

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) Report 2017-2022



Foreword

Foreword from the Chief Executive

Engaging with children and young people is an essential component of what Skills Development Scotland (SDS) does. Alongside a range of national and local partners, we work with, and for, young people, supporting them to develop the skills and behaviours that will guide their progression into and through work. In this, and all contexts, we understand that children's rights must be recognised, respected and promoted.

This report comes at a time when young people are facing a disruptive and uncertain future. Even prior to the pandemic, young people had to navigate a world of continuous and unprecedented disruption. The COVID-19 pandemic has further compounded this, impacting every aspect of young people's lives, and in a way which has disproportionately affected those who were already facing the most significant challenges.

The intent articulated through the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is evident throughout our approaches to supporting children, including our commitment to #KeepThePromise.

While this is our first formal report outlining how we contribute to upholding the rights contained within the UNCRC, we are building on pre-existing and strong foundations of taking a rights-based approach to service delivery.

This Report provides a baseline for our activities in this regard, against which future progress can be measured. Following the publication of our new Strategic Plan later in 2022, we commit to further considering how we can proactively seek to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of children in Scotland.

Our first UNCRC Report represents an important milestone for SDS. I am proud of the efforts made by SDS colleagues each day which contribute to achieving Scotland's ambition to be the best place in the world to grow up and learn.

Damien Yeates

**Chief Executive
Skills Development Scotland**

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Contents

Foreword

Introduction

What we do to uphold the rights of children in Scotland

- We listen to what you say and value your opinion
- We won't discriminate against you
- We care about your safety and wellbeing
- We give you the information you need
- We help the adults in your life to support you
- We support you to access learning
- We understand and respect your other rights as a child

Next Steps

Appendix 1 – The rights that we Fulfil, Protect and Respect

1. Introduction

About Skills Development Scotland (SDS)

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) is the national skills agency in Scotland. Our purpose is to drive productivity and inclusive growth through investment in skills, enabling businesses and people to achieve their full potential. We engage with partners at national, regional and local level, flexing and shaping our delivery to meet local needs and priorities, while informed by the knowledge of effective practice from across the country and beyond.

We work to help create a Scotland in which:

- All people in Scotland have the skills, information and opportunities to succeed in the labour market.
- Scotland's businesses drive productivity and inclusive growth.
- The learning and skills system is dynamic and responsive.
- SDS leads by example and continuously improves to achieve excellence.

Further details our strategic approach and operational activities can be found [in our Strategic Plan](#).

What is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child?

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, or UNCRC, is the most complete statement of children's rights and the most widely ratified international human rights treaty in history. It aims to ensure that children can grow up in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity. There are 54 UNCRC articles, the first 42 of which describes what every child and young person from birth to 18 years old should experience. The rights contained in the articles are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated.

The UK ratified the UNCRC in 1991, however it was not incorporated into domestic law. These rights can only be guaranteed when steps are taken to implement the convention into domestic law, policy and practice.

Arrangements for taking forward the UNCRC, and the children's rights agenda within the UK, reflect the separate constitutional responsibilities of the devolved nations. Scottish Ministers, therefore, have responsibilities for the progression of children's rights with reference to devolved public services and legislation.

In Scotland, the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill was passed unanimously by the Scottish Parliament on 16 March 2021. Shortly after, the UK Government raised some concerns in relation to certain provisions in the Bill that extended beyond the powers of the Scottish Parliament. The Bill has returned to the Parliament so that MSPs can address the issues within. Once it has been amended, the Bill will be sent for Royal Assent, and implementation will commence six months from that point. Upon passing, this legislation means that the Scottish Government, public bodies and those providing services for children and young people must ensure that their rights are wholly embedded into service provision.

How did we get here?

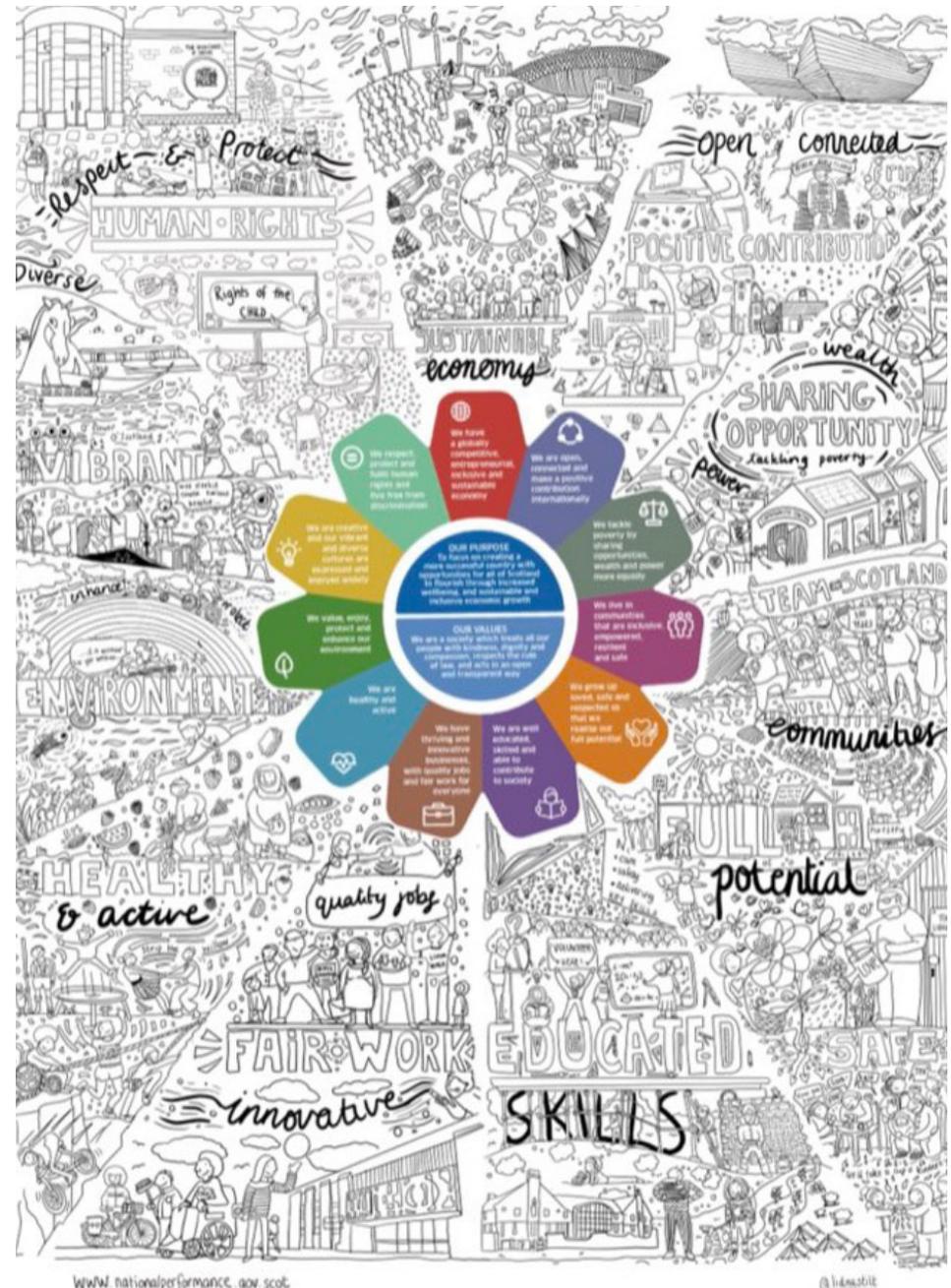
The UNCRC Bill followed over a decade of legislation and policy that protects and promotes children’s rights including the [Human Rights Act 1998](#), [Getting It Right For Every Child \(GIRFEC\)](#), the [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#), and the [Children \(Scotland\) Act 2020](#).

