supreme Court's judgment on the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill. In February 2023, we supported a group of children and young people to travel to Geneva and share their concerns directly with the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child at its pre-session. These efforts secured a direct recommendation to Scottish Government to "act expeditiously" so that the Bill can finally become law. On the same day we helped secure a debate in the Scottish Parliament, initiated by Martin Whitfield MSP, which demonstrated MSPs' ongoing commitment to the Bill. The Bill is a milestone on Scotland's journey towards making rights real for every child, and we remain confident that that milestone will be achieved.

The unwavering strength of our campaign is testament to the energy and passion of children, young people and our members. Their shared commitment has enabled us to the many twists and turns in the road that we have encountered. We would particularly like to thank the efforts of Arden, Omima, Beau and Daisy - Members of Children's Parliament and the Scottish Youth Parliament - for their outstanding advocacy at the Geneva pre-session, and to Grace and Ally (Young Advisors to CYPCS) for ensuring the UN Committee's concerns were known far and wide.



Promoting child rights- focused law

A new Human Rights Bill for Scotland

Alongside UNCRC incorporation, Together continued to campaign for additional human rights treaties to be brought into Scots law. We were able to draw from our significant experience with the UNCRC Bill to advise Scottish Government on how the new Bill could best secure the maximum positive change for children and young people. We continued to host our Human Rights Bill group, encouraging members to coordinate their advocacy and to offer direct contact with Scottish Government representatives through regular Q&A sessions.

In summer 2022, we benefited from the work of Judi Martin, an LLM candidate at the University of Edinburgh, who conducted research into how the new Human Rights Bill could best secure access to justice for Black, Brown and minority ethnic children, drawing upon learning from other countries. Our Director ensured these findings and members' views were heard at the heart of Scottish Government through her membership of the Human Rights Bill Governance and Engagement Advisory Board. Through these efforts, Together secured funding to ensure children's engagement in shaping the development of the Bill (see more on The Rights Detectives at p. 28).



Promoting child rights - focused law

Protecting the Human Rights Act

Together rallied its members around the Human Rights Act (HRA) in the face of continued threats of its repeal by UK Government. Through joint letters, consultation responses, member and child-friendly briefings we successfully demonstrated how the HRA is a powerful and essential mechanism in upholding children's human rights. We joined children, young people and our members in celebrating the decision to shelve the UK Bill of Rights but will remain vigilant to future threats arising.

Shaping proposals for new legislation

Together supported our members to engage with Scottish Government consultations - including on the Care and Justice Bill and proposals to restrict alcohol marketing. Our responses highlighted the children's rights impacts, drawing on guidance from the UN Committee and the lived experiences of children and families who are supported by our members.



Promoting child rights - focused law

What have our members said?



“Together (SACR) is undoubtedly one of the best membership engagement organisations in Scotland. The group provides accurate and timely information and is adept at leading children’s rights campaigning in a way that brings organisations and young people with them. That is a fantastic achievement and a testament to a hardworking, knowledgeable, and supremely talented team.’

(YouthLink Scotland, Membership Spotlight)

“Without being able to tap into the level of knowledge and expertise offered by Together, we would be greatly disadvantaged. The depth and breadth of detail and sheer diligence that Together brings to the sector is peerless, and the warm, accessible approach from the team to share their specialist experience in understandable, digestible formats is a gift! Thanks to all for all that you do to advance this vital work!”

“I value the feeling of connection that being a member brings. Our work can be hard sometimes and it keeps me going to know that there are likeminded people across Scotland who also want to give children a voice.”



‘Together has a clear purpose and ambition, demonstrably so, being alongside makes absolute sense for our organisation to play our part in furthering the rights of the child in Scotland.’

‘Only words of encouragement and support. It can feel like pushing jelly up a hill some days ... keep going! Children and Young People need you :)’



These quotes have come from those who responded to Together's 2023 Membership Survey or Together's Membership Spotlight

Supporting child rights practice



Law and policy in
Scotland is fully
implemented in line with
the UNCRC and other
international human
rights standards.

What have children said about supporting child rights practice?

Children recognise that putting rights into law is an important first step, but lots of other things need to change to put their rights into practice. Raising awareness and learning about rights is important but Scotland needs to go beyond this – children need culture change – everyone who works with children and young people should live and breathe rights.

Culture change will help secure the changes that children so urgently want to see:

“lots of things would be different because you would be included and people would be happy.”



“People would be nicer, there would be no bullying, no racism and everyone’s rights would be upheld. It would make Scotland a fair and happy place to grow up.”

“It would feel right to everyone, and no-one would feel like things are left at a disadvantage in any aspect of their life relative to living in Scotland.”

These quotes have come from The Rights Detectives. [Read their first mission update here.](#)



HIGHLIGHTS OF 2022-23

Supporting child rights practice



Law and policy in Scotland is fully implemented in line with the UNCRC and other international human rights standards.

To achieve this, we will:

- Work with our members to raise public and professional awareness and understanding of children and young people's human rights.
- Influence and build the capacity of our members and duty bearers to inform policy and direct practice and monitor and evaluate change.
- Undertake robust monitoring and reporting to support UN bodies to hold the Scottish and UK Government to account in implementing international human rights obligations

Supporting child rights practice

What did we do?

State of Children's Rights Report 2023

Together's [2023 State of Children's Rights Report](#) gathered evidence from children, young people and almost 80 organisations to show the UN Committee what things are really like for children and young people in Scotland. Evidence from our surveys, webinars and member meetings highlighted that while there have been areas of progress, there is often a significant 'implementation gap' between what is set out in law and policy, and what happens in practice. This problem affects a wide range of issues including implementation of additional support for learning legislation, sibling contact for Care Experienced children through to ensuring the views of the youngest children are heard. The investment of time and resources by so many of Together's members demonstrates the strength of commitment to children's human rights and the value placed on having progress scrutinised by the UN Committee.

