

# United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) Report 2023 Update



# Foreword

## Foreword from the Chief Executive

Scotland's young people live in a world where the rate of change is continually accelerating.

Events and developments beyond their control, from new technologies to global conflicts, can have ripple effects which impact on their day-to-day lives remarkably quickly.

Recent years have provided stark evidence of this, from the Covid-19 pandemic to the cost-of-living crisis compounding existing inequalities and further disadvantaging those already facing significant challenges.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) sets out an ambition that all children should develop to their full potential – an ambition Skills Development Scotland (SDS) undoubtedly shares.

We are proud of the work we do each year to support thousands of Scotland's children and young people to recognise and achieve their potential, as they progress through their learning and work journey. Taking a rights-based approach across all our work, we contribute to realising the Scottish Government's vision for children's rights to be embedded in all aspects of society.

Our Strategic Plan Skills for a Changing World, published in November 2022, included customer commitments for the first time. These commitments, alongside our commitment to #KeepThePromise, demonstrate the explicit link between our strategic ambitions and how, in partnership, we help Scotland's children and young people to fulfil their potential.

This publication is an update of our first Report, published in March 2022. The updated content demonstrates our continued commitment over the past year to recognise, respect and promote the rights of Scotland's children and young people. Against a wider background of public sector reform, as we look to transform our organisation for the future, the rights of our customers will continue to be at the heart of all we do.

**Damien Yeates**

**Chief Executive  
Skills Development Scotland**

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# 1. Introduction

## About Skills Development Scotland (SDS)

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) is the national skills agency.

Our ambition is that skills contribute to a thriving, productive and inclusive Scotland. The key to Scotland's future prosperity is to ensure that its people and businesses are inspired and enabled to develop the right skills for a changing world. SDS collaborates across the skills ecosystem to make this happen.

We achieve this through intelligence-led delivery of Scotland's Career Service, Apprenticeships, and other learning and skills interventions in support of Scottish Government ambitions. Through the sharing of expertise, intelligence, and extensive partnership working, particularly with our agency colleagues, we enable the development and delivery of innovative solutions to Scotland's skills and labour market challenges.

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. 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. Amendments to the Bill were formally lodged with Parliament on Monday 18 September 2023 and the amended Bill was unanimously passed into Scottish law on 7th December 2023. The Scottish Government affirmed that the UNCRC is at the heart of the Scottish Government's commitment to ensuring that all children and young people have the best possible start in life, regardless of their circumstances.

Parallel to the UNCRC Bill, the Scottish Government has developed plans for Scotland's new Human Rights Bill that will incorporate international human rights standards into Scots law. During the consultation period, many organisations have called for the inclusion of Care Experience of all ages to be named in and explicitly



protected by the equality provision in the proposed new Human Rights Bill.

