

CHILD RIGHTS AND WELLBEING IMPACT ASSESSMENT (CRWIA) OF CYRENIANS' Strategic Plan 2024 – 27.

Introduction and Overview

Cyrenians is committed to ensuring we meet our legal duties and international obligations in respect of human rights. In terms of our work with children and young people, this requires respect for and the promotion of children's human rights as set out in the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\) \(PDF\)](#).

In relation to the [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#), Part One places children's rights duties on Scottish Ministers and public authorities, with duties to report every three years on the steps they have taken to give better or further effect to the requirements of the UNCRC. The 2014 Children and Young People (Scotland) Act also places in statute key elements of Getting It Right for Every Child ([GIRFEC](#)). GIRFEC is Scotland's national approach to improving the wellbeing of children and young people and is linked to children's rights through the Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA).

The UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024, effective from July 2024, incorporates the UNCRC into Scots law, helping to ensure that children and young peoples' rights are legally recognised and protected. The Act ensures that:

- children's rights are respected and protected in devolved areas of law in Scotland.
- public services, including schools, health services and local councils, are legally required to respect and protect children's rights in all the work that they do.

Children, young people and their representatives will also be able to use the courts in Scotland to enforce their rights. The Act further seeks to make sure children's rights are part of everyday life and decision-making across the country.

All UNCRC rights are underpinned by the four general principles: non-discrimination (Article 2); the best interests of the child (Article 3); the right to life, survival and development (Article 6); and the child's right to have their views given due weight (Article 12).

It's everyone's job to safeguard, support and promote the wellbeing of children and young people in their area, with wellbeing defined by eight indicators. The indicators are: Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible, and Included, known and referred to as [SHANARRI](#).

This Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) will assist Cyrenians to fulfil existing UNCRC international obligations and specific duties under the 2014 Act, and to promote the wellbeing of children and young people through our policies and services. Ensuring rights are respected and upheld is at the heart of everything we do. It provides a cornerstone for our policies, practice and approach to our work.

Cyrenians provide direct and indirect support to children, young people and families through a range of services and provisions. In respect of Cyrenians' services that are not specifically for children and young people, all have the potential to be involved with families, and thus children and young people. Our services are diverse and to this end they will develop and review their own individual Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessments (CRWIA). This CRWIA is therefore in place for our organisation and overarching for all our service provision. Our services and projects also undergo training and complete their own CRWIA, which details how they ensure this in practice and in conjunction with policy and procedures.

Cyrenians' 3-year Strategic Plan

Our renewed mission statement is:

To tackle the causes and consequences of homelessness through learning from lived experience; by delivering targeted services which focus on prevention, early intervention and support into a home; and by influencing changes in legislation and policy.

Our strategic aims 2024 - 2027 are:

- We will prevent homelessness using a Public Health Approach
- We will respond to evidence-based need with services we are best placed to provide
- We will deliver whole person, whole family and whole community interventions
- We will be an organisation which nurtures its people and is financially and environmentally sustainable

We are committed to:

- Adherence to human rights obligations enhanced through children's rights and safeguarding training
- A commitment to review our policies and practices, to ensure they are consistent with human and children's rights and our duties regarding the UNCRC
- #KeepthePromise through a series of actions and commitments that are reviewed annually. Our commitments to the Promise can be found on our [website](#).

The [UNCRC](#) has 54 articles, those noted below most closely align with Cyrenians' current programme of work:

