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UNCRC IN SCOTLAND

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Children's Rights and Homelessness in Scotland



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Introduction

Housing is a fundamental human right, and local authorities, as the frontline defenders of children's rights, play a pivotal role in addressing housing challenges. Scotland has recently incorporated the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (UNCRC) into Scots law which makes it unlawful for public authorities to breach children's rights. The UNCRC states that children have a right to adequate housing¹ and families are entitled to support if they face housing challenges.² The [UNCRC \(Incorporation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2024](#) lists local authorities as duty bearers and requires them to act compatibly with the UNCRC³ and to report⁴ on how they are advancing children's rights. This duty has significant implications for policy and practice in Scotland.

Research shows that the social determinants of homelessness lie in poverty and disadvantage. Families experiencing poverty are at a higher risk of becoming homeless due to the inability to afford housing.⁵ Conversely, homelessness exacerbates poverty by disrupting access to essential services and support systems.⁶ For instance, a homeless child's education is often interrupted, leading to lower academic achievement and limited future opportunities. Addressing one issue often alleviates the other, indicating the need for a multi-agency approach that brings together a range of duty-bearers such as local authorities and health boards.

Furthermore, [national statistics](#) reveal that in Scotland, domestic abuse is the leading cause of homelessness among women and their dependent children. Consequently, it is crucial for duty bearers and stakeholders to thoroughly understand and address the specific needs of those experiencing homelessness due to domestic abuse.

This briefing provides an overview of homelessness in Scotland, examines its impact on children's human rights, and offers guidance on adopting a children's rights-based approach to tackling homelessness.

1 Article 27 of the UNCRC covers the right to adequate standard of living including housing

2 Article 26 covers the right to social security

3 Section 6

4 Section 18

5 See for example [Social conditions of becoming homelessness: qualitative analysis of life stories of homeless peoples](#)

6 See for example [Child Poverty and Housing by Shelter Scotland and Aberlour](#)

What are children's rights?

Children's rights in Scotland are framed by national and international legislation, primarily guided by the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (UNCRC). The UNCRC encompasses 54 articles that address every aspect of a child's life, outlining their civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. Every child is entitled to claim their rights without exception. It is important to view the UNCRC as an integrated whole, where each right is interconnected with the others, and equally important to ensure the holistic development and wellbeing of every child. The Convention also details the responsibilities of adults and governments to ensure that all children can fully enjoy these rights.

The UK ratified the UNCRC in December 1991, and it was incorporated into Scots law, within devolved competence, through the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(Incorporation\) \(Scotland\) Act](#) in December 2024.⁷ The legislation imposes legal duties on public authorities, including local authorities, to respect, protect, and fulfil children's rights. This means, amongst others, that local authorities must consider the best interests of the child in all decisions, ensure children's views are heard and taken into account, and provide adequate resources and services to uphold children's rights. The Act empowers children and their representatives to take legal action against public authorities in Scotland if they believe that children's rights have been violated. If a court determines that a violation has occurred, it can grant appropriate remedies, ensuring that the rights of the child are upheld and protected.

The general principles of the UNCRC underpin all rights and are fundamental to taking a children's rights approach. The principles include non-discrimination (Article 2), the best interests of the child (Article 3), the right to life, survival, and development (Article 6), and the right to participate in decision-making and have their views taken seriously (Article 12). These principles ensure all children are treated equally as rights-holders, their welfare is guaranteed, they are allowed to develop to their full potential, and their opinions are considered in matters affecting their lives.

In housing, a children's rights approach requires cultural change alongside policy and legislative action in order to transform the prevailing view of housing from a commodity or source of wealth to a fundamental human right essential for a

⁷ Supporting documents:

- [Non-statutory guidance: Taking a Children's Human Rights Approach](#)
- [Statutory guidance on Part 2 of the UNCRC \(Incorporation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2024](#)
- [Statutory guidance on Part 3 of the UNCRC \(Incorporation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2024](#)
- [Clarification of inherent obligations of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#)
- [Sources to guide interpretation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(Incorporation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2024](#)

dignified life. Homelessness should not be seen as inevitable aspect of society but rather as an unacceptable injustice. Every child deserves a safe and adequate place to call home.



