



**Scottish
Ambulance
Service**

Working in Partnership with Universities

NHS
SCOTLAND



UNCRC Implementation report 2017-2020

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1. Introduction



As Scotland progresses with the incorporation of the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) through the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill we are assessing our readiness to act and reflecting on the work we are doing across a range of partners, using this to inform our next steps.

We believe that the best way to uphold children's rights is to develop our services to meet their needs so that our workforce is ready to support them should they need to access emergency health care at any time.

This is our first report on Children's Rights in line with the reporting requirements set out in Part 1 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and we have taken the view that this initial report will set out our plan to improve our capability and capacity to recognise and respond to the needs of all children and young people in our care.

We understand that embedding children's rights as set out in the UNCRC Bill will be both complex and rewarding allowing us to identify areas where we can improve services by working collaboratively with children and young people as well as with our emergency services colleagues and health and social care partners.

2. What We Do



Our aim is to offer the highest level of emergency care to our patients as we preserve life and promote recovery, with our highly skilled workforce bringing care and compassion to those who need it most.

The Scottish Ambulance Service is on the frontline of the NHS, we employ over 5000 highly skilled staff. Each year our call handling teams respond to over 1.5 million calls for assistance, despatching immediate medical assistance or clinical advice to over 5 million people in Scotland serving all mainland and island communities as we provide care to patients.

To provide this care our air ambulance service undertakes around 3,500 missions each year and our ScotSTAR service transfers 2,500 of Scotland's most seriously ill patients to specialist care.

For those patients requiring non-emergency care we have a Patient Transport Service for patients who need support to reach their healthcare appointment, we transfer and transport around 1 million people to and from hospital each year.

All of these services are an invaluable resource to the public of Scotland and to deliver them we are helped by over 1200 volunteers who make up our community First Responder Schemes.

3. What is the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill

The UNCRC is an international treaty that sets out specific human rights for children up to the age of 18 years old. [The UNCRC consists of 54 articles](#) that set out children's rights and how governments and public services should work together to make them **available to all children**.

Under the terms of the convention, public services are required to **meet children's basic needs** and help them **reach their full potential**. Central to this is the acknowledgment that every child has basic fundamental rights. These include the right to:

- **Life, survival and development.**
- **Protection from violence, abuse or neglect**
- **An education that enables children to fulfil their potential.**
- **Be raised by, or have a relationship with their parents.**
- **Express their opinions and be listened to.**

Global changes, like the rise of digital technology, climate change, prolonged conflict and mass migration are completely changing childhood. Adult decision makers are struggling to develop legislative and policy responses to ensure rights are fulfilled in childhoods that are in many ways significantly different from our own experiences.

The Scottish Government has unanimously agreed to the general principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill.

4. The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014



The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 addresses a range of areas relating to the wellbeing of children and young people and sets out the duties of public bodies in relation to the UNCRC.

The Act 2014 places a duty on specified public bodies, Scottish Ambulance Service, to report every 3 years on the steps they have taken in that period to develop rights-based care within their services.

As mentioned previously there are 54 articles relative to UNCRC but we have chosen to focus on these four guiding principles to develop our service as we progress:

- ➔ For rights to be applied without discrimination (Article 2)
- ➔ For the best interests of the child to be a primary consideration (Article 3)
- ➔ The right to life, survival and development (Article 6)
- ➔ The right to express a view and have that view taken into account (Article 12)

5. Our progress and key developments towards implementation the UNCC 2017-2020



I. Introduction of a dedicated Public Protection Team.

Over the last 3 years we have reviewed our capability to recognise and respond to children, young people and families that we work with recognising that these are some of our most vulnerable groups of patients.

We have introduced new roles into the service that will promote actions that will improve the health and well being of all children and young people as they access our service.

This team works within the Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) Principles, which is a core theme of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act. This is a common approach across all agencies in Scotland, which supports the delivery of appropriate, proportionate and timely help to all children and young people, as they need it.

We have strengthened relationships with our partner agencies for example Health boards, Local Authorities, Police Scotland and NHS 24. There is a single point of contact for each of these services that focus on key areas of public protection and supporting vulnerable groups.

In partnership with these agencies, we have improved our National referral processes making it easier for staff to refer vulnerable patients in their care and making it easier for other agencies to obtain information about patients who are at risk and need support.

The Public protection process for raising a referral with partner agencies is key to getting the right help at the right time; Our Public Protection Policy is aligned to the Scottish Government National policy, guidance and legislation and this in turn, strengthens and supports the referral process.



II. Development of our Corporate Parenting Plan

We are constantly working to improve the care we provide to patients and their families. It is by listening to the voices of those we care for that we believe we can make the biggest impact on improving what we do and the services we provide.

In 2019 we published our Corporate Parenting Plan, which describes our responsibility and intent as a Corporate Parent. This plan applies to every child who is looked after by a local authority, and every young person, who is under the age of 26, and was but is no longer looked after by a local authority.

We are currently working together with other corporate parents and the following agencies to deliver this:

- ➔ The Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland (CELCIS)
- ➔ Who Cares? Scotland
- ➔ The Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland

We believe that through working together we can create more innovative ways in future for children and young people to engage with us and develop future services that are right for them.



III. Engaging with children, young people

We have appointed a Community Engagement and Involvement Manager to help strengthen our engagement with local communities and build stronger ties with our communities.

