



## What we do in Scotland

- We've kept ending child poverty high on the political agenda
- We're working hard to stop bullying and discrimination against young Gypsy Travellers
- We've successfully lobbied for better protection for asylum-seeking children



One child in four in Scotland lives in poverty. This means their families can't afford basics such as warm winter clothes and nutritional food, and they miss out on after-school activities. Many do not have proper healthcare, housing or education, let alone a secure and happy childhood. Experiencing poverty in childhood can have lifelong harmful consequences.

Some groups of children are particularly discriminated against, especially young Gypsy Travellers and refugees and asylum-seekers. Children and young people themselves think that their rights are not being respected – at home, in schools, or by the government. They want to know more about their rights and they want to have a say in decisions on issues that affect them directly.

### Save the Children in Scotland

We're working to improve the lives of the most vulnerable children and young people in Scotland. Our campaign against child poverty has attracted widespread support among politicians, the media and the public. As a result, the issue has been debated in the Scottish Parliament and politicians of all parties have shown their support for the campaign.

Through our work we're increasing people's awareness of children's rights and we're helping young people become active players in their own communities. Researching ways of improving children's lives, and consulting children to find out what their experiences can tell us, is a vital aspect of our work.

We played a lead role in the campaign to appoint a Children's Commissioner in Scotland. We're increasingly called on by government to give evidence and advice on matters concerning children.

## Key areas of work

### We're campaigning for an end to child poverty

About 250,000 children in Scotland live in poor families; 90,000 live in severe poverty. We think it's disgraceful that child poverty exists in Scotland today. Our vigorous lobbying has kept ending child poverty high on the political agenda. The Scottish Executive has made a pledge to help the most deprived families and the Parliament has made it a priority issue. Pressure from members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) has forced energy companies to reduce prices for low-income families. Our lobbying has also led to the main political parties promising to back wider entitlement to free school meals. Support for the campaign is gaining momentum across Scotland with a dramatic increase in public support, largely from young people, and widespread media coverage, including a one-hour radio programme devoted to our campaign. We are confident that this support will lead to commitments from Government to end child poverty.

We want every child to have access to quality education and learning opportunities, which enable them to achieve their full educational potential, and grow up to have happy and fulfilled lives. We aim to support children living in poverty by helping schools transform the relationships they have with the poorest families and communities. We'll do this by helping schools build on existing strengths and working with other organisations. Once we've explored what works best, we'll publish the findings.

### We're helping children get their views heard

We want children and young people to have their voices heard in the debate about poverty. In partnership with Glasgow University, we carried out research on poverty and how it affects the way children experience services such as education and health. We asked 10–14-year-olds about how they use services and what they think of them. The findings were published in a report, *Serving Children?* With our support, children from the north of Scotland produced a TV film on poverty. Information from focus groups involving 56 children affected by poverty has been included in another report, *Everyone Matters*, produced by a consortium of agencies, including Save the Children. We also support young people to raise these issues with politicians directly. The young people we work with have commitments from the First Minister and their local MSPs on key issues that affect them.

## **We're enabling children to be active in their communities**

The east end of Glasgow is an area with widespread poverty, a lack of services and high unemployment. The Young Eastenders Speaking (YES) project grew out of our Community Planning Partnership work. We want to give children and young people a voice and help them make positive changes in their own communities. YES now involves 265 young people aged 9–14. They meet weekly in groups in 13 communities. They've discussed topics such as teenage shelters, litterbins, environmental issues, play parks and community spirit. Young people from the YES steering group have run workshops on getting children and young people involved in improving local communities. Through the workshops they can pass on their knowledge and skills to young people in other parts of Glasgow.

In partnership with the East End Youth Network, YES ran an event called 'What's On', to find out what young people want from local services. Out of this they produced a report, *What's Up*. It reflects the views of the 55 young people who were involved. Among these were not having things to do, bullying, and not having enough money to take part in activities.

## **We've helped to get young refugees' and asylum-seekers' rights respected**

Young refugees and asylum-seekers arrive in Scotland as a result of difficult and often traumatic circumstances. Many face racism in their new communities and schools. A key part of our work with them is building understanding and friendship.

We're a key player in this area. We co-chair the Scottish Parliament's cross-party group on refugees and asylum-seekers and we also chaired the Government's Scottish Refugee Integration Forum (SRIF) sub-group on children's issues. We've helped to develop a new Refugee Action Plan. Most of our key demands have been included in the new plan. One of these is the provision of guardians for asylum-seeking children who've arrived unaccompanied.

