



**RIGHTS  
DETECTIVES**



# General Comment 27 on Children's Rights to Access to Justice and Effective Remedies

## What is General Comment 27?

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child is working on something called General Comment 27, which is about making sure babies, children and young people can access justice and get effective remedies when their rights aren't respected. Justice means being able to make things right when someone has done something wrong, and a remedy is the way to fix it. This might include things like getting an apology, compensation, or ensuring that what happened doesn't happen again.



**CHILD-FRIENDLY  
VERSION**

of our submission  
from  
**Together (Scottish  
Alliance for  
Children's Rights)**

## Why is this important?

The Committee knows that many babies, children and young people don't get the chance to access justice when their rights aren't respected. This is often because children might not know their rights, feel unsure about how to speak up, or face barriers like complicated legal processes that are not child-friendly. General Comment 27 is being created to help countries around the world make their justice systems easier for babies, children and young people to use and to make sure they can claim their rights when they need to.

## How did Together decide what to say?

Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights) responded to the Committee's call for feedback to help shape General Comment 27. Our response includes the thoughts and experiences shared by children and young people from our Rights Detectives, aged 11-17, and members of Together, including organisations working on children's rights across Scotland. The feedback from all the organisations and children and young people will help the Committee write the General Comment and guide governments on how to improve access to justice for children.

## What will General Comment 27 do?

The General Comment will help governments make justice systems fairer and easier for babies, children and young people to use. It will focus on:

- Making sure children and young people know their rights.
- Creating child-friendly processes that babies, children and young people can understand and use.
- Ensuring babies, children and young people have supportive adults to help them.
- Offering babies, children and young people remedies, such as apologies or compensation, when their rights aren't respected.



# What have children said?

Children and young people who have worked with Together and our members have had a lot to say about accessing justice. They talk about the barriers they face and what they think needs to change. Here are some of the things they say:

## Being afraid to speak up:

- Children might be afraid to speak up.
- “...I was made to feel like I was in the wrong for making a complaint. I’m sorry but this is my life—those decisions you make directly affect my life. I have to deal with the consequences where they can switch off at night.”

## Understanding rights:

- “If children can’t understand, then explain in a way that they can process it.”
- “Language is important. Use everyday language, use pictures, graphics, etc., and keep things clear and simple. It needs to be accessible without diluting the content.”
- “If a child can’t speak English, they won’t be able to speak up about their worry or complaint.”

## Needing help and support:

- “Who can you report to if your rights are being breached? Whether it’s through school or anonymous online or something like that.”
- “Having an advocate there makes you ten times louder.”
- “They can look after you and support you in ways that you need. They can protect you.”
- “Give you a hug.”

## The importance of quick action:

- “I think the process needs to be easier to challenge. Waiting for a response for an email for 3 weeks is still quite long.”

## The value of an apology:

- “It felt good to know he understood and obviously apologising. So not only did he apologise, he acknowledged what he did was wrong and understood the consequences. It was good to hear him apologise and to understand he knew just how bad it was.”

These quotes show how children and young people feel about their experiences when trying to access justice and highlight the changes they want to see to make the process easier and more supportive for them.

## What did Together say?

Children and young people from the Rights Detectives told us they often feel powerless when trying to get justice because of confusing processes or a lack of support. Some are scared of being seen as troublemakers, while others feel the process takes too long or isn't designed for children. Many children and young people said they would feel better if there were clearer information about their rights and what to do when something goes wrong.

Children and young people also spoke about the importance of having adults they trust, like teachers, parents, or independent advocates, to help them understand their rights and get justice. For example, care-experienced children talked about how advocacy workers help them understand their rights and feel more confident when speaking up.

Our response also highlighted the need for child-friendly complaint systems that are quick and easy to use. Children and young people told us they sometimes don't want to go through formal legal processes and would prefer things to be solved more informally, but quickly. However, if informal processes don't work, they want formal procedures to be available and easy to understand.



# What did Together say?

Together said babies, children and young people face many challenges in accessing justice, including:

- Not knowing their rights or how to speak up.
- Adults not understanding or listening to children's concerns.
- A lack of supportive adults or independent advocacy.
- Formal processes that are too slow or complicated.

Together's response urged the Committee to make sure that babies, children and young people's views are at the heart of the new General Comment, and that justice systems are made more accessible and child-friendly.

In summary, General Comment 27 is about making sure babies, children and young people have fair and easy ways to get justice when their rights aren't respected. Together's consultation response focuses on making sure this system is built in a way that works for children, based on their real-life experiences.



For more information, please contact Maria Doyle, Legal & Policy Manager  
**Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights)**

Email: [maria@togetherscotland.org.uk](mailto:maria@togetherscotland.org.uk)

Web: [www.togetherscotland.org.uk](http://www.togetherscotland.org.uk), X: [@together\\_sacr](https://twitter.com/together_sacr)

The Melting Pot, 15 Calton Road, Edinburgh, EH8 8DL