

# UNCRC EXPLAINED

# Meet Bruce

**SCOTLAND'S CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMISSIONER**

Bruce Adamson became Scotland's third Children and Young People's Commissioner in May 2017. He has over 20 years' experience as a lawyer and human rights advocate, working in New Zealand, Scotland and wider Europe.



“As Commissioner it’s my job to promote and safeguard the rights of children and young people in Scotland and by doing this, to make a real difference in their lives. My role includes everyone in Scotland up to the age of 18, or up to aged 21 for anyone who is, or has ever been in care.

“Children have the same human rights as adults, but due to their age and stage of development they are also entitled to special care and assistance. They have the right to grow up in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding, and have a broad range of rights including the right to education and for that education to help them grow and develop to their fullest potential, the right to have a say in decisions that affect them, and the right to be protected from harm.

“The Scottish Government has legally committed to upholding children’s human rights, that’s their promises to children and young people. Those promises are contained in several human rights laws including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

“My role is independent of the Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament. That means that I’m able to be fearless and critical in telling the Government where they are failing our children and young people, as well as giving credit where it is due.

“I work with a team of people and partner organisations to help children and young people in Scotland understand what their rights are. Only by understanding what rights they have; can they use them.

“As a childminder you are a special and significant person in many children’s lives. It’s in those key relationships between you and the children you care for that children’s human rights live. You are human rights defenders, and it is part of my job to support you.

“My office worked in partnership with SCMA to produce a Child-Led Participation Guide to help with key participation rights. My office has also produced the UNCRC in several formats to increase knowledge and understanding of children’s human rights. The resources include cartoons, symbols, and child friendly written versions which



can be accessed on our website. The symbols resources are especially useful for work with younger children or those who are non-verbal, have speech and language difficulties, or have additional support needs.

**“Children and young people need the significant adults around them to care for them and to help them understand their rights.”**

Children consistently tell me and my office that they want adults to be their champions.

“The UNCRC is a powerful advocacy tool for those of us working with, and for, children and young people, and it can be used to hold those in power to account for the promises they have made. It’s important for us all to share best practice so please do get in touch to let us know about any children’s rights work you do, or about any further ways in which we could support you.”

**Bruce Adamson**

[cypcs.org.uk](http://cypcs.org.uk)

## The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

The UNCRC is special. It is the first legally binding international instrument to incorporate children’s full range of civil, cultural, economic, political, and social rights, as well as aspects of humanitarian law. It starts with the premise that children should grow up in an environment of happiness, love and understanding.

It’s the most rapidly and widely ratified international human rights treaty in history and changed the way children are viewed and treated in international legal terms. It proclaims children’s status as human beings with a distinct set of rights, not just as passive objects of care and charity.

The 54 rights or ‘articles’ of the UNCRC are universal, interdependent and interrelated. The articles cover all aspects of a child’s life and explain how those in power must work together to make sure all children and young people can enjoy all their rights. The rights can be grouped into four categories: Survival, Development, Protection and Participation, as well as a set of Guiding Principles and additional provisions (articles 43 to 54) explaining how governments and international organisations will work to implement the UNCRC.

For childminders, increasing your awareness of the UNCRC enables you and the children you care for to take further steps towards creating environments and interactions which are respectful of these rights.

According to Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), listening to children is one of the most important things childminders can do to ensure that your minded children are able to experience and enjoy their rights as set out in the UNCRC.

### Online Download

Login to the Membership Dashboard at [childminding.org](http://childminding.org) to download ‘Child-Led Participation: A Childminders Guide’.