Survey Summer 2022

Evidence from children, young people and over 80 organisations, individuals and professionals.



Webinars October 2022

Four webinars to explore key themes arising from the survey - over 150 participants.



Review November 2022

Expert review by over 40 organisations, drawing upon what children have told them.



Submission December 2022

Submission of the report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child ahead of the UK's review in May 2023.



Supporting child rights practice

Reporting to the United Nations

Together's 2023 State of Children's Rights Report acted as Scotland's authoritative civil society submission to the UN Committee. The report made 93 recommendations for change and urged the UN Committee to reflect upon these during the UK's review in Geneva and in its Concluding Observations (recommendations).

At the same time, Together worked tirelessly to ensure that issues affecting children in Scotland received the attention they needed amidst a crowded, UK-wide pre-session. We coordinated advocacy efforts with our sister organisations across England, Wales and Northern Ireland, drafting joint reports highlighting where issues were shared and where certain issues were specific to Scotland and accordingly required special attention.

Together's efforts helped ensure that very many of the issues raised by children, young people and our members were reflected by the UN Committee in its Concluding Observations. These recommendations effectively set out "Scotland's to do list" of essential next steps to progress children's human rights.



Supporting child rights practice

What have we done?

Universal Periodic Review

Together successfully led UK-wide advocacy to ensure children's rights were at the heart of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). The UPR is a process that allows countries to review each others' human rights records and make recommendations for change. It considers all human rights issues – so can sometimes overlook more specific issues affecting children. Together led on the production of joint briefings from civil society alliances across the four nations. These covered a broad range of issues from child poverty, to immigration to children's participation in decision-making. We successfully lobbied UN diplomats by email, phone and online meetings to raise awareness of our concerns. The result was the most child rights-focused UPR recommendations that Together has ever witnessed. In combination with the UN Committee's Concluding Observations, we now have a very strong roadmap for what needs to change in Scotland.

Skills & Knowledge Framework

In autumn 2022, Together started work on an exciting new project commissioned by Scottish Government to explore in depth the skills and knowledge required for different duty bearers to fully implement children's rights in Scotland. The project is led in partnership with JustRight Scotland, JRS KnowHow, Children's Parliament and the Observatory on Human Rights of Children in Wales. Together brought together a Professional Panel, made up of 23 people from a variety of backgrounds, lived experiences and areas of Scotland to play a crucial role in shaping the framework through a collaborative process. The project offers an exciting opportunity to hear from the Scottish workforce, about the opportunities and challenges they see for the implementation of the UNCRC Incorporation Bill, and what they need to help them and their partners to fully realise children's rights. The Professional Panel worked alongside a Children and Families Panel supported by Children's Parliament, to gain from their knowledge and lived experiences.



Supporting child rights practice

Observatory of Children's Human Rights Scotland

Together continued its work as a founding member of the Observatory - a collaborative of Scottish organisations working to drive implementation of children's human rights in Scotland. The Observatory brings together Together members, the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland, Children's Parliament and academic partners from the universities of Edinburgh and Strathclyde to strategically advance opportunities for fully realising children's human rights in practice, policy and legislation.

Further work

The above is just a small sample of our work to progress a children's rights based approach across Scotland in 2022-23. Some other highlights include:

- Advocating for full implementation of children's human rights through membership of various government advisory groups - including the UNCRC Strategic Implementation Board and the UNCRC Embedding in Public Services Group.
- Delivering events, workshops and presentations on child rights practice in different settings - e.g. early years, justice settings.
- Reaching new audiences through increased engagement with our website, social media and e-newsletter - effective ways of communicating our key calls, news, consultation responses and events.



Click the links below!

[TwitterX](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Instagram](#)

[LinkedIn](#)

Supporting child rights practice

What have our members said?

“As a member of Together, we feel connected to other organisations passionate about children’s rights. We really value the accessible briefings that Together create, and we trust the team to act in the best interests of children nationally and internationally. Together have so much knowledge that they generously share with members and that is a great support to us.”

(Befriending Networks, Membership Spotlight)

“[Our] organisation is really pleased to be a part of the Together network and think about ways in which the young people they engage with can greater influence policy changes.”

(The Sound Lab, Membership Spotlight)

“Working on policy knowing we are drawing on collective expertise from Together and other members has been incredibly useful. Together always puts a lot of work into creating opportunities for members to connect and engage directly with decision makers and experts.”

(Membership Survey 2023)



Supporting children to influence their world

Children and young people experience a culture change in which they are listened to, respected and are able to influence the world around them.



What have children said?

Children and young people in #TeamScotlandUN shared their views on taking their priority issues direct to the UN in February 2023:

“I’m so privileged to be representing the voices of Scotland’s children and young people at the UN, but it is our right to be at the heart of discussions about own experiences.”

(Daisy Stewart Henderson MSYP)

“It’s harder to ignore what children are saying when we are face to face with the UN, I hope the issues we speak about will be addressed back in Scotland.”

(Omima MCP)

Members of Rights Right Now! Published their final report in June 2022, reflecting on some of their experiences interacting with Scottish Government decision makers. Many of their experiences were positive:

“Everyone was supportive - everyone listened - no one talked over anyone, and we all got opinions heard. You didn't feel guilty because you didn't forget what you wanted to say because no one jumped in.”

“In the middle of the big meetings, we went into little breakout rooms, so it is easier to say how we feel.”