<p>Article 1 (the definition of the child)</p>	<p>We recognise that everyone under the age of 18 has all the rights under the convention (UNCRC). In the case of young people with care experienced backgrounds, we undertake to apply best practice to the principles, processes and practices of our CRWIA beyond the age of 18. This will include the young people we work with in continuing care up to the age of 21 and for those young people in aftercare up to the age of 26.</p>
<p>Article 2 (non-discrimination)</p>	<p>We recognise that the UNCRC applies equally to all children and young people regardless of race, sex, gender, disability; all appropriate measures are taken to ensure that the child/young person is protected against all forms of discrimination.</p> <p>All Cyrenians' services operate on the basis of non-discrimination and are fulfilling this article of the Convention. We have an Equal Opportunities policy and robust procedures in place to ensure compliance.</p> <p>We have an active Inclusion and Diversity Working Group, part of our commitment to non-discrimination, and a way of maintaining a focus on issues connected to equality, inclusion and diversity across Cyrenians. The Working Group is open to all staff and meets every 8 – 10 weeks throughout the year. We also have two staff subgroups, neurodiversity and LGBT. We are a Disability Confident Employer (level 2) and are currently re-affirming the LGBT Charter Mark. A Youth neurodiversity group has been co-designed with young people to provide a space for neurodiverse perspectives and co-creation of best practice guidelines for Cyrenians. The group also provides a safe space for young people to meet new friends and learn about and celebrate neurodiversity.</p>
<p>Article 3 (best interests of the child)</p>	<p>The best interests of the child are a primary consideration in all actions taken for or on behalf of the child; all relevant standards and protocols ensure this is adhered to. We have an over-arching organisational Safeguarding policy which is reviewed on an annual basis. In addition, we have recently commissioned the Social Care Institute for Excellence to review</p>

	<p>our Safeguarding policy, practice and procedures to ensure they are up to date and fit for purpose.</p> <p>We also have a specific Child Protection policy and all staff and volunteers working directly with families and young people are PVG checked, trained in child protection, and work within the principles of SHANARRI and GIRFEC (see section below 'How will the policy/measure contribute to the wellbeing of children and young people in Scotland?').</p>
Article 4 (implementation of the Convention)	<p>Cyrenians is committed to best practice and ensuring rights are respected and upheld. Through our learning and development programmes, staff know and understand the steps to take so that children, young people and the adults who work with them know about the UNCRC. Our work is person-centred and rights-informed.</p>
Article 5 (parental guidance)	<p>Cyrenians recognise the responsibilities and duties of parents and that the family is fundamental for the growth and wellbeing of children and young people, where the family is a safe place for a child/young person to live and grow. Some of our services offer a 'whole family' approach.</p>
Article 6 (life, survival and development)	<p>We value the life-long development and survival of all with whom we work and support them to lead their own transformation.</p>
Article 9 (separation from parents)	<p>Our services work with children and young people in care, or on the edges of care, and where a relationship has broken down and where there is a risk of homelessness. Through our work we assist them to maintain contact, build positive relationships and return home where it is safe to do so, if that is what they would like to see happen.</p>
Article 12 (respect for the views of the child)	<p>The views of all children and young people who use our services are highly valued and form a fundamental building block of our approach. Our Youth Participation Lead, part of our Policy & Participation team, works to embed the Voice element of The Promise across the organisation, provides training and support for staff on youth participation and creates spaces and opportunities for young people to be listened to. Their feedback is disseminated to the relevant people and places within the organisation and to wider policy consultations.</p>
Article 13 (freedom of expression)	<p>We work to ensure information is accessible and easy to read, and, where needed, provide translators. We also work to address the impact of digital exclusion and provide young people with training and equipment to support their education and transition into work. Children and young people can also express themselves via blogs, newsletters and through artistic expression and music. In addition, we have accessible websites that meet industry standards hosting multi-media digital content for users to access. Co-creation of guidelines for best practice on neurodivergent communication are being designed by young people in the Neurodiversity group. Funding has been allocated for reasonable adjustment tools such as coloured overlays, fidget toys etc to aid communication across all services.</p>
Article 14 (freedom of thought, belief and religion)	<p>Cyrenians respect the beliefs and religions of all people with whom we work and actively promote their spiritual wellbeing in whatever manner suits them.</p>
Article 16 (right to privacy)	<p>We acknowledge the rights of children and young people to privacy in all matters relating to them and seek their consent. In line with our Confidentiality and Data Protection policy, only information that is relevant should be shared with those that need it. In so doing, we ensure the need for: confidentiality, protection and safeguarding of their interests and the sharing of relevant information that is necessary, proportionate, adequate, accurate,</p>