Children’s rights, within the broader context of human rights, are also embedded in Scotland’s [National Performance Framework](#) (NPF). The current version of the NPF, published in June 2018, includes the following outcomes: **“We respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination”** and, in relation to the rights of the child: **“We grow up loved, safe and respected so that we realise our full potential”**.

Our responsibilities under Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

Alongside the more familiar Corporate Parenting Requirements, from 1 April 2017, Part 1 of the 2014 Act places duties on Scottish Ministers and public bodies to report on what they are doing to progress children’s rights in their work.

Aligned to GIRFEC, the Act also sets out a statutory definition of wellbeing. While not a statutory requirement, in line with the GIRFEC National Practice Model, our career guidance practitioners utilise this definition as a framework to analyse information consistently to help understand a child or young person’s needs, the strengths and pressures on them, and consider what support they might require. We also operate in accordance with the [National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021](#).



¹ Scottish Government, National Performance Framework, 2018.

SDS's contribution to upholding the rights of children

SDS supports the Scottish Government's vision for Scotland:

"...children's human rights are embedded in all aspects of society. A Scotland where policy, law and decision making takes account of children's rights and where all children have a voice and are empowered to be human rights defenders".

As Scotland's national skills agency, we make a greater contribution to some rights than others. We mainstream children's rights across all our work on equality, and into our decision-making, planning, policy and practice. While some rights form a fundamental part of our service offer, we are alert to others.

COVID-19 has significantly impacted on the lives of children and young people across Scotland, particularly the most vulnerable, and on the delivery of the vital services on which they, and their families, rely. We recognise during these times of challenge; it is as important as ever to protect children's rights.

As a public body we are playing a key role in supporting the Scottish Government to embed children's rights and wellbeing into Scotland's approach to recovery from COVID-19. Furthermore, alongside the intention to progress the UNCRC into Scots law, there is a clear expectation that public bodies will adopt a step change in how they articulate their contribution to fulfilling, protecting and respecting children's rights.

Developing our Report

As a public body, SDS is required to report every three years, setting out what we are doing to better secure, or give further effect to, the rights set out in the UNCRC. We were initially required to report on the period 2017-2020. However, this was subsequently delayed due to COVID-19. This was in line with the provisions within the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 Act which enabled public authorities to delay the publication of their children's rights report, if doing so would hinder their ability to respond to the pandemic. Reporting now, in 2022, meets the original requirement and brings us up to date for the period 2017-2022.

This report outlines how we are continuing to take a rights-based approach when working with and for children and young people.

Action needed to advance human rights at an international, national and local level is deeply structured by the 'respect, protect, and fulfil'² framework. We have utilised this framework to determine how our work aligns to each UNCRC article, using the following definitions:

- **Fulfil** – We proactively uphold these rights through the delivery of our products and services.
- **Protect** – We have a defined approach to upholding these rights if we become aware of an infringement.
- **Respect** – We are aware of the rights and would act to uphold them if we became aware of an infringement.

² Office of the High Commissioner, [United Nations Human Rights](#), 2021.

In this report, we have also themed the UNCRC articles according to the ways in which we uphold them. Through a process of analysis, and consultation, we identified seven themes across which we fulfil, protect and respect the rights of children and young people:

- **We listen to what you say and value your opinion** – we want the young people we engage with to feel confident that we listen to and value their views.
- **We won't discriminate against you** – we do not discriminate against young people on grounds such as their sexual orientation, race, religion, sexuality, disability or additional support needs. Our services for young people seek to meet different needs and aspirations and are proactive in advancing equality.
- **We care about your safety and wellbeing** – we promote an approach to safeguarding for young people that takes all reasonable means to prevent harm from occurring, while also embedding wellbeing and encouraging resilience.
- **We give you the information you need** – we provide young people with access to as much reliable, independent information as possible, in order to support the development of their confidence and agency, enabling them to make informed choices about their future learning and career pathways.

- **We help the adults in your life to support you** – we help Scotland's parents/carers to engage positively and confidently in supporting their young people with learning and career choices.
- **We support you to access learning** – we ensure that our products and services provide young people with access to a range of options and pathways which allow them to effectively prepare for, enter and progress in the world of work.
- **We understand and respect your other rights as a child** – we will ensure the best interests of the young person serve as a primary consideration when developing our products and services.

An overview of the articles with regard to ways in which we uphold them, and in relation to how we have themed them, can be found in [Appendix 1](#).