“All the adults were really nice and welcoming. They were really conscious they didn't want to be intimidating and were really good.”

In other areas, they shared suggestions for what could have been better. Together is working to ensure these suggestions are embedded in subsequent projects, such as the Rights Detectives:

“Feel like we could have gotten to know each other better first before diving into doing stuff.”

“People being apathetic, not actioning our ideas when we have put a lot of effort into things.”*

(*RRN! member during discussion on barriers to achieving the goals of the project. Young people want to know how their views had informed and influenced decision makers through a clear feedback loop).

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2022-23

Supporting children to influence their world



To achieve this, we will:

- Consistently explore, embed and develop opportunities to ensure that children and young people's views, experiences and concerns are listened to and acted on at all levels. Achieve this through partnerships with our members and all levels of government.

Supporting children

What did we do?

#TeamScotlandUN

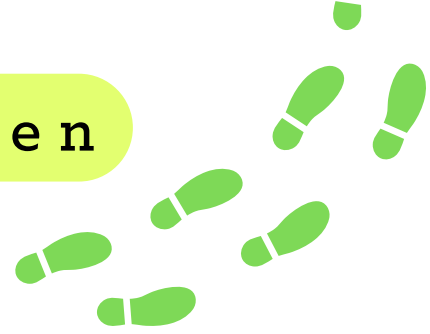
Together had the privilege of coordinating #TeamScotlandUN – a group of children, young people and adult human rights defenders who travelled to Geneva to give evidence directly to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. The group included Beau Johnston MSYP and Daisy Stewart Henderson MSYP (Members of Scottish Youth Parliament); Arden MCP and Omima MCP (Members of Children’s Parliament).

Together supported the MCPs and MSYPs to create their own report for the UN Committee, drawing on evidence gathered from a wide range of their peers across Scotland. We worked closely with our partners - Children’s Parliament, Scottish Youth Parliament and CYPCS - to support the group to prepare and build their confidence ahead of travelling to Geneva. This included organising a mock session whereby MCPs and MSYPs played the role of UN Committee members and posed questions to the Scottish Government officials who would be attending the review. This was an opportunity not only to become familiar with the pre-session format and get to know who would be in the, but also to provide feedback to Scottish Government on ways in which their answers could be strengthened.

In addition to coordinating #TeamScotlandUN, Together also coordinated the children’s meeting whereby over 30 children from across the UK had the chance to share their views directly with the UN Committee. This involved mapping priority issues across the various delegations, highlighting shared themes, preparing children for what to expect in the meeting, supporting them to plan the agenda and acting as the single point of contact for their supporting organisations.



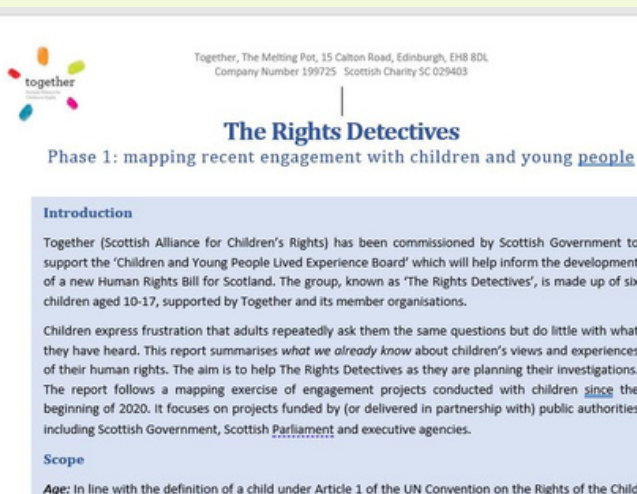
Supporting children



The Rights Detectives

From July 2022, Together has supported The Rights Detectives – a group of children aged 11-17 from across Scotland who are helping to shape a new Human Rights Bill. The project has allowed Together to test a model of participation that builds upon learning from the Rights Right Now! project (2021-22) and move towards an approach that is directed and led by children and young people themselves.

At the beginning of the project, Together responded to children's frustration that adults repeatedly ask them the same questions but do little with what they have heard. Together conducted a mapping exercise to summarise what we already know about children's views and experiences of their human rights. It aims to show that adults should first ascertain what children have already said about a subject, using this to provide context and identify gaps to be prioritised in future engagement.



Supporting children

Throughout 2022-23, The Rights Detectives received special missions from Scottish Government that required them to conduct peer research with other children and young people to help make sure what matters to children is put into the new law. They used a range of creative methods and tools in their 'Detective Packs' to support their investigations. For example, the Detective Packs included invisible ink pens that children were encouraged to use to write down people who might find it difficult to access their rights and who might not always be 'seen' by decision makers. They then shone UV lights on them to reveal what they had written down - they felt that the new Human Rights Bill would need to ensure these people had their rights, including: babies, children in poverty, disabled children and children from another country. In March 2023, the Rights Detectives published their first mission update, which detailed the findings of conversations with over 80 children and young people across Scotland. Together is currently exploring how the Rights Detectives model could be adapted to support younger children to explore their rights and share their views.



Supporting children

Further Work

The above is just a small sample of our work to progress children's participation rights in 2022-23. Some other highlights include:

- Rights Right Now! - Together published the final reports from this project in June 2022. The project piloted a model for children's engagement in governance at national level. The final report and child friendly version included a series of recommendations for Scottish Government and its UNCRC implementation programme.
- Child-friendly resources: Together heightened its efforts to publish information in accessible and child-friendly formats. We upheld our commitment to produce child-friendly versions of key reports, such as our State of Children's Rights Reports and project reports, and to seek children's views on key issues as well as those of our members. Outputs included child-friendly versions of the Rights Right Now! Report, Rights Detective Mission Updates and briefings on human rights developments across Scotland and the UK.
- Participation in the Scottish Parliament - Together responded to Scottish Parliament's inquiry on community engagement to emphasise its responsibility to uphold the participation rights of children and young people.