## How did we get here?

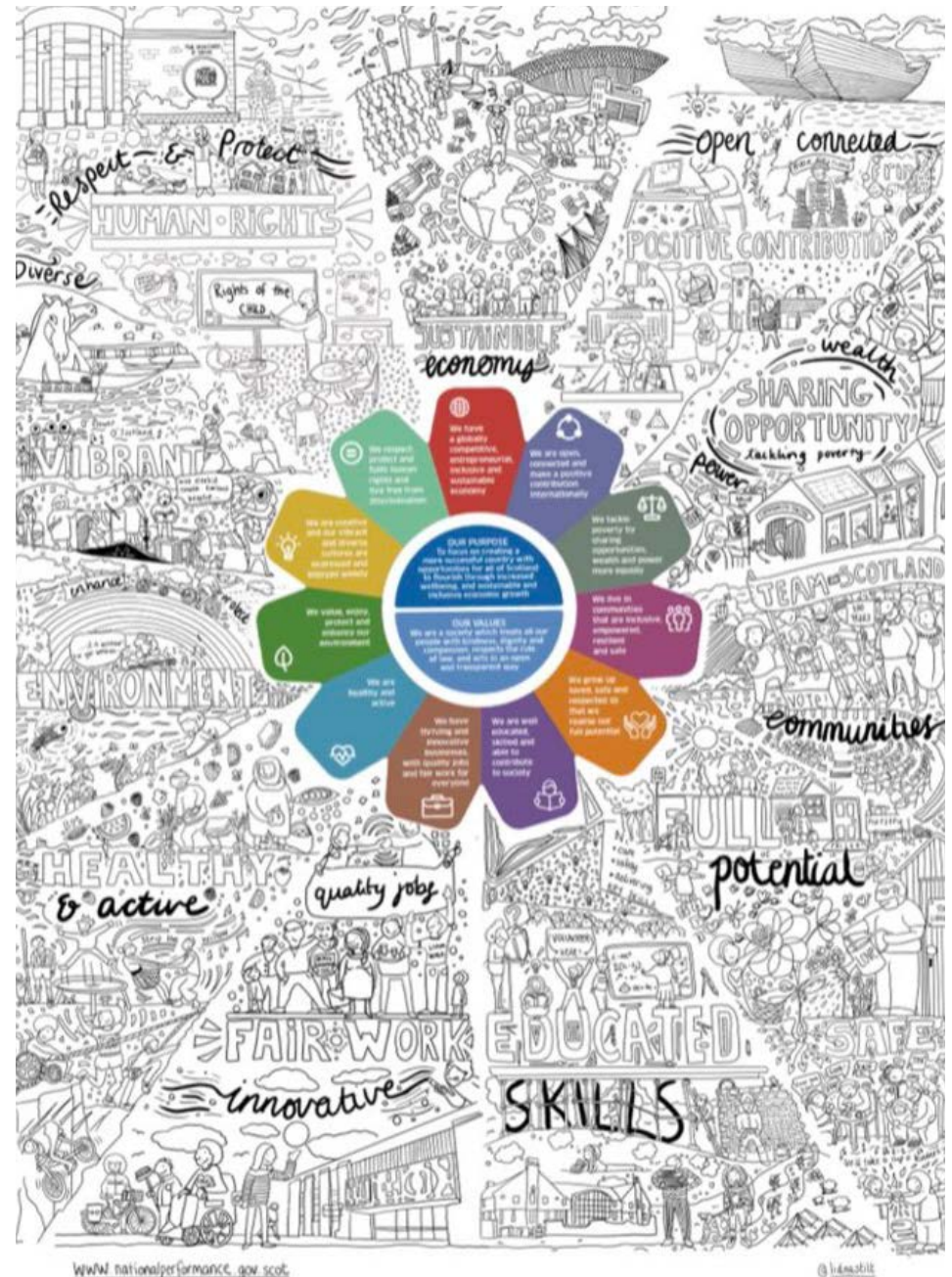
The UNCRC Bill followed over a decade of legislation and policy that protects and promotes children's rights including the [Human Rights Act 1998](#), [Getting It Right For Every Child \(GIRFEC\)](#), the [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#), and the [Children \(Scotland\) Act 2020](#).

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

Part 1 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 placed duties on Scottish Ministers and public bodies from 1 April 2017 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 refreshed values, principles and GIRFEC National Practice Model, our career guidance practitioners utilise the model to help understand, assess and support wellbeing in conjunction with partners. We also operate in accordance with the [National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021](#).



## Developing our Report

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". [Human Rights](#), Scottish Government

SDS is contributing to a new project commissioned by the Scottish Government to explore the skills and knowledge required for different duty-bearers to fully implement children's rights in Scotland. The Skills and Knowledge Professional Panel is a collaboration drawn from a range of public bodies and third sector organisations and plays a crucial role in the production of a [Skills and Knowledge Framework](#).

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, in line with the provisions for public authorities to delay the publication of their children's rights report within the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 Act. We published our first report in 2022 and this update in 2023 allows us to provide future reports in line with the original three-year reporting cycle.

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

We have used the United Nations 'respect, protect and fulfil' [human rights 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.

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, the ways in which we uphold them and how we have themed them, can be found in [Appendix 1](#).



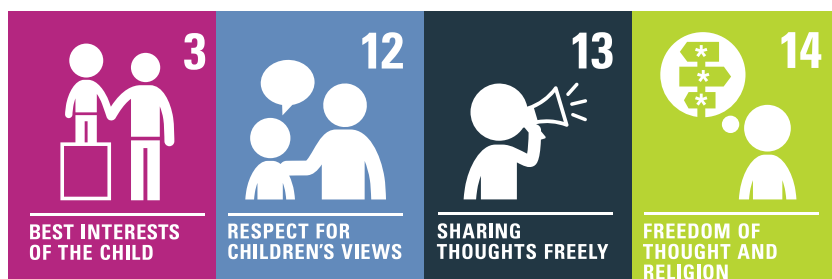
## 2. What we do to uphold the rights of children in Scotland

### 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 to 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.

SDS carries out the Young People's Career Ambitions Research to understand the choices, influences and motivations of young people in making career decisions. A total of 1,414 school leavers from the 2020/21 cohort provided feedback on their experiences. Young people from the most deprived areas have more complex post-school transitions than those from the least deprived areas. Most young people felt supported and encouraged by the careers services they received in school, and this is particularly true for those from the most disadvantaged groups, who report a wide range of benefits.