The state of homelessness in Scotland

In Scotland, homelessness is defined as lacking a stable and adequate place to live. This includes not only those without housing but also individuals whose housing situation is unsuitable or insecure, those living in temporary accommodation, or those facing threats of eviction.⁸ Local authorities are required by law to assist individuals and households who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, ensuring they have access to temporary accommodation and support services. While the legislation is clear that everyone in Scotland should have the right to a safe, warm, and secure home, the latest official statistics paint a concerning picture. Despite legal protections, significant numbers of children and young people continue to be affected by homelessness. According to the latest [homelessness statistics](#), 15,474 children were in households assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness. This is equivalent to 42 children becoming homeless every day. Moreover, the number of children in temporary accommodation increased to 10,110 in 2024.

The [Homeless Persons \(Unsuitable Accommodation\) \(Scotland\) Order 2014](#) establishes that all temporary accommodation provided to homeless households must meet specific standards, particularly when children are involved. It must be safe, not overcrowded, have cooking facilities, and be located near essential services such as schools. Unsuitable accommodation is only permissible for up to 7 days, highlighting the urgency of finding appropriate housing solutions. However, compliance with these standards remains a challenge. In 2023-24, twenty-five local authorities reported 7,400 breaches of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order, a significant increase from 5,240 in the previous year. Temporary accommodation is vital for families fleeing rough sleeping, but it should serve only as a short-term emergency solution. Yet, households spent an average of 226 days in temporary accommodation during 2023-24, with this duration being even longer for families with children.⁹

Local authorities are also legally required to provide temporary accommodation when a household is in need. A failure to do so is unlawful, and in 2023-24, there were 7,915 instances where households were not offered temporary accommodation, a significant increase from just 450 in 2022-23. These figures underline the systemic issues within Scotland's homelessness response.¹⁰

The prevention of homelessness is another critical area of focus. Under current legislation, local authorities have a duty to intervene when there is a risk of

8 [Housing \(Scotland\) Act 1987](#) as amended by Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003

9 [Homelessness in Scotland: 2023-24](#)

10 [Homelessness in Scotland: 2023-24](#)

homelessness within two months. Proposed changes in the [Housing Bill](#) aim to extend this duty to six months, emphasising the importance of early intervention. However, prevention efforts must go beyond timelines; local authorities must adopt a proactive approach, ensuring children's rights are considered not only when they become homeless but also in taking every possible measure to prevent homelessness from occurring in the first place.

Addressing child homelessness requires a comprehensive systems approach, integrating services and ensuring the necessary resources and structures are in place for effective early intervention. These efforts must prioritise the safety, stability, and well-being of children, as outlined in key legislation. The housing crisis in Scotland highlights the urgent need to reinforce these protections and ensure that every child's right to adequate housing is fully realised.

The impact of homelessness on children and young people

A safe and stable home is a fundamental human right, integral to an individual's sense of security, social engagement, and relationship building. This is especially the case for children and young people in vital stages of physical, cognitive, and social development. Homelessness is far more than just a lack of physical shelter; it profoundly affects every aspect of a child's life, disrupting education, health, relationships and overall wellbeing, with lasting implications.

Impact on physical health

Poor housing conditions significantly impact children's physical health. Families often lack facilities to store or cook food, leading to inadequate diets. The absence of suitable sleeping arrangements for babies and infants poses significant risks, as highlighted by the [National Child Mortality Database](#) study linking sudden infant death syndrome to unsafe sleeping conditions. In 2020, over half of the 124 unexplained infant deaths occurred when the sleeping surface was shared with an adult or older sibling.

Without washing machines and with long waits for bathrooms, families struggle to maintain hygiene. Researchers found high rates of tooth decay in children in temporary housing due to difficulties accessing dentists, alongside breathing problems from dampness and mould in poorly ventilated rooms.¹¹ Infestations of cockroaches and vermin also put children at risk of asthma and skin infections. The cumulative impact of these conditions can result in long-term health issues for children, infringing on their right to the highest attainable standard of health as stipulated in UNCRC Article 24.

Impact on mental health

Living in temporary accommodation affects the mental wellbeing of both parents and children, leading to feelings of guilt, unhappiness, and a loss of agency. One of the leading causes of homelessness is domestic abuse and evidence highlights the multiple ways in which experiences of domestic abuse can be traumatic for children.¹² When they end up in unsuitable housing far from their support networks, it exacerbates mental health challenges. Poor housing conditions have less visible psychological effects than physical impacts like bug bites and breathing difficulties. The transient nature of temporary

¹¹ See for example [Access to and utilization of oral health care by homeless children/families and Cockroach Allergen Exposure and Risk of Asthma](#)

¹² See [Domestic Violence Reports and the Mental Health and Well-Being of Victims and Their Children](#)

accommodations prevents families from establishing roots and integrating into communities, reducing children's sense of safety and hindering their right to recovery from traumatic experiences as outlined in Article 39 of the UNCRC.

