



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Join In

Gabh Pàirt

Scottish Parliament UNCRC Report 2026

Aithisg Pàrlamaid
na h-Alba air UNCRC 2026



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Presiding Officer Message

The Scottish Parliament is here to represent everyone in Scotland, including children and young people.

Hearing from a wide range of voices is essential to the Parliament's work. Over the past year, we have continued to involve children and young people in a variety of ways.

This includes committees hearing directly from them on issues that affect their lives and welcoming young people from across Scotland through our schools programme. We have also engaged with children and young people in their communities and online to support greater understanding of our work and how they can take part.

This year's report sets out the Parliament's commitment to a children and young people's human rights approach, grounded in five principles: **embedding, equality and non-discrimination, empowerment, participation and accountability**.

We are proud to take this approach, which shows the Scottish Parliament's ambition to reshape the way we work so that the rights of children and young people are at the heart of everything we do.

The report builds on our first year of reporting in 2025 and reflects our ongoing commitment to representing the voices of children and young people across all areas of our work. It outlines the further steps we will take to ensure that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is fully embedded in everything we do.

We are grateful to all those across Scotland who have supported this work to date. We look forward to continuing to work with children and young people over the coming year to support them to play an active role in our Parliament and our democracy.



Presiding Officer

Kenneth Gibson MSP

Facal bhon Oifigear Riaghlaidh

Tha Pàrlamaid na h-Alba ann gus a h-uile duine ann an Alba a riochdachadh, clann is daoine òga nam measg.

Tha e deatamach do dh'obair na Pàrlamaid gum bi sinn a' cluinntinn bho raon farsaing de ghuthan. Thairis air a' bhliadhna a dh'fhalbh, tha sinn air cumail oirnn a' com-pàirteachadh le clann is daoine òga ann an iomadach dòigh.

Mar eisimpleir, tha comataidhean air cluinntinn gu dìreach bho dhaoine òga air cùisean a bheir buaidh air am beathannan, agus tha sinn air fàilte a chur air daoine òga bho air feadh na h-Alba tron phrògram sgoiltean againn. Tha sinn cuideachd air conaltradh a dhèanamh le clann is daoine òga, sna coimhearsnachdan aca agus air-loidhne, gus an cuideachadh le bhith a' tuigsinn barrachd mun obair againn agus mar a dh'fhaodas iad pàirt a ghabhail ann.

Tha an aithisg am-bliadhna a' cur an cèill gealltanais na Pàrlamaid do mhodh-obrach stèidhichte air còraichean chlann is daoine òga, air a bhonntachadh air còig prionnsapalan: **fighe a-steach, co-ionannachd is gun leth-bhreith, cumhachdachadh, com-pàirteachadh agus cunntachalachd.**

Tha sinn moiteil às a' mhodh-obrach seo, a tha a' nochdadh miann-adhartais Pàrlamaid na h-Alba a bhith ag ath-chumadh na dòigh sam bi sinn ag obair gus am bi còraichean chlann is daoine òga aig teis-meadhan a h-uile nì a bhios sinn a' dèanamh.

Tha an aithisg seo a' togail air a' chiad aithisg againn ann an 2025 agus tha i a' nochdadh ar gealltanais leantainn a bhith a' riochdachadh guthan chlann is daoine òga thar a h-uile raon den obair againn. Tha i a' mìneachadh nan ceuman a bharrachd a ghabhas sinn gus dèanamh cinnteach gu bheil Cunntachd nan Dùthchannan Aonaichte air Còraichean Chloinne air fhighe a-steach gu tur sa h-uile nì a bhios sinn a' dèanamh.

Tha sinn taingeil don a h-uile duine air feadh na h-Alba a tha air taic a thoirt don obair seo gu ruige seo. Tha sinn a' dèanamh fiughair ri bhith a' cumail oirnn ag obair le clann is daoine òga thairis air a' bhliadhna ri teachd gus taic a thoirt dhaibh ann a bhith a' cluich pàirt ghnìomhach sa Phàrlamaid againn agus ann an deamocrasaidh.

Oifigear Riaghlaidh

Kenneth Gibson BPA

Introduction

In 2024, Scotland took a significant step by incorporating the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into law.