The Young People in Scotland research is used by SDS to explore the views and experiences of school pupils aged 11-18. It is an omnibus survey carried out by Ipsos MORI. School pupils are asked about future career plans; key influencers; views on STEM and caring careers; and views on work-based learning and My World of Work'. The insights generated are used to shape and inform service delivery in SDS. The 2023 research found that while young people's perceptions on apprenticeships were more positive than the previous year, almost half of young people do not know much about them. This response from young people will help us to target and enhance our communications around the work-based learning opportunities for young people.



Through our Pupils Voice Research (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.

SDS recently launched an automated and streamlined way of gathering feedback from Foundation, Modern and Graduate Apprenticeships through the Real Time Apprenticeship Insights (RTAI) surveys. All apprenticeships are given the opportunity to provide feedback at three key stages: whilst in training (6 months after they start their apprenticeship), when they leave (3 months after leaving) and 15 months after that. The new survey offers an improved evidence base in real time, with the ability to track individuals through different apprenticeships and matching their survey responses with anonymised personal characteristics bringing greater insight. The analysis and insight will be strengthened by additional deep-dives and qualitative, lived-experience research.

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 career service could better operate from early years right through until a young person enters employment. In leading this review of the career 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 are to design career services that are fit for purpose and future-proofed.

One of the young people who took part was Oliver Stan, who was then an S1 school pupil. He said:

**“I think it's important that young people's voices are heard because they could have such good ideas that have a good impact on the world.”**

Our national approach to equality stakeholder engagement involves working with focal point groups, which provide valuable input on equality, diversity and inclusion to SDS. We have groups on women and girls, care experienced, disability and race, and future plans for LGBTI and Age groups.

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, SDS ran a pilot to ensure the language, content, and imagery on the Cyber Security section of Digital World is inclusive and attractive to women and non-binary customers. In partnership

with LGBT Youth and Equate Scotland. The language on our website was felt to be inclusive, but recommendations were made on how to improve our colour, layout, and imagery choices. The insight from this project has been used to inform all of our digital services.

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 to allow young people to develop their core and career management skills and gain experience at SDS that will them to develop their confidence to progress in their future career. 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		

2  
NO DISCRIMINATION

22  
REFUGEE CHILDREN

23  
CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

8  
IDENTITY

40  
CHILDREN WHO BREAK THE LAW

## How we ensure that we won't discriminate against you

### Service Provision

Our [Equality and Diversity Mainstreaming Report 2021-2025](#), and our [update in 2023](#), 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. Sub-reports provide specific evidence on each of the protected characteristics and most recently on additional features such as intersectionality, youth unemployment, lived experience, business case and good practice. 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.

SDS has introduced a new, Integrated Equality Impact Assessment that includes Children's Rights and Wellbeing impact assessments in addition to Equality and Island Communities. It is designed to simplify the process and provide thorough, systematic assessment of the effects that a proposed or existing policy or project is likely to have.

We are committed to providing an impartial, person-centred Career Information Advice and Guidance (CIAG) service. Equality impact assessment of our CIAG service offers ensure the consideration of all equality groups.

Our coaching approach to career guidance has identification and development of career management skills at its heart. Through our career service the young people we work with are supported to explore self, all of their options (including non-traditional pathways), understand their strengths, identify and develop their networks. This enables young people to make and take ongoing decisions in a changing world and ultimately identify and pursue their own path. We have undertaken work to embed the [Principles of Good Transitions](#) for young people with Additional Support Needs (ASN) ensuring our career service contributes to the support required to make a successful post-school transition.

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 support to do so. While this support is primarily targeted at people aged 15 – 18, the offer is further 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 career advisers work with young people in the Young Offender establishments to help break down barriers to their future participation in the labour market for those in a custody setting. To support those young people serving community-based sentences, we also work collaboratively with Community Justice partners on the delivery and review of Community Justice outcome Improvement Plans. This supports 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. For example, we worked with Who Cares Scotland? to develop a resources on care experience for Learning Providers and a Guide for Care Experienced Apprenticeships.