Working with local schools we have delivered a successful work experience programme at our National Headquarters that showcased a range of career opportunities that working for the ambulance service and the wider NHS offers. Building on the success of this trial we will be looking to develop this further in partnership with Who Cares? Scotland

Save A Life for Scotland (SALFS) is a campaign which brings together the work of a range of partners committed to saving lives by changing the way we think about OHCA in order to get Scotland CPR ready and to improve the lives of future generations. It is a collaboration between the emergency services, third sector organisations, Scottish Government and academic researchers. As part of this our community resilience teams engaged with Save A Life for Scotland to teach lifesaving CPR skills in schools.

We work with the Young Scot, to gather information and opinions that help us engage a more focussed and younger audience to influence our future services.



IV. Improving Mental Health Awareness and Treatment

The Scottish Ambulance Service provides support for individuals, and communities, experiencing a range of health and wellbeing challenges including mental health challenges and we recognise that these experiences can touch every life in Scotland.

We have delivered our Mental Health Strategy with the aim to “prevent and treat mental health problems with the same commitment, passion. and drive as we do with physical health problems.”

Our mental health strategy is underpinned by a rights-based approach, recognising that individuals including children and young people have a right to good mental health and that the biopsychosocial influences that impact this are recognised.

Our Focus over the coming years is to create a trauma informed workforce where all staff have the skills to recognise and respond to trauma, including adversity experienced by children.

In line with the Scottish Transition and Recovery Plan we will focus on four key levels of need:

- ➔ Promoting and supporting the conditions for good mental health and wellbeing
- ➔ Providing accessible signposting to help, advise and support.
- ➔ Providing a rapid and easily accessible response to those in distress.
- ➔ Ensuring safe, effective treatment and care of people living with mental illness.

We will provide our clinicians with the confidence and competence to identify when and how influencing factors may be adversely affecting their mental wellbeing, across the lifespan, and connect people with appropriate onward care options to support them.

6. Impact of Covid-19 on this work



The COVID-19 impact patterns on areas of deprivation and those who are socio-economically at a disadvantage share a strong relationship with the characteristics of those that are a risk of developing mental and physical ill health. The data and evidence shows that Children and young people were affected by all socio-economic aspects of pandemic

The pandemic was shown to have a detrimental impact on the health of children and young people through a reduction in social interactions; changes to lifestyle and working conditions; a reduction in the access of social care services; and loss of work and income in the wider family context. A study by the Health Foundation showed a fifth of the population sustained a deterioration in their mental and physical health, with woman, younger people and those facing financial hardship to have fared the worst.

COVID 19 also impacted on the services abilities to implement some of our workstreams while we focussed on care delivery to those patients severely affected. In some cases our workstreams have been delayed by years, however, this delay has allowed us to see more clearly the scope and depth of the work that now needs to be undertaken to meet the needs of future generations. As we recover and move forward from The Pandemic our collaborative approach to care and service delivery will be key to any future success.

7. Our Vision

The UNCRC is the cornerstone that underpins policy and legislation concerning children in the United Kingdom. The Convention changed the way children are viewed and treated, ensuring that they are seen as human beings with a distinct set of rights and values of their own.

Recognising, respecting and promoting the rights of children and young people is key to our future service developments and will support improving better health outcomes for all patients including children and young people.

To promote this we will continue to:

Educate

- Educate our staff/volunteers and stakeholders to recognise, respond and refer our most vulnerable service users. Ensuring that their knowledge gives them the confidence and competence to provide support and direction.
- Educate staff, volunteers, public and service users about the UNCRC bill and how it applies to them when they are in care.

Collaborate

- Strengthen our engagement and participation in our local communities so that the voices and needs of our service users are prominent in the actions of our organisation.
- Promote partnership working through effective collaboration and communication with external partner agencies. Working together will further support the development of pathways, processes and systems to ensure that the children and young people of Scotland have their rights listed to, respected and upheld.

Lead

- We will continue to work collectively with other public services to promote children's rights in every aspect of our service, undertaking the Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) and meaningfully including children young people in our service development and delivery.

Innovate

- We will continue to connect people, services and communities to deliver digital and data solutions supporting best value and integrated delivery of care to our communities ensuring they are accessible to all.

The Promise Scotland's mission



the promise
scotland

The Promise Scotland's mission is to support the transformation of how Scotland cares for its children and families, ensuring that Scotland's children 'grow up loved, safe and respected so that they realise their full potential.'

Working towards the values embedded in The Promise Scotland, the Scottish Ambulance Service will work towards ensuring that Children's Voices are at the heart of everything we do and that the views and experiences of children and adults and those working alongside them – will inform how our future services are planned and delivered.”

We recognise that ultimately, building strong, positive and respectful relationships is what matters to children, young people, families and our workforce. With this in mind we will create and build strong relationships with community groups and services to guide and inform how we do our work.

8. Conclusion



We are very much committed to promoting and supporting the implementation of the UNCRC in every aspect of our work.

Working together will further support the development of pathways, processes and systems to ensure that the children and young people of Scotland have their rights listened to, respected and upheld.

Scottish Ambulance Service will continue to work with Young Scot, Who Cares? (Scotland) CELCIS and the wider networks supporting Children and Young People to ensure that we are informed and at the forefront of developments in the future.

Further Information

If you wish further information on the contents of this report or wish to find out more information then please e-mail: sas.corporateaffairs@nhs.scot