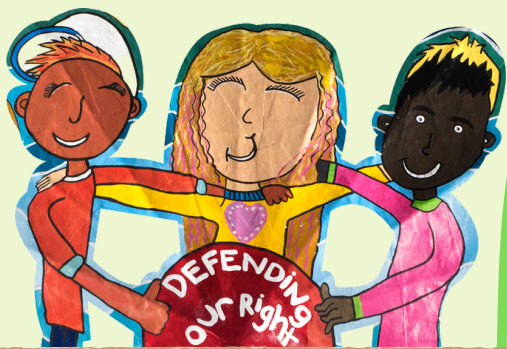


Supporting children

What have our members said?

“We value being a member and being up-dated on UNCRC and other campaigns that we would otherwise be unaware of.”

(Membership Survey 2023)



“We really appreciate the work that you do! It’s brilliant to be part of an organisation that is so committed to advancing the rights of children which, in turn, empowers us to be able to talk about, promote and celebrate this. EYS also really welcomes Together’s commitment to ensuring that the voices of our youngest children are heard, something which is integral to the work that we do as an organisation.’

(Early Years Scotland, Membership Spotlight)

“We value joining in campaigns to support children's rights and the opportunity to contribute to the State of Children's Rights reports. Being part of a learning and campaigning community in support of children's rights is extremely valuable.”

(Membership Survey 2023)

“Thank you very much to everyone at Together for all their work on the webinars and for continuing to give members meaningful opportunities to feed into the great work you do!”

(Membership Feedback Email 2022)

Where Scotland meets the world



Scotland is recognised internationally and within the UK as a pioneer
and an innovator in taking forward children and young people's human rights.

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2022-23

Where Scotland meets the world



To achieve this, we will:

- Bring learning from the international community to inform and develop work in Scotland to further children and young people's human rights.
- Promote and share good practice from Scotland with partners in the international community.
- Create and promote opportunities for our members to learn from - and bring learning to - the international human rights community.

What have children said?

Children are clear that their rights are universal – every single child in the world has human rights. As such, countries should work together and learn from one another in order to respect, protect and fulfil children’s rights to the fullest extent.

At the same time, children want Scotland to lead the way and set a good example for other countries to follow:

“You’d feel proud to be Scottish”

(a Rights Detective, reflecting that a new Human Rights Bill could help Scotland become a world leader in human rights).



“maybe we should remember that not every country has these rights and we should not forget we have to work for theirs too.”

These quotes have come from The Rights Detectives. [Read their first mission update here.](#)

Where Scotland meets the world

What did we do?

UK-wide networks

Together played a leading role in coordinating organisations across the UK in both the UNCRC reporting process and the Universal Periodic Review. In coordinating the children's meeting at the UNCRC pre-session, Together was keen to share learning from the Rights Right Now! and Rights Detectives! projects with partners to help inform the preparation for and format of the session itself. Together also ensured that children had the chance to evaluate and feedback on their experiences, so that our future approaches – and that of the UN Committee – could be strengthened over time.

International networks

Together continued to play an active role in international networks, including Eurochild and Child Rights Connect. Participating in these organisation's AGMs, workshops and events enabled Together to learn from international partner organisations and bring examples of good practice from Scotland. For example, connections made at a Eurochild event led to conversations about how other charities had campaigned for an end to child marriage – inspiring preparatory work for a similar campaign in Scotland.

What have our members said?

“It is really good to be a part of a bigger movement. I feel we can achieve more this way. I value all the work put into the campaigns and sharing information, the expertise and the consideration given to children's rights.” (Membership Survey 2023)



Continuing to thrive & grow

*Our impact and reach continues to grow
and we develop as a sustainably, funded independent organisation.*



What have children said?

Together is working to ensure that feedback from children and young people guides our growth and development. We are also keen to ensure that children have greater influence in shaping our strategic direction. The Rights Right Now! and The Rights Detectives projects have identified areas where Together is doing well, areas for improvement and broader things that should be borne in mind as Together develops its next strategic plan.

“Do you know where your opinions are going next? ‘no it would be good to know’”
(RRN! member evaluation)

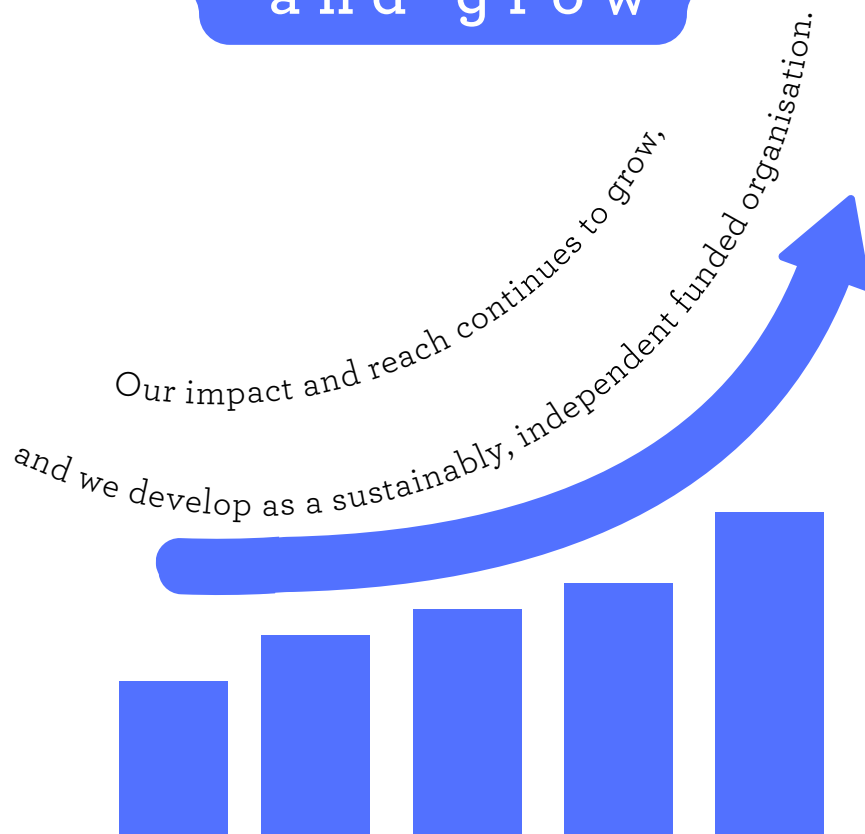
“there is a lot that I would change...Development wise it did not work like it should have been”.

