

Children's Parliament meets the Scottish Cabinet

19th
November
2024

Annual Scottish Cabinet meeting with children and young people

There's still more that needs to be done.

Our Journey to Cabinet

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Desk Research:

Staff from Children's Parliament, in partnership with the Children's Rights Unit (Scottish Government), reviewed more than 30 different reports, videos, surveys and resources from children's rights organisations. This desk research resulted in a long list of issues that affect children across Scotland today.

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Survey:

The long list of issues were put into themes and shared in a survey. Over 175 Members of Children's Parliament from across Scotland voted in the survey, ranking 10 headline issues in order of what they felt is most important to address now.

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Shortlist:

The Child Human Rights Defenders team (experienced Members of Children's Parliament) worked together to narrow down the long list of issues. They reviewed the desk research and the results of the survey considering the issues in relation to the impact on children, their

rights and how urgent this felt. They also considered the issues in relation to current policy, and what is already happening in Scottish Government. From their review, the children prioritised the top three calls to action that would guide their work this year.

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Class Missions:

After the calls to action were chosen, the Child Human Rights Defenders ran class 'missions' with their peers in school, engaging a further 120 children to gather additional evidence to help develop their understanding of the issues.

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The Executive Team Meeting:

The Child Human Rights Defenders analysed all the information gathered from the desk research, survey and missions to finally land

on their Calls to Action, and their ideas to help drive change. They planted their 'seeds of ideas' at the Scottish Government Executive Team Takeover in June 2024.

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Nurturing Change:

Since June, the Child Human Rights Defenders have been working in response to the Executive Team's actions to progress their ideas for change. As part of this, they have:

- Collaborated with the Children's Rights Unit at Scottish Government

- Talked to Scottish Government policy teams
- Taken part in consultations and raised awareness of their calls to action
- Ran classroom missions with peers
- Analysed Scottish Government policy and actions

Bullying and Mental Health in Schools

Call to Action

Bullying is a big reason for mental health problems in schools. Scottish Government needs to prioritise preventing bullying and supporting children with poor mental health in schools by ensuring dignity and a rights-based approach is at the heart of every school in Scotland.



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At school, everyone needs to feel like they exist, they matter, they're cared for.

- Member of Children's Parliament

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Seeds for change:



Training courses for all adults in school

The training courses would focus on:

- How to prevent bullying
- The impact of bullying
- How to remove stigma around mental health

The courses should focus on embedding children's rights and dignity in school. Children should input into the training courses and have a say on what the adults learn.



Nurture spaces throughout the school, in every school

Nurture spaces need to be available for every child to use throughout the school building. There should be dedicated rooms for children to take breaks and spaces in classrooms for them to feel healthy, happy and safe.



More play equipment in every school

There should be more play equipment for children to use inside and outside.

This will:

- Support mental health with more active breaks
- Prevent bullying by keeping children busy and engaged



Scan here to learn more about children's views on mental wellbeing in education.

Climate Crisis Education

Call to Action

Children are worried about climate change. They don't learn enough about the environment or have enough opportunities to have a meaningful say on their future. Scottish Government needs to find solutions to these worries and put children at the heart of their climate action.



**If we know
more about it,
we wouldn't
worry as much
and could help.**

- Member of Children's Parliament



Seeds for change:

Improved Government Communication

The government needs to communicate updates on the climate crisis to children, in a child-friendly way. Most importantly, children want to hear about:

- What climate issues are affecting Scotland
- What the Government are doing to stop it

In doing so, this will help ease children's climate anxiety and in turn offer them opportunities to take action.

Positive Climate Education

At the moment, children are only learning about the negative impact of the climate crisis. They want their education to include positive learning, involving:

- The positive steps people are making to reduce their climate impact
- The opportunity to participate in climate events and be supported to take action on the climate crisis

Involving children in climate education

Scottish Government needs to include children's views, ideas and opinions in the design of climate education.



Scan here to learn more about Children's Parliament's investigation on Learning for Sustainability.

Vaping

Call to Action

Vaping is often seen by children as a 'healthy', 'cool' alternative to smoking. Scottish Government need to reduce children's access to vaping and increase their understanding of its impact.



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**You need ID
to buy vapes,
but they sell it
to anyone and
hide it.**

- Member of Children's Parliament

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Seeds for change:

Stop vapes being designed for children

Vapes are very attractive to children, as they are flavoured like sweets, brightly coloured and on display in local shops. Members of Children's Parliament want vapes to share the same design features as cigarettes – with graphic images and dull colouring – to reduce children's desire to use them.

Reducing children's access to vapes

Vapes are being sold to children. Children want to reduce access to vapes by:

- Banning vapes being sold in areas near children's play/learning environments
- Not allowing vapes to be displayed in shops
- Putting a set price on vapes so they can't be discounted
- Stronger ID checks when buying vapes

Increasing knowledge and understanding of vaping and its impact

When exploring vaping with children, Members of Children's Parliament as young as eight years old could list the names of vape flavours, but none of them could explain the long-term effects. Some of them even thought vaping was a healthy choice. Children want to learn about the risks of vaping in a relatable way, for example from ex-users.



Scan here to learn more about children's ideas for a smoke-free Scotland.

Cabinet Matters to Children

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If we're listened to and taken seriously it makes us feel like our rights are real. 99

- Member of Children's Parliament

This year marks the first meeting since the incorporation of children's human rights into Scots law, a call to action that Members of Children's Parliament first proposed in 2018. It is also the 8th consecutive Scottish Cabinet Meeting with Children and Young People. Members of Children's Parliament are excited to share their ideas for change with Cabinet this year in the knowledge that their human rights are now enshrined in Scotland's domestic law.

99 **I enjoy doing this, it makes me feel included.** 99

- Member of Children's Parliament



More about Children's Parliament

Our dream is that children grow up in a world of love, happiness and understanding. Our mission is to inspire greater awareness and understanding of the power of children's human rights and to support implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) across Scotland.

For more about our story and the work we do:
www.childrensparliament.org.uk