## **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. This training was incorporated into our corporate induction process and made compulsory for all existing SDS colleagues and board members in 2019. Who Cares? Scotland has supported us to refresh our CPD offer in 2023 to reflect updated practice and changes to the policy landscape, including the Promise (Independent Care Review). 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.

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. We have taken positive action 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 and disabled individuals. We piloted an internship programme for care experienced undergraduates from 2021-23. Care experienced young people had the opportunity to take part in an 8-week paid internship at SDS in the summer before their final year at university. Following completion of their degree they were also offered the opportunity to work at SDS for one year and gain experience and support to make their next career move. 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	



Safeguarding children and young people is about looking after their wellbeing and preventing harm. 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 updated "getting it right for every child" framework as well as the [National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland](#). 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

SDS employees have a duty to promote a young person’s wellbeing, recognise any harm or concerns about their welfare and know what action to take to keep them safe. We take a robust protective layering approach to safeguard children and young people from harm, whereby CIAG staff at all levels receive mandatory training and subsequent refresher training as required. As such, we work with Barnardo’s Scotland and have created an organisation wide learning framework plus associated policy and procedures covering child protection. Our network of Nominated Protection Officers and their Knowledge Exchange network provides leadership and oversight to ensure teams recognise and respond to child protection concerns.

In line with the national priority to develop a trauma-informed workforce, we have cascaded Trauma-Informed Practice training to our CIAG teams. This has been focussed on raising awareness, developing insights, shared learning and relevant skills to ensure our advisers can play an appropriate part in supporting recovery as well as ensuring they can avoid re-traumatisation.

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 their confidentiality in engaging with CIAG. 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.

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/ Privacy Promise 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.

## We give you the information you need

Every young person should have access to impartial, 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

Our professionally qualified career advisers work in partnership with every state secondary school in Scotland, including in specialist settings. They deliver the CIAG service to pupils from P7/ S1 transition to S6, helping them make informed and confident decisions about their future. All of our career advisers have a postgraduate qualification in Career Guidance, adhere to the National Occupations Standards for Guidance Practice and Code of Ethics and [National Occupational Standards](#). 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 to find, synthesise and utilise robust career information.

The Career Review includes a recommendation that “Enhanced digital services and online tools should be developed that present information about the world of work in an inspiring and accurate way”. Inclusive, accessible digital services and tools will ensure all people can access trusted and relevant content, and this is complemented with access to professionally qualified, impartial one-to-one support to use, navigate and process 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. The Apprenticeships.scot website supports young learners who are interested in getting involved in apprenticeships. This includes those that are in senior phase and keen to get real industry experience via a Foundation Apprenticeship to those who want to earn while they learn via Modern and Graduate Apprenticeships.

Young people can learn more about apprenticeships, how they work and be inspired by a range of stories from other young people. They can search through the thousands of apprenticeship opportunities that are advertised each year and can also apply online.

My World of Work is designed to support the development of career management skills and enable individuals to explore careers which may be of interest to them. It is one of the most heavily accessed youth digital services in Scotland with over 1.2 million users in 2022<sup>1</sup>. Young people are encouraged to discover a wide range of career possibilities and it has up to date information on over 600 different careers, over 20,000 training opportunities and thousands of job vacancies.

Additional features include useful content on skills to help young people to understand what skills are, what skills they have and how they can develop them. There is also an option choices tool for school pupils to help them choose their subjects at school, a comprehensive assessment that helps young people to understand their strengths, a fun personality quiz – called Animal Me – that helps young people explore their personality, as well as a CV builder.

All of these resources help young learners understand more about themselves and support them in discovering future career opportunities.

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.

