



Glasgow City Council

Education, Skills and Early Years City Policy Committee

Report by Interim Executive Director of Education Services

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EDUCATION SERVICES: PUPIL PARTICIPATION DEVELOPMENTS

Purpose of Report:

To update the committee on Education Services developments to support pupil voice in the city

Recommendations:

The Committee is asked to note the update and Education Services work to support pupil voice, participation and engagement across our establishments.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes No consulted: Yes No

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

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1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 UNCRC is central to the key national and local policy drivers underpinning Glasgow's Education Services. These include Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), Curriculum for Excellence and Glasgow's Towards a Nurturing City. These rights are embedded in policy and practice across the policy landscape providing a means for children's rights to be realised.
- 1.2 The previous work of Glasgow Education Services was reported on to this committee in February 2025
- 1.3 The incorporation of the UNCRC bill into Scots law was passed unanimously by the Scottish Parliament in March 2021 and has subsequently been through a reconsideration stage and then passed the Parliamentary vote again on the 7 December 2023. As a result, the Bill moved to Royal Assent in summer 2024. It became law in July 2024.
- 1.4 Under Part 1, Section 2 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 places a duty on listed public authorities to complete a children's rights report. Subsequently Listed Public Authorities must report every 3 years on the steps they have taken within their area of responsibility to secure better or further effect on the requirements of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
- 1.5 Following Glasgow Education Services committee paper in May 2021, a Children's Rights Officer took up post in July 2021 in the Education Improvement Service (EdIS).
- 1.6 This report seeks to update on the progress of work to ensure Children's Rights are central to our work and that the voice of young people in Glasgow schools is heard. This work is rooted firmly in Education Services [All Learners All Achieving document](#).

2 GLASGOW SCHOOLS FORUM

- 2.1 The Glasgow Schools Forum is open to all schools across the city to send representation. The Forum in 2024/25 met in two separate groups: a Primary session, allowing up to 70 schools to meet together and then the Broad General Education (BGE) group which is open to all Secondary schools and has representation from young people across S1-S3. The Forum meets monthly.



2.2 In school session 2024/25 134 schools have attended at least one forum in session. 27 Secondary schools and 5 ASL secondary schools, 101 Primary schools and 1 ASL Primary. 17 secondary, 65 Primary and 4 ASL Secondary school regularly attended the forums.

2.3 Through activities at each Forum, the young people are directly involved in co-creating the agendas and focus for all future meetings. The Forums continue to be based on the Glasgow Children’s Rights Framework. Agendas are responsive to the voice of Glasgow’s young people.



2.4 Dialogue sessions at the forum over the last year have included: Widening access to University, Vaping, Curriculum, Glasgow 850, Protected Characteristics, Assessment Examinations, Inspections, Peoples Palace consultation, Commonwealth Games 2026

2.5 The Forum have worked with partners including Edis, NHS, Strathclyde University, Glasgow 850, Commonwealth Games 2026, Equalities team, Glasgow Life, Scottish Qualifications Authority, His Majesty’s Inspectorate.

- 2.6 *“It will help our school grow and improve our pupil council”*
“It was informative. It educated us and let us voice our opinion”
“we get to listen to opinions”
“we get to share our opinions”
“Representing our school the chance to give feedback and advice”
“Hearing different ideas. Getting a voice”
“We were able to freely give our opinions. We felt heard and acknowledged”
“We gave our own opinion on various matters throughout the pupil forum”

3 SENIOR PHASE PARLIAMENT

3.1 The Senior Phase Parliament meets 4 times a year and identifies the issues they would like to address. The Quality Improvement Officer uses this information to source appropriate partners to meet with the young people to address their concerns. Previous contributors include SQA, NRS and Strathclyde University. In addition, the young people have the opportunity to “Ask the Director” questions relating to Glasgow Schools that they would to change.

3.2 The Senior Phase Parliament met in November 2024 to identify the next priorities for this session. Young people have volunteered to be part of subgroups that will lead to outcomes for this session. These are:

- Equalities – Young people keen to ensure a consistent approach to Equalities across the City, focusing on protected characteristics, not just race and gender.
- Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) subgroup – the young people prepared questions for the SQA and invited a representative from SQA to their session in March 2024 to challenge them directly.