2. What we do to uphold the rights of children in Scotland

We listen to what you say and value your opinion

We know that children and young people have a unique knowledge of their own needs and circumstances. At SDS, we ensure that their opinions and experiences are used help us make decisions about the services we have available to support them.

This group of articles relate to our aim to make sure that all the young people we engage with feel confident that they will be listened to and that their views are valued.

We listen to what you say		
Fulfil	Protect	Respect
Article 3	Article 14	
Article 12		
Article 13		



How we listen to what you say and value your opinion

We provide a range of products and services for young people across Scotland. Their involvement in shaping and giving feedback on our services is crucial to helping us to ensure that our provision is inclusive, relevant, and accessible.

In carrying out research with young people and children, through surveys for example, we analyse feedback by protected characteristic. This ensures the specific needs of different groups are analysed and understood, allowing feedback to be utilised to help inform our service delivery.

Through our Senior Phase survey (S4-S6) we seek the views of young people on the career services we deliver in their schools. We ask about overall satisfaction, and more specifically, about the range of support available, ability to access it and amount of support received. Young people's views, particularly in relation to suggested areas for improvement, help us to adjust our CIAG school service offer accordingly. The most recent data available is from the 2018 survey, as the anticipated 2020 survey was postponed due to COVID-19. Our 2018 survey (5,756 responses) revealed that pupils were extremely positive in relation to the support they received in identifying different career options and routes and having knowledgeable and friendly Careers Advisers. However, feedback also suggested the wish for more practical support from Careers Advisors relating to CVs and job applications. We utilised this feedback to enhance this element of our service offer in schools. Re-branded Pupils Voice – Senior Phase Research, we were able to conduct the survey in 2021. When available, the results from this will be used to enhance our service offer in schools over the next three years.

The Young People in Scotland survey is used by SDS to explore the views and experiences of school pupils aged 11-18. It is an omnibus survey and is carried by Ipsos MORI. Recent surveys have asked pupils about future career plans; views on STEM and caring careers; the impact of COVID-19; and views on work-based learning and My

World of Work'. Results from this survey are used to shape and inform service delivery in SDS. Prior feedback from young people suggested they did not know about all of the apprenticeship opportunities available to them. This response from young people helped us to target and enhance our communications around the work-based learning opportunities for young people.

We use our Young People's Career Ambitions Research, launched and conducted in October/November 2020, to understand the choices, influences, and motivations of young people in making career decisions. A total of 2,204 school leavers from the 2019/20 cohort responded to the survey. Responses highlighted how individuals felt COVID-19 had negatively impacted and would continue to impact: on either their participation in education at either college or university, their ability to gain employment including an apprenticeship, and more generally, on their mental health. We used the feedback resulting from this survey to help shape our current provision for young people and support the development of plans for future delivery.

Since 2020, we have been working to support the ambition of the Young Person's Guarantee and its commitment that within two years, every young person aged between 16 and 24 will have the opportunity of a job, apprenticeship, further or higher education, training programme or volunteering. As part of this, the Scottish Government asked SDS to consider how best a careers service could better operate from early years right through until a young person enters employment. In leading this review of the careers service, SDS and partners have worked with more than 80 young people under 18, to develop and co-design the final recommendations which were [published in February 2022](#). The young people involved came from a diverse range of backgrounds and were engaged in the review through interviews, group discussions and workshops. They had the opportunity to feedback on what works well in the current system and the opportunities for improvement. This insight and shared

ownership is critical if we're to design career services that are fit for purpose and future-proofed.

In relation to our work-based learning products, apprentices across both our Foundation and Modern Apprenticeships are surveyed to ensure customer satisfaction is maintained. The Modern Apprenticeship survey, for example, is a key source of information about apprentices' perceptions of their training experience. It provides insight about the quality of training delivery, and when triangulated with feedback from both employers and learning providers, it helps to inform our continuous improvement actions set out in our [Quality Improvement Framework](#).

We have a number of other mechanisms through which young apprentices provide feedback on our products and services. The Apprentice Engagement Group (AEG) is a sub-group of the SAAB Employer Engagement Group. Members are current apprentices who are able to offer vital insight into their experiences of the apprenticeship process, helping to shape it in a way that benefits future generations.

Members from Scotland's Apprentice Network, which includes both past and current apprentices, are also given the platform to influence policy and help shape the future of apprenticeships. Young apprentices are regularly asked to speak at award ceremonies, industry meetings, learning events or even at the Scottish Parliament, providing them with unique opportunities to develop their public speaking and influencing skills.

We know that engagement with young people is more likely to result in services which meet their needs. However, we also recognise that it is important that particular attention is paid to seeking out, and acting on, the views of young people who tend not to be heard through general youth participation in consultation activity. For example, we held focus groups with care experienced young people, and staff from Barnardo's and Action for Children. The aim was to understand young

people’s perceptions of apprenticeships and any potential barriers they may face in accessing these opportunities. This feedback was used in conjunction with data to inform our activity in supporting care experienced young people.

Internally at SDS, the contribution of young people is highly valued. We ensure their voice is heard within the organisation via our Youth Board – a platform for young people to make and influence key decisions and shape what SDS has to offer. We also have an established Young Talent Journey for young people wishing to start careers with us. In this context, the fresh voice of our young staff members ensures our organisation remains current and fully linked into all generations, allowing us to learn from one another.

We won’t discriminate against you

At SDS we deliver services that recognise and build on the strengths of children and young people from all cultures, religions, gender, age, sexual orientation, circumstances and backgrounds; in ways that meet their needs and helps them to achieve their full potential.

This group of articles relates to our commitment to ensure equality and fair work practices are at the heart of everything we do. We remain committed to proactively addressing disadvantage faced by children and young people on their learning and career journeys, both as an employer and service provider.

We treat everyone equally		
Fulfil	Protect	Respect
Article 2	Article 8	
Article 22	Article 40	
Article 23		



How we ensure that we won't discriminate against you

Service Provision

Our [Equality and Diversity Mainstreaming Report 2021-2025](#) outlines how, through a wide range of policies, initiatives, and continuous improvement activities, we are working to embed equality and diversity throughout our organisation. It specifically details our commitment to supporting children and young people.

