

Getting it right for

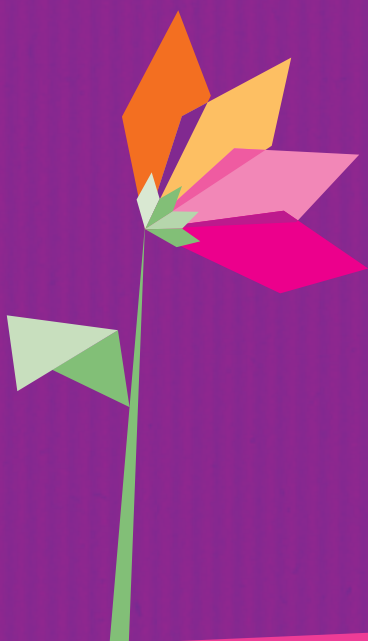
# CHILDREN & FAMILIES



Young people are the future of Scotland



The Scottish  
Government



## Happy, healthy children

They should be loved and safe, active and achieving. And they should get every chance to grow into responsible adults who can contribute to Scottish life, as future parents, employees, leaders and teachers.

Every child and young person has that potential. We want to make sure we get it right for all of them.

We share this ambition with everyone who cares for and about this country's children. That means we work in

partnership with a very wide range of people: parents and carers; health visitors and midwives; teachers and youth workers; the Children's Reporter, Children's Panel members and the police; social workers and the voluntary sector; and nursery workers.

We want all these people to work together – and with us – for the greater good of future generations.

It's an investment in a better future for us all.





**We believe every  
child in Scotland  
should be happy  
and healthy.**





# Children's rights

**If our children and young people are to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens then it is crucial that we recognise, respect and promote their rights.**



The rights of children and young people are set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The Convention sets out what a child can expect from others as a result of their government's commitment to respect their rights.

The Scottish Government has made a commitment to make sure that the UNCRC is a reality in Scotland – that children's rights are recognised and their voices heard and listened to.

Scotland has a Commissioner for Children and Young People, whose task is to make sure children's

**Article 12** of United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

views and rights are looked after. Children's and young people's rights include the right to play, to be kept safe from harm and protected from violence – and the right to be heard.

We believe that our approach, called Getting it right for every child, will help make the UNCRC a reality for children and young people in Scotland. This is explained in more detail on the next pages – Getting it right for every child reinforces what the Convention says and is a way to make important changes in how we and others support children and young people.



“Children and families are valued and respected at all levels in our society and have the right to have their voices sought, heard and acted upon by all those who support them and who provide services to help them.”







# Getting it right for every child and young person

**We are promoting a consistent, supportive way of working with all Scotland's children and their families.**

**It's called *Getting it right for every child* and it underpins everything we do in our work with children, young people and their families.**

## Family Nurse Partnership

The Family Nurse Partnership programme supports vulnerable young first-time mothers. It aims to help them have healthy pregnancies and babies, and to build their parenting and life skills.



It is a way of making sure everyone respects children's rights – and listens to what they have to say.

Children and their families say that what works best for them is co-ordinated support when they need it, so that they are not passed around from one agency to another, or having to repeat their story over and over. The Getting it right for every child approach helps make sure they get that co-ordinated support no matter who they are, or where they live.

Getting it right for every child is important for everyone who works with children – as well as many people who work with adults who look after children. Professionals

need to work together to support families, and where appropriate, take early action at the first signs of any difficulty, rather than only getting involved when a situation has already reached crisis point.

This means working across organisational boundaries and putting children and their families at the heart of decision making.

It is being used with families, nurseries, schools, health care, social work, law enforcement, housing and some support services for adults. In fact, as a way of working, it is designed to thread through all services and areas that involve children and young people of any age.



YEAR

9

YEAR

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YEAR

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YEAR

1

**Getting it  
right from  
the start**

# The first 1,000 days of any child's life are the most important.

Research shows that your parents' health and lifestyle, and what happens to you before birth and up to the age of three, can have a huge impact on the rest of your life.

We support work with expectant mums and parents to help make sure children are getting the best start in life.

During the first three years of life, 75 per cent of a child's brain growth is complete. And by the age of three, they've learned 50 per cent of their language skills. It's been shown that children whose parents or carers talk and read to them – and play with them – have better language skills.

