

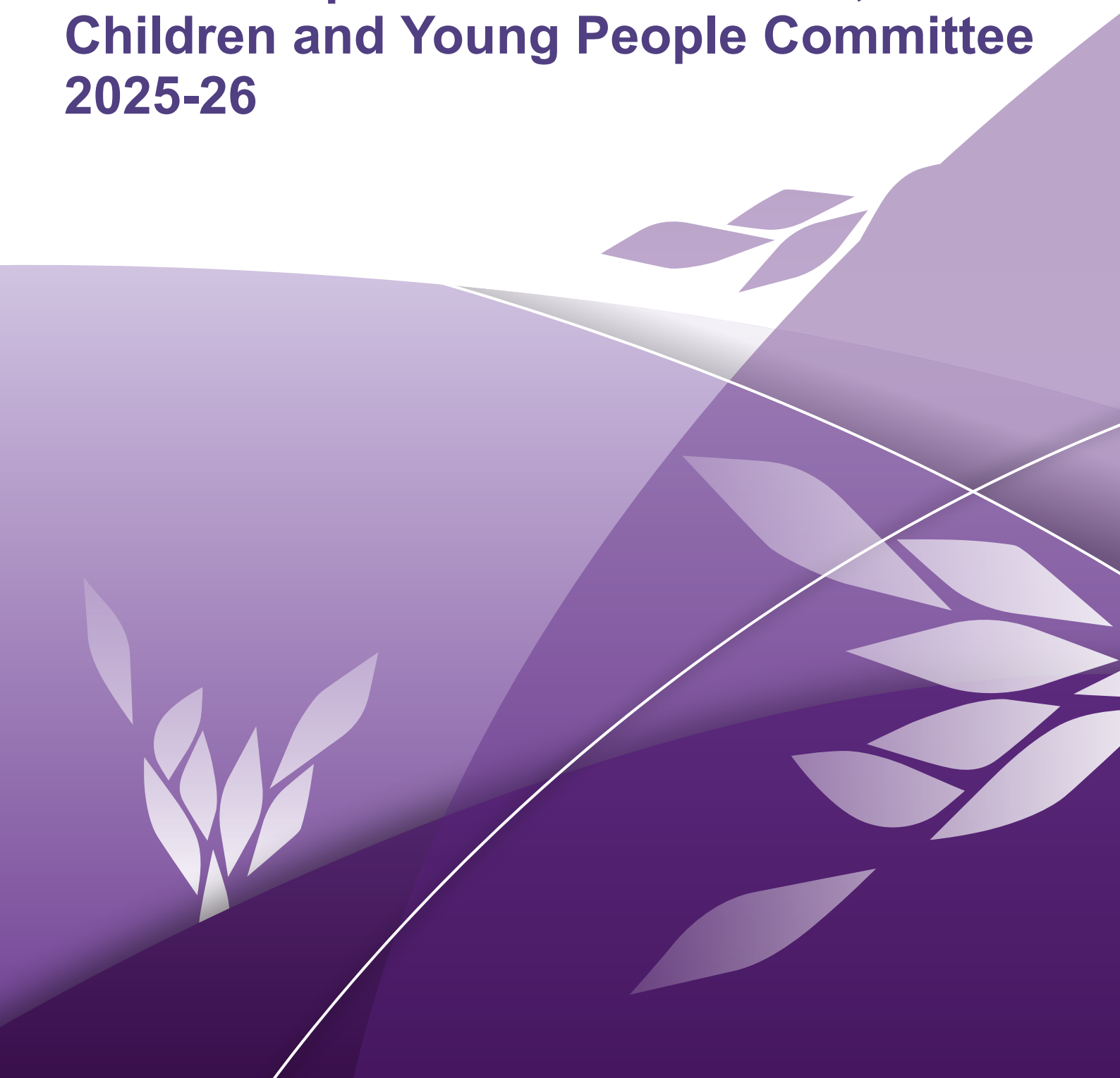


The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Published 19 March 2026
SP Paper 1088
5th Report, 2026 (Session 6)

Education, Children and Young People Committee

Annual Report of the Education, Children and Young People Committee 2025-26



Published in Scotland by the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body.

