"Our vision is for Scotland to be one of the best places in the world for vulnerable children and young people to grow up in".



Scottish Children's Services Coalition

Securing a better future for Scotland's vulnerable children and young people

Manifesto for the 2016 Scottish Parliament Election



About the Scottish Children's Services Coalition?



The Scottish Children's Services Coalition (SCSC) is an alliance of leading independent and third sector service providers, supporting vulnerable children and young people, as well as their families.

Our members deliver specialist care and education services to children and young people with complex needs, such as those with learning difficulties and learning disabilities, as well as direct help and support to their families.

They also provide independent advocacy, advice and representation to care experienced children and young people.

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www.thescsc.org.uk

ScotChildren

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Who are the Scottish Children's Services Coalition?

who cares? scotland
speaking out for young people in care

www.whocarescotland.org



mindroom
no mind left behind

www.mindroom.org

FALKLAND HOUSE SCHOOL fhs

www.falklandhouseschool.org

spark of genius
every second counts

www.sparkofgenius.com

YOUNG FOUNDATIONS

www.youngfoundations.com

Action for Sick Children SCOTLAND

www.ascscotland.org.uk

kindred
supporting families of children and young people with additional needs

www.kindred-scotland.org



Our vision is of a Scotland that is one of the best places in the world for vulnerable children and young people to grow up in, creating a more equal society.



We aim to achieve this through campaigning for a wide-variety of high-quality, well-resourced and quickly accessible services for vulnerable children and young people, so that they receive the best possible care and support, tailored to their individual needs.

Our Manifesto

Our manifesto for the Scottish Parliament election focuses on **four key areas**, ensuring that the rising numbers of those requiring support are receiving it in a **timely** manner, through:

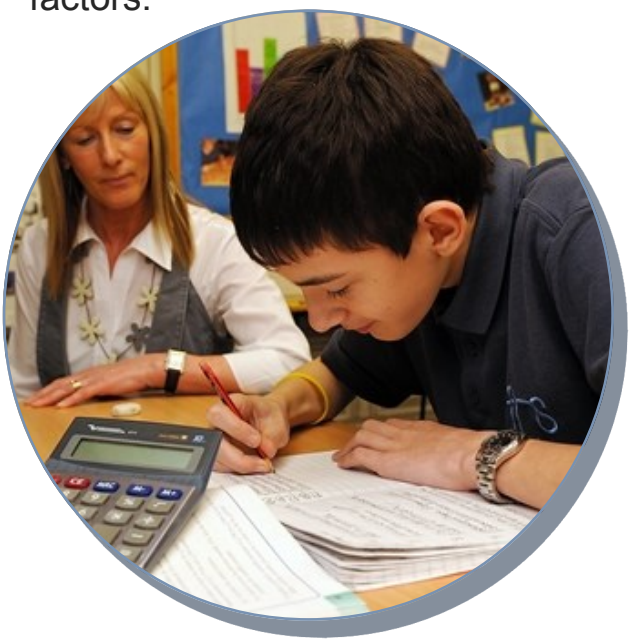
- **Providing a wide variety of high–quality, well-resourced and quickly accessible services to children and young people who require Additional Support for Learning (ASL).**
- **Providing a wide variety of high quality, well-resourced and quickly accessible services to children and young people with mental health needs.**
- **Providing training and employment opportunities to young people with Additional Support Needs (ASN) and care experience.**
- **Providing a statutory right to independent advocacy services for children and young people with care experience.**

Providing high-quality services to children and young people who require Additional Support for Learning

Additional support for learning means giving children extra help or support so they can get the most out of their education and reach their fullest potential.

A child or young person is said to have Additional Support Needs (ASN) if they need more – or different support – to what is normally provided in schools or pre-schools to those of the same age.

A very wide range of factors may lead to a child or young person having a need for additional support. These factors fall broadly into four overlapping themes: learning environment, family circumstances, disability or health need, and social and emotional factors.



Over 153,000 children and young people in Scotland are classed as having ASN, more than **one in five of the school population (22.5 per cent),** of which 61 per cent are boys.[1]

ASN, including poor mental and physical health and long-term conditions, disproportionately affects those children from lower income families and areas of deprivation.

Increased pressure on services, combined with budget cuts, means that many children and young people are missing out on the support they vitally need, leading to a 'potential' lost generation of vulnerable young people.

More needs to be done to ensure that children and young people with ASN have access to a wide variety of high-quality, well--resourced and quickly accessible services, so they get the help they need when they need it. This will improve their life chances, assist in closing the educational attain-ment gap and reduce the health, economic and social costs.

Recommendation 1

That children and young people who are thought to have ASN are assessed as early as possible and promptly provided with the appropriate support.

While those with ASN have poorer educational and employment outcomes than their peers, early intervention and preventative measures can assist in addressing this, preventing further difficulties developing later and maximising their life chances.

Recommendation 2

That there is increased investment in services for those with ASN, delivered for example by local authorities, NHS, the independent and third sectors, and that statutory requirements are fulfilled.

There should also be greater partnership working between the public sector and independent and third sector service providers, addressing the needs of the child or young person

Recommendation 3

That there is appropriate support for those with ASN through adequate provision in both special and mainstream education, tailored to the needs of the child or young person.



Recommendation 4

That there is funding provided to promote greater public awareness and understanding of children and young people with ASN, and that teachers, social workers, health professionals and other practitioners are adequately trained in order to support those involved.

Recommendation 5

That there is improved guidance from the Scottish Government to local authorities on recording the numbers of pupils with ASN, given the current sizeable variation in figures between local authorities.

Providing high-quality services to children and young people with mental health needs

Mental health services are under increasing pressure and services are under increasing pressure due to an ever increasing demand.