Our Play Talk Read campaigns encourage mums, dads, grandparents and carers to find simple, fun ways to help their child's brain develop, and to give them the best chances in later life.

Being a parent or carer can be tough at times and no one should be afraid to ask for support. Because we want the best for all our children, we want to make sure that support is available when people need it, and that they know who to speak to.





**Sir Harry Burns,**  
Scotland's Chief  
Medical Officer

**“Research is now clearly indicating that children born and brought up in difficult and deprived circumstances are more likely to experience physical and mental health problems later in life.**

**By supporting their parents and by providing a range of services which increase stability in their lives, children are more likely to perform better at school, become more resilient in their response to challenge and develop into healthy adults.”**



“The real question is how to use available funds wisely. The best evidence supports this policy prescription: invest in the very young and improve basic learning and socialisation skills.”







Investing in  
better life  
chances

**We know that when it comes to getting it right for all our children and young people, prevention is better than cure.**

**James Heckman**, 2000 Nobel Laureate in Economics (Investing in Disadvantaged Young Children in an Economically Efficient Policy)

Investing in the early years of a child's life makes good sense for their future life chances. It also makes sound financial sense for all of us. Every £1 spent in the early years generates an eventual saving of £9 for the taxpayer.

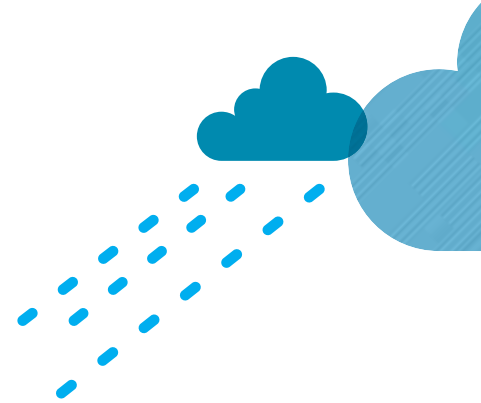
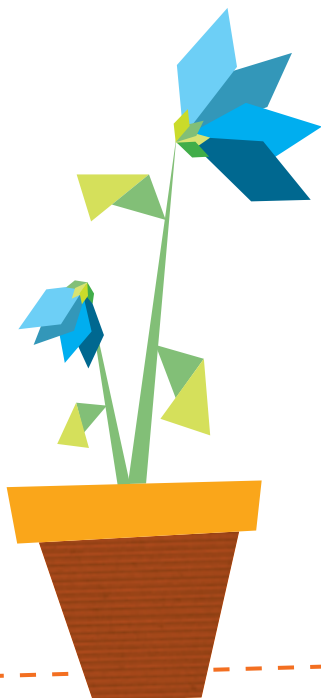
Put another way, by the time a young person reaches the age of 28, the cost of public services for them if they have had social, emotional and behavioural difficulties is over 10 times higher than for someone without those additional needs. That's an average of over £70,000 compared to £7,500 for a young person who hasn't needed any

additional support growing up. If children and young people do need additional support, we want to make sure they get this at an early stage, to prevent any difficulties reaching crisis point.

We want everyone involved in a child's life to ask themselves whether a child is safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. In the Getting it right for every child approach these make up a child's overall 'well-being'. Looking at all of them helps everyone to make sure nothing has been missed.

# Early intervention doesn't just apply to younger children.

It means taking early action at any age when there are the first signs of a problem. This includes working with young people who are at risk of being involved in offending.



The 'whole system approach' is an effective way of working with high-risk young people involved in offending, to improve their life chances and reduce crime. The approach is about organisations working together to divert young people away from the Children's Hearings System, prosecution or custody by intervening early and providing intensive support in the community. All of this is aimed at getting them the right help at the right time.