Impact on the right to play and development

A [study by the Reach Alliance](#) illustrates how living in temporary accommodation breaches young children's right to play (UNCRC Article 31), a critical aspect of their physical, cognitive and social development (UNCRC Article 6). Research shows that play is essential for stimulating social skills, personal agency, and healthy conflict resolution, mitigating some negative impacts of isolation associated with temporary housing.¹³ However, many children in temporary accommodations are confined to small rooms shared with family members, without space to play, socialise, or even walk. This can lead to developmental issues such as the inability of very young children to develop gross motor skills.¹⁴ Fear of unsafe playgrounds and families having to reside in mixed housing blocks alongside drug users and people with severe mental health issues further limits children's activities and sense of safety.

Impact on education and life prospects

The trauma of experiencing homelessness can have long-lasting consequences, with children who experience homelessness being much more likely to face it again as adults. The disruptive nature of homelessness affects education, as children in temporary housing may attend school tired or underdeveloped, impacting their ability to learn and participate fully in educational activities (UNCRC Articles 28 and 29). Schools tend to attribute a child's poor performance to parental neglect, whereas the actual cause can lie in the inadequate living conditions provided by public authorities. Parents should be supported, not blamed for the adverse conditions their children face in temporary accommodation. The UNCRC explicitly states that duty-bearers must assist parents in ensuring children's right to an adequate standard of living is realised (UNCRC Article 27).

Addressing the multifaceted impacts of homelessness on children's health, development, play, education, and life prospects requires a holistic and proactive approach. The UNCRC provides a comprehensive framework that emphasises the importance of supporting families to ensure the wellbeing and rights of children are upheld.

¹³ See for example [Social isolation and its impact on child and adolescent development: a systematic review](#)

¹⁴ [A Place to Play: Children's Play Needs in England's Temporary Housing](#)

Evictions and children's rights

The [UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#) recognises forced eviction as a violation of Article 16 of the UNCRC, which guarantees children's freedom from arbitrary or unlawful interference with their privacy, family, and the security of home. Under Scots law - beyond the UNCRC Act - evicting children from their homes directly contradicts the statutory duties of local authorities and Registered Social Landlords to prevent and address homelessness, as mandated by the [Homelessness \(Scotland\) Act 2003](#). Furthermore, it undermines their duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children as required by the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. Evicting a family with children is inconsistent with legislation and Scottish Government guidelines, which emphasise the importance of preventing homelessness and prioritising the best interests of children in these situations.¹⁵

Evidence suggests that childhood exposure to evictions is associated with harm to neurodevelopment and overall child health (UNCRC Articles 6 and 24).¹⁶ Evictions interrupt education (UNCRC Articles 28 and 29) and lead to a sense of insecurity as children are removed from their support systems. Witnessing the forced removal of their family's belongings, including toys and pets, compounds the trauma, leading to long-term emotional and mental health issues (UNCRC Article 19 and 39).

In Scotland, evictions from social housing occur when tenants breach their tenancy agreements, often due to rent arrears.¹⁷ Issues with the benefit system frequently contribute to rent arrears. Evictions should always be the last resort. If unavoidable, evictions should be treated with sensitivity and an understanding of the trauma experienced by children due to homelessness and the negative impact it has on children's access to support and services that can help them recover from their experiences of trauma. To mitigate the negative impacts, authorities must ensure families with children are provided suitable accommodation and support services that minimises disruption to their lives.

