

# CHILD RIGHTS AND WELLBEING IMPACT ASSESSMENT (CRWIA) OF CYRENIANS' Strategic Plan 2025 – 28.

## 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 is 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. This CRWIA is in place for our organisation and overarching for all our service provision. Some services that work directly with children and young people have also developed their own service-specific CRWIA which details how they ensure this in practice and in conjunction with policy and procedures.

# Cyrenians' 3-year Strategic Plan

Our 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:

<b>Article 1 (the definition of the child)</b>	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.
<b>Article 2 (non-discrimination)</b>	<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 Community of Practice, 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 Community of Practice is open to all staff and meets every 8 – 10 weeks throughout the year.</p> <p>We are a Disability Confident Employer (level 2), which was recently renewed and is in place until October 2028. Last year, we also renewed our LGBT Charter Mark which will be in place until 2027. A youth neurodiversity group, co-designed with young people, provides a space for neurodiverse perspectives and to support best practice around neuroinclusion in Cyrenians' services. The group also provides a safe space for young people to meet new friends and learn about and celebrate neurodiversity.</p>
<b>Article 3</b>	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

<p>(best interests of the child)</p>	<p>an over-arching organisational Safeguarding policy which is reviewed on an annual basis. In addition, in early 2025 we commissioned the Social Care Institute for Excellence to review our Safeguarding policy, practice and procedures to ensure they are up to date and fit for purpose. The recommendations from this comprehensive review were prioritised by an internal working group and include the need for a fixed term post to support the implementation of recommendations, remembering that safeguarding is 'everybody's business'.</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>
<p>Article 4 (implementation of the Convention)</p>	<p>Cyrenians is committed to best practice and ensuring rights are respected and upheld and our work is person-centred and rights-informed.</p> <p>We have also established a Children and young People's Community of Practice to ensure an ongoing focus on UNCRC and sharing of good practice.</p>
<p>Article 5 (parental guidance)</p>	<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>
<p>Article 6 (life, survival and development)</p>	<p>We value the life-long development and survival of all with whom we work and support them to lead their own transformation.</p>
<p>Article 9 (separation from parents)</p>	<p>Our services work with children and young people in care, or on the edges of care, 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. We also support people to maintain distance from family where child protection measures necessitate this approach.</p>
<p>Article 12 (respect for the views of the child)</p>	<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 &amp; Participation team, works to embed youth voice across the organisation, provides 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 externally through policy consultations, newspaper articles, exhibitions and other platforms.</p>
<p>Article 13 (freedom of expression)</p>	<p>We work to ensure information is accessible and easy to read, and, where needed, provide translators for children and young people where English is not their first language. 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 are also supported to express themselves via blogs on our website and news articles in national newspapers, and through artistic expression and music in our Creative Natives art studio. In addition, we have accessible websites that meet industry standards hosting multi-media digital content for users to access. To support neurodivergent communication, funding was allocated for reasonable adjustment tools such as coloured overlays, fidget toys etc. to aid communication across all services. Services can also consult our youth neurodiversity group on these matters.</p>

<b>Article 14 (freedom of thought, belief and religion)</b>	Cyrenians respect the beliefs and religions of all people with whom we work and actively promote their spiritual wellbeing in whatever manner suits them. Our Inclusion and Diversity Community of Practice helps maintain oversight of this across the organisation.
<b>Article 16 (right to privacy)</b>	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, timely, and secure. We adhere to The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) legal framework and guidelines.
<b>Article 18 (parental responsibilities and state assistance)</b>	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. An example of this includes running parenting programmes at HMP Addiewell to strengthen the relationship between dads who are in prison and their children. 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.
<b>Article 19 (protection from violence, abuse and neglect)</b>	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.
<b>Article 20 (children unable to live with their family)</b>	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. All of our services that work with families or young people are mindful of The Promise and the five pillars – Voice, Family, Care, People and Scaffolding – and some services specifically support care experienced young people.
<b>Article 22 (refugee children)</b>	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. As part of our work, we support Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children directly with accommodation and visiting support.
<b>Article 23 (children with a disability)</b>	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 want to do and to have a say in choices about their lives and we liaise with other professional, e.g. learning disability nurses, to make sure young people's needs are met. Our work is person-centred, self-directed and relationship-based. As mentioned, we have an Inclusion & Diversity Community of Practice and a youth neurodiversity group that both help maintaining a focus on these matters.
<b>Article 24 (health and health services)</b>	Cyrenians recognise that health and access to health services for the children and young people we work with 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. Many of our services will support young people to register with a GP and dentist and in some cases to attend appointments if young people find it challenging to advocate for themselves. We also support young people to access mental health support if they need it.
<b>Article 25 (review of treatment in care)</b>	Some of our services are subject to the relevant inspectorate bodies for the service provided, including the Care Inspectorate and SSSC which holds services accountability to training and development standards as well as professional behaviour. We are also committed to Keeping The Promise (referred to in Article 20), including the pillar focused on Care. The opinions and views of the young people we work with are sought and taken seriously when their care is being assessed.
<b>Article 26 (social security)</b>	Some of our services specifically support the 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 who provides advice to people we work with and provides training to staff on the social security system.
<b>Article 27 (adequate standard of living)</b>	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 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.
<b>Article 28 (right to education)</b>	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 full 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 outdoor learning opportunities to young people who are struggling in traditional school settings at our Green Skills Centre in West Lothian.
<b>Article 30 (children from minority or indigenous groups)</b>	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. Services that work directly with UASC make sure that young people are linked in with faith communities, that they have access to places of worship and that holidays and celebrations based on culture and religion are recognised. Through our Cook School, we also seek to bring together diverse communities around food.
<b>Article 31 (leisure, play and culture)</b>	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 spaces, toys, books, soft play, music, art, sports, hobbies, theatre, trips to the Zoo, etc. In our residential communities we often seek additional funding to promote leisure and play opportunities as well as group activities and trips. We also offer a range of outdoor nature-based activities for young people in our green spaces and arts-based activities at our Creative Natives studio.
<b>Articles 32-36 (child labour; drug abuse; sexual exploitation, abduction; sale &amp;</b>	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

<b>trafficking; and other forms of exploitation)</b>	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, some of whom will have children who have been affected by parental drug and alcohol use.
<b>Article 37 (inhumane treatment and detention)</b>	We have services that work with, and provide support for, those within secure care and the justice system. Staff are trained so that those we support will be treated with respect and compassion and, where appropriate, will be able to maintain contact with their family. In some cases, we also support young people who have been sectioned in mental health hospitals or young people on treatment orders.
<b>Article 39 (recovery from trauma and reintegration)</b>	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 to the life they wish to lead. Our strategic plan includes a commitment to extending trauma-informed practice by creating Psychologically Informed Environments for those who use our services and our staff. We run regular reflection practice sessions for staff, facilitated by a clinical psychologist, to ensure staff has a space to reflect on their experiences, the impact of trauma on the people they support, and the impact of vicarious trauma on staff.
<b>Article 40 (juvenile justice)</b>	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.
<b>Article 42 (knowledge of rights)</b>	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 learning and among staff through the Children & Young People Community of Practice. We also talk to children and young people about their rights through our youth participation and engagement activities.

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

Cyrenians' Strategic 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 remove barriers and eliminate 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' Strategic 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 provide 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 children and young people 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 reduce 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 we work with 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 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 we work with, including children and young people. This entails how they have been supported to meaningfully participate in decisions and 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 Children and Young People's Community of Practice meets quarterly 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 oversees 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 and in 2025 by our Children and Young People's Community of Practice.

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**Next date for CRWIA review** – December 2026