Undertaken to inform the development of our equality outcomes and impact assessment of our work, our [Equality Evidence Review](#) also provides an overview of evidence in relation to schools, further and higher education, and the labour market across the protected characteristics. This includes an extensive review of existing evidence regarding the outcomes achieved by young people. This information helps us to build a cross-business understanding of the barriers faced by young people in and post-school and shape our services accordingly.

Any new, or significant changes to existing, products or services within SDS cannot be signed-off or implemented without consideration of the impact on equality and diversity. We review our approach to conducting Equality Impact Assessments on an ongoing basis. This is to ensure quality, consistency, and that the needs of all groups, including young people across from across all backgrounds, are considered. For example, following significant consultation with our partners and stakeholders, we published our Equality Impact Assessment for Work-based Learning in 2020. Covering all work-based learning, this assessment guides SDS and our delivery partners on how to promote equality and diversity in apprenticeships. It has been, and continues to be, used to inform the development of programme enhancements, including those designed to young support young people from all backgrounds.

We are committed to providing an inclusive Careers Information Advice and Guidance (CIAG) service that promotes equality and values diversity. The development and delivery of our CIAG service offers has continued to consider those from equality groups. In particular, this has included the publication of our [CIAG Equality Action Plan](#) which outlines the continuing challenges for identified equality groups and the specific actions we have committed to taking to address them.

Our coaching approach to career guidance has the promotion and development of career management skills at its heart. As a result, this action naturally features in our offer to Senior Phase pupils. Through the development of their career management skills, the young people we work with are supported to explore options, develop their networks and ultimately identify and pursue their own path, including those occupations considered to be non-traditional. We proactively promote non-traditional pathways where under-representation is a known issue, with a particular focus on increasing participation in apprenticeships. In support of this, gender and race competency training are being developed for CIAG colleagues to increase the competency of our staff to challenge preconceptions and barriers. Furthermore, we have also undertaken work to embed the [Principles of Good Transitions](#) for young people with Additional Support Needs (ASN) into our Career Management Skills (CMS) framework, ensuring our career service provides them with the support required to make a successful post-school transition. This has included the development of 'My Career Management Skills' resources for young people with ASN. We piloted these resources, allowing us to incorporate feedback from partners in disability organisations, SDS colleagues who had used the resources with customers, and from the young people themselves.

Our digital CIAG service, My World of Work, reinforces this approach, suggesting a range of pathways available to young people to pursue their chosen learning and career goals. To strengthen our work in this area we have added new content to our core group work resources

for careers professionals, to help challenge gender stereotypes and concepts of 'realistic' jobs for disabled people. We have also developed 'My Career Management Skills' resources to support young people with ASN. This included a pilot of the resources, allowing us to incorporate feedback from partners in disability organisations, SDS colleagues who had used the resources with customers, and from the young people themselves.

Our 'Next Steps' Service Offer ensures that those who do not make a successful transition from school to a positive destination, such as education or employment, are provided with additional intensive coaching support to do so. Information on care experience and other additional support needs is used to determine the required service offer. While this support is primarily targeted at people aged 15 – 18, the offer is extended for those with known care experience as part of our [Corporate Parenting Plan](#) commitments.

As a statutory Community Justice partner, we also bring expertise at a local level with regards to improving the outcomes for those young people with experience of the justice system. Our Careers Advisers work with young people in the Young Offenders Institute Polmont and Cornton Vale to help break down barriers to their future participation in the labour market. We also work with Community Justice partners to support prevention and reintegration which contributes to the improvement of employment prospects of vulnerable young people.

We are also committed to ensuring that young people from a diverse range of backgrounds can access work-based learning opportunities and achieve equitable outcomes. We work to encourage employers to value and develop a diverse talent pool with the right skills for their business. First produced in 2015, our [Apprenticeships Equality Action Plan](#) sets out our approach to delivering this ambition. Key activity aligned to this plan has, for example, included providing a range of guides for our employers across Foundation and Modern Apprenticeships, so they continue to have access to up-to-date information and resources on attracting and retaining a diverse

workforce. We collaborated with the youth mental health charity, Penumbra, to produce guidance for employers and apprentices about mental health and well-being. We also worked with Who Cares Scotland? to develop resources to support care experienced individuals.

We have begun piloting a Fair Work toolkit with Senior Phase pupils in order to raise awareness of it as a concept as well as increase their understanding of their rights as future employees.

Our Organisation

We seek to develop a work environment where we treat all employees as individuals, fairly and in a consistent way. We work within the spirit and the practice of the Equality Act 2010 by promoting a culture of respect and dignity. Should it ever arise, staff are expected to challenge attitudes, behaviour and language that are non-inclusive and discriminatory, in a positive way. Our ambition is still to go beyond the requirements set out in equality legislation and to lead by example within the public sector. Our Equality & Diversity elearning is mandatory for all colleagues. This ensures the elearning is completed by all new colleagues and every two years for existing colleagues.

We also offer enhanced training aimed at ensuring colleagues have the relevant knowledge and skills to support staff, including young people, from a variety of backgrounds. For example, all colleagues have access to relevant training, developed in partnership with Who Cares? Scotland, which allows them to understand our duties as a Corporate Parent and invites them to consider how this impacts their job role. Reviewed in 2019, this training was incorporated into our corporate induction process and made compulsory for all existing SDS colleagues and Board members. As of April 2021, 100% of SDS colleagues had completed this training. Frontline delivery colleagues also receive additional equality training, including content which highlights a shift in our duties in respect of the findings of Scotland's Independent Care Review.

Colleagues have also taken up CPD relating to ASN, disability, care experience, minority ethnic, gender and LGBTI+ as part of their minimum 21 hours of annual learning. This has included access to a range of webinars provided by partner organisations.

We want to recruit, develop and retain the most talented people, regardless of their background and make best use of their talents. Equality, therefore, features heavily as part of our commitment to developing opportunities for young people to access careers within SDS. This is done through our Young Talent Programme, and the placements and internships that we offer on an annual basis.