The UNCRC is an international human rights treaty which sets out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all children are entitled to and provides a framework for ensuring those rights are respected, protected and fulfilled.

For the Scottish Parliament, this was the beginning of a long-term commitment in relation to how it understands its role and relates to the people it serves, especially children and young people.

This report is published by the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body under section 21 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024, which requires an annual report on the actions taken by the Parliament and its committees to secure better or further effect of children's rights, and the actions they intend to take in the year ahead.

Our annual report is an important accountability tool. It provides a transparent account of the Parliament's work to implement children's rights, what progress has been made since the previous reporting period, what challenges remain and what action will be taken next.

We recognise that children and young people were not directly engaged in drafting this year's report to the extent we would have wanted. To support accessibility and accountability, we plan to produce a child-friendly video to accompany this year's report and will build engagement with children and young people into future reporting cycles from an earlier stage.

This report builds on the Parliament's first year of reporting in 2025, which set out early activity, learning and ambition across a range of teams.

It reflects a growing awareness that embedding children's rights isn't just the responsibility of individual teams. Rather, it requires a collective effort to ensure that these rights are respected, protected and fulfilled across every aspect of Parliament's work.

The Scottish Parliament has a unique role to play. As the institution responsible for law making, scrutiny and representation, it plays a central role in implementing human rights standards into everyday reality.

In practice, this means ensuring that laws are compatible with rights, holding decision makers to account, and creating the conditions in which rights can be realised.

Children under 16 cannot vote in Scottish Parliament elections and no child can stand for election. As a result, children rely on the structures Parliament puts in place, including scrutiny of legislation and its role in holding government to account, as some of the main ways they can influence decisions that affect their lives. This makes Parliament's law-making, scrutiny and representative functions particularly important for the protection and promotion of children's rights.

As this report demonstrates, parliamentary scrutiny can provide an important route through which children's experiences and views influence decision-making, helping ensure that legislation and public policy take account of children's rights.

The Scottish Parliament is responsible not only for enabling rights through legislation, but also for modelling what a rights respecting organisation looks like.

This includes ensuring that children and young people are recognised as rights holders, that their experiences inform parliamentary work, and that their voices are taken seriously in decisions that affect them.

At the heart of this is a commitment to a children's human rights approach¹ which is grounded in five principles: **embedding, equality and non-discrimination, empowerment, participation and accountability.**

Embedding requires children's rights to be built into planning and decision making. **Equality and non-discrimination** require action to address inequality and remove barriers. **Empowerment** requires children and young people to be supported to understand and exercise their rights. **Participation** means meaningful and inclusive involvement of children and young people. **Accountability** requires transparent decision making, which can be scrutinised and improved.

For the Scottish Parliament, using a children's human rights approach demonstrates its ambition to reshape the way it works so that the rights of children and young people are at the heart of everything it does, not something added on at the end.

The 2025 report showed examples of early work towards this including:

- Partnership working with organisations that support children and young people through the UNCRC working group.
- involving children and young people in parliamentary committees.
- improving how children and young people can take part in visits and education sessions.

¹ A children's human rights approach is a framework for implementing children's rights developed originally in Wales through research by Dr Rhian Croke and Prof Simon Hoffman. In Scotland their principles were used to create the Children's Rights Skills and Knowledge Framework, commissioned by the Scottish Government to support the workforce to understand and implement children's human rights in practice.

However, experience from the first year has also reinforced that meaningful participation requires time, trust and sustained relationship building.

One of the key lessons from the first year of reporting is that this work cannot be neatly mapped onto individual teams. While the 2025 report documented activity across different functions, it became clear that far more teams and roles contribute to this work than initially anticipated.

This report therefore marks a deliberate shift in framing. Rather than presenting activity team by team, it is structured around the principles of a children's human rights approach.

It describes the work we have already done, and the plans we have going forward. In each case it demonstrates where that work has met one, or often many, of the five principles.

This is not a short-term programme of work. As the [State of Children's Rights Report](#) makes clear, the realisation of rights depends on sustained changes in culture, practice, relationships and systems. Not just on the existence of legal duties.

This report should therefore be read as part of a longer journey. It sets out the Parliament's continued ambition to evolve, to learn from practice across Scotland, and to embed a children's human rights approach across all areas of its work over time.

