



**Fife Children's  
Rights Strategy  
& Action Plan**

**2010 - 2011**



***"I commend Fife for leading the way in Scotland  
by developing a Children's Rights Strategy and Action Plan"***

***ADAM INGRAM Minister for Children and Early Years***

### **Foreword...**

It is important to ensure we value children and young people's rights, to make aware the support available to them and allow them to have the best opportunities possible.

As a young person myself, I believe it is crucial for all children and young people to be aware of their rights. I worked with a group of young people from Kinetic Theatre Group discussing the issues of young people's rights and the lack of public knowledge surrounding them. Following several phone calls to national youth organisations, we devised a short mixed media production, which explored these issues and delivered our findings in an exciting, humorous show. We interviewed members of the public and asked them their views on the rights of a young person and portrayed this through the medium of film. This was a great opportunity for us to raise awareness of young people's rights and challenge the negative perception perceived in the media.

**Abbie McFarlen** - Kinetic Theatre Group



***Adam Ingram, Douglas Chapman with children/young people  
involved in the consultation process and the development  
of the Fife Children's Rights Strategy and Action Plan***

### **Acknowledgments...**

Thanks to Fife Rights Forum for their support and to everyone who contributed to the Strategy and Action Plan.



## INTRODUCTION

***“All Children and Young People under 18 have all the rights in the Convention. It is the State’s obligation to protect children and young people from any form of discrimination and to take positive steps to promote their rights”***

### ***Article 1 of the UNCRC***

In modern societies everyone has rights, and to incorporate these rights into everyday life it is important that we all understand the associated responsibilities. The function of the law is to protect and safeguard these rights and this is particularly important where children and young people are concerned, because they may not be in a position to claim these rights themselves. In 1989 the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) set out internationally agreed principles and minimum standards for children’s welfare and education, against which current legislation can be assessed and future progress monitored.

In Fife we support wholeheartedly the principles enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We believe that by supporting these principles we will enable all children and young people to become active and responsible citizens who are able to make a real contribution to society. However we need to put in place a plan to make sure we can turn this idea into a reality.

Fife Children’s Rights Strategy incorporates identified actions which will help everyone working with children and young people to understand what these rights are, and to make sure they can take account of these in their work. It is important for example that when new services or provisions, like schools, hospitals or leisure activities, are being developed children’s rights are taken account of. It is also really important that attention is paid to the rights of children and young people when people are actually delivering services to them. This applies to all agencies working with children and young people across all children’s services.

We also need to have a way of knowing if people who are working with children and young people are genuinely respecting these rights. The Rights Strategy will help us to do this as it will outline expectations which must be met when working with children and young people, and all services and workers can evaluate their practice against these.

We know that to have a really effective strategy we will have to give extra support to some groups of children and young people, for example those with disabilities or those who are looked after, or are particularly vulnerable. Sometimes groups like these are at more risk of having their rights ignored or overlooked, and sometimes they don’t have anyone to speak out on their behalf. We believe that by having a strong and fair Rights Strategy that everyone signs up to we can make sure we protect the rights of all children and young people.



## CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN FIFE

***“All actions concerning Children and Young People shall take full account of his/her best interests”***

### ***Article 3 of the UNCRC***

#### **CONTEXT**

The United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is presently the most ratified international human rights treaty to include civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and sets out in detail what every child needs to have to ensure a safe, happy and fulfilled childhood.

In learning about their rights, children also learn about the importance of respecting the rights of others ie responsibilities. This helps to maintain a positive tone to any work. It contributes to developing a positive and socially responsible identity, which is more likely when children believe in and feel good about themselves.

The principles of the UNCRC are already enshrined in key legislation such as ***The Children (Scotland) Act 1995*** which references the best interests' principle and the child's right to express a view and have that view taken into account.

***Getting it right for every child*** is a programme that aims to improve outcomes for all children and young people. Working to achieve these outcomes is based on a shared approach across Fife.

***The Children's Services Group*** within Fife has agreed that Children's Rights is a priority, and that the UNCRC should be effectively linked in to all services delivered to children and young people.