Across the Young Talent Programme, we aim to provide a quality experience of learning and work, including understanding of fair work principles, and through doing so increase the diversity of our workforce. Some of these opportunities are specifically targeted at young people who face disadvantage in the labour market, including care experienced young people. For example, in 2018 our CIAG and HR Young Talent Team engaged with MCR Pathways to deliver Talent Taster sessions for care experienced school pupils. Pupils that participated in the taster sessions were offered a guaranteed interview should they apply for one of SDS’s Foundation or Modern Apprenticeship vacancies. Over the last three years, positive action has taken place to support care experienced young people to apply for Young Talent Programme positions at SDS. This includes adjustments to the wording in our recruitment adverts, ringfencing vacancies and extending the application age from 24 up to 29 for care experienced individuals. In our 2019 round of Young Talent recruitment, care experienced candidates were successful in securing both Modern and Graduate Apprenticeships. Training with Who Cares? Scotland is regularly organised for people managers to ensure care experienced colleagues have appropriate support in place.

We care about your safety and wellbeing

How we protect our children and young people is fundamental to enabling them to reach their full potential, by allowing each child to be safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected and included.

This group of articles relates to our commitment to guarantee the safety and wellbeing of young people, and their families, who engaged with our products and services. Our approach to safeguarding embeds a ‘culture of care’ which promotes resilience and the prevention of harm, and encourages young people to thrive, no matter who they are or what their circumstances.

We care about your safety and wellbeing		
Fulfil	Protect	Respect
Article 16	Article 6	Article 24
Article 32	Article 11	
	Article 19	
	Article 20	
	Article 21	
	Article 26	
	Article 27	
	Article 33	
	Article 34	
	Article 37	
	Article 29	



SDS employees have a duty to promote a young person’s wellbeing, recognise any concerns about their welfare and know what action to take to keep them safe. Using a ‘critical friend’ approach, in 2019 we worked with the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) to review, revise and update our approach to child and vulnerable adult protection. Across Scotland, SDS has established a network of Nominated Protection Officers to assist teams handle child protection concerns. While we strive to ensure all colleagues have a strong awareness of safeguarding, including what to do in response to any concerns, this network is particularly relevant to our CIAG advisers working in school and post school settings.

Children and young people have a right to privacy in the both the physical and virtual environment, which includes the protection of their personal data and respect for the confidentiality of their communications. Ensuring awareness and understanding of this has become particularly pertinent during COVID-19. We take measures to ensure that their personal data is fairly, lawfully, accurately and securely stored, for specific purposes and with the explicit, informed and unambiguous consent of the young person and/or their parents or carer.

Prior to the pandemic, and going forward, our Evaluation and Research team’s work with young people in schools requires that staff follow strict guidelines on conducting research with under 18-year-olds. This includes adapting research methods, so they are suitable for young people, and following procedures regarding consent and privacy.

In line with best practice, we also provide privacy statements for all our services on our [corporate website](#). These statements explain to individuals their rights in accordance with current legislation, what we use their personal information for, why we require to use it and how long we need to hold onto it for.

Safeguarding children and young people is about looking after their wellbeing. The principles of protection that we apply to our engagements with children and young people across our service delivery are in line with those which run through Scotland’s “Getting it right for every child” framework. Our safeguarding approach also adheres to the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021. Furthermore, all staff in SDS that work with children or young people are PVG certified in line with the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007.

Our policies, procedures and guidance outline how SDS will fulfil our duty of care to safeguard the children and young people with which we work. Following these policies and procedures means that all

We give you the information you need

Every young person should have access to independent, reliable and accurate information in order to inform their decision-making.

This group of articles relates to the information we provide young people with, in order to help them make informed education and career choices.

We give you the information you need		
Fulfil	Protect	Respect
Article 17	Article 4	
Article 42		



How we give you the information you need

The Career Education Standard acknowledges the interdependent roles held by SDS, teachers, parents, carers and employers in supporting pupils to develop their career management skills and prepare them for the world of work. In line with the standard, our service offer recognises the importance of the quality and consistency of information provided to young people about work and careers across Scotland.

Our professionally qualified Careers Advisers work in partnership with every state secondary school in Scotland, including in specialist settings. They deliver face-to-face and online guidance to pupils from S1-S6, helping them make confident decisions that will lead them to jobs suited to their talents, interests and goals. All of our Careers Advisers have a postgraduate qualification in Career Guidance, adhere to the National Occupations Standards for Guidance Practice, and most are registered with the Career Development Institute (CDI). This ensures they meet the requisite standards required to deliver the best service possible. With regard to information provision, in line with the standards, our advisers help young people find career development information; explain how to distinguish between different types of information including marketing materials; and highlight the value and sources of quality-assured information.

Our digital channels including Apprenticeships.scot and My World of Work also provide young people with access to a range of up-to-date information to support their learning and employment opportunities. Apprenticeship.scot offers information on learning and skills pathways, including Foundation, Modern and Graduate Apprenticeship opportunities. My World of Work is designed to support the development of career management skills and enable individuals to discover which careers match their skills, education and experience. It is one of the most heavily accessed youth digital services in Scotland with over 1.4 million users per year. By creating

an account, young people can explore their interests and strengths using the online tools, including both the Skills Explorer and the CV tool. Scottish Government policy dictates that every pupil in Scotland should have a My World of Work profile by the end of their time in S3. This allows pupils to access the material they need to, for example, assist in their decision-making in relation to subject choices. My World of Work provides over 600 industry job profiles, helping individuals to gain insight into careers they might wish to explore. These profiles are linked to reliable, accurate and up-to-date labour market intelligence that we provide, based on the forecasting information we receive from Oxford Economics.

We are continuing to build and enhance the depth and quality of labour market intelligence on skills supply and demand. By working in partnership with industry, we help to identify and articulate their current and future skills needs and how these vary by geography, industry sector and occupation. Our Careers Advisers support the provision of this information to parents and carers, teachers and pupils in a format that can be easily accessed, understood and utilised for the benefit of highlighting opportunities for the young person.

In adopting a partnership approach to delivering the Career Education Standard, we have increasingly focused our efforts on co-designing and co-delivering resources with young people.