Mental health issues provide **one of the greatest health challenges of our time**. These include depression, anxiety, suicide, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and self-harm.

Research indicates that one in 10 children and young people have a clinically diagnosable mental health problem.

A lack of resources means that mental health services, such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), are overstretched and unable to adequately address demand.

More needs to be done to ensure that a wide variety of high-quality, well-resourced and quickly accessible mental health services is available to those requiring it, so they get the help they need when they need it. This will improve life chances and reduce the health, economic and social costs.

Recommendation 1

That there is parity of esteem between physical and mental health needs when providing care and treatment for children and young people.

Recommendation 2

That there is greater investment in preventing poor mental health and in early intervention, supporting the child or young person concerned at the earliest opportunity possible.

Recommendation 3

That there is a wholesale review of CAMHS to ensure that funding is being spent in the most effective manner, and that this is a key part of any new mental health strategy.



Recommendation 4

That there is greater investment in mental health services and greater partnership working between the public sector and independent and third sector service providers to address the needs of the child or young person concerned.

Evidence points to the fact that only 0.45 per cent of NHS Scotland expenditure is spent on CAMHS (5.56 per cent of the mental health budget),[2] compared with 0.7 per cent (7 per cent of the mental health budget) in England[3]

Recommendation 5

That the Scottish Government provides a strategy to ensure that NHS Health Boards meet the waiting time targets for CAMHS treatment.

The Scottish Government set a target for the NHS in Scotland to deliver a maximum waiting time of 18 weeks from a patient's referral to treatment for specialist CAMHS, a target dating from December 2014.





Recommendation 6

That adequate specialist beds are provided for children and young people with mental health and associated problems, close to home, and there is a greater focus on prevention and early intervention to prevent hospitalisation.

And that this facility would be able to provide for the needs of forensic patients.



Recommendation 7

That there is funding provided to promote greater public awareness and understanding of mental health needs, seeking to end mental health stigma and discrimination.

That those involved in working with children and young people receive the necessary training to assist in identifying and supporting mental health needs, and that there should be counselling provision in all secondary schools.

Providing increased training and employment opportunities available to young people with ASN and care experience

We are seeking to increase the training and employment opportunities available to those with ASN and care experience, including mental and physical health conditions, ensuring that no one is left behind, while delivering a stronger economy and a more equal society.

Those with ASN and care experience endure some of the poorest educational and employment outcomes of any group of young people.

In comparison with those not in these categories they face significant barriers into training and employment.

The Scottish Government aspiration to cut youth unemployment by 40 per cent by 2021 is to be welcomed.

However, we are still concerned by the challenges facing many of those with ASN and care experience looking to enter the world of training and employment.

As an example, the number of Modern Apprenticeship (MAs) starts in 2014/15 with a self- declared disability was **0.41 per cent** (in comparison with 8.6 per cent of those aged 16 to 24 in employment in Scotland having a disability). [6]

Recommendation 1

That there is prioritised and tailored career advice and work experience for children and young people with ASN and care experience at school.

Recommendation 2

That there is greater support for young people with ASN and care experience, as well as assistance and encouragement to employers to support these young people into and while in work.

Recommendation 3

That young people with ASN and care experience make a successful transition into training and employment, through providing public and third sector bodies with appropriate support.

We, for example, successfully campaigned to expand Scotland's Employer Recruitment Incentive (ERI), providing financial support to employers to recruit young people with disabilities and care experience.



Much more can be done to support young people with ASN and care experience to transition smoothly into training and employment.

Recommendation 4

That there is greater financial support for colleges and training providers, reflecting the cost of providing additional support to young people with ASN and care experience.



Recommendation 5

That age restrictions are relaxed for young people with ASN and care experience - whose transitions take longer - entering vocational education and training.

Recommendation 6

That there is an increase in the number of Modern Apprenticeship starts for those with ASN and care experience, including providing the highest level of funding.



Providing a statutory right to independent advocacy services

Being in care can be a difficult environment for a child or young person to cope with. Whilst they have been placed in care because their families are unable to provide them with the caring, nurturing and in some cases, safe environments which they deserve, many children and young people can find the process very daunting and unsettling.

These vulnerable children and young people have substantially poorer educational outcomes than those who have not been in care, leaving school earlier and often with no formal qualifications.[7]

Recommendation 1

That children and young people with care experience across Scotland have a statutory right to independent professional advocacy.

The role of an advocate is to support and empower the child or young person to be able to express their views, and to assist them in making informed decisions on matters which influence their lives.

Advocates help to safeguard the wellbeing of the child or young person, and specifically contribute to the Respected and Included elements of the Wellbeing Indicators.

This support can make a huge difference to the day-to-day and long-term experiences which children and young people have whilst in care, and upon leaving care.

It can help children and young people feel like their care is being provided in consultation with them and not something that is being done to them.

Recommendation 2

That the needs of parents and carers for advocacy support are recognised, especially where children are in receipt of complex care packages and/or require high levels of statutory services.



References

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[2] ISD Scotland, *Child and Adolescent mental health expenditure 2013-14, Scottish Health Service Costs*, *Report R300, R04LSX and SFR 8.3.*

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[4] Children's Commissioners, *Report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child*, 2nd July 2015; p.25. Available at: http://www.sccyp.org.uk/ufiles/UKreport.pdf.

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[6]Skills Development Scotland, Equalities action plan For Modern Apprenticeships in Scotland, Section 2 – Framing the Challenge. Available at: https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/40664/2869_sds_equalities_action_plan_digital_v2.pdf

[7] Scottish Government, Education Outcomes for Scotland's Looked After Children, 2013/14, 17th June 2015. Available at: http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/06/6439/3