“speaking to decision makers who are nice and not in grilling mode”

“We need kinder people because people make up the environment as well, even the language they use.”

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2022-23

Continuing to thrive and grow



To achieve this, we will:

- Ensure operational compliance and good governance in all we do.
- Develop and implement a funding strategy that promotes a diversity of income sources, including support from government, charitable trusts and membership.
- Develop a diverse and talented team of staff, volunteers, interns and trustees to ensure there is a strong foundation from which we can progress our mission.
- Assess and measure our impact to ensure we learn from successes and challenges and develop our approaches and strategies.

Continuing to thrive and grow

What did we do?

Impact and reach

Together continued to promote membership at every opportunity. At the end of March 2023, Together had 511 members, including NGOs and professionals working with and for children and young people. This is almost a 10% increase on the previous year. The high number of new members reflects the development of a dedicated membership team within the organisation, and work through our events, briefings, e-newsletter and social media to try to engage wider stakeholders whose work impacts on children and young people.

Together conducts an annual membership survey to monitor our impact, learn from our membership and develop our approaches and strategies. The 2022-23 survey showed high levels of satisfaction and offered ideas on how the membership offer could be further improved. As a result, we reformed our membership fee structure to better reflect the different sizes and funding situations of our membership. We also ensure that attendees at all Together events are asked to complete an evaluation form to understand what worked well and how future events could be improved.



Continuing to thrive and grow

Board of Trustees

Together's Board of Trustees oversees Together's work to ensure we meet Companies House and OSCR requirements. Throughout the year, staff and the Together Board continued to draft, implement and improve organisational policies and procedures to ensure best practice in the day-to-day and overall governance of the charity are followed.

Three new trustees were elected at the 2022 AGM: Oonagh Brown, Paul Sullivan and Mairi McReynolds. Mary Glasgow was re-elected as Chair, Susan Hunter as Vice-Chair and Mairi McReynolds as Treasurer. The Board brings a range of skills and expertise, offering valuable strategic oversight to the organisation.

Board meetings are held once a quarter, and subgroups have been established to help focus expertise on certain issues. The Finance subgroup led by the Treasurer met regularly to oversee the production of the monthly management accounts and propose budgetary and spending decisions to the Board of Trustees. An Executive subgroup of office-bearers met regularly to streamline Board decision-making. In 2023, the Board actioned the decision of the membership to change Together's legal status to a SCIO.

Almost 40% of respondents to our 2023 Membership Survey said they would consider or possibly consider running to become a Trustee on Together's Board. This is a slight decrease from the year before. We received feedback on how we could improve information about these roles and advertising. We are actioning these suggestions as we approach our 2023 AGM.

Continuing to thrive and grow

Lobbying Register

Together has ensured that all regulated lobbying activities are registered in the appropriate manner and that new staff understand the procedures before attending events where they may become involved in such activities.

Staff team changes

There have been several changes to the Together staff team between April 2022 and March 2023:

- In April 2022, Jane Miller left her part-time position as Rights and Participation Lead due to the conclusion of the Rights Right Now! project;
- From April until August 2022, Mary Olaleye joined as a Membership Intern in a role funded directly by the John Smith Centre's Emerging Leaders Programme.
- In May 2022, Isla Kitching left her part-time position as Membership Outreach Officer;
- In June 2022, Judi Martin joined as a part-time Policy and Communications Intern;
- In July 2022, Naomi Sutton left her full-time role as Policy Officer. This position was thereafter left vacant due to lack of funds to re-recruit;
- In August 2022, Caitlin Forrest joined as a part-time Membership and Events Assistant;
- In October 2022, Mary Campbell joined as a full-time Project Officer on the Skills & Knowledge Framework;

Continuing to thrive and grow

Over summer 2022, Together also benefitted from the work of Judi Martin as a placement student as part of her LLM in Human Rights at the University of Edinburgh. In early 2023, Together secured a new placement agreement with the University of Stirling, due to commence in September 2023.

Together continued to benefit from the services of Jacqui Dunbar, Participation Consultant, which was made possible by funding from Scottish Government for #TeamScotlandUN and later the Rights Detectives project.

Together continued to benefit from the contribution of Ian Douglas, voluntary accountant.



Continuing to thrive and grow

Training and development

Staff training and development needs have been supported through the following courses:

- NSPCC child protection training;
- Cyber resilience training;
- SCVO communications and marketing training;
- Follow-up anti-racism training.



Continuing to thrive and grow

What have our members said?