All documents are available on the Scottish
Parliament website at:
<https://www.parliament.scot/documents>

For information on the Scottish Parliament contact
Public Information on:
Telephone: 0131 348 5000
Textphone: 0800 092 7100
Email: info@parliament.scot

Contents

Introduction	1
Meetings	2
Legislation	3
Bills	3
Schools (Residential Outdoor Education) (Scotland) Bill	3
Tertiary Education and Training (Funding and Governance) (Scotland) Bill	3
Children (Care, Care Experience and Services Planning) (Scotland) Bill	3
Restraint and Seclusion in Schools (Scotland) Bill	4
Legislative Consent Memorandums	5
Subordinate Legislation	5
Inquiries	6
Pre-Budget Scrutiny (2026-27)	6
Other evidence sessions	7
Equalities and Engagement	8

Education, Children and Young People Committee

To consider and report on matters falling within the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills and matters relating to the Historical Abuse Inquiry, redress and languages falling within the responsibility of the Deputy First Minister.



ecyp.committee@parliament.scot



0131 348 6225

Committee Membership



Convener
Douglas Ross
Scottish Conservative
and Unionist Party



Deputy Convener
Jackie Dunbar
Scottish National Party



George Adam
Scottish National Party



Miles Briggs
Scottish Conservative
and Unionist Party



Ross Greer
Scottish Green Party



Bill Kidd
Scottish National Party



John Mason
Independent



Paul McLennan
Scottish National Party



Paul O'Kane
Scottish Labour



Willie Rennie
Scottish Liberal
Democrats

Introduction

1. This report covers the work of the Education, Children and Young People Committee during the Parliamentary year 13 May 2025 to 8 April 2026.
2. The following changes to the Committee's membership occurred during the course of this parliamentary year.
 - On 26 June 2025, Paul McLennan replaced Joe Fitzpatrick as a member of the Committee.
 - On 6 December 2026, Paul O'Kane replaced Pam Duncan Glancy as a member of the Committee.

Meetings

3. During the Parliamentary year, the Committee held 33 meetings. Of these, seven were entirely in public, one was entirely in private and 25 included a mixture of public and private items.
4. Examples of business which the Committee agreed to consider in private include:
 - its work programme.
 - draft reports and
 - evidence heard during meetings.
5. Agendas and minutes of all meetings are published on the [Education, Children and Young People Committee webpage](#) on the Scottish Parliament website.
6. In addition, the committee held a number of informal, private engagement sessions. These are reflected throughout this report.

Legislation

Bills

Schools (Residential Outdoor Education) (Scotland) Bill

7. The [Schools \(Residential Outdoor Education\) \(Scotland\) Bill](#) is a member's bill, which was referred to the Committee for Stage 1. The Bill will establish that all pupils in state and grant-aided schools will have the chance to experience at least four nights and five days of residential outdoor education during their school career.
8. The Committee took post-stage 1 evidence on the Bill at its meeting on 10 September and held Stage 2 proceedings on the Bill at its meeting on 19 November.

Tertiary Education and Training (Funding and Governance) (Scotland) Bill

9. The [Tertiary Education and Training \(Funding and Governance\) \(Scotland\) Bill](#) was referred to the Committee for Stage 1 scrutiny. The Bill aimed to change the way that funding is provided for post-school education and skills training.
10. The Committee took oral evidence on the Bill throughout May 2025. The Committee published its Stage 1 report on 9 September, and held Stage 2 proceedings on the Bill at its meetings on 26 November and 3 December 2025.

Children (Care, Care Experience and Services Planning) (Scotland) Bill

11. The [Children \(Care, Care Experience and Services Planning\) \(Scotland\) Bill](#) was referred to the Committee for Stage 1 consideration. The Bill makes changes in the law in relation to the children's care system. It also changes who is responsible for the planning of children's services.
12. The Committee launched several calls for views on the Bill aimed at individuals with care experience and those providing support and organisations and academics. The Committee also produced an easy read version of the call for views, as well as one for BSL users. The call for views were open between 27 June and 15 August.
13. The Committee took oral evidence at meetings on 10 September and 17 September, 8 October and 5 November. It published its report on 17 December. An accessible version of the report was published alongside it.
14. The Committee held Stage 2 proceedings at its meetings on 4, 11 and 18 February.

Restraint and Seclusion in Schools (Scotland) Bill

15. The [Restraint and Seclusion in Schools \(Scotland\) Bill](#) was referred to the Committee for Stage 1 scrutiny. The Bill aims to minimise the use of restraint and seclusion of children and young people in schools and to create statutory guidance and duties in relation to its use in schools. The policy intention is to ensure that appropriate techniques of restraint and seclusion are used in schools only as a last resort.
16. The Committee launched a call for views on the Bill which ran from 28 May 2025 to 11 July 2025 and received 125 responses. The Scottish Government produced a memorandum on the Bill following its introduction. The Committee took evidence at its meetings on 24 September 2025, 1 and 29 October 2025 and 12 November 2025.
17. The Committee published its report on 16 January 2026. The Committee held Stage 2 proceedings on the Bill at its meeting on 4 March 2026.

