

Bairns' Hoose Standards

Children's rights and wellbeing impact assessment

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Background

Article 4 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) requires governments 'to undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative and other measures for the implementation of the rights recognised in the UNCRC'.

Section 2 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 requires local authorities, NHS boards and other public bodies to report every three years on the steps they have taken to secure better or further effect of the requirements of the UNCRC.

Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) is Scotland's approach to improving the wellbeing of children and young people. Wellbeing is defined by eight indicators listed in s.96 (2) of the 2014 Act. These indicators – Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible, Included – were developed from the UNCRC.

Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) is a tool that can help to inform and meet these duties.

Assessment

Which UNCRC articles are relevant to the work?

Article	✓	Article	✓
Non-discrimination	x	The best interests of the child	x
Implementing the UNCRC	x	Parental guidance	
Children's survival and development	x	Birth registration	
Identity		Separation from parents	
Family reunification		Abduction	
Respect for children's views	x	Freedom of expression	x

Freedom of thought conscience and religion		Freedom of association	
Privacy	x	Mass media	
Parental and state responsibilities	x	Protection from violence, abuse and neglect	x
Alternative care		Adoption	
Refugee children	x	Disabled children	x
Health and healthcare	x	Children receiving healthcare away from home	
Social security		Adequate standard of living	
Education		Education and children's development	
Minority and indigenous groups	x	Play and cultural and artistic activities	
Child labour		Drug abuse	
Sexual exploitation and abuse	x	Other forms of exploitation	x
Cruel treatment and detention		Armed conflict	
Abduction, sale and trafficking		Recovery from trauma and reintegration	x
Juvenile justice	x	National law and standards	x
Knowledge of children's rights	x		

What impact will the policy or measure have on children's rights?

Positive

Negative

Neutral

How will the work contribute to the wellbeing of children and young people in Scotland?

For each indicator below, explain how your work will help safeguard, support and promote the wellbeing of children. Provide narrative only for the indicators that are relevant.

<p style="text-align: center;">Safe</p> <p>Protected from abuse, neglect and harm by others at home, at school and in the community.</p>	<p>The Barnahus model, and consequently the standards, aims to protect children from harm and abuse. Improvements in the quality of evidence caused by the minimum need for the child to retell their story improves judicial outcomes and prevents delay in child protection decisions. The standards outline specific measures related to the child protection process including an effective and coordinated multiagency response, planning for the child and family and supporting the Children's Hearing system.</p> <p>Standard 11 outlines the capacity building and prevention work of the Bairns' Hoose, in addition to the governance requirements outlined throughout the standards to maintain data and share information to ensure the safety of children. Ongoing safety planning, support and tailored therapies aim to improve outcomes for children and young people by reducing self-harm, suicide and further risk of harm and trauma.</p> <p>Standard 4, relating to design and environment, includes specific criteria related to the need to design the Bairns' Hoose to ensure safety of children and families. Standard 5 outlines how dynamic risk assessment should form part of child protection planning.</p>
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<p>Healthy</p> <p>Having the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health, access to suitable healthcare, and support in learning to make healthy and safe choices.</p>	<p>The Bairns' Hoose standards outline a requirement for each Bairns' Hoose to support children to access the highest attainable quality of health. Early prevention and intervention in child protection cases reduces the likelihood of children and young people developing additional health problems and other poor health outcomes associated with adverse childhood experiences. Standard 8 specifically relates to health provision in the Bairns' Hoose and includes universal, acute and community services which support children to be healthy. Standards 8 and 9 include criterion relates to mental health support and access to therapeutic recovery services.</p>
<p>Achieving</p> <p>Being supported and guided in their learning and in the development of their skills, confidence and self-esteem at home, at school and in the community.</p>	<p>Early prevention and intervention in child protection cases reduces the likelihood of children and young people experiencing poorer educational outcomes and attainment associated with adverse childhood experiences. The standards outline the role of therapeutic support and effective coordination and community-based services to support children's learning and development. Standards 1 and 3 include criteria related to minimising disruption to education and supporting children with additional learning needs.</p>
<p>Nurtured</p> <p>Having a nurturing place to live, in a family setting with additional help if needed or, where this is not possible, in a suitable care setting.</p>	<p>The standards outline that where services are co-located, all facilities including interview and assessment facilities should be looked after, well kept, safe, homely, welcoming and child-friendly. The standards also outline how support and therapeutic help being provided throughout, along with a trusted person alongside each child, provides a nurturing setting and staff.</p>