3.3 In November 2024 young people were consulted on their use of the school library service and how this resource could be improved to support their learning.

In March 2025 the parliament prepared a response to the SQA on the late changes made to the exam timetable and what they hope will be the changes introduced by Qualifications Scotland.

In June they were involved in consultation with Commonwealth Games 2026

4 ANTI-RACIST CONVERSATIONS GROUP

4.1 Anti-Racism Conversations (ARC) is a pupil-led programme providing safe and supportive spaces for Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) young people in primary and secondary schools to explore complex issues around race, identity and anti-racism. Sessions are co-shaped by young people, who influence themes, guest speakers and future actions. Staff sessions run alongside pupil activity to support professional learning and consistent practice

4.2 Growth and Participation

- The ARC pupil group continues to grow in both numbers and school representation, reflecting increasing demand and engagement.
- Participation spans a wide range of primary and secondary schools, including denominational and non-denominational settings.
- Dedicated additional sessions were delivered for clusters of schools, extending access where required.

5 GIRLS 4 EQUALITY LEGACY

5.1 S1 Girls Group

Following the graduation of the Girls4Equality Group, a legacy of COP26, Education Services have initiated a new young women's group as a legacy of 850. This group will be tracked from S1 to S6 in a similar way to the Girls4Equality, meeting twice a year on International Women's Day and International Day of the Girl. In addition to these sessions, young women will be supported to lead change initiatives in their schools and promote gender equality. There will be a new name and logo; this was part of the initial consultation in October and this will be finalised in March. The girls will then develop an action plan based on the targets they have identified. Each session will include inputs from partners who can lead and inspire the young women to achieve their goals.

5.2 S4 Young Men's Minds

On 30 January 2026, Education Services will launch the Young Men's Mind Project. This project has been developed to support the mental health of young men in our city based on evidence gathered by Education Psychologists. The project will be delivered in partnership with Strathclyde University and a variety of other agencies. After the initial Conference, young people will return to their schools to develop an action plan based on their own school priorities. They will be supported to do this by the allocation of two coaches, one who is based in the school and another external coach who has volunteered to support the project. Support sessions are being delivered to coaches prior to the launch to ensure a consistent approach to supporting the young people. This project will be used as research by the University to show evidence of the impact of this model. All 30 Secondary schools have been invited to attend with 4 S4 young men who will represent their schools.

6 COMMONWEALTH GAMES MASCOT CREATION

6.1 In March 2025 Education were approached by the organizing committee of the Glasgow 2026 to ask how they can meaningfully consult with young people about the 2026 Games. The CWG206 Participation officer met with the lead officer for Children's Rights to organize sessions with Young people during the Forums. 2 sessions were organised in the Banqueting Hall with young people selected from schools who support the Forums and Senior Phase Parliament.

6.2 The magical mascot was imagined with the help of 76 children from 24 schools from communities across Glasgow – known as Mascot Makers. 'Fun, cool, and sassy' Finnie's signature feature is a horn inspired by the famous traffic cone on top of the Duke of Wellington statue outside Glasgow's Gallery of Modern Art (GOMA) – a nod to Glasgow's renowned sense of humour.

"Being involved in creating the mascot has inspired me. To me, the mascot represents my city, Glasgow, and stands as a symbol of the 2026 Commonwealth Games. It's something I'll always feel proud to have contributed to."

7 GLASGOW CITY CHILDRENS CHARTER

7.1 The Primary and Secondary Forums throughout 2024/25 have met to discuss the UNCRC rights. The rights can be organized around 3 domains, often referred to as the 3 Ps.

- PROVISION of services, such as education, housing or healthcare. Refers to sharing and distribution of resources. This includes access to play facilities, leisure and arts.
- PROTECTION of children and young people from abuse or from dangerous drugs (for example).
- Promoting the PARTICIPATION children and young people so that their views are sought, heard and actively influence decisions or outcomes. The right to do things, express yourself and have an effective voice.

7.2 While all the articles are important, the young people discussed which articles were more relevant to young people living in Glasgow. They voted and have taken the 54 articles to 12.

The articles selected are.

