SCOTTISH INDEPENDENCE REFERENDUM (FRANCHISE) BILL

CHILDREN IN SCOTLAND

Children in Scotland strongly supports the extension of the voting franchise to 16 and 17 year olds and any measures which facilitate voting and result in greater and more broadly representative participation in the electoral process.

We would endorse the submissions made to the Committee by our colleagues at the Scottish Youth Parliament and the National Union of Students who raise concerns and suggestions as to the practical application of the extension of the franchise.

In particular we would like to see support being given to schools and colleges to help teachers approach the issue of voting and the referendum in a positive and unbiased way. Some guidance may also be useful to deal with situations where some students can vote and others cannot - the cut off date of 18 September 1998 will mean it is likely a number of students in a class will not be able to vote whereas others in the same school year will.

We hope the Committee will be able to devote time in its meetings to explore the various issues, both legal and otherwise, surrounding the extension of the voting franchise to 16 and 17 year olds.

Sara Collier
Policy Officer
3 April 2013