

Children's Parliament meets the **Scottish Cabinet**

Key messages from Children's Parliament

Cabinet Meeting with Children and Young People
Bute House, 5th March 2019

2019

Members of Children's Parliament have identified **Love** as their overarching theme for the 2019 Cabinet Meeting. As such, each of the following themes focus on how children experience love in their lives.

**“Children's Rights
are important.
Very important!
It's actually a bit
of care and love
for you.”** - MCP, age 6



Children as human rights defenders

- Children's Rights are the things that keep children healthy, happy and safe and they're all in the UNCRF.
- It's important that children know about their rights. So, if something is unfair or they're being treated badly, they know to speak to someone who they trust.
- Children feel that people need to talk more about their right to be loved.
- Children can be Human Rights Defenders by standing up and speaking out when children's rights aren't being respected.

Poverty

- Poverty strips away children's human dignity. For children living in poverty, they carry a weight on their shoulders.
- Poverty affects children in their homes, at school and in their communities, it impacts on their relationships with parents/carers, teachers, friends and in communities.
- Adults need to listen to children who are living in poverty, show empathy and, importantly, take action to help.
- Children view poverty through a lens of fairness. They believe all children should have what they need in order to live and grow up healthy, happy and safe. Children do not want anyone's life to be defined by poverty.



“Children born into poverty is not fair in any way. Children like myself are very lucky because we are born into families who have everything they need to bring up a child, but I could easily have been born into poverty. What I’m trying to say is that it’s all luck of the draw what family you are born into and that’s not fair.”

- MCP, age 11

Q: How can Scotland create a more loving society?

Relationships with Teachers

- It is important that teachers understand children, involve them in decisions, listen to them and take them seriously.
- A school concerned with wellbeing is a school focused on relationships based on human dignity, kindness, empathy and trust. Children learn when they are safe and happy.
- Adults in school need training on how to listen to children, take their views and worries seriously and remember that they have a responsibility to help the child who is hurting or unhappy.
- You can't enjoy your rights if you don't know that you have them. Children say that they enjoy learning about their rights and the UNCRC. They want to be informed about their human rights in fun ways, which are easy to understand with the support of informed teachers, who take a rights-based approach.

"Mr Not Shoosh defends the right to having a say and your voice heard. His hands are loudspeakers and his hat is a microphone. He shouts 'don't be afraid to speak up' and 'children should be listened to!'"

- MCP, age 10



Q: How much better would it be for everyone, if teachers were supported to love their pupils?

Bullying

- Our emphasis needs to be on preventing bullying. Schools can create a safe place where children can go early to seek help.
- Prevention is underpinned by a commitment to forming relationships and a school ethos where bullying or other negative behaviours have little chance to grow.
- Adults should spend less time on investigating and punishing behaviour and more time on fixing relationships.



“Bullying makes children feel horrible, abandoned and left alone. You feel like no-one ever cares about you”

- MCP, age 13

“Adults need to consider bullying as if every child in Scotland is being bullied. It’s that serious.”

- MCP, age 13

“When I tell an adult something, I want them to try and fix the problem and make things easier for me.”

- MCP, age 12

“Children can be bullied for what they wear and how they look”

- MCP, age 12

Q: Is there a way to join up the important places in children’s lives, so they never feel left alone?

Discrimination and Equality

- Boys and girls should be treated equally.
- Children with care experience can be treated differently than other children just because they're in care, this is not fair.
- Adults sometimes don't take children seriously because they are smaller and still have things to learn. We are all human and we all have human rights.



“All of you deserve rights and no one can tell you that you don’t. You deserve help if something is going wrong, no matter if you use a wheelchair or you just feel normal. You deserve rights.”

- MCP, age 10

“People who are hearing, why don’t we teach them to sign so they can talk to me?”

- MCP, age 12

Q: When will children’s rights be in the law in Scotland?

Mental Health

- Children tell us that there is a connection between their right to play, to feel safe in their communities, on their streets and their mental health. Outdoor spaces and parks to play in “helps them get away from their problems”.
- Children repeatedly tell us that they do not like when adults shout and that it is not right for adults to hit children. They say that it is scary and upsetting when these things happen.
- Children want adults to stop stereotyping all children and young people as trouble. They want adults to protect children from harm and make time/create spaces where they can tell adults how they feel.

“Children need crucial people to guide them, otherwise they could develop depression and have trouble getting a job.”