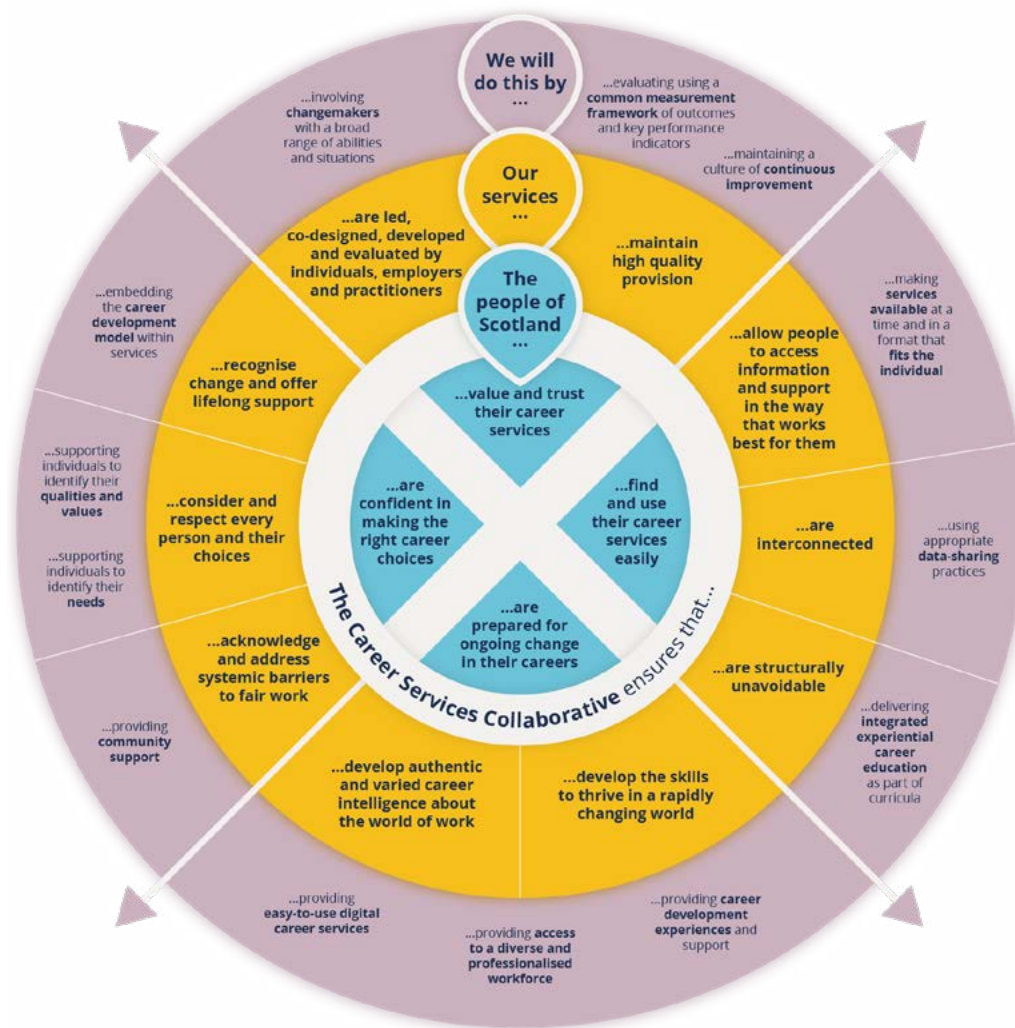
In adopting a partnership approach to delivering the Career Education Standard, we have increasingly focused our efforts on co-designing and co-delivering resources with young people.

<sup>1</sup>This data is provided using Google Analytics which uses third-party cookies. Users who do not explicitly choose to accept these cookies when using the site cannot be tracked and are not included in this reporting. This means reported data reflects a sample, and acts as an indicator for further investigation rather than firm value.

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 specifically designed for young people, offering tips and advice to support them to make important subject choices during key stages in school.

Following extensive collaboration with partners across the career ecosystem, the Career Review published ten recommendations, which represented an ambitious redesign of the career ecosystem in Scotland. The Career Review engaged hundreds of practitioners, partners and a diverse range of children and young people entitled to services to inform how services are delivered through a 'changemaking' approach. The Career Services Target Operating Model sets out a vision for Scotland's all-age and lifelong career services and describes how that vision can be delivered.

We collaborate with schools across Scotland to maintain a network of My World of Work Ambassadors. Young people who volunteer as Ambassadors promote My World of Work in their school to help to embed career education across and beyond 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. This helps better prepare young people and those who influence them to make use of the services we offer which, in turn, helps them to make informed choices about their future learning and careers.



## 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. Our approach is set out in our Parents and Carers Strategy. 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, option choices in S2/S3 and in the senior phase.

When pupils are making the transition from P7 to S1, career advisers attend parent/carer events to outline the support on offer. When engagements take place on a one-to-one basis between our career 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 career advisers about future careers and what skills employers are looking for, other SDS services, and career management skills. Career advisers also attend parent evenings and events 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, with both virtual (e.g. parent/carer webinars) and face-to-face events being made available.

Our online sessions for caregivers provide information on their role as influencers and the support that is available on the 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: option 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.



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 children's house staff to develop their confidence and competence in supporting the learning and career decisions of the young person.