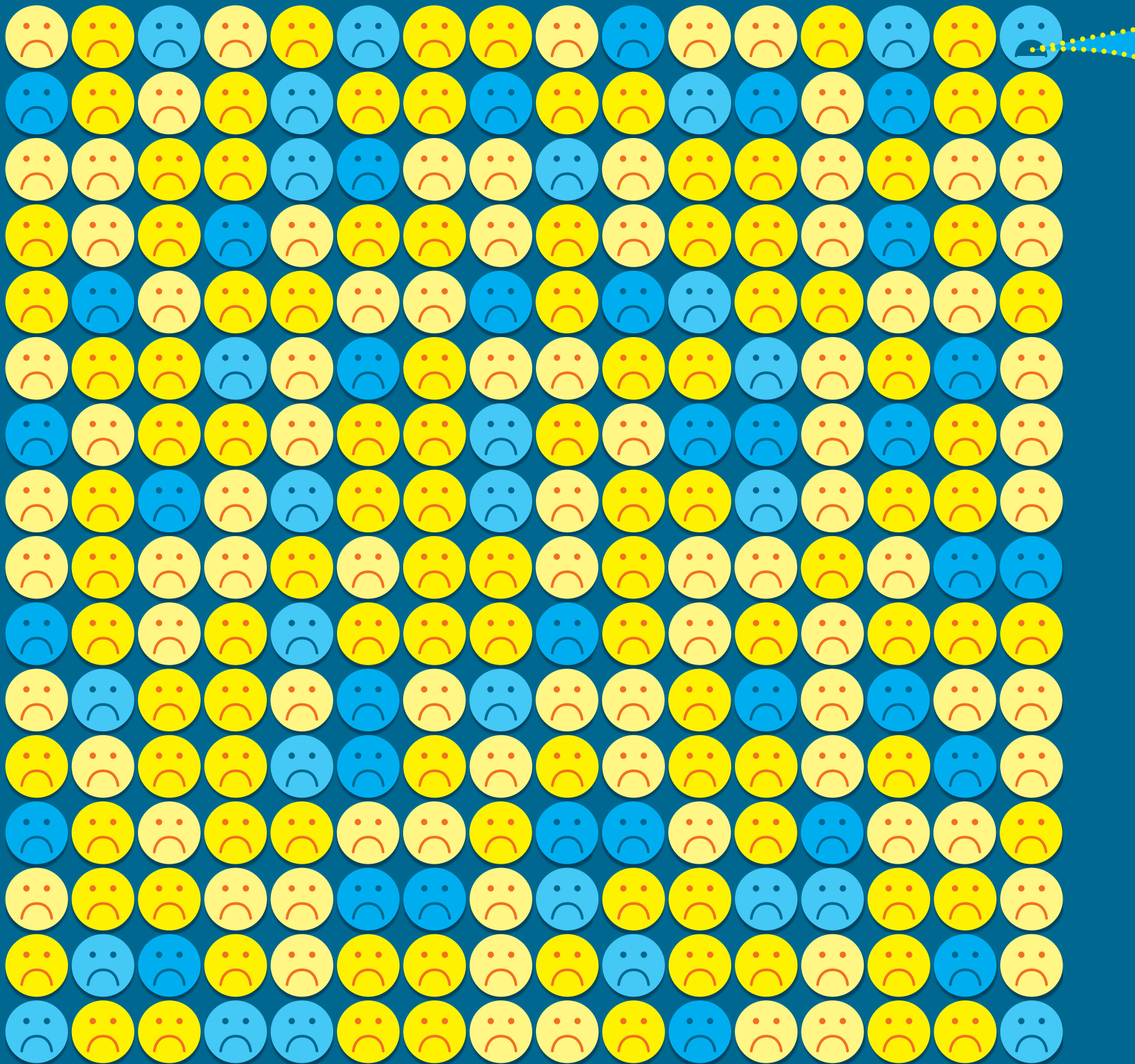
Police, social workers and other support agencies work with young people to try to tackle their behaviour by managing risk and identifying what support they need.

It's effectively about nipping any problems in the bud – and is working well with both low-level and more serious offending.



Early  
intervention...  
it's never too late







**Early  
intervention...  
protecting  
the most  
vulnerable**

# **The Children's Hearings System is the care and justice system for Scotland's children and young people.**

At its heart is the principle that children who commit offences, and children who need care and protection, are dealt with in the same system – as they are very often the same children.

**Every year, 40,000 children in Scotland need the care or supervision orders the Children's Hearings System can provide.**



**Three-quarters of them are suffering from abuse or neglect, or are in need of protection.**



**While around a quarter are referred because they become involved in offending.**

Children and young people are referred to the Children's Reporter from a number of sources including police, social work, education and health. They are referred because some aspect of their well-being is giving cause for concern.

