

Agenda Item	8.
Report No	EDU/17/21

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Education

Date: 2 September 2021

Report Title: **Highland Youth Charter**

Report By: Executive Chief Officer - Education and Learning

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to promote the creation of a Youth Charter for all Children and Young People across The Highland Council area.
- 1.2 The process to create the Youth Charter will take into account statutory requirements relating to:
- Revised National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland
 - Implementation of The Promise
 - United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill
 - Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) guidance
 - Links to the Community, Learning and Development Draft 3 year plan
- 1.3 Using the expectations of the above statutory requirements, the Charter will provide a collaborative and cohesive system to ensure all Children and Young People have opportunities to be part of a process where feedback is collected, listened to and responded to formally within an agreed process which will be set out through engagement activities led by the Highland Youth Convener as set out in section 3.3 of this report.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
- i) approve the creation of a Highland Youth Charter; and
 - ii) note a progress report will be brought back to the Education Committee in February 2022.

3. Implications

3.1 **Resource** - No additional resource required

3.2 Legal

3.2.1 The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 impresses the importance of everyone involved with a child taking responsibility for their wellbeing, and ensuring they work together to enable the child to reach their full potential.

3.2.2 The [UNCRC \(Incorporation\) \(Scotland\) Bill](#) implementation design phase will develop the guidance, training and investment needed. This legislation provides both preventative methods for protecting child rights, as well as statutory measures.

3.2.3 In relation to children's rights, the following articles are of particular note when developing the Highland Youth Charter:

Article 3: The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.

Article 12: All children have the right to express their views and have these taken into account in matters affecting them.

Article 13: Every child must be free to express their thoughts and opinions.

Article 16: Every child has the right to privacy.

3.3 **Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural)** - Each area of Highland is unique, and it is important to recognise the views and experiences of children and young people from all contexts. Planned engagement work will support all Young People's views to be listened to and acted upon. The method of communication will be co-constructed with young people. Working with Highland Youth Parliament, local Youth Work Networks and Fora, Highland Children and Young People's Forum, Voluntary Youth Network and wider community groups.

3.4 **Climate Change / Carbon Clever** - There are no implications specifically related to climate change. The consultation events will occur locally or digitally.

3.5 **Risk** - Reputational risk should we not seek the views of our Young People in determining, shaping future policy and practice.

3.6 **Gaelic** - Materials generated through the consultation will be made available in Gaelic and can be accessed for translation.

4. Rationale

4.1 Statutory implications

4.1.1 Part 1 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 requires all authorities to give better or further effect to the requirements of the UNCRC and take account of the relevant views of children of which they are aware. To promote public awareness

and understanding of the rights of children Section 2 of the 2014 Act requires local authorities, health 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.

4.1.2 Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) is Scotland's approach to improving the wellbeing of children and young people, with 'wellbeing' 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;

4.2 **Care and Learning expectations**

The introduction of a Youth Charter for Highland Children and Young People comes at a pertinent time for the Highlands. Education and Learning service is introducing a system review in relation to below, which provide both preventative methods for protecting child rights, as well as strong accountability measures:

- the revised National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland;
- the requirement to implement The Promise; and
- UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill.

4.3 **Charter developments to date**

4.3.1 Young people from Highland have already identified having a Youth Charter as a priority. The Northern Alliance (NA) Regional Improvement held a regional youth event in June 2019 where over 80 young people came together at the University of the Highlands and Islands in Inverness to talk about improving youth participation across the region. The full programme included a workshop led by Aberdeenshire Youth Forum which focussed on how they developed and implemented their Youth Charter in their area. Following this session, there was a unanimous decision to take forward action in each of the NA Local Authorities to develop a Youth Charter.

4.3.2 It will be important to have cross-sector collaboration in this process. Community Learning and Development partners were supportive of the Summer of Hope Charter that was shared with them, this was based on Scotland's Play Charter (UNCRC based) and gave clarity on the values and experiences our young people could expect from a variety of partners. Our Community Learning and Development partners engage with our children and young people in a different context. This could enable participation from an even wider group of young people, particularly those who experience successful learning opportunities in community contexts through youth work outcomes. This closer cross-sector collaboration will help ensure the voices of all young people are consistently promoted more often.

4.3.3 The core values of the Youth Charter will ensure the voices of young people are critical in shaping and developing it, ensuring it is inclusive and relevant, led by young people.

4.3.4 Many Young People are very familiar with the process of establishing a charter through schools' engagement with UNCRC and Rights respecting Schools.


