

## **Using Child Rights Impact Evaluations (CRIA) and Child Rights Impact Evaluations (CRIE)**

### **Video transcript**

I'm Juliet Harris, Director of Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights).

I'm here to talk to you about Child Rights Impact Assessments (often also called Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessments in Scotland) and Child Rights Impact Evaluations.

Before we start, it might be useful to reflect on some of the terms I'll use throughout this presentation.

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (known as the UN Committee). This is an independent expert body that monitors how well countries, including Scotland, fulfil their obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (the UNCRC).

The General Principles are four articles of the UNCRC which are crucial to understanding how to implement a children's human rights approach. They provide the means by which the other articles of the UNCRC are interpreted and in line with the indivisibility principle of human rights, each of the general principles must be considered alongside each article. They are: Article 2: non-discrimination; Article 3: best interests of the child; Article 6: life, survival and development; and Article 12: respect for the views of the child.

You'll hear me use these terms throughout this presentation.

Child Rights Impact Assessments and Evaluations are tools to help us consider how a decision – whether that's big or small – might impact or has impacted on children and young people's rights. They can vary widely in scope, from in-depth assessments for major strategic decisions and new laws to simpler, reflective evaluations for everyday activities. Regardless of the scale, the aim remains consistent: to embed a children's human rights approach and put the rights of children and young people at the forefront of decision-making.

Consider a strategic decision like revising local transport policies. An Impact Assessment for this would examine the impact of a change of policy on critical factors such as children's safety on the streets and on their access to education and after-school activities. A smaller-scale decision, such as changing a library's opening hours, would also need careful consideration

from a children's rights perspective. An Impact Assessment would need to explore how these changes affect children's access to educational resources, particularly for those whose rights are at risk, such as children living in poverty who may struggle to access IT, the internet or the books that they need at home.

Effective Child Rights Impact Assessments consider varied impacts that a decision can have on different groups of children. A Child's Rights Impact Assessment helps to identify which rights could be impacted by a decision, and whether the impact will be positive, negative or neutral. It requires decision makers to look at the evidence or data that is available, and to identify any changes that might mitigate the negative impacts, and maximise the positive impacts.

They also help to identify and address potential issues early enabling preventative changes to uphold children's rights. They therefore need to be conducted at the very beginning of planning about a new decision, new law, or policy, and then updated on an ongoing basis.

It's important that children and young people are involved in Child's Rights Impact Assessment design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Often children will identify issues that adults have missed. Involving children might mean commissioning engagement work. It's always important to look at what children have already said, as they say it's frustrating to keep getting asked the same questions by adults if they don't do anything with the information. Children will need to be provided with accessible information about the process to meaningfully participate.

There are many tools and resources available that can help you start your Child Rights Impact Assessment. We have shared some links to those resources in the description to this video.

While significant decisions require formal, structured assessments, don't underestimate the value of informal assessments for smaller decisions. Simply contemplating key questions related to the UNCRC's general principles, can help to make sure every decision we make has children's rights at its core. For example, how does this decision affect those children whose rights are at risk? Will it have a negative impact on some children but not others? Is it in their best interests? Who is deciding what children's best interests actually are? Importantly, have we asked children and young people about this decision? What did they say? Is this decision the best option for helping make sure all children are able to thrive? Engaging with questions like this, whether in formal assessments or as part of reflective

practice, helps to embed a children's human rights approach in every decision we make.

It's important to remember that Child Rights Impact Assessments must not be a one-off exercise and should always be followed by Child Rights Impact Evaluations. You do the Impact Assessment, and then you see whether it's had the results that you expected, you evaluate that, and then you move back around and through the cycle again.

Our Together members have some Top Tips on doing Child Rights Impact Assessments and Evaluations. They are:

- **Educate and train:** Ensure you and your colleagues understand what Child Rights Impact Assessments are and why they are important. This may involve specialised training in children's rights.
- **Data collection:** Gather comprehensive data, including disaggregated data and insights directly from children, to understand the impact of a decision on different groups.
- **Clearly articulate actionable recommendations** to help decision-makers implement necessary changes effectively.
- **Transparency and accessibility:** Publish your findings, including versions that are accessible to children, to maintain transparency.
- **Continuous learning:** Document and share your experiences and lessons learned to continuously improve the practice of conducting Impact Assessments.

If you find yourself worrying about when to start a Child Rights Impact Assessment, how to secure leadership buy-in, whether you possess the necessary skills, or how to effectively involve children and young people, you are not alone. We often hear worries and concerns like these – and they reflect the complexities of implementing a children's human rights approach.

Many people also worry about accessing relevant data, and whether they are being asked to complete an Impact Assessment that's purely to justify a decision that has already been made. The best way to overcome these challenges is to start where you are, use what you have, and learn as you go. Acknowledging these hurdles is part of the process.

No Child Rights Impact Assessment is perfect. Each iteration between an Impact Assessment and Impact Evaluation offers a chance to refine your approach, gradually securing the buy-in and understanding necessary to make these Assessments more impactful. Engaging with diverse groups of children and building on each experience will enhance your ability over time.

So, take the plunge, address these challenges head-on, and continuously improve your practice.

To end, it's worth spending some time reflecting on the Together top tips and some of the challenges that we hear about, and actively considering how we can build Child Rights Impact Assessments and Evaluation into our practice. I will finish with some reflective questions that I encourage each of you to contemplate. Thank you.

- Are there decisions made in your work where you could do an informal Child Rights Impact Assessment?
- Are there decisions made in your work where you should do a formal Child Rights Impact Assessment?
- How would you consider children whose rights are at risk when doing a Child Rights Impact Assessment?
- What could you put in place to ensure decisions that affect children are evaluated afterwards to check their impact?

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Children's rights budgeting

Rights at risk

Visit the Together website for more information

[www.togetherscotland.org.uk](http://www.togetherscotland.org.uk)

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