The Children's Rights agenda is applicable across a number of local priorities and strategies including, but not limited to :

- *Fife Community Plan*
- *Joint Health Improvement Plan*
- *Children's Services Plan*
- *Community Safety Strategy*
- *Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy*
- *Early Years Strategy Group*
- *Corporate Parenting Strategy*
- *Child Protection Committee Action Plan*
- *GIRFCIF - Getting It Right For Children In Fife*



***The development of the Strategy and Action Plan is a result of a wide consultation with all partners, focus groups of young people, the Young People's Panel and a conference held in November 2009.***

## **MAPPING ACTIVITY**

At the beginning of the process, an initial mapping exercise was undertaken using a questionnaire that was sent out to partner agencies within Fife who were working with children and young people. The purpose of the mapping was to:

- *Find out what work is already being undertaken in relation to children's rights by agencies in Fife*
- *Establish if there are any gaps*
- *See how work is being evaluated*

The mapping exercise was supported through the Children's Services Group and CVS Fife.

## **ANALYSIS**

From the mapping exercise, some key themes emerged:

- *There is a focus on child protection rights*
- *Most of the training is aimed at staff and other adults, although training currently includes Rights Respecting Schools and child protection, which is aimed at both children and adults*
- *There is an emphasis on understanding rights when an issue develops for a child rather than on the premise that all children are born with rights*
- *There is very little formal evaluation carried out and that it would be useful to evaluate activity to better understand the impact of the UNCRC in Fife*
- *There are many groups of children where extra attention around rights should be targeted, such as immigrant populations, children with disabilities, gypsy travellers, young carers, children and young people in homeless accommodation*

The mapping evidenced that there is a good deal of activity, although not consistent, amongst agencies on raising awareness of children's rights amongst staff, adults and children and also many examples of advice, advocacy and other projects being undertaken.

The mapping exercise has given Fife some baseline information on activity, gaps and evaluation. The group used this information and subsequent discussion to identify key priorities for action.



## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S INITIAL PRIORITIES

***“Children and Young People have the right to express their opinion freely and to have that opinion taken into account in any matter affecting them”***

### ***Article 12 of the UNCRC***

The strategy reflects the priorities seen to be important in the eyes of children and young people. The priorities are informed by a range of representative groups of Fife's children and young people.

Three groups aged between 6 - 18 were involved in activities over a period of weeks that culminated in an event where they all came together to identify their priorities for Fife. The group expressed the following views and identified the following as areas for action:

- *More variety, more choice in youth provision - **Article 15***
- *To promote positive things that children do instead of the negative things - **Article 3***
- *Extended opening hours so that young people have greater access to facilities - **Article 31***
- *For adults to change - show their good side, talk to young people if they have problems - **Article 12***
- *Don't judge us for what we wear or what we look like - **Article 2***

These views along with the mapping exercise and subsequent analysis influenced the 4 priorities for action.

The Strategy introduction stated that “Fife Children's Rights Strategy is a plan which will help everyone working with children and young people to understand what these rights are, and to make sure they can take account of these in their work”. The work plan is clear in that the priorities reflect our need to progress children's rights work within many arenas such as with children and young people, communities, service providers, elected members and the media amongst others. The 4 priorities listed below reflect this statement and highlight the diverse context of the strategy aims.

The **4 priorities** identified by the Children's Rights Group are:

- *To raise awareness and promote the UNCRC in Fife communities*
- *To promote a positive image of children and young people in Fife*
- *To ensure children and young people can influence decisions in matters that affect them*
- *To build the capacity of practitioners to promote and protect children's rights*



## CHILDREN'S RIGHTS STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2010 - 2011

The Children's Rights Strategy and Action Plan has been developed through consultation across Fife with adults, children and young people. The methods used were focus groups, surveys and briefings.

A multi-agency conference which included children and young people, was held in November 2009 which enabled us to further develop and identify key priority areas.

The Action Plan will be reviewed by the Children's Rights Strategy Group on an annual basis.