We recognise that evaluation is still developing across this work. At present, the Parliament captures activity through a shared tracker, with teams across Parliament contributing updates of activity that supports children's rights to ensure transparency, shared learning and connection.

The next step is to work with children, young people and partners to understand what a fuller monitoring and evaluation approach should look like, including how tracked actions can be evaluated over time.

The work ahead will require ongoing commitment, collaboration and reflection. But it also offers a clear opportunity to ensure that the Scottish Parliament not only upholds children's rights in theory, but actively contributes to making them real in the lives of children and young people across Scotland.

Actions from the last year

Over the past year, the Scottish Parliament has continued to put children's rights into practice.

This work has strengthened partnerships, improved safeguarding, built shared understanding, and connected children and young people's views more directly to parliamentary scrutiny, services and communications.

Together, these actions show progress across the five principles of a children's human rights approach: **Embedding** rights in systems and planning; advancing **Equality/Non-discrimination** by reducing barriers to involvement; supporting **Empowerment** through learning, confidence and voice; strengthening **Participation** in decisions that affect children and young people; and improving **Accountability** through clearer feedback, scrutiny and reporting.

Strengthening safeguarding and creating safe participation

Safeguarding is a foundation for meaningful participation and gives effect to children's right to protection from harm (UNCRC article 19).

During the year, the Parliament progressed a formal safeguarding policy for children and adults at risk, supported staff learning through NSPCC safeguarding training, and began developing an online safeguarding module with the Ann Craft Trust for MSPs, their staff and Parliament staff.

This work advances **Embedding** by building safeguarding into organisational practice, **Participation** by creating safer conditions for children and young people to take part, and **Accountability** by clarifying responsibilities across Parliament.

While developing a formal safeguarding approach is a significant step forward, the next challenge is ensuring this knowledge is consistently embedded across Parliament so that safe and meaningful participation becomes part of everyday practice.

The Parliament has continued to work alongside a UNCRC Working Group, which brings together external organisations with experience of supporting children and young people. The group provides a shared space to reflect on practice, identify barriers to involvement and shape future approaches to participation.

The Working Group has been instrumental in supporting the Parliament to understand what strong participation with children and young people could and should look like in parliamentary processes.

With support from Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights), work is underway to involve children and young people in shaping how the Parliament approaches future UNCRC reporting. This strengthens **Participation** by involving children and young people earlier in planning, **Embedding** by making their views part of reporting processes, and **Accountability** by ensuring reporting is informed by the people whose rights it concerns.

Partnerships with organisations including the Scottish Youth Parliament and Children's Parliament have supported children and young people's involvement in committee work and informed new school education sessions delivered by the Parliament's Education Service.

Initial engagement with Starcatchers has also helped broaden the Parliament's understanding of babies and under-fives, supporting **Equality/Non-discrimination** by widening attention to groups whose voices are less often heard directly, and reflecting babies and toddlers' right to development (UNCRC Article 6)

While this activity has helped strengthen participation knowledge and confidence across a range of Parliament teams, we recognise that further action is needed to embed this learning consistently across the organisation and ensure that children and young people's participation is routinely considered in planning, decision-making and evaluation.



Building capability and shared understanding

Embedding children and young people's rights requires shared understanding across the organisation. This year, the Parliament took further steps to build knowledge and confidence among MSPs and staff.

In April 2026, training was delivered to UNCRC leads from across parliamentary teams, including representation from the senior executive team. The training included input informed by children and young people, helping to ground learning in lived experience.

Staff who took part in the training reported an increase in confidence about what a children's human rights approach is with many highlighting an appetite to understand how the principles could apply in their individual remits.

While this activity has begun to build shared knowledge and confidence, we recognise that understanding of children's rights is not yet consistent across all roles and teams. In future, we will consider how learning can be made more systematic, practical and directly informed by children and young people's experiences.

The Parliament is also exploring how UNCRC learning can be built into ongoing professional development for MSPs, their staff and Parliament staff, including opportunities for children and young people to contribute directly.

Education sessions delivered directly to children and young people continue to support understanding of rights and democratic processes. These include 12 Rights Respecting Schools sessions and 5 targeted programmes for new voters, linking learning for 600 children and young people aged 16 to 18 to current parliamentary activity so that it feels relevant and practical.

