



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body

Thursday 19 June 2025 (Session 6)

Incorporating the UNCRC: SPCB report

Executive summary

1. This paper asks the SPCB to agree to the publication of the attached report under section 21 of the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 and to agree arrangements for publishing future such reports.

Issues and options

2. The 2024 Act incorporates into Scots law the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, an international human rights treaty covering all aspects of children's lives including civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. This includes placing public authorities under a duty not to act incompatibly with the UNCRC requirements and placing public authorities, in relation to certain functions, under duties to publicly account for and report regularly on their compliance with, and efforts to go beyond, the UNCRC requirements.
3. The Scottish Parliament is not designated as a public authority under the Act. Instead there is a duty on the SPCB under section 21 of the Act to report annually by July 16 (the date the Act came into force) on:
 - a. the actions taken by the Parliament and its committees to secure better or further effect of the rights of children during the period covered by the report; and
 - b. the actions they intend to take to secure better or further effect of the rights of children during the next period.
4. The first draft report fulfilling this duty is attached. The content of the report has been developed by the Participation and Communities Team (PACT) in collaboration with offices across the Parliament and with an external working group of children and young people's organisations.
5. Section 21 requires the report to be published in such manner as the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body considers appropriate and accompanied by a version of the report that children can understand. We have sought to fulfil this duty by producing a single report which aims to convey the information clearly in plain English to any interested audience. We will also produce alongside the report a child-friendly visual summary encapsulating the key points. We can

Reference: SPCB (2025) - Paper 33

review this approach for future years once we see how the first report is received.

6. This year's report has not had any direct input from children and young people. We plan to work with organisations on the working group from September of this year to ensure that children and young people are meaningfully involved in reviewing and contributing to our delivery plan and shaping next year's delivery plan and report.

Governance

7. We have taken equalities considerations into account by working with a range of organisations with experience of children and young people with different needs and experiences including hearing and visual impairment, neuro-divergence (such as autism) and care-experience.
8. Because this is the first report under the Act, we thought it appropriate for the SPCB to approve it. We propose that the sign off of future reports should be delegated to the Chief Executive.

Resource implications

9. All the actions outlined in the delivery plan will be met within existing resources as part of office plans.

Publication Scheme

10. This paper can be published once the report is published. PCO are aware of the report and supporting communications around publication.

Decision

11. The SPCB is asked to agree to the publication of the attached report and that approval of future annual reports on UNCRC incorporation should be delegated to the Chief Executive.

Participation and Communities Team
June 2025