	timely, and secure. We adhere to The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) legal framework and guidelines.
Article 18 (parental responsibilities and state assistance)	Cyrenians recognise the responsibilities and duties of parents and what they must do to look after a child. We respect that the family is fundamental for the growth and wellbeing of children and young people, where this is not detrimental to their safety or wellbeing. When needed or required to do so, we also work alongside, for example, Housing, Education, Department of Work and Pensions, Social Work, Criminal Justice and Health and Social Care.
Article 19 (protection from violence, abuse and neglect)	We recognise that children and young people have the right to be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse. All staff who work directly with children and young people are trained in child protection, with robust safeguarding and child protection policies and reporting systems in place. Our Board of Trustees has also received safeguarding training and has a named Board member as Safeguarding Lead.
Article 20 (children unable to live with their family)	Cyrenians is aware that children and young people who are looked after or accommodated have a right to special protection and assistance. The organisation is committed to keeping The Promise and driving the change that is needed, internally and externally, to ensure all children grow up safe, loved and respected, enabling them to realise and reach their full potential. Our Keeping Families Together project supports young people aged 12+ in secure care and their families at the point of admission, and those who are in the process of returning home. Offering whole-family support, the project helps build positive relationships, promote better communication, and reduce the potential for future conflict.
Article 22 (refugee children)	Children and young people who are refugees have the right to special protection and help whether they come to Scotland unaccompanied or with other people. They have the right to be safe and to receive medical treatment, education, and shelter. In one of our residential communities for young people, we provide accommodation and support for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children and have a dedicated wellbeing worker connected to the community.
Article 23 (children with a disability)	In line with our Equal Opportunities policy, children and young people are treated with respect, dignity, and included and cared for in a way that takes any disabilities they have into account. We support them to choose what they do and to have a say in choices about their lives. Our work is person-centred, self-directed and relationship-based. In addition, we have an Inclusion and Diversity Working Group, part of our commitment to non-discrimination and inclusion, and a way of maintaining a focus on issues connected to equality, inclusion and diversity across Cyrenians. The youth neurodiversity group, co-designed with young people, also provides a space for neurodiverse perspectives and co-creation of best practice guidelines for Cyrenians. We are also a Disability Confident Employer.
Article 24 (health and health services)	Cyrenians recognise that health and access to health services for the children and young people with whom we work is a fundamental aspect in the promotion of their wellbeing. They have the right to the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health. They should have a say in how they get this and be able to say what they like and dislike.
Article 25 (review of treatment in care)	Some of our services are subject to the relevant inspectorate bodies for the service provided. We are also committed to 'The Promise' (referred to in Article 20) and some services are specifically focused on 'Keeping the Promise'. The opinions of the young