If the Reporter believes that, for example, a child is not safe, and might need to be placed in care with their local authority, then a Children's Hearing will be held.

Each Hearing has three panel members – all trained volunteers from the local community. They

listen to the child's circumstances and decide what measures need to be taken. This could mean they recommend a placement with foster carers, or in a residential unit or in secure accommodation. Or the Hearing may recommend that the child can remain at home with support from other agencies like social work or specialist voluntary organisations.

The Hearings System aims to ensure that the best interests of the child are met and that they get the most appropriate intervention and support.

39%



20%



Looked after  
children  
and young  
people

### Stats:

In 2010 there were 15,892 children looked after by local authorities – an increase of four per cent since the previous year.

Of those, 39 per cent were placed at home with parents, 20 per cent were looked after by friends or relatives, 31 per cent were looked after by foster carers or prospective adopters and nine per cent were in residential accommodation.





# We have high ambitions for Scotland's 'looked after' children and young people.

'Looked after children' are those who are in the care of their local authority. Most children and young people become legally 'looked after' for their own safety. Some will have experienced neglect or mental, physical or emotional abuse. For various reasons, some parents are unable to look after their own children.

The majority are either being looked after at home, or looked after away from home with foster or kinship carers, in residential care homes or secure units.

Young people leaving care also need particular support to make sure they do well as young adults.

We believe that getting it right for all looked after children means they should have safe, stable, permanent homes – whether this is with their birth parents or someone else. If a child has to spend time in care they should, where possible, be in one safe place the whole time, reducing disruption to their lives. We are working to reduce the time it takes to make decisions about adoption.

At the moment, every looked after child has a 'corporate parent' – an organisation (usually a local authority) that is responsible for the child's well-being while they are in care. We are working to make sure this goes further – and that every looked after child has a named corporate parent. This would be a person rather than an organisation who champions a child's needs and aspirations. We want to see this happening consistently so that Scotland has the best corporate parents possible.

# The vast majority of Scotland's young people are a credit to their families and their communities.

They are volunteering and are actively engaged in sports, hobbies, school, college and politics. Many are young carers – looking after a family member who is disabled or has a chronic illness.

We work with national youth and citizenship organisations and a wide range of partners to improve life chances for children and young people. These organisations support thousands of local youth services across Scotland, giving young people lots of opportunities to nurture their ambitions and sense of achievement – and helping build the skills they need to succeed in life.

Young people are accessing training and awards programmes; literacy projects; outdoor education; volunteering opportunities; community activities; anti-violence and anti-sectarianism initiatives;

healthy living programmes; and sports, arts and cultural activities. Youth organisations are also working with us to ensure that young people have a voice, and get their views listened to by local and national decision makers.

We place great value on the role that youth work/community learning and development can play in delivering preventative services that encourage young people to have an active role in their communities and in civic Scotland. We want to support the thousands of dedicated young people's champions – in particular those volunteers who give up their own time.

We believe that young people who become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors are more likely to make healthy and positive life choices in the longer term.

**Ensuring that young people have a voice  
and their views are listened to**





“Young people are the future of Scotland, treat them as you would like to be treated yourself.”

Young person posting on Scotland's Children's Commissioner's website





*Developing the children's workforce*





**Everyone who works with,  
and for, children and young  
people – staff and volunteers  
– needs to ensure they are  
putting the child at the centre  
and respecting their rights.**



Many different people work with children and young people as they grow up. They include midwives and nurses, nursery workers, school teachers and youth workers.

There are also people who are there to provide extra help when it's needed – for example, social workers, doctors or police officers.

While all these people are trained in their own disciplines and professions, we are also working to make sure there is recognition of a set of 'core' skills they all need to have in common in order to make sure they put children and young people at the centre of their work.

We call this the 'common core' and it describes a set of skills, knowledge and values that are essential for everyone who works with children and young people. The common core helps them build successful relationships with children and young people and also with other workers.







# Find out more...

...about the work we do with and for children and young people, their families and the people who support them.



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**[www.scotland.gov.uk/childrenandfamilies](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/childrenandfamilies)**



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**The Scottish  
Government**

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