

# Children's Parliament

# Imagining Aberdeen

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"Our Imagineers have helped shape our policy and plans."

— Gayle Gorman  
Director of Education and Children's Services  
Aberdeen City Council



Children from across the city are Imagining Aberdeen as a place where children are **healthy, happy, safe** and **doing their best**. Initially, 300 children from our partner primary schools **Bramble Brae, Manor Park, Riverbank** and **Tullos** explored the idea of **human dignity** and considered life at home, school and in the community. Then, 20 children were invited to become our band of **Imagineers**. They took part in creating a mural and film, which captured children's vision for the city, distilling the key messages that children need adults to understand and act on. Since then the **Imagineers** have been taking their messages and informing and influencing adults across Aberdeen.

**"Being an Imagineer doesn't feel like work. It feels like I'm making the world good."** - Imagineer

**"Since becoming Imagineers we can have a say, we have new friends, we are more confident and creative. Adults are listening to us, and our families are proud of us."** - Imagineer

# The story so far...



"I liked going on the trips and meeting everyone, being in the film and making the mural – being part of whole project really."

**Learning and impact**  
 Being an Imagineer  
 To do this we want  
 Being a good listener  
 – Being a team player  
 Being a leader – Be

"The Imagineers have had significant impact on officials in ACC, elected members and on ACC policy and strategy. They have engaged with senior officers and ensured their views and comments were central to locality planning, decision making and the Integrated Children's Services Plan. They have given children's views and rights a face in Aberdeen and challenged some adult preconceptions of their capacity to engage and feedback on decisions. They have challenged planned policy and ensured that children are now featured in all service plans, policy decisions and thinking going forward. They have modelled effective communication, encapsulated United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and helped shaped the future of the city".



## Learning and impact on Aberdeen City Council and its partners.

The purpose of the Imagining Aberdeen programme is to connect the lived experience of children with strategic decision making. Colleagues in Aberdeen City commented on the impact and influence the **Imagineers** have had...

"I have never come across a project that has captured the imagination and enthusiasm of so many officers. The day it was discovered the Imagineers were in the foyer talking to staff, there was a rush of colleagues to go down and meet them. Officers have been very willing to listen to the views of the Imagineers and their peers, and to take this into consideration when planning."

"The work has certainly had an impact on me and subsequently the service – which has resulted in the integration into the Locality Plan as well as in various parts of our Locality work. It has increased our focus on younger people in Locality Planning."

"This project has helped to propel the importance of considering and engaging with young people to engage their views within numerous services at ACC. In addition to this, the inspirational and emotive mural has been frequently requested by ACC officials to promote the views of children and young people and, correspondingly, it has been displayed in venues across the city."

I believe that people don't have to ask for love



"Being a M  
 Children's  
 makes me

**"I like that adults listen to you."**

**"I learned to draw, and that adults should care for their children."**

**Impact on the children.**

It is about being creative, having fun and influencing adults. Our Imagineers to have these characteristics:  
- Being respectful of others - Being a problem-solver  
- Being brave - Being helpful - Being trustworthy - Being confident.

**Member of the Children's Parliament is happy."**



**"Being an MCP makes me feel nervous AND brave."**



**"The best thing is that I can make Aberdeen a better place. I have a say in changing the city."**



**"I cannot believe the difference there has been in her through involvement with this project. She has shown increased confidence and self-esteem and will push herself beyond her comfort zone. I was proud and surprised by her speaking at events - a year ago she would not have been able to do so. This project has helped her find her voice and be able to realise that she can make a difference in life."**

**"He has developed resilience through the project which is helping him deal with issues out with school. The work has really allowed him to realise that his voice can make a difference within and beyond the school."**

**Adult feedback.**

The adults who are closest to the Imagineers; teachers, PSAs and parents, recognise the impact made in terms of peer relationships, self-esteem, relationships with adults, and engagement with school and learning. Adults have said these things - names have been removed for privacy, and because some of this is so good we wouldn't want to embarrass any one of our Imagineers with such glowing reports.