The membership of this strategy group consists of:

- ***NHS Fife***
- ***Fife Constabulary***
- ***Early Years Strategy Group***
- ***Voluntary Sector***

Fife Council Services including:

- ***Education***
- ***Social Work***
- ***Community Learning & Development***
- ***Performance & Organisational Support***

MARCH 2010

If you want to know more please contact:

**Sandra.Martin-es@fife.gov.uk**

**08451 55 55 55 ext:471775**

***Following on from the consultation - pages 9,11,13,and 15 are quotes from children and young people involved in the process.***



CHILDREN'S RIGHTS ACTION PLAN 2010 - 2011

**What is the Action Area?**

**To Raise Awareness and Promote Children's Rights in Fife**

***Specific Action***

*Rights Respecting Schools/Communities Programme to be promoted and implemented*

*Utilise existing resources and develop additional resources as required across agencies*

*Develop peer education programmes with children and young people*

*Develop a shared understanding across agencies and communities*

*'State parties undertake to make the principles and provisions of the UNCRC widely known, by appropriate and active means, to adults and children alike.'*

**Article 42 UNCRC**



*help*  
To let everybody know about  
Children's Rights...

**C**are for children

**R**emember to treat  
everyone equally

**H**elp them along

**I**ndependent thought

**I**nspire them

**G**ive it a go

**L**earn

**H**ave fun

**D**eal with situations

**T**each others

**S**upport each other

**S**pend time on things

■ Posters/leaflets/magazines/internet

■ Do workshops for children,  
young people and adults



CHILDREN'S RIGHTS ACTION PLAN 2010 - 2011

**What is the Action Area?**

**To Promote a Positive Image of Children and Young People**

***Specific Action***

*Support children and young people in delivering this action area at a local level*

*Work with staff in partner organisations to capture achievements and awards, and publicise these*

*Support for agencies, children and young people to challenge negative stereotypes*

*Support local and national campaigns*

*'All rights apply to all children without exception.  
It is the State's obligation to protect children from any form of discrimination and to take positive action to promote their rights.'*

**Article 2 UNCRC**



*help*  
To let everybody know about the good things Children and Young People do in Fife...



## Get involved

Adults, children and young people getting to know each other



Respect for everyone

Take each others views into consideration

Opportunities to join in and be yourself, and have your say



## Communicate



Showcase children's and young people's creativity



Need to compromise



CHILDREN'S RIGHTS ACTION PLAN 2010 - 2011

**What is the Action Area?**

**To Ensure that Children and Young People can influence Decisions in Matters that Affect Them**

***Specific Action***

*Increase participation and opportunities for children and young people to express their views across agencies*

*Undertake Impact Assessment on policies that directly affect children and young people*