The Convener with Daniel Johnson MSP, who introduced the Bill, and campaigners Beth Morrison and Kate Sanger.

The Convener invited Daniel Johnson MSP, who introduced the Bill, and campaigners Beth Morrison and Kate Sanger to the launch of the Committee's Stage 1 report.



Source: Scottish Parliament

Legislative Consent Memorandums

18. The [Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill](#) is a UK Government Bill introduced in the House of Commons on 17 December 2024. The UK Government tabled amendments to the Bill on 13 May 2025 which extend to Scotland.
19. The Bill, as introduced, states that it aims to break the link between young people's backgrounds and their future success. It will put in place a package of support to drive high and rising standards throughout the education and care systems so that every child can achieve and thrive. It will protect children at risk of abuse, stopping vulnerable children falling through the cracks in services, and deliver a core guarantee of high standards with space for innovation in every child's education.
20. The two areas where provisions are proposed to extend to Scotland through parliamentary amendments are community-based accommodation and child employment. These proposed provisions aim to provide more flexibility to children and young people while still maintaining their safeguards and wellbeing.
21. A [Legislative Consent Memorandum](#)(LCM) was lodged on 12 June by Jenny Gilruth, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills. The LCM provides an overview of the Bill and sets out the provisions for which the Scottish Government considers consent is required from the Scottish Parliament.
22. The Committee considered the LCM its meeting on 18 June 2025 and [reported](#) on it 19 June 2025.

Subordinate Legislation

23. During this parliamentary year, the Committee considered 19 Scottish Statutory Instruments (SSIs)—
 - 5 SSIs subject to the affirmative procedure; and
 - 14 SSIs subject to the negative procedure.

Inquiries

Pre-Budget Scrutiny (2026-27)

24. The Committee took oral evidence for its pre-budget scrutiny during June and October. The Committee again concentrated on university and college funding, with a specific focus on financial sustainability.
25. The Committee wrote to the Minister for Higher and Further Education with its conclusions on [14 November 2025](#).
26. Following the publication of the Budget in January 2026, the Committee took evidence from the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, the Minister for Higher and Further Education, and the Minister for Children, Young People and The Promise on [21 January 2026](#).

Other evidence sessions

27. Throughout this parliamentary year, the Committee held focussed sessions on a range of issues:
- University of Dundee, including at meetings on [25 June](#), [26 June](#) and [29 October](#).
 - [Universities](#)
 - [Professor Alexis Jay and the Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs](#), followed by an evidence session on group-based child sexual abuse and exploitation.
 - [Scotland's Rural College \(SRUC\)](#)
 - [VAT and independent schools](#)
 - [The Curriculum Improvement Cycle and Progress on reform to senior phase qualifications](#)
 - [Community sporting initiatives for children and young people](#).
28. The Committee also held cross-portfolio ministerial sessions at its meetings on [11 June](#) and [17 December 2025](#).

Equalities and Engagement

29. The Committee wants to hear from as diverse a range of people when taking evidence, as possible. When inviting organisations to give evidence, it asks them to consider this when identifying people to speak to the Committee.
30. The Committee also ensures that it creates opportunities to hear from those working on the ground in education and with young people.
31. As part of its evidence gathering on the Restraint and Seclusion in Schools (Scotland) Bill, the Committee visited the Donaldson Trust in Linlithgow, to meet teachers, staff and families of young people who have additional support needs.

The Committee with teachers and staff at The Donaldson's Trust in Linlithgow.

The Convener, Douglas Ross MSP, and Deputy Convener, Jackie Dunbar MSP, with Committee members Bill Kidd MSP and John Mason MSP with teachers and staff from The Donaldson's Trust.



Source: Scottish Parliament

32. It is important to the Committee to hear directly from young people. The Committee therefore works with young people and key organisations to develop sessions designed to make the young people as comfortable as possible, so that they can fully participate and share their evidence.
33. As part of its work on the Children (Care, Care Experience and Services Planning) (Scotland) Bill, the Committee worked with Who Cares? Scotland, to create an informal engagement session to allow care experienced young people to share their views on what was in the Bill.
34. For its working on the Tertiary Education and Training (Funding and Governance) (Scotland) Bill, on its work on Universities and for its session focussed on

Scotland's Rural College, the Committee was keen to hear from local staff representatives, to ensure that members understood the views of those on the ground to the various proposals.

