



'Share your views'

The survey results – adult views

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Introduction

This brief report provides a summary of key findings from the ‘**Share your views**’ survey which took place at the same time as the consultation exercise for the revised strategic plan. Children and young people were invited to complete a similar survey.¹

1. Overview, Methodology and analysis of respondents

The survey was advertised as an open call for participation and also administered to key organisations and representatives.

The survey was designed to reflect similar questions to those asked in the group consultation sessions and in the children and young people’s online survey version. (see appendix 1 – copy of survey questions)

There were **107 responses** and 74% indicated that they had filled in the form as ‘individuals’, 24% identified themselves as ‘organisations’ and 2% preferred not to say. In a second question of the survey, respondents were asked to describe their organisation, with the highest percentage (44%) stating that they were from the third sector, followed by the local authority (14%), childcare (11%) health (9%) and school (9%). The remaining responses came from Higher Education, Government and Public Bodies.

While many who completed the survey did so as ‘individuals’, they also indicated their area of work and interest. The main interests from respondents covered a wide range, sometimes ticking more than one area:

- children’s rights (70%)
- child protection (51%)
- mental health and wellbeing (50%)
- education (47%)
- care experienced (29%)
- poverty (29%)
- equality (29%).

¹ Dr Brieger Nugent, *Strategic Plan Review Consultation exercise – Analysis of the Findings Technical Report* January 2018 Available at: <https://www.cypcs.org.uk/ufiles/Strategic-plan-analysis.pdf>; *What children and young people told us – Summary Findings* March 2018 Available at: <https://www.cypcs.org.uk/ufiles/Strategic-plan-summary-findings.pdf>

2. Role of the Commissioner

The Commissioner's duties and how important

In the same way as the survey with children and young people did, respondents were given a list of six key duties and asked to rank them in order of importance, with '1' being the most important and '6' the least.

The options ranked 'most important' were as follows:

1. **Listening to the views of children and young people** (29%)²
2. **Making sure children and young people's rights are protected** (28%)
3. **Making sure all adults understand children's rights** (20%)
4. **Making sure that children and young people have their rights respected** (14.8%)
5. **Looking into the problems that affect children and young people** (12%)
6. **Helping children and young people know about their rights** (8%)

How to carry out these duties

The survey also asked in what ways the Commissioner should carry out his duties and to indicate their top three priorities. These were identified as being:

1. Make sure that people **listen to what children and young people have to say** when decisions are being made that affect them (69%)
2. **Hold government decision makers and rights holders to account** (68%)
3. **Keep under review the law, policy and practice** relating to the rights of children and young people (47%)
4. **Carry out research** into issues which affect children and young people's rights (33%)
5. **Raise awareness of the UNCRC and children's human rights** (31%)
6. **Work in partnership** (27%)
7. **Engage with the Scottish Parliament and MSPs** (19%)
8. **Find and share examples of good practice** (17%)

There were 13 responses to 'something else' which might be viewed as a priority.³ There were some comments around the balance between parents' rights versus children's rights, and around -working with others (government, local authorities, researchers) around — for example —,—ASN and health, amongst others.

² All percentages rounded up.

³ See Appendix 2

3. How should children and young people be involved in the work of the Commissioner?

Overall, the majority of respondents felt that the three top ways in which children and young people should be involved were:

- finding out what matters to children and young people (92%)
- sharing the view of children and young people with adults who make decisions (87%)
- writing and publishing information about children's rights (46%)

The remaining three were:

- Letting him know whether he's doing a good or not (27%)
- Deciding what he should do in his job (26%)
- His day to day work (24%)

There were 80 qualitative responses on how the Commissioner could involve children and young people, and a more detailed analysis of the statements shows that from these responses 108 different ways were suggested. Of these suggestions over two thirds were about 'reaching out' to children and young people. The remainder were about 'bringing young people in'.

Reaching Out

Coding responses into fairly loosely defined categories, 76 comments were around the need to 'reach out' or get out to meet young people and organisations and to hear the views of children and young people.