¹⁵ See for example [Meeting the best interests of children facing homelessness](#)

¹⁶ See for example [Evictions and Infant and Child Health Outcomes](#)

¹⁷ See evidence by [Shelter Scotland](#)

Children and young people most at risk of homelessness in Scotland

Children living in poverty

Children living in poverty are at a higher risk of homelessness with rising housing costs as one of the main contributing factors. Housing tends to be the largest expense for most households, and rapidly increasing housing costs are pushing families into financial hardship. The [Scottish Government's data](#) shows that, before housing costs, 19% of people in Scotland live in relative poverty; after housing costs, this rises to 21%, meaning 140,000 people in Scotland experience housing cost-induced poverty. This impact is particularly severe for children, with 240,000 children in Scotland living in poverty after housing costs, 30,000 of whom have been pushed into poverty due to rising housing costs. As families struggle to meet housing costs, many fall into debt, which compounds their financial difficulties. Around 55% of families receiving Universal Credit in Scotland have public debt, and debt-related deductions from benefits can reduce their income by as much as £1,000 a year.¹⁸

The gendered nature of poverty further exacerbates these challenges. Women are disproportionately affected by poverty due to systemic inequalities, including lower wages and increased caregiving responsibilities, which limit their financial stability.¹⁹ As a result, families led by single mothers are especially vulnerable to the financial pressures associated with rising housing costs and are more likely to experience homelessness.

These financial pressures often lead to families losing their home (in most cases privately rented properties, but also social housing) and being placed in temporary accommodation for longer periods which are often not adequate as highlighted earlier in this paper.

Children and young people affected by domestic abuse

Domestic abuse remains a leading cause of homelessness amongst women and children, as many women are primary caregivers and are forced to flee their homes with their children.²⁰ As a result, women and children often end up in temporary unsuitable accommodations, often for prolonged periods. However,

¹⁸ [Child poverty won't end without a new approach to Scottish public debt collection](#)

¹⁹ [The Gendered Nature of Poverty](#)

²⁰ [Homelessness in Scotland: 2023-24](#)

for many women financial instability resulting from gender inequality presents a formidable barrier to leaving an abusive partner. It not only limits their options for safe housing but also undermines their ability to ensure safety for themselves and their children. A staggering 89% of women experiencing domestic abuse also endure financial abuse, a form of coercive control that exacerbates their vulnerability.²¹ Addressing gender inequality is crucial in empowering women to break free from cycles of abuse and homelessness.

Urgent measures are required to support women and their children who experience domestic abuse. This includes ensuring safe and suitable accommodation, permanent housing, advocacy, and trauma-informed wraparound money, debt and mental health support. However, many local authorities struggle to provide timely and effective support. [Research by Scottish Women's Aid](#) found that the lack of gendered national and local policy and practice responses to domestic abuse-related homelessness means that the inequalities experienced by women and children are repeated and reinforced.

A [good practice guidance for social landlords](#) developed by Scottish Women's Aid and others encourages gender-sensitive responses to domestic abuse, recommending training, advocacy, and a Housing Options toolkit. Advocacy groups emphasise the urgent need to improve service coordination and embed women's and children's rights into all homelessness policies to mitigate the damaging effects of domestic abuse.

Care-experienced children and young people

Care-experienced children and young people, especially those transitioning out of care, face increased challenges including mental health issues, lower educational attainment, and reduced prospects of achieving positive destinations, such as stable employment or further education.²² These challenges often increase their vulnerability to homelessness and housing instability when compared to their non-care-experienced peers. According to a [report by the Independent Care Review](#), care-experienced individuals are more than twice as likely to experience homelessness by the age of 30.

Despite their known vulnerabilities, not all care-experienced young people receive the same level of protection. Those who do not fit the legal definitions of a 'looked after child' (currently in formal care) or a 'care leaver' (who was in care beyond their 16th birthday and is under 26) lack access to corporate parenting supports. Young people on the edges of care—those at imminent risk of entering care—often have similar experiences to care leavers, yet they are considered part of the general population and do not receive the same statutory support.²³

²¹ [The Gendered Nature of Poverty](#)

²² [Homelessness prevention: child rights and wellbeing impact assessment](#)

²³ [Youth Homelessness Prevention Pathway](#)

The [Youth Homelessness Prevention Pathway for Care Leavers](#) offers detailed recommendations and analysis concerning care-experienced individuals, emphasising the need for policy and legislative changes to better support young care leavers and prevent homelessness. Additional support is essential to help these young people transition into adulthood and achieve independence, rather than slipping into cycles of housing instability or homelessness.

LGBTQ+ youth

There is currently no official data available on LGBTQ+ homelessness rates in Scotland, primarily due to a lack of data collection on sexual orientation and gender identity by housing services. This gap is compounded by many LGBTQ+ young people feeling unsafe disclosing their identities to services due to fears of prejudice and discrimination. [UK-wide research from the Albert Kennedy Trust](#) indicates that 24% of young homeless people aged 16-25 identify as LGBT. Additionally, a [study by LGBT Youth Scotland](#) found that 30% of LGBT young people have experienced homelessness, though only 8.5% recognised their situation as homelessness because many respondents were unaware that they might be considered homeless under existing legislation.