88.89 percent of respondents to our 2023 Membership Survey felt that Together definitely engages with its members. These engagement activities take place via various channels such as seminars, evidence gathering and partnership work. Some comments included:

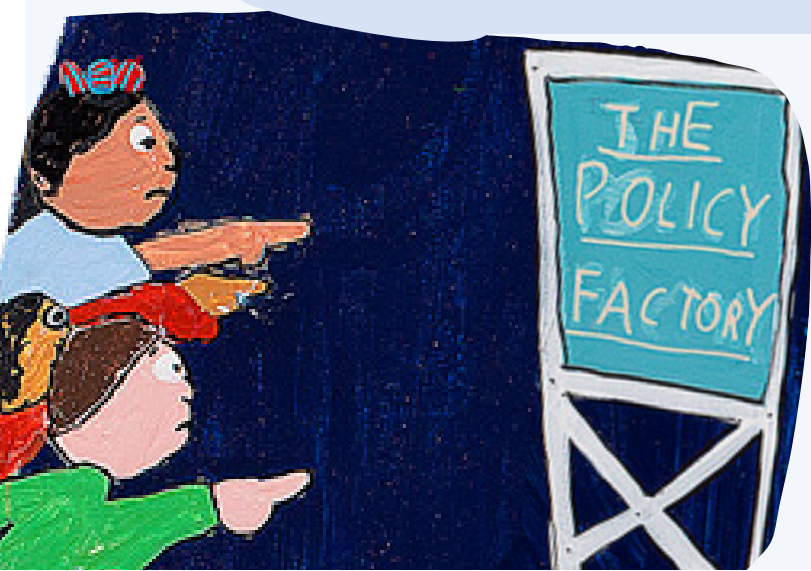
“We love being connected to other rights focused organisations and working together towards to be more inclusive, children’s rights-respecting, equal society we all want. Together members know we all need what children need!” (Lickety Spit, Membership Spotlight)

“It’s great to be part of a group of like-minded organisations that share our values.”

(Young Scot, Membership Spotlight)

“[T]he most enjoyable feature about being a Together (SACR) member is the genuine feeling that we are part of something special. We are among a natural and growing movement to bring about positive cultural, legal, and political change to get the best for young people. This feeling is palpable from the organisations’ communications, briefings, events and individual meetings with Together (SACR) staff and volunteer members.”

(YouthLink Scotland, Membership Spotlight)



Structure, governance & management



STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT



Legal structure

Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights) is a company limited by guarantee governed by its Memorandum and Articles (dated 17th August 1999, and last revised 23rd September 2013). It is registered as a charity with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator. In 2022, a resolution was passed to convert Together's status to a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO). Together became a SCIO on 23rd May 2023.



Appointment of trustees

The Trustees are elected or re-elected by the members at the Annual General Meeting. The number of Trustees shall not exceed 10 persons. All Trustees are appointed for an initial 3-year term after which they can be re-elected for a further 3 years. The Trustees hold regular board meetings and monitor the financial situation of the Charity closely. None of the Trustees receive remuneration or other benefit from their work with the Charity.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT



Reserves policy

To avoid closure if funding difficulties were to happen the Board has agreed to maintain unrestricted reserves at a level of at least three months essential operating costs, which would allow staff to continue working, primarily to secure new funding or to be able to safely manage exit costs. The Board can decide to increase this amount as needed, for example to ensure financial stability in times of uncertainty such as the COVID-19 pandemic.



STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT



Risk management

A comprehensive Risk Register has been created and forms a standing item for the Board of Trustees.

Internal risks are minimised by the implementation of policies and procedures for authorisation of all transactions and projects and to ensure consistent quality of delivery for all operational aspects of Together's work. These policies and procedures are periodically reviewed to ensure that they still meet Together's needs. The key risks identified and associated mitigating actions are:



Funding and fundraising:

To ensure Together is able to fund its core objectives and work programmes, the Trustees keep funding under review with quarterly updates and scenario planning. Trustees conduct a regular review of the reserves policy. The Director maintains ongoing contact with existing and potential funders.

To ensure adequate financial controls, budgeting and scenario planning, funding strategy, reserves policy and financial reporting, the Trustees scrutinise income/expenditure against budget on a quarterly basis with ongoing oversight by the Finance Subgroup. The Treasurer works with the Finance Subgroup to apply financial controls and ensure an annual independent financial examination.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT



Good governance structures and boards:

Trustees are attentive to relevant communications and scrutinise all Board papers. Board meetings are held quarterly with accurate information provided by Together's Director to inform quality decision making. The Executive and Finance Subgroups meet 3 monthly at a minimum with at least one Trustee Office Holder (Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer) in attendance at every meeting. Trustees tasked with supporting the development of policies and procedures in relation to governance, finance and human resources and monitors risk on an ongoing basis. A part-time Business Support Officer supports the Trustees and Director with governance needs.



Staff retention and recruitment:

Trustees take a range of actions to promote the retention of key staff. In 2022-23, Together engaged the services of a Human Resources Policy Consultancy to ensure employment practices meet or exceed statutory requirements. Within the staff team, there are regular check-ins and 1-1s between staff and Director with relevant issues explored. The Trustees conduct a three-monthly Staff Wellbeing Survey to identify any pressing concerns or issues. Pay, remuneration and pension policy is reviewed by Trustees annually and the remuneration package is deemed competitive. Every step is taken to ensure that training and support meets the needs of the role.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

Responsibilities of the Trustees

The Charity Trustees (who are Directors of the Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing a trustees' Annual Report and Financial Statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice). Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial period that give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company at the balance sheet date and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including income and expenditure, for the financial period. In preparing those financial statements, the Trustees should follow best practice and:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the Financial Statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to assume that the company will continue on that basis.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and the group and hence taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities. The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

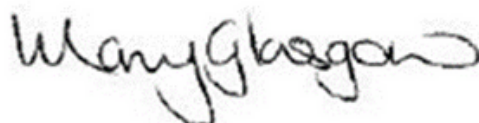


Statement as to disclosure to our Independent Examiner

In so far as the trustees are aware at the time of approving our trustees' annual report:

- there is no relevant information, being information needed by the Independent Examiner in connection with preparing their report, of which the Independent Examiner is unaware; and
- the trustees, having made enquiries of fellow directors and the Independent Examiner that they ought to have individually taken, have each taken all steps that he/she is obliged to take as a director in order to make themselves aware of any relevant information and to establish that the Independent Examiner is aware of that information.