- MCP, age 10

“We want adults who care for us, play and spend time with us.”

- MCP, age 10



Q: How can Scotland make sure that adults understand that children are people too, with feelings and worries that matter?

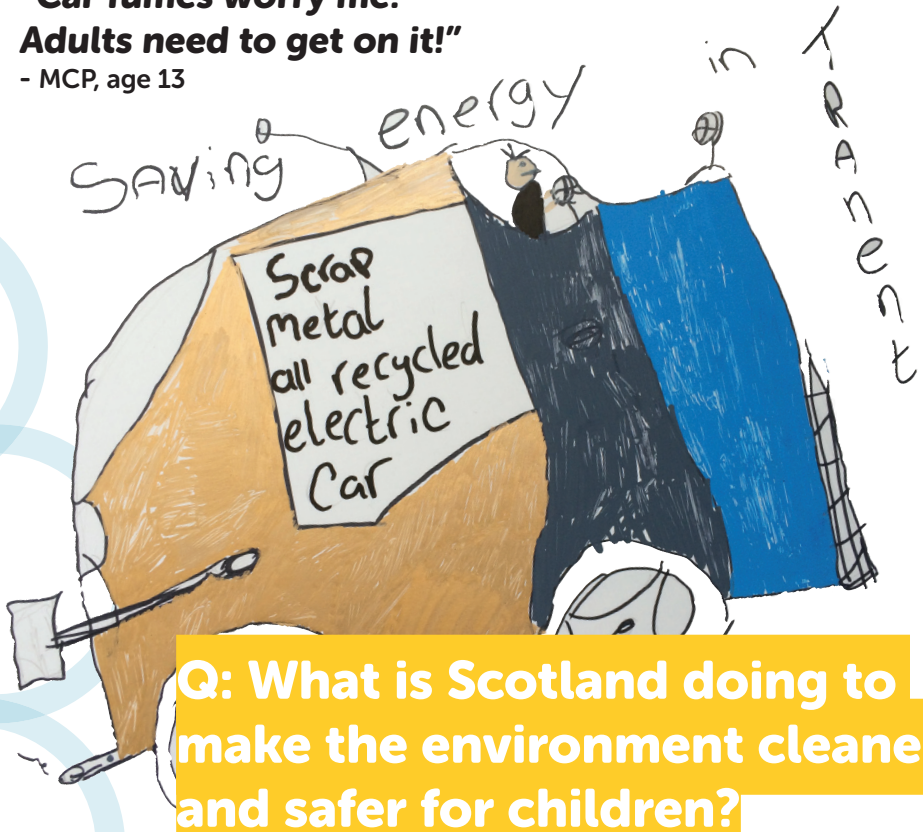
Environment

- Children are concerned about the environment, climate change and how this will affect their futures. However, when they talk about the environment, they also talk about the local places and spaces they inhabit. They want the streets, playparks and schools they spend time in to be clean, safe and fun.
- Children want their voices heard. They want to be active citizens and have their say about climate change.
- Children's message is that of individual and shared responsibility; *"now is the time to make a difference and help stop climate change."*
- Children are concerned about how climate change affects people in Scotland, their health and well-being, as well as people in other countries.

"Car fumes worry me!

Adults need to get on it!"

- MCP, age 13



Q: What is Scotland doing to make the environment cleaner and safer for children?

Recommendations

Scottish Government should:

- Social workers should wear ordinary visitor badges in schools when visiting or working with children to protect our privacy and prevent bullying. Make sure all schools in Scotland follow the same rules about wearing badges.
- Provide peer mentors and safe spaces in schools to support children with bullying.
- Involve children in teacher training to help teachers understand children's rights and why it is so important for children to have positive relationships with their teachers.
- Make uniforms, lunches, school resources, after school clubs and educational trips free or more affordable.
- Make sure all children and families can access financial, housing and mental health services quickly if we need support.
- Make children's human rights a law in Scotland to make sure everyone respects children's rights and children grow up happy, healthy, safe and loved.



Children's Parliament *giving ideas a voice*

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"A defender of children's rights should be a fusion of Neil Armstrong, Robin Hood and a dragon! They need to wear a badge, so that people know they care about children and their rights" - MCP, 11

- we invite you to join the **#Unfearties** and stand up for and alongside children.

Visit: bit.ly/Unfearties