The LGBT Youth Scotland Commission on Housing and Homelessness conducted consultations revealing that many LGBT young people are uninformed about their housing rights and available support. A significant number reported feeling compelled to leave home before coming out, fearing negative family reactions and potential abuse. While the breakdown of relationships is a common cause of youth homelessness in Scotland, issues such as homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia significantly impact LGBTQ+ young people's housing situations, including their ability to access support and maintain stable housing.

To mitigate these issues, early interventions like family support, mentoring, and mediation are crucial in preventing crises and family breakdowns, allowing for healthier communication, and understanding. Additionally, staff training on prejudice and bias is crucial in rebuilding trust with LGBTQ+ individuals and ensuring they feel safe and supported when seeking help. Effective training increases awareness and sensitivity around LGBTQ+ issues and empowers staff to create inclusive environments, free from discrimination.

Asylum-seeking children

Asylum-seeking children in Scotland face significant barriers due to the “[No Recourse to Public Funds](#)” (NRPF) policy, which restricts access to essential services like social housing and welfare support. Families with NRPF are often placed in temporary hotel-type accommodation, which exacerbates instability and impairs children's social, emotional, and physical development, denying their fundamental rights as discussed earlier in this paper.²⁴ It is important to note,

²⁴ See for example the report by the [Children and Young People Commissioner Scotland](#)

however, that local authorities and health boards have a statutory duty to assess the welfare needs of all children, regardless of immigration status or NRPF, and to meet those needs. This can include providing housing and other support. Additionally, families with NRPF are not entitled to child benefit or Scottish Child Payment, further limiting access to financial support.²⁵ Article 22 of the UNCRC specifically addresses the rights of children seeking refuge or asylum, emphasising that duty-bearers must ensure these children receive special protection and assistance.

Gypsy and Traveller children

Gypsy and Traveller families face a unique set of challenges when it comes to housing stability. They often encounter discrimination, limited access to permanent or suitable sites, and a lack of culturally appropriate services, which increases the risk of homelessness for their children. These families are often subject to forced evictions from unauthorised sites, putting children at immediate risk of homelessness. Ensuring the proportionality of evictions and addressing the rights of Gypsy and Traveller families, especially children, are critical in preventing homelessness and supporting their access to basic rights as outlined by the UNCRC. Importantly, Article 42 of the UNCRC requires duty-bearers to make children's rights known "by appropriate and active means" to adults and children.

Therefore, duty-bearers must ensure that members of Gypsy and Traveller communities are aware of their rights and can access legal representation.

²⁵ See [NRPF Network](#)

Upholding children's rights in homelessness services and during evictions

To ensure that homelessness policy and practice are truly child rights-based, [Child Rights Impact Assessments](#) (CRIAs) should be routinely integrated into decision-making processes. CRIAs enable local authorities and service providers to assess how policies, decisions, and actions impact children's right. This assessment tool ensures that children's needs and experiences are central to policy development, safeguarding their rights to safety, stability, and adequate living conditions.

Assistance with rent arrears

Proactive measures should be taken to prevent destitution for children and their families by directly assisting with rent arrears through money and debt advice services. When families face eviction due to rent arrears, their housing benefit entitlement should be checked. If they have a court or tribunal appearance on the same day, a continuation for a few weeks should be requested to allow for a thorough review of their benefit status. This is in line with Article 27 of the UNCRC which requires duty bearers to assist parents in ensuring children's right to an adequate standard of living is realised.

Consideration of childcare costs

Repayment plans for arrears should take childcare costs into account to ensure fairness and support for families. This aligns with Article 18 of the UNCRC, which states that parents or guardians have the primary responsibility for raising a child, and governments should support them in this role.

Understanding the needs of children

Homelessness services should ensure comprehensive knowledge of the children involved in homelessness cases, aligning with Article 3 of the UNCRC, which mandates that the best interests of the child should be a primary consideration in all actions concerning children. Whenever possible, services should actively seek the perspectives of children regarding their needs and what they believe to be in their best interest, as stipulated by Article 12 of the UNCRC.