*Evidence examples of good practice and disseminate widely*

*Promote examples of involvement in recruitment of staff*

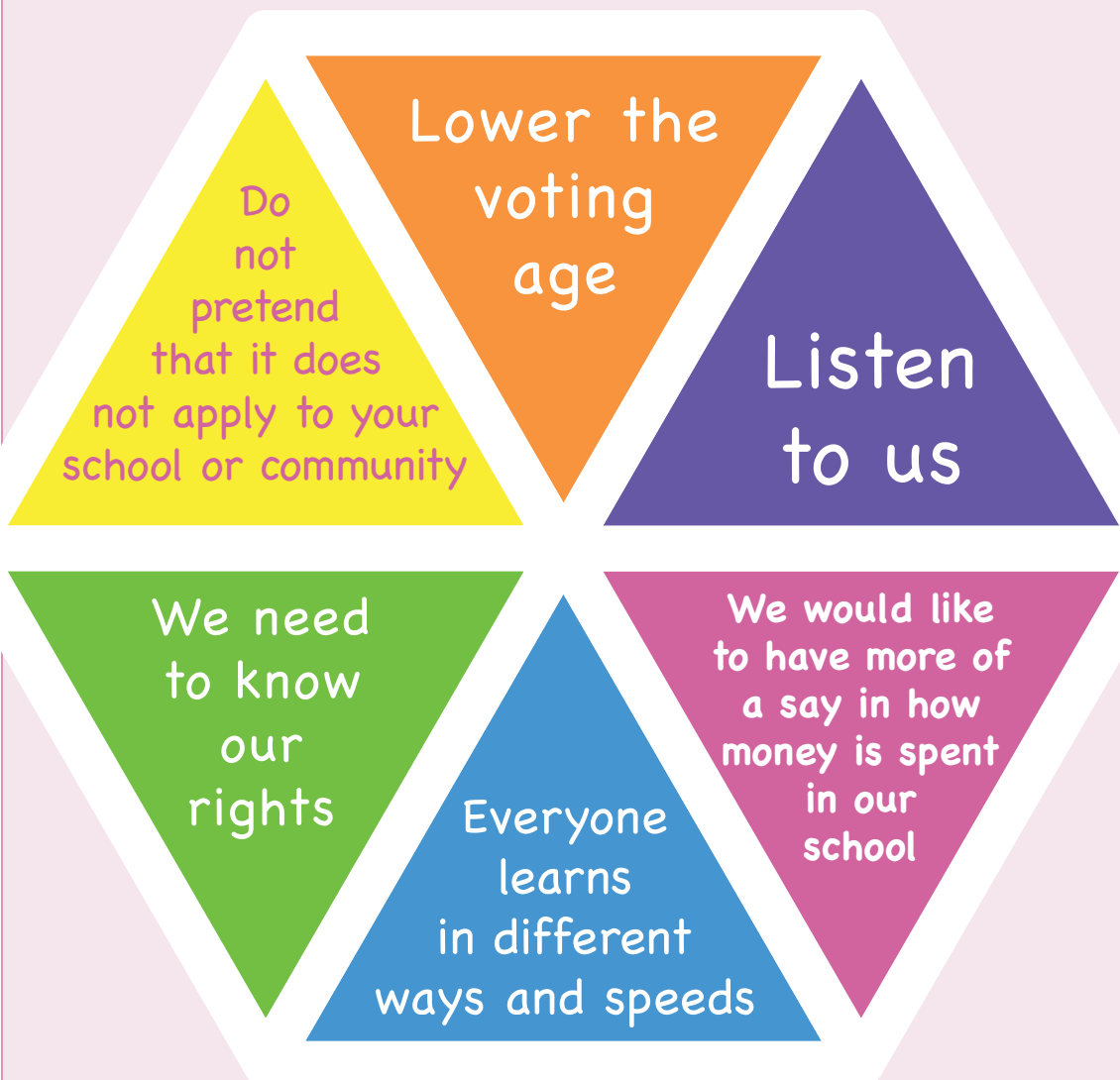
*Develop suitable environments and alternative methods to facilitate participation in formal care and protection proceedings*

*'Children and young people have the right to express their opinion freely and to have that opinion taken into account in any matter affecting them.'*

**Article 12 UNCRC**



~~help~~  
To let Children and Young People  
have their say on things that  
affect them...



We can talk to:  
Councillors/Parents/Carers/Teachers/  
Youth Organisations/MSPs and MPs



CHILDREN'S RIGHTS ACTION PLAN 2010 - 2011

**What is the Action Area?**

**To Build the Capacity of all Staff to Promote and Protect Children's Rights**

***Specific Action***

*Commitment from partner organisations to reflect the UNCRC in recruitment, induction and training processes*

*Establish regular dialogue regarding Children's Rights at local, national and international level*

*Training Development opportunities to be aligned to the Children's Rights Strategy with joint training opportunities developed where possible*

*'All actions concerning children and young people shall take full account of his/her best interests.'*

**Article 2 UNCRC**



*help*  
To let people working with Children  
& Young People to understand and  
protect Children's Rights



Make it easier for  
everyone to understand



Shout out  
to people  
who don't  
know

Everyone is  
important



Keep  
**positive**



about children



Let **ME** be **ME**



*Listen to me  
I say listen to me  
OY! I've gotta shout haven't I?  
This isn't how I want to be*

*I'm a teenager and it's not good  
All people see of us is the bad  
Some of it is bad yes but not all of it  
This really makes me sad*

*We've got rights and here's one  
Not to be judged straight away  
This happens though and it hurts  
It happens and hurts everyday*

*You've gotta listen to me  
I listen to you dudes  
So show me the same respect  
Never mind your moods*

*Give us the opportunity  
To be ourselves and show  
Showcase the good from us  
The progress toward it is slow*

*I'm young yes but don't patronize  
Treat me for who I am  
Accept what I'm telling you  
Don't treat me for what I am*

*I'm not asking for much  
I'm asking for you to hear  
Hear and respect all my rights  
Is the time for that near?*

**Rebecca Marie Parkinson**

(Thanks to Rebecca for allowing us to use her poem.  
Please do not reproduce this poem without permission)