Feedback gathered from 2 of the online new voters sessions showed 53% of the children and young people taking part felt more informed and better able to get involved with parliament and 75% felt prepared to participate in the upcoming election.

Teachers also mentioned that the examples of how children's voices had been listened to in parliament, such as a 7 year old boy lodging a petition, really added value to the sessions.

This work advances **Embedding** by integrating children's rights into organisational learning, **Empowerment** by helping staff, children and young people understand and apply rights, and **Participation** by ensuring training is informed by children and young people's perspectives.

Embedding participation in parliamentary processes

Committee scrutiny provides one of the clearest examples of a children's human rights approach influencing parliamentary work. Collaboration between committee teams, The Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe), the Participation and Communities Team (PACT) and external partners has helped connect participation, evidence and scrutiny more effectively.

The Education, Children and Young People Committee's work on the Promise showed this approach in practice, giving practical effect to children and young people's right to be heard in decisions that affect them (UNCRC Article 12).

Over the parliamentary session, the Committee heard from care experienced children and young people, supported by Who Cares? Scotland, and used their evidence to inform business planning and scrutiny on workforce planning and whole family wellbeing.

SPICe researchers also helped ensure that issues affecting care experienced people were considered across the Committee's wider programme, including scrutiny of organisations working across education, social work and youth justice. This gave Members a stronger understanding of how these issues connect and supported scrutiny of legislation affecting Scotland's care system.

Importantly, the Committee closed the feedback loop by writing to children and young people who had taken part to explain how their input had influenced its work. Who Cares? Scotland then produced an impact video for its members, helping the young people who took part to see the value of their contribution.

The following quotes were gathered directly from some of the young people who took part in this engagement:

"I felt the politicians listened carefully and were very respectful and patient during our discussions in the group"

"I also liked seeing the videos the next day of the ministers giving examples from talking to us the night before, that's how you know they listened to what we have to say."

This example demonstrates **Participation** by connecting lived experience directly to scrutiny; **Embedding** by making children and young people's evidence part of committee planning; **Equality/Non-discrimination** by working with partners to reduce barriers to involvement; **Empowerment** by showing participants how their views made a difference; and **Accountability** by strengthening scrutiny and reporting.

Similar approaches have informed other areas of committee work, including engagement with children and young people on:

- **Widening access to higher education** - reflecting children's right to education (UNCRC Articles 28 and 29).
- **The Children (Withdrawal from Religious Education and Amendment of UNCRC Compatibility Duty) (Scotland) Bill** - which engages children's right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (UNCRC Article 14).
- **The Wellbeing and Sustainable Development (Scotland) Bill** - which engages children's rights to development (UNCRC Article 6).
- **ADHD and Autism, Pathways and Support Inquiry** - engaging the rights of disabled children (UNCRC Article 23) and their right to health (UNCRC Article 24).
- **Climate change plan scrutiny.** - reflecting children's right to a healthy environment (UNCRC Article 24).

For example, engagement on the climate change plan ensured that children and young people's views contributed to committee recommendations and influenced how government information was communicated.

Taken together, this work shows how children and young people's rights are becoming more systematically connected to parliamentary scrutiny, rather than treated as a separate activity.

While these examples show that participation can strengthen scrutiny and decision making, we recognise that this approach is not yet applied consistently across all committees or policy areas. In future, we will consider how to make participation with children and young people a more routine part of parliamentary scrutiny, including in areas where the relevance of children's rights may be less immediately visible.

Participation within and beyond the Parliament building

The Parliament has also continued to support participation beyond the Parliament building. The Participation and Communities Team's communities action plan includes a commitment to design events with and for children and young people, creating opportunities that are more accessible and relevant to different groups.

Work with community partners in East Lothian has explored how children and young people's views can influence decision making in their area. This supports **Empowerment** and advances **Equality/Non-discrimination** by reducing geographic and social barriers to participation.

The Parliament has also been exploring how to make its own spaces more welcoming, inclusive and rights-respecting. Children and young people, supported by partner organisations, have shared views on what would help them feel comfortable and valued when engaging with Parliament.