Before initiating eviction proceedings, landlords must be aware of any dependent children in the household and conduct Children's Rights Impact Assessments

(CRIAs) to evaluate the impact on children's rights and wellbeing. The views of children and young people should be sought and taken into account throughout the proceedings. If eviction is unavoidable, landlords should develop strategies to mitigate the negative impacts identified in the CRIA.

It is important to minimise the number of moves between temporary accommodation for children. Frequent transitions can have significant negative impacts on children's emotional wellbeing, sense of security, and access to education. It is crucial that children are moved into settled accommodation as quickly as possible to provide them with stability and the opportunity to thrive. The decision-making process surrounding the suitability of accommodation for children must also reflect legal obligations, particularly the duty to ensure that no accommodation is deemed unsuitable for children. This includes considering factors such as the availability of space for children to play, study, and rest (UNCRC Article 28, 29 and 31). Accommodation should be safe and located near schools and other essential facilities.

Trauma-informed policy and practice

Housing services should embed a trauma-informed and responsive approach across practice and policy. Staff should have the appropriate skills, knowledge and confidence in supporting children and families who may be affected by trauma during housing insecurity and evictions. Evidence shows that it is equally important to embed a trauma-informed and responsive approach across a service's culture, environments, policies and ways of working, to support staff to work in a trauma-informed way and support children and families affected by trauma. Robust support for families transitioning from homelessness should be available to ensure children's needs are integrated into transitioning plans, in line with Article 39 of the UNCRC, which calls for measures to promote recovery and reintegration for children who have experienced trauma.

Referral to support agencies

When children are involved, referrals to appropriate support agencies should be made, with follow-up to ensure these agencies respond effectively. Efforts should be made to confirm that children are safe and supported when a family with children is evicted, in accordance with Article 19 of the UNCRC, which protects children from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury, abuse, neglect, or negligent treatment.

Protection of personal belongings

Procedures should be in place to protect and, if possible, return any personal possessions left behind by tenants, including those belonging to children. This respects the child's right to protection of their property as outlined in Article 16 of the UNCRC.

Alternative tenancy options

Offering a [Short Scottish Secure Tenancy](#) should be considered an alternative to eviction to provide stability for families with children.

Coordination with schools

Educators should be informed about the child's homeless status, facilitating appropriate support and ensuring compliance with Article 28 and 29 of the UNCRC, which outlines the right to education and the need for schools to accommodate children's circumstances, so children can reach their full potential. Useful [guidance](#) is available on what schools can do to support children experiencing homelessness.

Practice examples

Rock Trust's Upstream

The Rock Trust's Upstream programme is an innovative initiative aimed at preventing youth homelessness by identifying young people at risk through a schools-based approach. This programme uses a universal screening tool targeting students in S3/S4 year groups. The tool gathers information on various aspects of young people's lives, including school life, housing, wellbeing, and resilience. The goal is to identify early indicators of housing instability and provide appropriate support before situations escalate to homelessness.



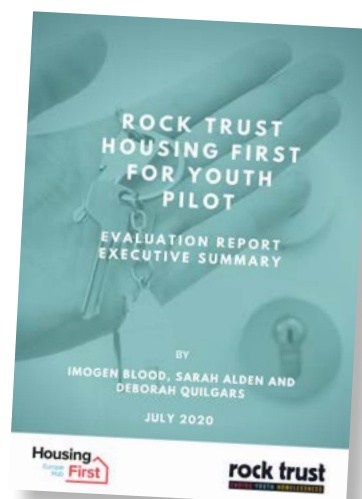
The Upstream programme has been piloted in Edinburgh, West Lothian, and Perth & Kinross, with early results showing that a significant proportion of students report high levels of family conflict and low wellbeing. Around 10-20% of students are identified as being at risk of homelessness, with additional concerns regarding mental health and resilience, which are key factors contributing to homelessness risk.

The programme is designed to be a proactive and preventative measure, focusing on reaching students before they experience homelessness. It includes partnership building, offering targeted interventions, and providing resources for schools to help address the underlying factors that contribute to homelessness risk.

For more detailed information, you can explore the programme further on the [Rock Trust's website](#).