We have collaborated with schools across Scotland to create an innovative network of My World of Work Ambassadors. Through this programme school pupils, who volunteer as Ambassadors, work to promote My World of Work in their schools, helping to embed career management skills in the curriculum. Ambassadors not only aid their peers, but also work with staff, parents, and partners to promote the variety of career information and support that can be accessed through My World of Work. As a result of taking a partnership approach, through the ambassador programme, young people are therefore better prepared to engage with, and make use of, the

services we offer, preparing them to make informed choices about their future career.

We ensure that we communicate using language and methods appropriate for our audiences, so that pupils across different ages and stages can understand and access the services we provide. For example, our My World of Work Live! programme for eight to 18-year-olds offers a set of fun, interactive activities that enables individuals to discover future career opportunities. Our Future Me Magazine is also specifically designed for young people, supporting them to make important subject choices during key stages in school. At SDS, we have a responsibility to actively work towards ensuring that all of our colleagues are aware of the UNCRC and enact their responsibilities in line with it. We have already started an internal process of engagement to ensure that all colleagues that directly engage with young people are able to signpost them to sources of information on their rights.

We help the adults in your life to support you

All children and young people benefit from the interest and involvement of their parents/carers in their learning and education. Parents and carers are the number one influence on young people making decisions about their future.

We help the adults in your life to support you		
Fulfil	Protect	Respect
Article 5	Article 9	
Article 18	Article 10	



How we help the adults in your life support you

Our in-school CIAG practitioners work to develop positive partnerships with parents and carers by facilitating opportunities for them to be involved in decisions affecting their children's future education and career choices. We provide caregivers with information and practical support, helping them to use their skills and experience, and develop the relevant knowledge, to support their children to make important decisions in their career planning journey e.g., at key transition points, including from P7-S1, subject choices in both S2/S3 in the senior phase.

When pupils are making the transition from P7 to S1, Careers Advisers attend parent/carer events to outline the support on offer. When engagements take place on a one-to-one basis between our Careers Advisers and pupils at subject choice time (both at S2/S3 and senior phase), we actively encourage parents and carers to come along and get involved. In this context, along with the young person, parents and carers are able to hear from our Careers Advisers about future jobs and what skills employers are looking for, other SDS services, and career management skills. Careers Advisers also attend parent evenings and events throughout the senior phase to support both the young people and their parents and carers. During COVID-19, while these events were not able to take place face-to-face, we organised a series of virtual events for parent and carers, which proved very successful. This will continue into the future, with both virtual and face-to-face events being made available.

Our online sessions for caregivers provide information on the help that is available on parents and carers section of My World of Work. One of the aims of the site is to help guardians spark career conversations with their child and explore the different routes and pathways that their child can take. There is information on: subject choices; applying for courses and funding; applying for jobs; volunteering; and how to help children when they receive their exam results through our Exam Results Helpline.

We also have a dedicated website, My Kid's Career, to help parents and carers understand current and future jobs in demand, the routes into these jobs, and tips on having career conversations. My Kid's Career includes up-to-date labour market information showing the skills and occupations which are in-demand now in Scotland, and emerging career paths for the future.

The range of people taking on the role of guardian for care experienced young people is also wide and varied and it is important that parental engagement activity accounts for this. To support care experienced young people, our careers advisers work with residential units/children's house staff to develop their confidence and competence in supporting the learning and career decisions of the young person.

We know that parents and carers are the primary influence on young people making decisions about their future. As such, to ensure that we are providing the best opportunities for custodians to give guidance and direction to their child in respect of positive, sustained destinations after school, we regularly seek their views on the services we provide. Feedback received in 2019/20 from parents and carers we engage with suggested that there was room to improve our communications and increase awareness of our products and services, as well as the available routes and pathways into apprenticeships. In response to this, we undertook a learning and review phase on how to better engage with guardians. We refreshed our cross-organisation approach to parental engagement in 2021 to inform future activity, including situations where parental influence regarding apprenticeships may be an additional barrier to equality and diversity in apprenticeships.

We support you to access learning

All children and young people should be able access the learning opportunities which are available to them, so that they can realise their full potential, in learning, in work, and in life.

This group of articles relates to our commitment to ensuring Scotland's young people, regardless of their background, characteristics or location, have access to a range of options and pathways which allow them to effectively prepare for, enter and progress in the world of work.

We support you to access learning		
Fulfil	Protect	Respect
Article 28	Article 31	
Article 29		



How we support you to access learning

By delivering Scotland's career service, we help young people to develop their career management skills to make their learning and career choices.

Our CIAG services support young people at key transition points to explore learning and career opportunities and make informed decisions. We believe the lifelong development of career

management skills is fundamental to being adaptive and resilient in navigating change. We understand that individuals, particularly those with protected characteristics, may need different levels of support to develop their career management skills. As such, a key principle of our service is that our advisers provide a personalised service to each customer that is determined by their specific needs. For example, we continue to offer an enhanced, targeted service to care experienced young people. In 2018/19, 97% of senior phase pupils and 75% of Next Steps customers with known care experience received coaching guidance from SDS, with 84% and 65% respectively showing an improvement in their career management skills. In 2018/19, 75% of care experienced Next Steps customers progressed on to sustained learning, training or work. During the pandemic lockdown, we continued delivery of these services remotely, through one-to-one sessions online, additional means such as our CIAG helpline, and safely through our career centres when the lifting of restrictions allowed.

We have jointly developed, with Education Scotland and teaching practitioners, career-long professional learning modules, and a suite of resources, lesson plans and subject lesson inserts that help teaching staff to support young people to develop career management skills in a school setting. Lesson inserts are designed in an easy-to-use one-page format and aim to link the curriculum to careers using short activities that insert resources found on My World of Work into a wider subject lesson.

My World of Work Live! is helping young people across Scotland develop their career management skills and explore the job opportunities that may exist for them in the future in an engaging and interactive way. As a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we developed resources that can be done at home to help young people better understand the world of work. Each activity had a lesson plan for parents and carers and a worksheet for the young person to work through. Some activities also had supporting films

or tutorials. As part of the programme, we also ran, and continue to run, virtual Meet the Expert sessions for young people. Experts from a range of sectors take part in sessions where young people get the chance to gain valuable insight to job roles. Going forward, we will continue to offer My World of Work Live! activities in both face-to-face and virtual context.