Feedback gathered from a previous visit by care experienced children and young carers has informed this work. Further feedback from a visit by children and young people in June is being considered by teams including Facilities Management, with a focus on practical improvements such as signage and colour in and around the building.

The children and young people who visited in June stated that the visit helped to increase their confidence in speaking in front of a group of people and that they would be listened to.

This work demonstrates **Participation** by involving children and young people in community and parliamentary settings, **Empowerment** by enabling them to shape spaces and decisions, **Equality/Non-discrimination** by addressing barriers to access, and **Embedding** by applying this learning across outreach, services and the physical environment.

While this work has helped gather valuable feedback on how children and young people experience Parliament's spaces and outreach, we recognise that more work is needed to translate that feedback into visible changes and to test whether those changes improve their experience.

In future, we will consider how children and young people can be involved in reviewing improvements and shaping the next stages of this work.

Raising awareness and modelling a rights respecting organisation

The Parliament has used its public platform to raise awareness of children and young people's rights and to model what a rights-respecting organisation can look like.

This has included a podcast with the Chair of the Scottish Youth Parliament on young people's involvement in politics, and a video with members of the Children's Parliament explaining how the Scottish Parliament could become more child and young person friendly.

This work has brought together communications, participation and external partners to represent children and young people's views in ways that are authentic, accessible and clear.

At the time of writing the podcast had been downloaded 176 times and the Children's Parliament video had 121 views on YouTube with the BSL version totalling 167 views.

The Children's Parliament video will continue to be used as a resource, with updated messages planned from the new Presiding Officer. This supports **Empowerment** by amplifying children and young people's voices, **Participation** through their direct involvement in communications, and **Embedding** by helping build a consistent rights-respecting culture across the organisation.

While these communications have helped share children and young people's views more widely, we recognise that we need to better understand who they are reaching and what difference they make to awareness, understanding and confidence.

In future, we will consider how communications can be more consistently co-produced, evaluated and used to show the impact of children and young people's participation.

Continuing to build the foundations for accountability

A core part of the Parliament's purpose is accountability, holding Government to account and scrutinising its actions. Progress over the past year has also strengthened how the Parliament supports accountability for children's rights.

This includes helping MSPs scrutinise whether children's rights are considered in legislation and policy, and ensuring that previous evidence and engagement, including children and young people's views, inform ongoing scrutiny.

The Parliament is also continuing to develop its understanding of what accountability means within its own work. While this is still at an early stage, work to involve children and young people in shaping UNCRC reporting, alongside clearer approaches to participation and feedback, is helping to build more transparent and responsive systems

Ongoing evaluation of education sessions and work to strengthen feedback loops will support this. Further work is also exploring more accessible and child-friendly approaches to feedback and complaints.

These actions show a continued shift from individual activities towards a connected approach in which **Embedding, Equality/Non-discrimination, Empowerment, Participation** and **Accountability** are equally understood and applied.

While this work is still developing, it shows that a children's human rights approach is beginning to influence not only what the Scottish Parliament does, but how it works.

Looking Forward

The Parliament's first two years of UNCRC reporting have shown that embedding a children's human rights approach is a long-term process.

The next phase will focus on applying the five principles more consistently across all areas of work, strengthening how children's rights are embedded in parliamentary processes and better understanding the impact of this work over time.



Strengthening safeguarding and creating safe participation

The Parliament will continue to embed safeguarding across its work with children and young people. Building on the development of a formal safeguarding approach, the focus will now shift towards ensuring safeguarding knowledge is consistently applied across teams and becomes part of everyday participation practice.

Alongside this, work with the UNCRC Working Group and external partners will continue to strengthen understanding of what safe, meaningful and rights-respecting participation looks like in different parliamentary contexts.

Finally, the Parliament will work to involve children and young people in shaping future UNCRC reporting and wider participation activity from an earlier stage.

Building capability and shared understanding

Building knowledge and confidence across the organisation will remain central to embedding children's rights. This includes further integrating UNCRC learning into training and development for MSPs, their staff and Parliament staff, alongside targeted awareness-raising activity.

The Parliament will continue to explore how children and young people can contribute directly to learning and development, ensuring that understanding of rights is grounded in lived experience.