	people we work with are sought and taken into consideration when their care is being assessed, their opinions and views are taken seriously.
Article 26 (social security)	Some of our services specifically support families, children and the young people they work with to maximise their income or benefit entitlements as part of our holistic support. We have a dedicated cross-organisational Income Maximisation post.
Article 27 (adequate standard of living)	We work with many people who face, or have faced, tough realities. We recognise that poverty and inequalities are a significant driving force for the difficulties they endure/have endured and a significant driver of homelessness. We regularly participate in public and political debate to address inequalities and provide services to alleviate poverty in all its forms. In our new strategic plan, we take a public health approach to homelessness prevention, meaning that we want to lift homelessness from being siloed as a housing issue to homelessness being understood across all sectors as a public health issue.
Article 28 (right to education)	Cyrenians acknowledge the importance of children and young people's right to education regardless of race, sex, gender, or disability; if they are in detention or if they are a refugee. We believe education, in its widest sense, is essential to their development and reaching their fullest potential. We offer 1 to 1 and small group support to young people who have disengaged from school to improve access to future employment, education and training opportunities, and support them to address conflict at home, in schools and in their communities. We also offer accredited outdoor learning opportunities to young people at our Green Skills Centre in West Lothian.
Article 30 (children from minority or indigenous groups)	Cyrenians' values (compassion, integrity, respect and innovation) guide our way of working and we believe all children and young people have the right to enjoy their own culture, religion and language.
Article 31 (leisure, play and culture)	We recognise the importance of relaxation and play and breaking down barriers. We support the children and young people we work with to shape what we provide and what they wish to participate in, providing for example: quiet space, toys, books, soft play, music, art, sports, hobbies, theatre, trips to the Zoo, etc. We run a dedicated youth programme at our Cook School, providing opportunities to learn about food, nutrition and have fun cooking. We offer a range of outdoor nature-based activities for young people in our greenspaces and arts-based activities at our Creative Natives studio.
Articles 32-36 (child labour; drug abuse; sexual exploitation, abduction; sale & trafficking; and other forms of exploitation)	We are committed to ensuring we uphold rights, with safety and protection paramount in relation to the issues in articles 32 – 36. We recognise that children and young people have a right to be protected from dangerous work, drug use, sexual exploitation and trafficking. We work closely with organisations such as Survivors of Human Trafficking in Scotland (SOHTIS) and, where appropriate, our staff have attended SOHTIS training. We take all necessary measures to protect children and young people, we have a Disclosure and PVG policy and additional policies to cover child protection, safeguarding, drugs and alcohol, with clear reporting and recording procedures in place. Our services also support over 18's into recovery, many of whom have children who have been affected by their caregiver's addictions.
Article 37 (inhumane treatment and detention)	We have services that work with, and provide support for, those within secure care and the justice system. Staff are trained and supported so that those whom we support will be treated with respect and compassion to ensure that they treated humanely and, where appropriate, able to maintain contact with their family.

<p>Article 39 (recovery from trauma and reintegration)</p>	<p>We have a staff training programme in place, in line with NHS Education for Scotland’s Transforming Psychological Trauma Framework, to ensure that our staff and volunteers are trauma-informed. We share the Scottish Government’s belief that ‘trauma is everyone’s business’ and seek to embed trauma-informed practice across our organisation so as to support individuals in their recovery and transition back into the life they wish to lead. Our new strategic plan includes a commitment to extending trauma-informed practice by creating Psychologically Informed Environments for those who use our services and our staff.</p>
<p>Article 40 (juvenile justice)</p>	<p>Cyrenians is aware of the requirement to uphold human rights in the field of juvenile justice and the need for extra protections where their liberty is at stake. Children and young people should have the right to legal help and receive this without being discriminated against in any manner. They also have the right to privacy. One of our services is specifically targeted at supporting young people in secure centres to re-build relationships with their families.</p>
<p>Article 42 (knowledge of rights)</p>	<p>In line with our commitment to The Promise, and our rights-based approach which is aligned with the UNCRC, GIRFEC and SHANARRI, we raise awareness and share our learning and approach among staff and adults through child rights training and CRWIA assessments. We also talk to children and young people about their rights through service provision, training, workshops and our youth participation and engagement activities.</p>

What impact will the policy/measure have on children’s rights?

Cyrenians’ Three Year Plan will have a positive impact on all the articles outlined above. Our work is subject to internal and external review to ensure that we are delivering on our stated aims and objectives. Respecting the rights of children and young people is an integral part of our service delivery which will continue throughout the duration of the plan.

Will there be different impacts on different groups of children and young people?

As an organisation, Cyrenians recognise and acknowledge that, due to the diverse nature of our work, there will be different impacts on different groups of children and young people, within families, and on those who are marginalised in society. We also recognise the positive impacts of diversity on children and young people. We strive to ensure that, in line with Scotland’s aspiration to be ‘the best place in the world to grow up’, we will continue to mitigate potential negative impacts, and to create positive opportunities for children and young people in their lives.