- Article 2 You have the right to protect against discrimination.
- Article 3 Adults should do what's best for you.
- Article 6 You have the right to life.
- Article 8 You have the right to have an identity.
- Article 12 - You have the right to an opinion and for it to be listened to and taken seriously.
- Article 15 - You have the right to be friends and join or set up clubs, unless this breaks the rights of others.
- Article 19 You have the right to be protected from being hurt or badly treated.
- Article 27 You have the right to have a good enough standard of living.
- Article 28 You have the right to education.
- Article 30 - if you come from a minority group you have the right to enjoy your own culture, practice your own religion and use your own language.
- Article 31 - You have the right to play and relax by doing things like sport, music and drama.
- Article 33 You have the right to be protected from dangerous drugs.

Although the articles are indivisible and interdependent, there are 4 underpinning rights which can be seen to support all the others and are called General Principles:

- Article 2 covers the principle of Universality.
- Article 3 puts the best interest of the child first – before any other consideration – in all actions concerning children.
- Article 6 recognizes that every child has the inherent right to life and that States must ensure ‘to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child’.
- Article 12, the right to be heard, is seen as a gateway right. Without Article 12 it is very difficult for children and young people to exercise their other rights. Participation therefore is often the first step to raising awareness of rights.

7.3 The young people have also researched how all the City Council and ALEOs support Young People whether through Education, Financial, Leisure, housing, advice, employability and other services.

“Good to hear other young people’s opinions. Good to have our say. Good to know all the different departments that help us.”

“It helped us understand that the council should listen more to the children to understand that we can help the world”

8 PARTICIPATION IN OUR SCHOOLS

8.1 Pupil voice and pupil participation is now regularly recognised in HMI reports as being a strength in schools. The following quotes are taken from recent reports

“Children have a very strong sense of community and responsibility through the Gospel values. Almost all children contribute to the school and wider community through pupil voice groups, the pupil council and through charity work.”

“A whole school focus on wellbeing at the start of every session supports children and staff to write their helpful class mission statement, relevant to their classroom context. This helps ensure children have a voice in shaping their learning environment.”

“senior leaders know children’s views on what is working well and what they would like to develop next. Senior leaders and staff are now exploring meaningful ways to involve more younger children in sharing their views and contributing to school decisions.”

“all children contribute to the school and wider community through pupil voice groups, the pupil council and through charity work.”

“Children talk confidently about their rights and how staff support them in achieving these.”

“ensure our values are enshrined in the rights of the child and a lived experience in our school. – Classes have a collaboratively planned Class Charter linked to the UNCRC and a consistent display exhibiting thinking skills is in every class.”

9 RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOL AWARDS (RRSA)

- 9.1 Pupil Voice is a key aspect of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Rights Respecting School Awards (RRSA). At all levels schools and young people are asked about their views and to give examples of when and how they are being listened to.

RRSA Evaluation statements for Pupil Voice

“The young people spoke enthusiastically about how important they felt pupil voice was in school. In school “people ask and they’ve made it happen”.”

“P6 pupils raised their concern about the Heartstart manikins as they didn’t represent many of the young people in school. They asked, “Could darker skin manikins be bought.”

“Primary 7 wanted more opportunities to be leaders and share their passions and expertise.”

“We asked about having a culture day and are now designing it - how we want it to look like from everyone’s suggestions.”

- 9.2 In August 2021, the Children’s Rights Education Officer began working with schools across the city, developing the understanding and implementation of Children’s Rights in all establishments. The table below shows the increase in active schools engaging with the award from September 2021 to December 2025

RRSA Position in Glasgow School Sept 21 to December 2024. (Award level is valid for 3 years)

RRSA Awards at	20/09/2021	05/12/2023	04/12/2024	22/10/2025
Gold	2	6	9	17
Silver	2	18	48	66
Bronze	16	61	61	46
Registered	16	28	21	18
Active (within 3 years)	36	113	139	147

- 9.3 In promoting and developing engagement with the UNCRC, the Lead Officer has developed an extensive CLPL offer for all establishments, delivering to practitioners from August 24 to June 25
- 9.4 Education Services have worked very closely with UNICEF to train our RRSA assessors and trainers for the city. We now have a trained team of 4 and this will increase annually to ensure sustainability.
- 9.5 Further mutual learning from UNICEF has taken place as part of the Children and Young People's Euro Cities Working Group which is supporting our networked learning Organisation work.