Particular focus will be placed on ensuring that understanding of children's rights becomes more consistent across teams and roles, helping colleagues apply a children's human rights approach within their own areas of responsibility.

Alongside this, the Parliament will continue to build knowledge and confidence across Clerks, SPICe and other colleagues, improve the accessibility of its information, reflecting children's right to information that they can understand (UNCRC Article 17), and work with partners to reach children and young people who are less often heard.

Embedding participation in parliamentary processes

A key priority will be to further embed children's rights in scrutiny and law-making. This means supporting committees to consider children's rights from the outset, connecting participation more clearly to decision-making, and making better use of existing evidence.

This will include supporting the use of child rights impact assessments within parliamentary processes, testing a human rights-based approach to scrutiny with committees, and strengthening how committees engage with Scottish Government assessments.

The Parliament will also test these approaches across a wider range of policy areas, including those not traditionally associated with children and young people. This will reinforce that children's rights are relevant across all aspects of parliamentary work.

The Parliament's Session 7 Strategic Plan will also be agreed later this year. We will continue to explore how the views of children and young people can support the delivery of the strategic priorities. Options such as direct engagement with children and young people or the use of a child rights impact assessment will be considered with colleagues across Parliament.

Participation within and beyond the Parliament building

The new Public Engagement Strategy will support engagement with people across Scotland who are less likely to participate in Parliament's work, including children under 16, who have been identified as a priority group.

Greater focus will be placed on Equality and Non-discrimination. The Parliament will use data and insight from previous engagement to identify and reach children and young people whose voices are less often heard.

For example, the Education Service uses data such as the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation to target engagement with schools that have had lower levels of participation and has begun tailored outreach, including sessions for home educators.

The Parliament will also move towards more sustained and relationship-based participation. Longer-term approaches, such as people's panels, ongoing groups and youth-led activity, can help children and young people build confidence, deepen their understanding of rights and see how their views contribute to change.

Work to improve the Parliament's environment, services and engagement approaches will continue, with children and young people playing an active role in reviewing improvements and shaping future developments.

Raising awareness and modelling a rights-respecting organisation

The Parliament will strengthen its approach to communicating children's rights through more strategic, consistent and accessible communications across a range of channels, including social media.

This will include increasing co-produced content, building staff confidence to communicate rights clearly, and ensuring children's and young people's voices continue to be represented authentically in communications activity.

Storytelling and case studies will be used more consistently to demonstrate how participation has influenced parliamentary work and to help children and young people better understand the impact of their involvement.

The Parliament will also continue to create opportunities for children and young people to take on visible and active roles through events, panels and engagement activity.

Continuing to build the foundations for accountability

Strengthening accountability will remain a key priority over the coming year. This includes improving feedback and complaints processes, developing more accessible approaches to feedback, and involving children and young people in shaping future reporting.

The Parliament will continue to strengthen how it demonstrates the impact of participation, including re-engaging children and young people who take part in activities and showing how their views have influenced decisions and parliamentary work.

Alongside this, the Parliament will continue to develop its monitoring and evaluation approach. This will include working with children, young people and partners to understand how progress should be measured, how impact can be evaluated, and how future monitoring can link more clearly to UNCRC articles and clusters as well as the five principles of a children's human rights approach.

Together, these priorities reflect a continued move towards a more connected and systemic approach. The next phase will focus not only on expanding activity, but on improving the quality, consistency and impact of how children's rights are embedded across the work of the Scottish Parliament.

Measuring progress and impact

The Parliament does not yet have a fully embedded monitoring and evaluation framework for this work. Current monitoring is supported through a shared work tracker, which brings together actions from teams across Parliament and helps create transparency about what is being progressed.

During 2026/27, the Parliament will consider how this tracker can be developed so that it not only records activity, but also supports evaluation of quality, consistency and impact.

Progress will be measured across all five principles, recognising that change will happen over time and that impact will be understood across whole systems as well as individual activities.

For **Participation**, success will mean clear evidence that children and young people's views move through parliamentary processes and influence evidence gathering, scrutiny and decision making.

For **Equality/Non-discrimination**, progress will mean a wider and more diverse range of children and young people taking part, with fewer barriers to involvement.

For **Empowerment**, progress will be seen in how confident children and young people feel in understanding their rights, engaging with Parliament and seeing the impact of their involvement.