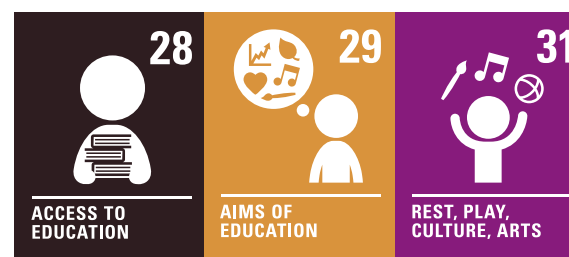
We know that parents and carers are the primary influence on young people making decisions about their future. As such, to ensure that we are providing the best opportunities for parents and carers to give guidance and direction to their child in respect of positive, sustained destinations after school, we regularly seek their views on the services we provide. 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 enable young people to understand and develop their career management skills to make and take ongoing learning and career 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. For example, we continue to offer an enhanced, targeted service to care experienced young people.

We work with schools, local authorities, Education Scotland, DYW and other partners to develop and deliver a highly valued programme of career education related professional learning. These workshops help teachers and other practitioners to integrate career learning into day-to-day learning and to better supporting young people.

We produce and provide access to learning and teaching resources, that help practitioners support young people to learn about the world of work. These resources link learning in the classroom to its application in life and work and to develop the skills that employers are looking for. Skills that will be essential for young people to progress and thrive in an ever more complex and dynamic labour market.

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. The SDS Youth Strategy sets out our commitment to young people, particularly those 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.

SDS achieved the Platinum Level Investors in Young People (IIYP) 3rd Generation Good Practice Award in 2021. We were commended for our “unswerving commitment” to our Youth Strategy, as well as our willingness to lead by example through a commitment to developing young people across the organisation. We were also awarded the Gold Investors in People Accreditation in 2019, in recognition of our positive working practices. 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. Furthermore, SDS won the UK EFQM Excellence Award in 2022 for its ‘organisation-wide dedication to excellence’ and ‘people-focussed culture’. This follows SDS being awarded a 7-star recognition by European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) in spring 2021.

## 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.

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.

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 who are 18 and beyond, 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.



### 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 and provided an update on these in 2023. 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. In November 2022 we published our new [Strategic Plan](#) for 2022-2027 which reaffirms our commitment to young people. 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

Our UNCRC report has been developed in consultation across the organisation. SDS has recently reviewed its equality groups and governance structure and the newly formed Equality Programme Board will assume responsibility for ensuring there is a proactive culture of everyday accountability for children's rights in SDS. This includes keeping under review the ways in which we effectively involve and provide information to children and young people about their rights in relation to our services. This 2023 update report is aligned to the original intended three-year reporting cycle, meaning our next report will cover the period 2023-2026.

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

Right	Theme	Fulfil/Respect/Protect
<b>Article 1</b> – Everyone under the age of 18 has all the rights in the Convention.	We understand and respect your other rights as a child	Fulfil
<b>Article 2</b> – 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
<b>Article 3</b> – 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
<b>Article 4</b> – 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
<b>Article 5</b> – 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
<b>Article 6</b> – 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
<b>Article 7</b> – 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
<b>Article 8</b> – 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
<b>Article 9</b> - 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

<b>Article 10</b> – 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
<b>Article 11</b> – 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
<b>Article 12</b> – 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
<b>Article 13</b> – 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
<b>Article 14</b> – 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
<b>Article 15</b> – 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
<b>Article 16</b> – 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
<b>Article 17</b> – 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
<b>Article 18</b> – 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

<b>Article 19</b> – 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
<b>Article 20</b> – 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
<b>Article 21</b> – 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
<b>Article 22</b> – 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
<b>Article 23</b> – 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
<b>Article 24</b> – 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
<b>Article 25</b> – 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
<b>Article 26</b> – 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

<b>Article 27</b> – 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
<b>Article 28</b> – 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
<b>Article 29</b> – 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
<b>Article 30</b> – 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
<b>Article 31</b> – 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
<b>Article 32</b> – 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
<b>Article 33</b> – 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
<b>Article 34</b> – Governments must protect children from all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation.	We care about your safety and wellbeing	Protect
<b>Article 35</b> – 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
<b>Article 36</b> – 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

<b>Article 37</b> – 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
<b>Article 38</b> – 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
<b>Article 39</b> – 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
<b>Article 40</b> – 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
<b>Article 41</b> – 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
<b>Article 42</b> – 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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