By order of the board of trustees



September 2023

Mary Glasgow
Chairperson

Financial reports & accounts



INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT & FINANCES

Basis of Independent Examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general directions given by the Charity Commission and is in accordance with Regulation 11 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006 and section 44(1)(a) of the 2005 Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records, comply with the accounting requirements of the Companies Act 2006, section 44(1)(b) of the 2005 Act and Regulation 8 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations; and
 - which are consistent with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charitieshave not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Philip Duncan

5 James Bell Wynd,
Monifieth
Dundee DD5 4NE

**Charity Statement of Financial Activities (including income and expenditure account)
for year ending 31 March 2023**

	Note	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2023	Total Funds 2022
Income:					
Donation	14	13,820	277,077	290,897	288,177
Investments	13	55	0	55	0
Other income		0	0	0	0
Total income:		13,875	277,077	290,952	288,177
Expenditure:					
Charitable activities	15,17,18	11,770	277,077	288,847	288,649
Governance Costs	16	0	0	0	0
Total expenditure:		11,770	277,077	288,847	288,649
Net income/(expenditure) and net movement in funds for the year		2,104	0	2,104	(472)
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		71,832	0	71,832	72,304
Total funds carried forward		73,936	0	73,936	71,832

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2023

	Note	2023	2022
Fixed Assets			
Tangible fixed assets		0	0
		0	0
Current Assets			
Debtors	20	19,563	0
Cash at bank and in hand		72,107	83,239
		91,670	83,239
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	21	17,734	11,407
Net Current Assets		73,936	71,832
Total Net Assets		73,936	71,832
Funds			
Restricted funds		9,850	0
Unrestricted funds		64,086	71,832
Total Funds		73,936	71,832

NOTES ON ACCOUNTS

1 Accounting Policies

The principal accounting policies adopted, judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty in the preparation of the financial statements are as follows:

2 Basis of preparation

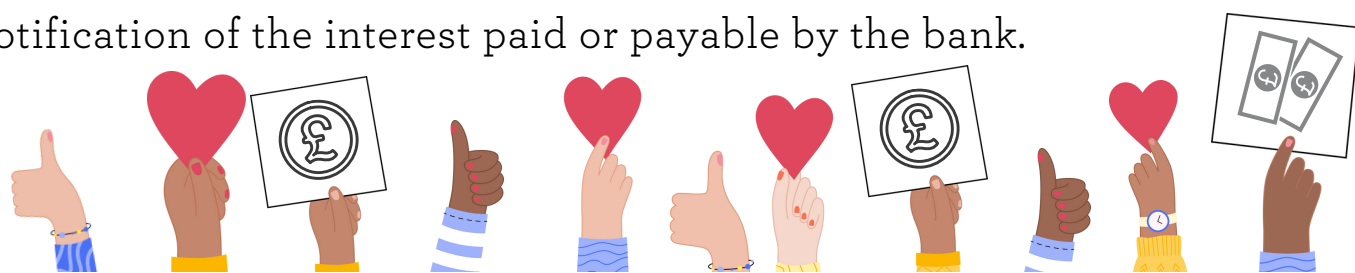
The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities published on 16th July 2014, the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective January 2015) and the Companies Act 2006. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s).

3 Preparation of the accounts on an ongoing concern basis

The Trustees have prepared these financial statements on the assessment that Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights) is an ongoing concern. There are no material uncertainties of which the trustees are aware that ought to be disclosed in relation to this assessment.

4 Interest receivable

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.



NOTES ON ACCOUNTS

5 Fund Accounting

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any of the purposes of the charity. Restricted funds are donations which the donor has specified are to be solely used for particular areas of Together's (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights) work.

6 Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party. It is probable that settlement will be required, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified under the following activity headings:

Costs of raising funds comprise the costs of staff time involved in applying for grants from statutory and trust funding sources, as well as meeting the monitoring and reporting requirements in relation to funds secured.

- Expenditure on charitable activities includes the costs of all activities undertaken by Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights) which promote the UN Convention on the Rights of Child and monitor its implementation across Scotland, including policy, membership and events and their associated support costs.
- Other expenditure represents those items not falling into any other heading.
- Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

NOTES ON ACCOUNTS

7 Support costs

Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Support costs include some finance, personnel (including volunteers) and payroll costs which support Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights) overall activities. Support costs have been detailed in note 15.

8 Debtors

Debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any discount offered.

9 Cash in bank and in hand

Cash at bank and in hand includes petty cash and the cash balance of Together's deposit bank account.

10 Creditors

Creditors are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will result in a transfer of funds to a third party, and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors are normally recognised at their settlement amount allowing for any discounts due.