Collaborating with the agencies, employers and other partners, we also help to create opportunities for young people to experience, enter and progress in the labour market, including through work-based learning.

Working with SQA, we created the opportunity for young people across Scotland to gain work-based learning qualifications at an earlier point in their school journey (S3-S4), through the expansion of the Foundation Apprenticeships programme to SCQF Levels 4 and 5. This development exists to extend the reach of the Foundation Apprenticeship offer for the future. Foundation Apprenticeships at SCQF Levels 4 and 5 aim to enable individuals to identify and develop meta-skills such as communication, creativity and self-management. This can contribute to work readiness and create high performing employees at an earlier stage in a young person's learning.

The programme is also enabling employers to make a structured contribution to school learning by providing real life work-based situations that add value to learning and provide a pathway that articulates to other work-based qualifications available in the senior phase and beyond, such as Foundation, Modern and Graduate Apprenticeships.

We have an established Young Talent Journey and offer Foundation Apprenticeships, Modern Apprenticeships, Graduate Apprenticeships and Graduate Intern opportunities to young people wishing to start careers with us as well as supporting work-based learning and training for people wishing to become Careers Advisers. This

includes for young people from under-represented groups and those who face the greatest barriers to work. Young people in SDS are offered a supportive working environment with mentoring support in addition to the support of their peer group.

In recognition of our positive working practices, we were proud to be awarded Gold Investors in People Accreditation in 2019. One of the strengths highlighted by the assessment was that our young talent has easy access to development opportunities, particularly within leadership, and are constantly encouraged to enhance their skills. This built upon our Gold Standard Investors in Young People awarded in summer 2018.

We understand and respect your other rights as a child

This group of articles relate to the rights which are not directly within SDS’s remit but which we uphold without question due to their foundational, underpinning and universal nature.

We support you to access learning		
Fulfil	Protect	Respect
Article 1	Article 15	Article 7
Article 41		Article 10



How we understand and respect your other rights as a child

We recognise the definition of a child as being anyone under 18-years-old. Our all-age career service offers universal and targeted support to individuals up to and beyond their 18th birthday, and our apprenticeship offer provides a higher contribution rate for 16–19-year-olds. As stated in Article 41, we are not limited to the Articles of the UNCRC in our efforts to promote and fulfil the rights of children. We take a rights-based approach to all aspects of our work, internally and across our service design and delivery, ensuring personalisation and responsiveness to the specific situations and aspirations of each young person.

In line with a human rights-based approach, we are also committed to protecting and respecting those articles that sit outwith our areas of either activity or authority. This applies directly to articles 7, 10 and 15 of the UNCRC. Should we become aware of an infringement upon these rights, we would act accordingly.

3. Next Steps

In April 2021, we introduced our new 2021-2025 Equality and Diversity Mainstreaming Outcomes to provide an intersectional and holistic focus for equality work across SDS. Consideration was given to children's rights during the development of these outcomes:

- **Outcome One** – People with lived experience of poverty, and from protected characteristic groups known to face inequality, have increased participation and improved progression in learning and employment.
- **Outcome Two** – Women and girls can access and sustain learning and careers which reflect their skills and interests, enabled by the adoption of gender-sensitive approaches from employers and key influencers.
- **Outcome Three** – Lived experience of people from protected characteristic groups is a fundamental component of the design and development of SDS services, improving their customer experience and outcomes.
- **Outcome Four** – Businesses are aware of the benefits of diversity and fair work practices and increasingly adopt and embed them, improving the wellbeing of people from protected characteristic groups.
- **Outcome Five** – SDS benefits from increased diversity throughout our workforce, particularly in relation to gender, race and disability, and colleagues with protected characteristics feel heard, respected and fulfilled at work.

We are working to implement these outcomes, ensuring our commitment to upholding children's rights. We are also in the process of developing our new Strategic Plan for 2022-2025. We will continue to further our contribution to upholding the UNCRC over the next reporting period, through activities which are aligned to both our Equality Outcomes and new Strategic Goals.

Furthermore, as part of ongoing activity to continuously improve the way in which we assess the positive or negative equality impacts of SDS policy and services, we are considering how we incorporate Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) going forward.

Monitoring and Reporting

SDS has a constituted cross-business Equality Management Group who were consulted in the development of this report. This group meets monthly and will assume responsibility for ensuring there is a proactive culture of everyday accountability for children's rights in SDS. This includes keeping under review effective ways that we involve and provide information to children and young people about their rights in relation to SDS services.

Following the publication of our new Strategic Plan in 2022, and in response to anticipated statutory guidance for public bodies on UNCRC reporting requirements, we will produce a full update on our progress in relation to the UNCRC in 2023. This will include clear commitments to activity aimed at furthering children's rights going forwards.

Appendix 1 – The rights that we Fulfil, Protect and Respect

Right	Theme	Fulfil/Respect/Protect
Article 1 – Everyone under the age of 18 has all the rights in the Convention.	We understand and respect your other rights as a child	Fulfil
Article 2 – The Convention applies to every child without discrimination, whatever their ethnicity, sex, religion, language, abilities or any other status, whatever they think or say, whatever their family background.	We treat everyone equally	Fulfil
Article 3 – The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.	We listen to what you say	Fulfil
Article 4 – Governments must do all they can to make sure every child can enjoy their rights by creating systems and passing laws that promote and protect children’s rights.	We give you the information you need	Protect
Article 5 – Governments must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents and carers to provide guidance and direction to their child as they grow up, so that they fully enjoy their rights. This must be done in a way that recognises the child’s increasing capacity to make their own choices.	We help the adults in your life to support you	Fulfil
Article 6 – Every child has the right to life. Governments must do all they can to ensure that children survive and develop to their full potential.	We care about your safety and wellbeing	Protect
Article 7 – Every child has the right to be registered at birth, to have a name and nationality, and, as far as possible, to know and be cared for by their parents.	We understand and respect your other rights as a child	Respect
Article 8 – Every child has the right to an identity. Governments must respect and protect that right, and prevent the child’s name, nationality or family relationships from being changed unlawfully.	We treat everyone equally	Protect
Article 9 - Children must not be separated from their parents against their will unless it is in their best interest (for example, if a parent is hurting or neglecting a child). Children whose parents have separated have the right to stay in contact with both parents, unless this could cause them harm.	We help the adults in your life to support you	Protect