<p>Active</p> <p>Having opportunities to take part in activities such as play, recreation and sport which contribute to healthy growth and development, both at home and in the community.</p>	<p>The standards outline that children and young people should have access to outdoor spaces and activities at the Bairns’ Hoose.</p>
<p>Respected</p> <p>Having the opportunity, along with carers, to be heard and involved in decisions which affect them.</p>	<p>Throughout the standards document, several criteria refer to the child’s right to be heard and influence decisions which affect them. Information, advice and support should be provided in a way that is age-appropriate and in formats and languages that are chosen by the child. The standards document includes a ‘children and young people told us’ section containing words, phrases and ideas from children and young people actively involved in the standards development process. Standard 4 relates to involvement of young people in the design of the Bairns’ Hoose, and Standard 5 includes criteria relates to children’s involvement in proceedings and processes that affect them.</p>
<p>Responsible</p> <p>Having opportunities and encouragement to play active and responsible roles in their schools and communities and having appropriate guidance and supervision and being involved in decisions that affect them.</p>	<p>The standards outline that all people who use services including children and young people should be given the opportunity to provide feedback to shape and design services. Each Bairns’ Hoose must demonstrate how it has sought out and acted on the views of children and young people, and how young people are supported to meaningful participate in decisions. Standards 1 and 11 include criteria related to children’s participation in the Bairns’ Hoose model.</p>

<p>Included</p> <p>Having help to overcome social, educational, physical and economic inequalities and being accepted as part of the community in which they live and learn.</p>	<p>Standard 3 highlights that all children and young people who are victims and witnesses of violence or abuse should have equitable access to services, and that each Barnahus must take steps to reduce barriers including barriers faced by children with disabilities.</p>
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Please provide a short description of how the work gives better or further effect to the implementation of the UNCRC in Scotland.

The first Barnahus or 'Child's House' was established in Iceland in 1998 to improve the statutory response to child sexual abuse. Inspired by the Child Advocacy Center model from the United States, the Barnahus model is explicitly underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and is internationally recognised as an evidence-based model for children and families who are victims and witnesses of abuse and violence.

Article 39 of the UNCRC places an obligation on states to take all appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery from abuse and exploitation. It states this should take place 'in an environment which fosters the health, self respect and dignity of the child.' Barnahus has a critical role in upholding this right. The views and experiences of children and families highlight the importance of feeling heard, respected and supported by professionals 'under one roof.' Barnahus is conceptually described as a 'house with four rooms': health services, child protection services, judicial or investigative proceedings and therapeutic recovery. The roof of a Barnahus provides expertise through collaboration, consultation, training and awareness-raising on upholding the child's rights to care, protection, recovery and justice.

Children's right to participation in all judicial and administrative proceedings about them is enshrined in Article 12 of the UNCRC. This right is upheld through the processes and design of an effective Barnahus as well as the relationships that are developed there.

Barnahus plays a further critical role in ensuring that a child's journey through the justice process as a victim or witness is coordinated. Barnahus also plays an important role in enhancing awareness and knowledge of violence and abuse against children.

Central to the Bairns' Hoose model are the following key articles: Article 1 defines the age of the child as everyone under the age of 18. Article 2 establishes the rights in the UNCRC are to be given to all children without discrimination. Article 3 establishes that the best interests of the child should be the primary consideration in all actions concerning children.

Article 12 establishes that children have the right to express their views on all matters affecting them, and for those views to be given due weight, in accordance with the age and maturity of the child. Part 2 of the article states that children have the right to be heard in administrative or judicial proceedings affecting them.

Article 13 relates to the right to seek and receive information of all kinds. Article 18 relates to the involvement of both parents (or people with parental responsibility) in the upbringing of the child and the state's responsibility to provide assistance and support. Article 19 establishes children's right to be protected from violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation while in the care of parents or guardians.

Article 24 states that children have a right to the highest attainable standard of health. Article 39 requires the promotion of physical and psychological recovery and social integration of children who have been victims of abuse and that such recovery should take place in an environment which supports the health, self-respect and dignity of the child. The provision of holistic and relational support to help the child's recovery from abuse and trauma should be understood by the whole team as a core aim of the Bairns' Hoose.

Article 12(1) of the UNCRC states that all children should be given the opportunity to be heard and their views given due weight on all matters affecting them. Children who are supported to fully participate and have their rights upheld report lower levels of subsequent trauma following disclosure of abuse. Effective engagement with children should underpin the design and delivery of Bairns' Hoose.

Article 13 enshrines 'children's right to seek and receive information'. In December 2021, before the formation of the Bairns' Hoose Standards Development Group, children and young people across Scotland were asked one key question: 'what would you like to see in the standards?' This built on the work of the Glasgow Initiative for Facilitation Therapy who, in partnership with the Moira Anderson Foundation, made a series of recommendations to the Standards Development Group. The Standards Development Group were presented with this feedback at the beginning of the process.

From February 2022, participation and rights workers from six organisations have supported children to play an active role throughout the six months standards development period. Through creative sessions, play, videos, group work and one-on-one sessions, children input their ideas into the standards and fed back on their experiences to the Standards Development Group at every meeting.

A children's version was published for the consultation and organisations were offered up to £500 to run sessions or workshops with young people across Scotland.

Evidence

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Sign-off

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