We will continue to monitor, assess and review how our strategy, policies and practice removes barriers and eliminates prejudice in respect of the protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. We strive to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Remove and/or minimise any barriers and/or disadvantages
- Take steps which assist with promoting diversity, equity and inclusion, meeting people’s different needs
- Encourage and nurture participation
- Foster good relations, tackle prejudice, and promote understanding

How will the policy/measures contribute to the wellbeing of children and young people in Scotland?

The wellbeing of children and young people in Scotland is measured against the eight wellbeing indicators outlined in the Scottish Government's Getting it Right for Every Child framework. Using the SHANARRI indicators, Cyrenians' Three Year Plan will have the following impact on children and young people:

Safe - Being safe is at the heart of our service provision. In the initial stages this requires the identification of risk factors and taking measures which entail providing safe places for children and young people to consider and discuss their own situation. Ongoing safety planning, support and interventions are focused on improved outcomes. In some instances, Cyrenians' involvement only takes place once the child or young person has left the family home, for instance through the provision of residential care. Our preventative work enables them to stay safe or leave home in a safe, planned way.

Healthy - Tackling health inequalities is a common thread throughout all our services. We know that early prevention and intervention reduces the likelihood of children and young people developing additional health problems and other poor health outcomes associated with adverse childhood experiences. Some examples of how we do this includes advocating for better access to health services and to healthy food and support with cooking skills. In terms of mental health, we aim to improve the wellbeing of children and young people and to reduce the chances of self-harm, suicide, and further risk of harm and trauma.

Achieving - Whilst poverty is the main driver of education inequality, it is important to provide early prevention and intervention which can reduce the likelihood of children and young people experiencing poorer educational outcomes and attainment associated with adverse childhood experiences. Services which are appropriately targeted can ameliorate some of the impact of poverty and improve educational outcomes for children and young people living in difficult circumstances and support progression towards positive destinations in relation to work, training and further education.

Nurtured - Cyrenians' ongoing commitment to the people with whom we work is to provide companionship and support on their journey through trauma and recovery. This is particularly relevant for children and young people as they transition from childhood into adulthood, sometimes requiring additional support because of complex circumstances and potentially adverse childhood experiences.

Active - Our approach is to promote an individual's participation in their local community to the fullest extent possible. This entails engagement with play, learning and leisure opportunities, as well as the identification and promotion of individual interests and talents, which allow for holistic development of the person.

Respected - The views of those with 'lived experience', as staff, volunteers and people who use our services is crucially important to the ongoing development of service design, delivery and our influencing work. This will continue to be a strong element as it is a core part of our renewed mission statement and a key organisational driver.

Responsible - Cyrenians' services are expected to demonstrate how they have sought out and acted on the views of people with whom we work, including children and young people. This entails how they have been supported to meaningfully participate in decisions; any support requirements are self-directed by them. It also includes expectations that people with lived experience have a positive role to play in assisting others who are at different stages in their journey to where they would like to be in the future.

Included - Cyrenians know and understand the value of community, and this is embedded across the organisation. Building a supportive community within Cyrenians is standard practice and it is also important for individuals to feel part of their local community, wherever they reside. We believe that to be included and valued is a crucial part of personal development and in addressing previous traumas through companionship and shared understanding. This is relevant for all people, but especially those who may be from marginalised groups.

Monitoring and review

Our Promise Working Group meets every 6 – 8 weeks and includes members of our Leadership and Senior Manager teams, along with staff working directly with children and young people. As part of our commitment to Keep the Promise, this group will oversee our commitments to children’s rights and participation.

Who carried out the impact assessment?

Cyrenians’ CRWIA was initially completed in 2019 by our then Ambassador, Tam Baillie. This was subsequently updated by our Children’s Rights Monitoring Group in 2021/2022 with further reviews in 2023 and 2024 by our Promise Working Group.

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Next date for CRWIA review – November 2024