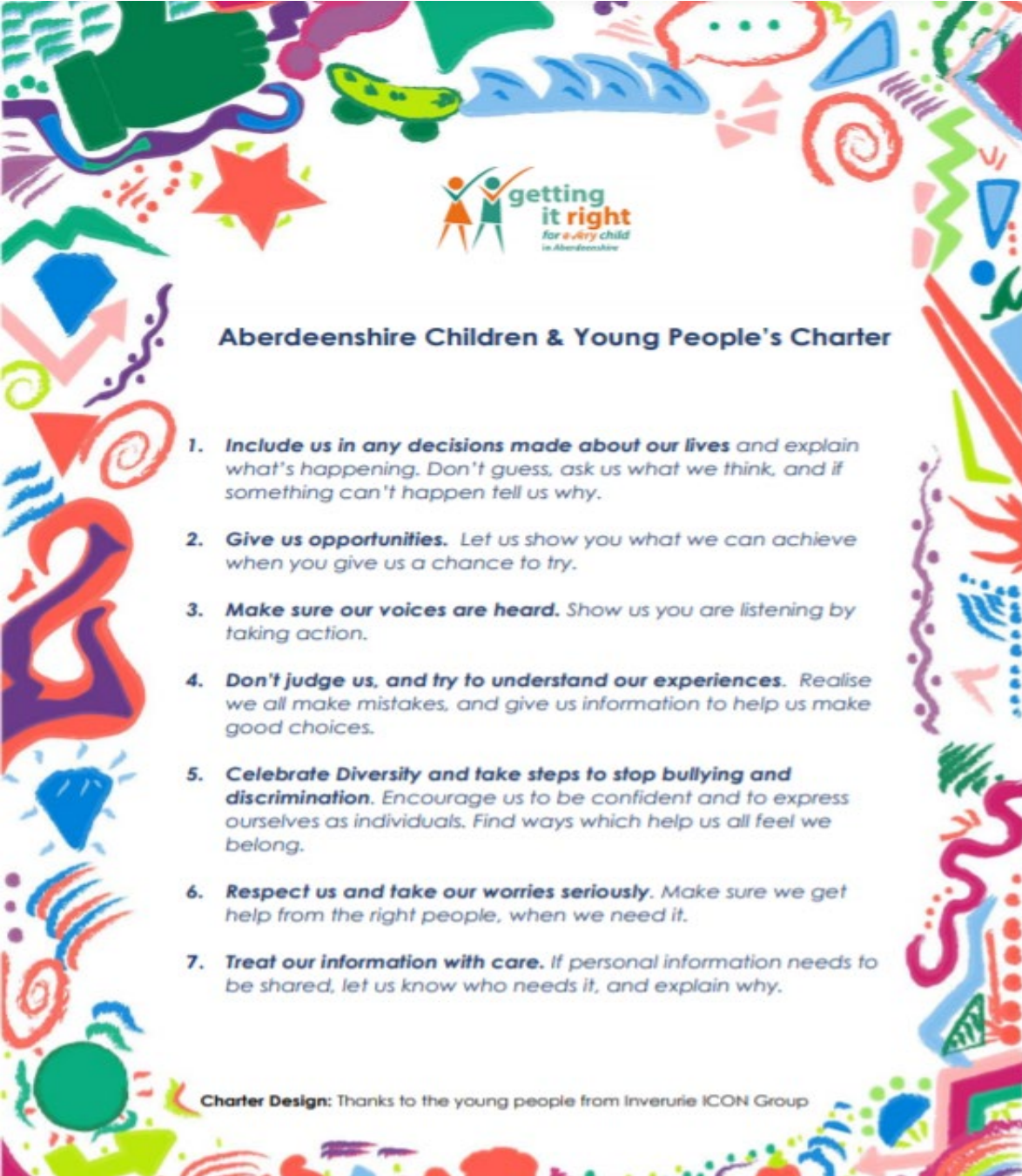
4.3.5 In November 2020 the NA collaborated with the North Sea Commission on a joint virtual event titled "*Changing Tides and Making Waves – Youth Participation Leading*

Positive Change across the North Sea” (conference report **Appendix 1**). This provided a further opportunity for Highland young people to work on strengthening youth voice structures and processes with their peers across the 8 Local Authority Areas in the North as well as young people from the 7 other countries which make up the North Sea Commission.

4.3.6 Discussions took place on the process required to develop a charter and young people discussed ideas outlining what they would like to see happen and how they could be involved. A summary of the discussion is noted in the following graphic recording of the workshop session:



Designation: Executive Chief Officer, Education and Learning
 Date: 15 July 2021
 Author: Anja Johnston – Highland Youth Convenor
 Appendices: Appendix 1 – Example Aberdeenshire Youth Charter



Aberdeenshire Children & Young People's Charter

1. **Include us in any decisions made about our lives** and explain what's happening. Don't guess, ask us what we think, and if something can't happen tell us why.
2. **Give us opportunities.** Let us show you what we can achieve when you give us a chance to try.
3. **Make sure our voices are heard.** Show us you are listening by taking action.
4. **Don't judge us, and try to understand our experiences.** Realise we all make mistakes, and give us information to help us make good choices.
5. **Celebrate Diversity and take steps to stop bullying and discrimination.** Encourage us to be confident and to express ourselves as individuals. Find ways which help us all feel we belong.
6. **Respect us and take our worries seriously.** Make sure we get help from the right people, when we need it.
7. **Treat our information with care.** If personal information needs to be shared, let us know who needs it, and explain why.

Charter Design: Thanks to the young people from Inverurie ICON Group