**"I love the way new experiences are incorporated - the Imagineers are encouraged to think about their community, their environment."**

**"Without his involvement with this project I feel that he may have gone off the rails, However, for the most part he has been a model pupil. He has stunned me this year with his confidence in speaking to adults. I want him to make sensible choices in his life! His role as an Imagineer and his work with Children's Parliament has been such a valuable and beneficial experience."**



MCP Dignometer: MCPs (Members of Children's Parliament) use dignometers to tell us what helps and what gets in the way of their human dignity.

**#imaginingaberdeen**

## Highlights of the Imagineers story so far...

### 2016

#### May

- Following their school-based projects the 20 nominated children get together with the Children's Parliament team for a week based at Harlaw Academy where they create their amazing Mural and Film.

#### August

- Launch of 'Imagining Aberdeen: The Film' at the Belmont Cinema to an invited audience of parents and professionals. Followed by school screenings for peers.

#### September

- Imagineers meet with Aberdeen's primary and secondary school head teachers to discuss how they can make their schools joyful and happy places.
- At the Aberdeen City Service Awards the Imagineers win the title of Children and Young People's Champions.

### October

- The Imagining Aberdeen Mural tours the local communities of Tillydrone, Torry and Northfield as part of Locality Planning events.

### November

- At the Integrated Children's Services conference, the Imagineers are guest speakers on the opening discussion panel. They also facilitate a session for professionals on their role as child rights duty bearers.
- The Imagineers and Mural are part of Aberdeen City Council's Celebration of Children and Young People; staff and visitors at Marischal College are asked what they can do for children.
- Imagineers take part in the City Centre Masterplan consultation on Union Terrace Gardens.

### December

- A winter themed party sees the Imagineers celebrate 2017. They write some New Year's Resolutions for adults and share them on social media; 748 adults view the post!

## 2017

### January

- Imagineers meet Aberdeen City Councillors sitting on the Communities and Housing Committee and the Education and Children's Services Committee.
- Imagineers meet with Education Scotland's CLD Inspection team.

### February

- Imagineers meet NHS Grampian Board.
- Imagineers take part in the filming of a NHS Health Scotland commissioned film on a children's rights approach.

### March

- Imagineers meet at Hazlehead Park to explore what changes they have made to Aberdeen and how being an Imagineer has changed them.

### April

- Imagineers design a poster called 'Acts of Kindness'. This illustrates how kindness can change communities.

### May

- Imagineers take part in the induction of newly elected Aberdeen City Councillors.

- Bramble Brae Imagineers meet with local MP Kirsty Blackman and then travel to London to visit the Houses of Parliament.

### June

- Imagineers write and publish an open letter to their communities: 'Dear Community' captures progress made and the challenges that remain to help children live their lives with dignity.
- Gayle Gorman, Director of Education and Children's Services, hosts the children and their head teachers for a celebratory lunch in their honour.
- Imagineers receive the Anne Frank Award for their "active participation and extraordinary involvement in the promotion of Equality, Diversity and Human Rights".

## FIND OUT MORE

More information is available from our website:  
[www.childrensparliament.org.uk](http://www.childrensparliament.org.uk)



**"The best bits were getting to meet other people and becoming confident. And talking to adults, and they listen."** - Imagineer

## What's next? 2018 and the Year of Children and Young People in Aberdeen

Children's Parliament will be working with the Imagineers for another school year. Some Imagineers are now in High School and so a number of new Primary School Imagineers are joining us. Our new, larger group with children from P5 to S1 will be at the heart of plans to celebrate 2018 as the Year of Children and Young People. Plans are being made to continue the high-level influence children have. Watch this space!

## More about Children's Parliament

Children's Parliament is Scotland's centre of excellence for children's participation and engagement. Through our projects, programmes and consultations we work with children, the adults who love and care for them, and the wider communities in which they live. We work across the domains of **home, school and community**. Our purpose is to promote understanding of, and commitment to, implementation of **the rights of the child**. We do this by helping children and adults to learn that rights-based relationships are built on the core idea of **human dignity** alongside empathy, kindness and trust. We emphasise the need to address the needs and rights of children as distinct from young people or adults, but remind every individual citizen and Public Body that **children's rights are human rights**.

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Project delivered on behalf of Aberdeen City Council



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