

Bòrd na Gàidhlig

UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS REPORT

Bòrd na Gàidhlig,
Great Glen House,
Leachkin Road.
Inverness,
IV3 8NW

+44 [0] 1463 225 454
oifis@gaidhlig.scot
www.gaidhlig.scot

INTRODUCTION

BÒRD NA GÀIDHLIG

Bòrd na Gàidhlig is the principal public body in Scotland responsible for promoting Gaelic development, including providing advice to Scottish Ministers on Gaelic issues.

Our aim is that Gaelic is seen and heard on a daily basis across Scotland, such that it is widely recognised as an integral part of Scottish life and a national cultural and economic asset.

WHAT IS A CHILDREN'S RIGHTS REPORT?

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 places a duty on public bodies to produce a children's rights report. This sets out the work an organisation has taken to ensure that children's rights have been protected under the UNCRC. This report is for period 16th July 2024 – 31 March 2026.

WHAT IS THE UNCRC?

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is a legally-binding international agreement setting out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of every child, regardless of their race, religion or abilities.

The UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill was passed unanimously by the Scottish Parliament in December 2023 and came into effect on the 16 July 2024. 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.

There UNCRC contains 54 articles and there are four guiding principles which run through all of these:

1. Non-discrimination (Article 2)
2. Best interests of the child (Article 3)
3. Right to life, survival, and development (Article 6)
4. Respect for the views of the child (Article 12)

For the purposes of reporting, we have given consideration to the following:

- Provision
- Protection
- Participation

PROVISION

ACCESS TO GAELIC EDUCATION AND LEARNING, PLAY AND CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES

THE NATIONAL GAELIC LANGUAGE PLAN

Under the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 (the Act) Bòrd na Gàidhlig has a duty to prepare and submit to Scottish Ministers a national Gaelic language plan every five years. The National Gaelic Language Plan 2023 – 2028 identifies commitments in several areas which help provide children with access to opportunities through the medium of Gaelic:

- Increase the use and learning of Gaelic in Education, 0-18
- Increasing the use and learning of Gaelic in Communities
- Increasing the use and learning of Gaelic in Homes

STATUTORY GUIDANCE FOR GAELIC EDUCATION

Bòrd na Gàidhlig continue to provide advice and support to Local Authorities who provide Gaelic Education. We request that all Local Authorities adhere to the provisions within Education (Scotland) Act 2016, outlined in The Statutory Guidance for Gaelic Education, and include commitments within their statutory Gaelic Language Plans to:

- Promote and support Gaelic Education

This goes some way towards ensuring that more children, young people and their parents / carers are aware that Gaelic Education is an option and is open to all.

Futhermore, the provisions within the Education (Scotland) Act 2016, for parents to request Gaelic Medium Primary Education (GMPE), in areas where it isn't currently available, goes some way to increasing the availability of GMPE so that it can be more accessible.

The Statutory Guidance is also clear about the responsibilities of schools and local authorities in relation to secondary education: Schools should aim to deliver a sufficient proportion of the secondary curriculum through the medium of Gaelic to enable young people to continue to develop their fluency in Gaelic. Bòrd na Gàidhlig is aware of the gaps in secondary education across the country and will work with partners to support this area.

GAELIC EARLY YEARS (0-3) PROVISION

Bòrd na Gàidhlig have continued to provide funding to Gaelic Early Years Groups across Scotland, to ensure children and their families have sustained access to play and learning opportunities within their communities. We have also provided funding to Comann nam Pàrant Nàiseanta and Local Authorities to employ play workers to support this sector.

CORPORATE PARENT

Bòrd na Gàidhlig is legally designated as a Corporate Parent under The Children and Young Peoples (Scotland) Act 2014. This means that we have statutory duties to fulfil with regard to care experienced young people. As a Corporate Parent, Bòrd na Gàidhlig has a duty to:

- Give due consideration to matters which might or might not adversely affect the wellbeing of children and young people.
- To assess the needs of those children and young people for services and support it provides.
- To promote the interests of those children and young people.
- To seek to provide those children and young people with opportunities to participate in activities designed to promote their wellbeing.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig staff and board members all receive Corporate Parenting training to ensure that everyone within the organisation is equipped with the skills to put our responsibilities into practice.

All organisations and projects who receive funding from Bòrd na Gàidhlig must consider and report on how they will support the aims outlined in the Children and Young Peoples (Scotland) Act.



PARTICIPATION

LISTENING TO THE VIEWS OF CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

Although Bòrd na Gàidhlig does not directly provide services for children, we proactively engage with our delivery partners and organisations who receive funding to ensure that children's rights are actively considered in the planning and delivery of all projects.

In 2025, Bòrd na Gàidhlig commissioned research into Gaelic Secondary Education in Scotland. As part of this, researchers engaged directly with young people to seek their views. Information is provided in the final report: Gaelic-medium Secondary Education: Assessment and Recommendations for Improvement.

PROTECTION

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE WHILE PARTICIPATING IN GAELIC OPPORTUNITIES

Children and their parents / carers have the right to feel safe while participating in activities funded by Bòrd na Gàidhlig. We work with all our funded partners and projects to ensure this happens.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig have three main funds open to various organisations: Gaelic Early Years Grants Scheme, Taic Freumhan Coimhearsnachd (Communtiy Roots Support) and Gaelic Plans Fund. As a condition of funding, we require that delivery partners and supported projects designed for children meet national standards and include details of their Child Protection and or Safeguarding Policies. There is specific reference to the UNCRC within the Guidance of our Early Years Grants Scheme.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig work closely with voluntary Early Years organisations and partners to promote and deliver training opportunities to play leaders and committee members to ensure groups provide a high quality, safe environment. Training offered in the reporting period included: Community Safeguarding Awareness, Health & Safety and Equalities & Diversity.

NEXT STEPS

- Bòrd na Gàidhlig will continue to develop the work we have carried out between 2024 – 2026.
- We will ensure that all funding scheme guidance incorporates references to the UNCRC and associated duties for applicants.
- We will require all relevant funded delivery partners, that provide services to children and young people, to report on how they are implementing the UNCRC, including how they have engaged directly with children and young people to seek and reflect their views.
- We will integrate consideration of the UNCRC and associated duties into our internal committee paper procedures and decision-making processes.
- We will increase the advice provided to Scottish Government and other public bodies on how to strengthen policy development and delivery to ensure the protection of the rights of Gaelic speaking children and the growth of the minority indigenous language in Scotland.
- We will provide further training to staff and board members on the UNCRC to ensure the organisations as whole understands and implements our duties.
- We will establish an internal steering group to take forward our duties related to the UNCRC.