10 YOUNG LEADERS PROJECT: WEST PARTNERSHIP

- 10.1 The Young Leaders of Learning Programme (YLL), Is a programme which Scottish Government wants to use to engage with young people to listen to their views about how to improve Scottish Education. Schools participating in YLL programme support their own self-evaluation and school improvement activities by involving learners in the process.
- 10.2 Staff and up to 8 Young people from 34 Glasgow schools. were trained by a Lead Officer and the West Partnership team using training materials from Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland (SPARQS), an organization that promotes student engagement in the quality of learning and teaching in Scotland's universities, colleges, and schools. We chose Health and Wellbeing as the focus for the engagement.
The group met together in April 2025 to share their findings.
Evidence so far suggests that YLLs develop confidence, communication skills and other Organisational ability.

11 SCHOOL CAPTAINS

- 11.1 The Executive Director of Education meets annually with the school captains across all Secondary and ASL schools in the city. This is the approach ensures young people have the opportunity to share their thoughts and questions with the Director directly in this forum, as well as the Director being able to give the young people a voice.

12 NEXT STEPS:

The work in supporting and ensuring Childrens Rights and Voice in Education continue to be developed and supported. The following initiatives are now being planned:

- Education Services and UNICEF have drafted an RRSA Action Plan. It is the aspiration of the Glasgow Education Services that all Glasgow schools will engage in UNICEF UK's Rights Respecting Schools Award. Rights Respecting Schools Awards at Bronze and Silvers are all now assessed by Glasgow trained staff. GCC Edis team will support all establishments to fund the award as costs were seen as a barrier in March 2021.
- A City Children's Charter has been cocreated with the Young People of the forums and will be shared with elected members, Council departments and ALEOS. This charter is asking for their support.
- The UNCRC Strategic group has been reformed and will meet 4 times a session. The group will look to refresh the priorities for our service with regard to pupil participation and refresh the Pupil Voice Framework. This work will be ongoing over the next year.
- Education Services will support collaborative work and actions across services as a follow up to enactment of the UNCRC bill.
- A citywide Pupil Conference designed and delivered by Young people will be planned for Climate week in May 2025 as climate has been a major priority for the Forums.

13 POLICY AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Resource Implications:

<i>Financial:</i>	N/A
<i>Legal:</i>	Future work on CRIA
<i>Personnel:</i>	N/A
<i>Procurement:</i>	NA

Council Strategic Plan: Specify which Grand Challenge (s) and Mission (s) the proposal supports. Where appropriate the relevant Commitment can also be listed.

- Increase Opportunity and prosperity for all our citizens (Mission 3 Raise attainment amongst Glasgow's Children and young people)
- Fight the climate emergency in a just transition to a net zero Glasgow (Mission 2 Become a net zero carbon city by 2030)
- Reduce poverty and inequality in our communities. (Mission 2 Meet the learning and care needs of families before and through school, Mission 3 Improve the Health and wellbeing of our local communities, Mission 4 Support Glasgow to be a city that is active and culturally vibrant)
- Enable staff to deliver essential services in a sustainable, innovative and efficient way for our communities. (Mission 1 Create safe, clean and thriving neighbourhoods, Mission 2 Run an open well governed council in partnership with all our communities)
-

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify.

Yes

1. CLPL Provision across outcomes
2. Development of BAME networks linked to equalities developments across participation, engagement and inclusion approaches
3. Inclusion of all young people
4. Gender based violence and Gender is a theme through this work
5. Hate crime training
6. Mental health and wellbeing focus e.g. Respect Me
7. Equalities and discrimination are part of the Senior Phase Parliament manifesto

What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?

Positive impact

Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage.

Yes – engagement in civic responsibility and accountability

Climate Impacts:

Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:

Yes: -
Theme 1 Communication & Community Empowerment
Theme 2 Just and Inclusive Place
Theme 4 Health and Wellbeing

What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?

None

Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?

N/A

Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:

Are there any potential data protection impacts as a result of this report
Y/N

No

If yes, please confirm that Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) has been carried out.

14 Recommendations

14.1 That Committee notes the report and promotes engagement across the Council Family, Officers and Members.