Housing First for Youth

The Housing First for Youth (HF4Y) model is a pioneering initiative in the UK aimed at addressing the unique housing needs of young people, particularly care leavers. After a [successful pilot](#) in West Lothian, the program has expanded to Fife and Glasgow, partnering with local councils. HF4Y provides immediate, permanent, and unconditional housing alongside tailored support focusing on education, employment, and well-being. This model recognises the high risk of homelessness among care leavers and offers a compassionate



alternative to traditional temporary accommodation approaches. For more information, you can visit the [Housing First for Youth](#) page.

Cyrenians Mediation and Support for Young People

Cyrenians, a Scottish charity, runs a Mediation and Support Service to prevent youth homelessness, focusing on family conflict resolution. Recognising that many young people become homeless due to relationship breakdowns, especially with family, Cyrenians aims to keep young people at home or help them return if safe. This service offers mediation between young people (aged 14-24) and their families to resolve disputes that could lead to homelessness.



The programme is designed to help rebuild trust and communication within families, offering tailored one-to-one support and professional mediation. The service has proven effective in reducing homelessness by maintaining family unity where possible, supporting young people in understanding their housing options, and offering guidance to parents in addressing the challenges they face with their children.

For more information, visit [Cyrenians Mediation and Support](#).

Cyrenians Young People's Residential Communities

Cyrenians operates Young People's Residential Communities in West Lothian and Edinburgh, offering safe and supportive housing for young people aged 16-25 who are at risk of homelessness. These communities provide much more than just accommodation; they aim to create a nurturing environment where young people can build life skills, confidence, and a sense of belonging. The program supports young people who have faced significant challenges, including care leavers and those struggling with mental health issues.



Each resident is supported by staff who provide tailored assistance, helping them work toward independence through a focus on personal development, education, and employment opportunities. The residential community allows young people to gain stability, access therapeutic support, and create strong, trusting relationships, all in a home-like setting. Many young people who enter the community have experienced trauma or disrupted living situations, and the support provided helps them transition smoothly into adulthood and avoid future homelessness.

For more information, visit [Cyrenians Young People's Residential Communities](#).

Trauma-informed approaches in housing – case studies

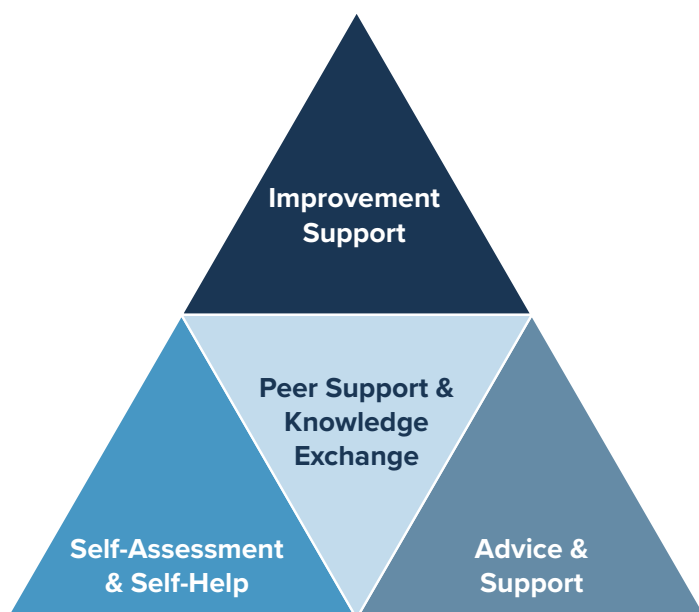
Public Health Scotland has a range of examples of [trauma-informed practice from the housing sector](#).

Help and support

The Improvement Service has a range of support available to local authorities working on

- ▶ [implementing the UNCRC](#)
- ▶ [tackling child poverty](#)
- ▶ [tackling violence against women and girls](#)
- ▶ [adopting a trauma-informed approach](#) based on the [National Trauma Transformation Programme](#).

Available support includes the opportunity to participate in Peer Networks, access dedicated knowledge-sharing spaces, receive self-assessment tools and feedback, and obtain tailored support to meet your specific needs. For more information and to connect with us, please visit the webpages highlighted above.



This briefing paper was prepared by Felicia Szloboda, Child Poverty and UNCRC Project Officer and with contributions from:

Rebecca Spillane, UNCRC Implementation Project Manager, Improvement Service

Mhairi Snowden - Head of Policy and Programmes, Homeless Network Scotland

Laura James - National Improvement Lead for Trauma, Improvement Service

Miriam McKenna - Inequality, Economy & Climate Change Programme Manager, Improvement Service