'Meeting with him regularly - across the country not just in Edinburgh.'

Three suggested setting up community hubs of young people in local areas so that the Commissioner could consult with them at any point.

'Each school could have a rights Hub led by elected reps from each year. Within each geographical/council area information and issues can be gathered, prioritised and forwarded to the commissioner. Often participation favours the brave and the quiet voice isn't heard so participation needs to be varied and manageable. Maybe the Commissioner could pose a question each month and the hubs could respond or encourage responses via the website or text alert? Vox pox; you gov type approach. And the commissioner can attend meetings (might be a bit too busy). It might also want to do some equality monitoring to ensure representation.'

In the same vein as 'reaching out', it was felt that another way of doing this would be to link up with schools, again going out and hearing from the young people.

'Outreach sessions to schools. Resources produced for teachers written in child friendly language.'

'Having a direct link to schools, open days inviting children from schools/further education to participate. Maybe a mobile unit?'

Bringing children and young people in

One third of other suggestions (33 or 30%) were about encouraging bringing children and young people 'inside' the organisation by setting up advisory groups, having ambassadors, including children and young people in meetings and having them involved in the creation of materials and the website.

'Commissioner should be able to meet youth representatives to discuss issues relating to their area.'

'Monthly meetings with youth parliament, young carers and other representatives from youth organisations. Recruitment of Ambassadors (adults and children) who feedback to school peers and colleagues about children's rights, linking to existing Youth Forums. Encourage more youth in decision making in parliament.'

'They could be filmed explain[ing] to other children and young people what the role is, and why it is important to promote and protect the rights of children and young people - in other words, translate the CYPSC work for the benefit of children and young people.'

And another comment around involving children and young people was about producing information and direct involvement:

'I think young people already are, but some examples would be designing and updating website, being supported to write news releases and reports, interviewing staff, peer education and outreach, short working groups on specific issues.'

4. The 'Issues'

The final open question asked for comment on what 'one issue' they would like the Commissioner to prioritise. The responses (83) to this are summarised in Appendix 3 and some are highlighted below.

Children's input

The highest number of responses was that the Commissioner should prioritise hearing the views of children and young people and providing ways for their input to be given.

'More engaging and yp involved at every level.'

'To make sure children voices, opinions, thoughts and views are listened to and acted upon.'

'For the commissioner to support a group of young people to take the views and concerns of their peers directly to the Scottish government.'

'Ensuring the voices of the most marginalised young people are heard. For example a lot of work is done in school - what about young people who are not in school? In my experience the young people that tend to be involved are young people who are relatively confident and motivated and who have adults who encourage them. I would like to see more young people who are seen as "challenging" being given a voice.'

Children 'in care'

Other comments were in relation to the needs of children in care and these were about children being heard from, their rights generally, ~~and~~ in terms of contact, and what information is recorded about this particular group.

'Encouraging all involved in the care of children to be mindful of a young person's journey in care - and teach by example that allowing children the chance to speak mindfully and be listened to mindfully will create compassion and kindness across all departments.'

'Child contact - children having more say and listened to about their rights to decide.'

'Looking at what information is being recorded for children in care about their life history and what information adopters could and should have access to.'

'Guidance on console games and movie certification within residential care homes. Our children want to play games their peers play but currently are not permitted which adds to the isolation they experience at school etc. and is detrimental to forming/maintaining friendships.'

Mental Health Services

Access to mental health services for children and young people ~~were~~was highlighted as a priority.

‘Children with mental health conditions and ASD in this country are in a state of crisis due to the chronic underfunding of all relevant services. CAMHS wait lists are atrocious, lack of personnel experienced in autism is scandalous and the failure to meet NICE/SIGN guidelines should be a national emergency. Pity the families who have to deal with local authorities who contest their child's diagnosis, too - Pathological Demand Avoidance. Most shocking of all, I find it unimaginable that when a child is finally accepted to be in crisis by all statutory services, there can be a six month wait for a GIRFEC assessment!’