For **Embedding**, progress will mean children's rights being reflected consistently across parliamentary processes, outputs and decision making, including in areas of work not traditionally associated with children and young people.

For **Accountability**, progress will be shown through clearer feedback loops, stronger scrutiny of children and young people's rights, more transparent decision making, and greater involvement of children and young people in reporting and evaluation.

Together, these measures will help the Parliament understand whether children and young people's experience is improving, not only whether they can access opportunities, but whether they feel heard, included and able to influence decisions.

Alongside the five principles of a children's human rights approach, the Parliament will explore how future monitoring can link more clearly to UNCRC articles and clusters. This would help show both how the Parliament is working in a rights respecting way and which specific rights are being considered through its activity.

Over time, this will provide a clearer picture of the difference this work is making and help guide the Parliament's development as a rights-respecting organisation.

Forward Plan

The measures below reflect the Parliament's current approach to monitoring progress. As part of the development of a wider monitoring and evaluation framework, these measures will be reviewed with children, young people and partners during 2026/27

Area of work	Reflections	Forward action	How we will measure progress
Strengthening safeguarding and creating safe participation	Progress has been made through the development of a safeguarding policy, training and strengthened partnership working. However, safeguarding knowledge and participation practice are not yet consistently embedded across the organisation.	Continue embedding safeguarding across participation activity, strengthen staff confidence, and involve children and young people in shaping future reporting and participation activity from an earlier stage.	Evidence that safeguarding is routinely considered within participation activity; staff confidence in safeguarding and participation practice; children and young people involved in shaping reporting and participation processes.
Building capability and shared understanding	Training has increased knowledge and confidence, but understanding of children's rights is not yet consistent across all roles and teams.	Further integrate UNCRC learning into professional development; involve children and young people in learning activities; build knowledge across Clerks, SPICe and other colleagues; improve accessibility of information.	Increased confidence and understanding among staff; participation in learning opportunities; evidence of children's rights being considered in different areas of work; improved accessibility of information and resources.

Area of work	Reflections	Forward action	How we will measure progress
Embedding participation in parliamentary processes	Examples from committee work demonstrate how participation can strengthen scrutiny and decision making. However, this approach is not yet applied consistently across all committees and policy areas.	Support committees to consider children's rights earlier; strengthen rights-based scrutiny; support the use of child rights impact assessments; explore how children's views can inform delivery of the Session 7 Strategic Plan; test approaches across a wider range of policy areas.	Evidence that children's views influence scrutiny and decision making; use of child rights impact assessments; examples of participation informing committee work across a wider range of subjects and committees.
Participation within and beyond the Parliament building	Valuable feedback has been gathered from children and young people, but more work is needed to translate feedback into visible change and review whether improvements are effective.	Deliver the Public Engagement Strategy; prioritise engagement with children under 16 and children whose voices are less often heard; develop longer-term participation approaches; involve children and young people in reviewing improvements to Parliament's environment and services.	A wider and more diverse range of children and young people participating; evidence of engagement with less-heard groups; feedback from children and young people on accessibility, inclusion and their experience of engaging with Parliament.

Area of work	Reflections	Forward action	How we will measure progress
Raising awareness and modelling a rights respecting organisation	Communications activity has helped amplify children's voices, but understanding of reach, impact and effectiveness remains limited.	Strengthen communications through more strategic and accessible content; increase co-produced communications; use stories and case studies to demonstrate impact; create more visible opportunities for children and young people.	Reach and engagement across communications channels; feedback from audiences; evidence that children and young people have helped shape communications activity; examples showing how participation has informed Parliament's work.
Continuing to build the foundations for accountability	Accountability approaches are developing, but monitoring, evaluation and feedback mechanisms remain at an early stage.	Improve feedback and complaints processes; strengthen feedback loops; involve children and young people in future reporting; develop the monitoring and evaluation framework; explore links between monitoring, UNCRC articles/clusters and the five principles of a children's human rights approach.	Clearer feedback to children and young people about the impact of their involvement; children and young people involved in reporting and evaluation; a developed monitoring and evaluation approach; evidence of progress against the five principles and clearer links to UNCRC rights.

Public Information

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