We've also campaigned against the use of 'dawn raids' to remove families whose asylum applications have failed. A group of young women, the 'Glasgow Girls', led widespread protests when one of their close friends was removed with her family. The minister for immigration matters agreed to consider a more humane procedure. We had a meeting with government officials to advise on how this might be done. However, little progress was made, so we supported the Glasgow Girls to organise a press conference. This pushed the Executive to finally introduce a new procedure that would ensure children's best interests were respected when families were removed.

In partnership with the Scottish Refugee Council, we launched the campaign, 'No Place for a Child', against the detention of children for the purpose of immigration control. We've been very influential in getting public and political support for this campaign. As a result, the maximum time families with children can be kept at Dungavel detention centre before being transferred to the Yarl's Wood removal centre is now 72 hours

We continue to challenge Glasgow City Council because it discriminates against asylum-seeking families when it comes to services for children under five. These families are offered pre-five places only after all other groups have been allocated theirs. As a direct result of pressure from us, the government has prioritised this issue. Together with Rosemount Family Learning Centre we've developed a project to provide support to asylum-seeking families.

A group of young asylum-seekers and refugees has made a DVD on children's experiences of detention. It's been put on the website 'CARIS' (Child Asylum and Refugee Issues in Scotland). CARIS provides information for young asylum-seekers and refugees. The site gets about 6,500 'hits' a month. It now has a new section for children of primary school age, called 'A journey with Alex and Anna'. Pupils from Sir John Maxwell school helped design it.

### **We're raising awareness of child trafficking**

We want better protection for trafficked children. We're working with a network of child protection agencies to increase knowledge of this terrible problem. We also co-ordinate support for trafficked children. We took part in a consultation with the UK Home Office and Scottish Executive, basing our contribution on our report, *A hidden trade – a report on child trafficking in Scotland*. Following a seminar on child trafficking that we organised with Glasgow City Council, we're using the recommendations to lobby government on this issue.

### **We're getting children involved in decision-making**

We want children to play a part in decision-making and to gain the skills and confidence they need to fulfil their potential. Learning and Teaching Scotland commissioned us to produce citizenship and participation materials for teachers. Our package consists of a DVD, booklet and online material, called *Participation and Learning*. We've distributed this to all 3,000 schools in Scotland. It offers ideas on how young people, teachers and parents can get involved in all aspects of school life. Thirteen young people learned to use film equipment and shot a large part of the 35-minute video themselves.

### **We're enabling young Gypsy Travellers to challenge discrimination**

One of the most vulnerable groups of children and young people in Scotland are Gypsy Travellers. They often face racism and discrimination. We're the only organisation working with Gypsy Traveller children across Scotland. We lobby for changes in policy and legislation, and support young people to challenge discrimination and promote greater understanding of their needs and aspirations.

With our support, young Gypsy Travellers took part in a three-day conference organised by the Scottish Traveller Education Programme. They set up a display of their work and ran workshops for other Gypsy Traveller children. More than 145 young people have attended similar workshops throughout Scotland run by young Gypsy Travellers and aimed at conveying the message 'same people but different lives'.

We've launched an interactive website containing information about Gypsy Travellers. The site was created and designed by the young people themselves. Using Heritage Lottery Fund funding, young Gypsy Travellers have also created an interactive website, 'Time Travellers', containing accessible information about all aspects of Gypsy Traveller lives, from a young person's perspective.

In partnership with Heriot Watt and Strathclyde universities, we've been commissioned by four local authorities to carry out an accommodation needs assessment. As part of this work we ran three workshops specifically for young Gypsy Travellers. Over 20 children produced a range of powerful artwork. This will be exhibited along with the final research report.

We've supported young Gypsy Travellers to give presentations about their lives to four conferences attended by approximately 1,000 professionals and MSPs. In Fife, 12 young Gypsy Travellers produced a DVD and made a presentation to a council committee; as a result, they secured funding of almost £50,000 for providing recreational facilities. Over 30 young Gypsy Travellers from across Scotland produced a hard-hitting DVD, *Moving Voices*, about the problems they face regarding access to education, prejudice, relationships with the police, accommodation, and their hopes and aspirations for the future. The DVD is used in training sessions for professionals in services such as health and education.



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Registered charity no. 213890