Child Protection

There were some comments that could be classified as relating to ‘child protection.’ These were quite different in terms of what they specifically referred to, ranging from stopping underage children from having piercings, educating young people about safe internet use, stopping parental neglect and safeguarding the rights of those who are disabled.

Children with Additional Support Needs

Ensuring young people with additional support needs get access to appropriate support in schools was also identified as a priority.

‘The importance of schools as potential or real places of human rights practice and culture- with specific focus on those who have needs that are not being met - additional support needs, mental health, care experience- and the wide range of professionals that engage with them - including teachers, psychologists, social workers, parents/carers in this environment.’

‘Making school aware of their responsibilities with regard to the rights of children with additional needs.’

Poverty and Inequality

Some thought that the Commissioner should prioritise levels of poverty and inequality. In addition there were specific issues mentioned, such as the need to address levels of food poverty.

‘Hunger. Universal credit role out is causing chaos and with the year of young people, child poverty and good food nation at the forefront of policy it would be an excellent place to start.’

Role of Families

There were a small number of comments emphasising the role that parents and families play in safeguarding rights and the role of the Commissioner in making them aware of this role. There was another comment made about how difficult

it can be for parents to challenge local authorities when decisions have been made against them.

5. Conclusion

To conclude, the views of adults reflect those gathered from children and young people,⁴ particularly with the emphasis on the Commissioner's role being on making sure children and young people's rights are protected and listening to the views of children and young people.

Interestingly, the adults reflect the views of the children and young people who took part in the survey, and felt that the Commissioner should involve children and young people to find out what matters to them (92%) and share their views with adults who make decisions (87%).

In terms of the issues that the Commissioner should focus on, having children's input, access to mental health services, child protection, addressing poverty and inequalities and improving access to support in schools for those with additional support needs were felt to be most important.

⁴ Dr Brieger Nugent, *Strategic Plan Review Consultation exercise – Analysis of the Findings Technical Report* January 2018 Available at: <https://www.cypcs.org.uk/ufiles/Strategic-plan-analysis.pdf>; *What children and young people told us – Summary Findings* March 2018 Available at: <https://www.cypcs.org.uk/ufiles/Strategic-plan-summary-findings.pdf>

Appendix 1 – Survey questions

Reviewing our Strategic Plan

Dear colleague,

We would be very grateful if you could take a few moments to complete the following survey.

Bruce Adamson is the new Children and Young People's Commissioner in Scotland. His job is **to promote and safeguard children's human rights**. The Commissioner and his team are reviewing the office's current Strategic Plan, due to run until 2020.

We want the revised Strategic Plan to reflect the issues that children and young people, and those working closely with them, think are most important.

We are gathering the views of children and young people through a series of workshops and school-based/online surveys.

We would like to hear your views too.

Completing this survey will help inform the drafting of the revised Strategic Plan.

You can choose to leave this survey at any time.

Please note this survey will close on Friday 6th October 2017

ABOUT YOU

1. Are you responding as: *Please tick one box*

An individual?	<input type="checkbox"/>
An organisation?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. How would you describe the organisation you work for: *Please tick one*

Childcare	<input type="checkbox"/>	Local Authority	<input type="checkbox"/>
Charity/third sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	Public body	<input type="checkbox"/>
Government	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parliamentary	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health	<input type="checkbox"/>	Research	<input type="checkbox"/>
Higher Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	School	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (<i>please specify</i>):	
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3. From the following list, please indicate your main focus or interest.

(You may tick more than one box)

Additional support for learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	Equality	<input type="checkbox"/>
Armed Forces	<input type="checkbox"/>	Faith communities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asylum	<input type="checkbox"/>	Families / Parenting	<input type="checkbox"/>
BME Communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	Health	<input type="checkbox"/>
Care Experienced	<input type="checkbox"/>	Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child protection	<input type="checkbox"/>	LGBT-QI	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children's rights	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mental Health and Wellbeing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Digital	<input type="checkbox"/>	Poverty	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	Travelling Communities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Early Years	<input type="checkbox"/>	Young Carers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	Youth Justice	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: Please specify:			

FUNCTIONS AND DUTIES

4. The Commissioner's main job is to promote and safeguard children's human rights.

The Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland has specific duties under the Commissioner for Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2003 and Children and Young People Scotland Act 2014.