Article 10 – Governments must respond quickly and sympathetically if a child or their parents apply to live together in the same country. If a child’s parents live apart in different countries, the child has the right to visit and keep in contact with both of them.	We help the adults in your life to support you	Protect
Article 11 – Governments must do everything they can to stop children being taken out of their own country illegally by their parents or other relatives, or being prevented from returning home.	We care about your safety and wellbeing	Protect
Article 12 – Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. This right applies at all times, for example during immigration proceedings, housing decisions or the child’s day-to-day home life.	We listen to what you say	Fulfil
Article 13 – Every child must be free to express their thoughts and opinions and to access all kinds of information, as long as it is within the law.	We listen to what you say	Fulfil
Article 14 – Every child has the right to think and believe what they choose and also to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Governments must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents to guide their child as they grow up.	We listen to what you say	Protect
Article 15 – Every child has the right to meet with other children and to join groups and organisations, as long as this does not stop other people from enjoying their rights.	We understand and respect your other rights as a child	Protect
Article 16 – Every child has the right to privacy. The law should protect the child’s private, family and home life, including protecting children from unlawful attacks that harm their reputation.	We care about your safety and wellbeing	Fulfil
Article 17 – Every child has the right to reliable information from a variety of sources, and governments should encourage the media to provide information that children can understand. Governments must help protect children from materials that could harm them.	We give you the information you need	Fulfil
Article 18 – Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their child and should always consider what is best for the child. Governments must support parents by creating support services for children and giving parents the help they need to raise their children.	We help the adults in your life to support you	Fulfil

Article 19 – Governments must do all they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.	We care about your safety and wellbeing	Protect
Article 20 – If a child cannot be looked after by their immediate family, the government must give them special protection and assistance. This includes making sure the child is provided with alternative care that is continuous and respects the child’s culture, language and religion.	We care about your safety and wellbeing	Protect
Article 21 – Governments must oversee the process of adoption to make sure it is safe, lawful and that it prioritises children’s best interests. Children should only be adopted outside of their country if they cannot be placed with a family in their own country.	We care about your safety and wellbeing	Protect
Article 22 – If a child is seeking refuge or has refugee status, governments must provide them with appropriate protection and assistance to help them enjoy all the rights in the Convention. Governments must help refugee children who are separated from their parents to be reunited with them.	We treat everyone equally	Fulfil
Article 23 – A child with a disability has the right to live a full and decent life with dignity and, as far as possible, independence and to play an active part in the community. Governments must do all they can to support disabled children and their families.	We treat everyone equally	Fulfil
Article 24 – Every child has the right to the best possible health. Governments must provide good quality health care, clean water, nutritious food, and a clean environment and education on health and well-being so that children can stay healthy. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.	We care about your safety and wellbeing	Respect
Article 25 – If a child has been placed away from home for the purpose of care or protection (for example, with a foster family or in hospital), they have the right to a regular review of their treatment, the way they are cared for and their wider circumstances.	We listen to what you say	Protect
Article 26 – Every child has the right to benefit from social security. Governments must provide social security, including financial support and other benefits, to families in need of assistance.	We care about your safety and wellbeing	Protect

Article 27 – Every child has the right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and social needs and support their development. Governments must help families who cannot afford to provide this.	We care about your safety and wellbeing	Protect
Article 28 – Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free and different forms of secondary education must be available to every child. Discipline in schools must respect children’s dignity and their rights. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.	We support you to access learning	Fulfil
Article 29 – Education must develop every child’s personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child’s respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.	We support you to access learning	Fulfil
Article 30 – Every child has the right to learn and use the language, customs and religion of their family, whether or not these are shared by the majority of the people in the country where they live.	We treat everyone equally	Fulfil
Article 31 – Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.	We support you to access learning	Protect
Article 32 – Governments must protect children from economic exploitation and work that is dangerous or might harm their health, development or education. Governments must set a minimum age for children to work and ensure that work conditions are safe and appropriate.	We care about your safety and wellbeing	Fulfil
Article 33 – Governments must protect children from the illegal use of drugs and from being involved in the production or distribution of drugs.	We care about your safety and wellbeing	Protect
Article 34 – Governments must protect children from all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation.	We care about your safety and wellbeing	Protect
Article 35 – Governments must protect children from being abducted, sold or moved illegally to a different place in or outside their country for the purpose of exploitation.	We care about your safety and wellbeing	Protect
Article 36 – Governments must protect children from all other forms of exploitation, for example the exploitation of children for political activities, by the media or for medical research.	We care about your safety and wellbeing	Protect

Article 37 – Children must not be tortured, sentenced to the death penalty or suffer other cruel or degrading treatment or punishment. Children should be arrested, detained or imprisoned only as a last resort and for the shortest time possible. They must be treated with respect and care, and be able to keep in contact with their family. Children must not be put in prison with adults.	We care about your safety and wellbeing	Protect
Article 38 – Governments must not allow children under the age of 15 to take part in war or join the armed forces. Governments must do everything they can to protect and care for children affected by war and armed conflicts.	We care about your safety and wellbeing	Respect
Article 39 – Children who have experienced neglect, abuse, exploitation, torture or who are victims of war must receive special support to help them recover their health, dignity, self-respect and social life.	We care about your safety and wellbeing	Protect
Article 40 – A child accused or guilty of breaking the law must be treated with dignity and respect. They have the right to legal assistance and a fair trial that takes account of their age. Governments must set a minimum age for children to be tried in a criminal court and manage a justice system that enables children who have been in conflict with the law to reintegrate into society.	We treat everyone equally	Protect
Article 41 – If a country has laws and standards that go further than the present Convention, then the country must keep these laws.	We understand and respect your other rights as a child	Fulfil
Article 42 – Governments must actively work to make sure children and adults know about the Convention.	We give you the information you need	Fulfil

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