NOTES ON ACCOUNTS

11 Pensions

Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights) had a staging date of 1st February 2017 to meet the automatic enrolment requirements of the Pensions Act 2008. The Finance Subgroup, with agreement of the Board of Trustees, has opted to use NEST (National Employment Savings Trust) as its automatic enrolment pension provider. A defined contribution scheme with NEST has been in place from 1st February 2017 and is open to all staff. The NEST pension scheme operates in line with Government legislation and employer contributions will match at least the minimum levels stipulated by the Government. During the employee's term of employment, Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights) will contribute 6% of basic salary each month to the NEST pension or other qualifying pension scheme that the employee may have.

12 Legal status of charity

Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights) is a company limited by guarantee and has no share capital. The liability of each member in the event of winding-up is limited to £1.

13 Investment income



Other Income	2022-23	2021-22	
Bank Interest	55	0	Income from treasurers bank account

NOTES ON ACCOUNTS

14 Income from donations

The income from donations was £290,897 (2021-22: £288,177). Of this, £13,820 was unrestricted (2021-22: £12,699). Together is particularly grateful for the ongoing support of the Scottish Government's Rights & Wellbeing Team and the Children & Young People's Early Intervention Fund which provides core funding for its activities.

Donations	2022-23	2021-22	
Membership donations	12,970	12,699	Unrestricted income
Scottish Government (Core)	137,000	137,00	Core funding from the Rights & Wellbeing Team
Children & Young People's Early Intervention Fund	50,925	48,500	Project funding for the Policy & Communications Officer and the Business Support Officer posts
Scottish Government (Consortium)	0	78,689	Project funding for the Children & Young People's Interim Consortium (pilot)
Scottish Government (Human Rights Detectives)	46,804	0	Project funding for Children and Young People's Lived Experience Board
Scottish Government (Skills and Knowledge Framework)	30,068	0	Project funding for the development of a Children's Rights Skills and Knowledge Framework to support the UNCRC implementation programme
Children's Parliament	0	4,704	Project funding to support Children's Parliament's Education Reform consultation with children and young people for Scottish Government
Scottish Commission for Learning Disability	500	0	Training session
University of Edinburgh	350	5,485	Project funding to support Observatory on Children's Human Rights UNCRC Theory of Change project.
Parenting Across Scotland	0	1,100	Consultancy for research briefings on the UNCRC and parentings
EHRiC	2,958	450	Project funding for UNCRC pre-session reporting in Geneva
Children and Young People Commissioner Scotland	9,322	0	Project funding for UNCRC pre-session reporting in Geneva
	290,897	288,177	

Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights) benefits enormously from the ongoing commitment and enthusiastic support of its many Trustees and our dedicated Finance Volunteer who has supported our work for many years. More detail of their work is given in our annual report. In accordance with accounting standards, the economic contribution of these volunteers is not measured in the accounts.

NOTES ON ACCOUNTS

15 Analysis of expenditure on charitable activities

Expenditure on charitable activities was £288,847 (2021-22: £288,649). Of this, £10,920 was unrestricted (2021-22: £13,171) and £277,927 was restricted (2021-22: £275,478).

Expenditure	2022-23	2021-22	
Marketing & promotions	2,046	2,805	Includes website and printing of reports
Office costs	4,122	4,468	Includes rent, registered address, telephone, stationery, postage, and IT equipment and furniture for all staff
Professional fees	1,441	554	Includes insurance
Travel	12,380	1,674	Includes all staff travel and subsistence
Events	6,341	20,124	2022-23 includes speaker fees, venues and refreshments for project related events, including remuneration of children and partners 2021-2022 includes speaker fees and Consortium related expenses including remuneration of children and partners
Staff costs & consultancy	249,681	243,521	Includes salaries, employer's NI and pension, and working from home allowance, and consultancy charges
Support costs	12,836	15,503	Includes IT subscriptions, HR support service, payroll, recruitment, training, bank charges, subscriptions and volunteer expenses
	288,847	288,649	

NOTES ON ACCOUNTS

16 Analysis of expenditure on governance

Expenditure on governance costs was £nil (2021-22: £nil). Of this, £nil was unrestricted (2021-22: £nil) and £nil was restricted (2021-22: £nil).

Expenditure	2022-23	2021-22	
Trustee travel expenses	0	0	Travel to trustee and subgroup meetings
	0	0	

No remuneration was paid to Trustees during the year. Throughout the year, online conferencing has kept Trustee expenses to a minimum.

17 Analysis of expenditure on staff

Expenditure on staffing was £249,681 (2021-22: £243,521). Of this, £nil was unrestricted (2021-22: £nil) and £249,681 was restricted (2021-22: £243,521).

This comprised of the following costs:

	2022-23	2021-22
Salaries	225,090	221,211
Employer National Insurance	13,743	12,487
Pension	10,848	9,823
Includes consultancy and WFH allowance	249,681	243,521

No employees had emoluments in excess of £60,000 (2021-22: nil).

NOTES ON ACCOUNTS

18 Staff numbers

The average monthly number of full-time equivalent employees (including paid interns) during the year was 5.9 (2021-22: 6.7).

19 Corporation taxation

Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights) is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or section 252 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objectives.

20 Debtors

Debtor	2022-23	2021-22
Scottish Government (Skills and Knowledge Framework Prepayments)	15,183	0
	4,380	0
	19,563	0

21 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

Creditor	2022-23	2021-22
Accruals	0	5,909
PAYE	5,013	4,519
Mastercard	43	1,106
Accruals (Aviva)	-2,567	-2,591
Scottish Government (UNRC Reporting)	9,850	0
NEST pension	1,147	763
Trade Creditors	4,248	1,701
	17,734	11,407



THANK YOU!

A huge thank you to all the members, supporters and individuals who have supported Together throughout this period to achieve so much.

Thank you to the pupils of Sciennes Primary School, Edinburgh and Children's Parliament for creating the artwork found within this report.