We would like to ask your views on the Commissioner's duties and how important you think they are:

Please choose from 1 to 6 with 1 being the most important and 6 being the least important. You can only use each number once.

Helping children and young people know about their rights	
Making sure that children and young people have their rights respected	
Making sure children and young people's rights are protected	
Listening to children and young people's views	
Looking into problems that affect children and young people	
Making sure all adults understand children's rights	

5. And in what ways should the Commissioner carry out his duties?

Please tick your top three

Raise awareness of the UNCRC and children's human rights	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hold government decision makers and rights holders to account	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keep under review the law, policy and practice relating to the rights of children and young people	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carry out research into issues which affect children and young people's rights	<input type="checkbox"/>
Engage with the Scottish Parliament and MSPs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work in partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>
Find and share examples of good practice	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make sure people listen to what children and young people have to say, when decisions are being made that affect them.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Something else? (please specify)

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INVOLVING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Q6. One of the key duties of the Commissioner is to involve children and young people in his work.

There are various ways in which children and young people could be involved.

Please tick your top 3 choices

Deciding what he should do in his job	<input type="checkbox"/>
His day-to-day work (for example, talking to him about his budget, coming to a meeting)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finding out what matters to children and young people	<input type="checkbox"/>
Writing and publishing information about children's rights	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sharing their views with adults who make decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>
Letting him know whether he's doing a good job or not	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Can you give some examples of how you think children and young people could be involved in the work of the Commissioner's office?

6. We know there may be many things which will come to mind but given your role and experience, if you could prioritise one issue what would it be?

Please provide a short comment.

If you would like to tell us more, please contact us at: info@cypcs.org.uk

Thank you for sharing your views!

– *The Commissioner's team*

Appendix 2 – Comments from some respondents on ways for the Commissioner to carry out his duties:

- Provide information and interface with international structures, effective practice, learning
- Make sure that children's rights and voices are more important than those of their parents
- More input to support you people with ASN learn and understand their rights through education and support and youth services!
- Speak to parents, teachers, foster carers I.e. People at the front line that know the children not social workers or MP's
- Facilitate public discourse about controversial issues considered normal in Scotland's culture that gets in the way of children's wellbeing. E.g. parental alcohol use
- Enforce education authorities to comply
- Children often tell professionals how they feel and are often ignored or passed to someone else due to stretched services
- Build up your scrutiny role and be where CYP's and their families can report poor treatment and the breach of their rights, in this instance health rights.
- There needs to be more action and less talk especially for children with additional support needs
- Lobby vociferously for all local authorities to use the child rights impact tool
- I think it is very hard to number these. These are all equally important. I feel that young people need to be listened to far more sometimes governments will not recognise that they are not meeting the needs of young people due to a complete lack of understanding.
- Hold child abusers in places of responsibility accountable for crimes. Make available info and help for child victims of sexual assault.
- Work with and listen to others who are doing relevant research in this area.

Appendix 3 – summary of issues to prioritise

Key Issue	Number of Respondents
Children's input	11
Mental health services	8
Child protection	7
Additional support needs met in schools	6
Poverty	4
Inequality	4
Children's rights	4
Teach respect	3
Children's rights in care homes	3
Children's input on child contact	3
Care placements	3
Trauma	2
Role of families	2
Gender inequality	2
Food poverty	2
Education	2
Transition out of high school	1
Support	1
Substance misuse	1
Scrutiny role	1
School closures	1
Review children's panels	1
Parent's rights	1
Information on children in care	1
Funding youth work	1
Emotional support	1
Early intervention	1
Disclosure rules	1
Disabled children access to services	1
Connections	1
Children's health services	1
Change way in which young people perceived	1
Belongingness	1