



***GLASGOW ASSOCIATION
OF MENTAL HEALTH [GAMH]:***
**Young People's views
on the 2016 *UNCRC*
Concluding Observations**

**MENTAL HEALTH
ISSUES
MUST BE
HIGHLIGHTED
IN SCOTLAND**

GAMH

Our Rights!

"Professionals must listen to us and not treat us all the same. Don't assume you know what is best for me or what i am able to achieve."

"we need peer education in schools to help others understand the roles and responsibilities of young carers. this would help get rid of stereotypes and stop harassment at school."

"we need to be heard"

"Schools need to be in good condition for us to be in!"



"Something needs to be done about bullying!"

"we need to feel safe in school!"



LOTTERY FUNDED



ARTICLE 12

Published by: Article 12 in Scotland in partnership with Glasgow Association for Mental Health [GAMH]: Young Carers Project

Writing and editing: Beth Cadger

Design and delivery of workshops: Bernadette Williamson and Liz Love



Citation: Cadger, B [2018], Glasgow Association of Mental Health [GAMH]: Young People's views on the 2016 UNCRF Concluding Observations.

ABOUT *GLASGOW ASSOCIATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH [GAMH]: YOUNG CARERS PROJECT*

GAMH Young Carers Project provides support to young people aged 12-21 caring for a family member with a mental health problem. The service has been in operation since 2000 and is funded by *NHSGGC* and the *Big Lottery*. The project sits within the *Glasgow Association for Mental Health*, which provides community based support to people affected by parental mental health problems.

The primary aim of the project is to improve young people's resilience, confidence and life chances in a safe and supportive environment. The project is based around *Getting it Right for Every Child [GIRFEC]* to help build on the 'SHNAARRI' principles which are: 'Safe, Healthy, Nurtured, Active, Achieving, Respected, Responsible and Included'.

The project offers one-to-one support and a group work programme:

- **One-to-one support:** this is time limited and aimed at supporting young people who are experiencing difficult issues and who need additional help out with a group setting. One-to-one is available as and when required;
- **Groups:** weekly groups are run across Glasgow, these groups act as time out for young people. Groups are split in terms of age ranges and focus on social and recreational activities which often the young carers miss out on due to their personal experiences. Groups offer peer support and sessions can range from physical activity, creative arts, and health and wellbeing workshops.

More information about *GAMH* and their *Young Carers Project* can be found at:
<https://www.gamh.org.uk/project/young-carers/>

ABOUT *ARTICLE 12 IN SCOTLAND*

Established in 1996, *Article 12 in Scotland* is a young person focused organisation that works to promote young people's participation and information rights as set out in international human rights charters. We believe that governments, professionals, and the wider community all have a role to play in building an environment that respects, values and validates the contributions of young people.

Our work is underpinned by the principle of free participation: the right to participate as equal citizens at all levels of society, without fear or favour; a process that facilitates the participation of all young people on their own terms and according to their own realities, a principle that, if realised, facilitates informed choice, freedom, dignity, respect and demonstrates an acceptance that young people have the same human rights entitlements as adults.

We work to achieve this by supporting some of the most marginalised young people, such as young Gypsy/Travellers, care experienced young people and young people experiencing mental ill-health.

More information about *Article 12 in Scotland* and their various projects can be found at:
<http://www.article12.org>

WHAT IS THE *UNCRC*?

The *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child [UNCRC]* is a list of 54 Articles that cover all aspects of life for young people under the age of eighteen. 40 of the Articles describe the rights that the government must make sure they have. The United Kingdom signed up to the *UNCRC* in 1991.

The *UNCRC* itself is not binding in Scotland [or indeed elsewhere in the UK] in a legal sense, however; some of the articles are reflected in Scots law, and *Scottish Government* policy and practice and it does serve to establish recognised standards that are often referred to by national and international courts and bodies in their conclusions, recommendations and decisions.

When governments [referred to as State parties] agree to put the *UNCRC* into practice, they must prepare a report for the *Committee on the Rights of the Child* after two years, and then every five years. This is known as the Reporting Process. The *Committee* is a group of adults from different countries who are experts on children and young people's rights. The *Committee* last examined the *UK Government's* record on implementing children and young people's human rights early in 2016, publishing its *Concluding Observations* on the report in June of that year.¹

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

This resource is the result of a partnership-work between *Glasgow Association for Mental Health [GAMH]: Young Carers Project* and *Article 12 in Scotland*.

In 2015, *Article 12 in Scotland* published *I Witness: The UNCRC in Scotland – Young People's Voices*²: a narrative rich insight into the concerns, experiences, hopes and aspirations of five of the most marginalised groups of young people in Scotland - in their own words, on their own terms and according to their own realities; ensuring that the rights of **all** Scotland's young people are recognised, respected and promoted; without conditions attached.

This resource aims to provide an accessible **summary of [GAMH] participants' key concerns and recommendations** published within *Article 12 in Scotland's* 2018 report *I Witness: The Concluding Observations*³ [which contains the full views, opinions and recommendations of all the young people who participated in our research processes]. These findings were gathered during a process of rights-based peer education via workshops and a seminar [the purpose of which was to discuss the key, relevant issues and recommendations with each group of young people and the partner organisations who participated in the Reporting Process of our Alternative Reports]. The underlying theme of these findings overwhelmingly found that the basic rights of young people - to be respected and live a life free from discrimination - were not being met.

¹ Further information on the *UNCRC* and the Reporting Process can be found at: *Child Rights Connect* - <http://www.childrightsconnect.org>

² http://www.article12.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/I-Witness_the-Concluding-Observation_2018_web.pdf

³ http://www.article12.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/I-Witness_the-Concluding-Observation_2018_web.pdf

PARTICIPANTS' VIEWS OF THE *CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS*

There are many children and young people in Scotland today currently living with mental illness in their family; some feel they don't have any rights [or know how to understand and access them] and remain 'hidden' from, and unsupported by, wider society. It is vitally important that these young people are recognised and assisted in order to know their rights [and what they mean for them] with increased support in order to overcome any language, religious or cultural barriers that may be in place. Young people living with mental ill-health, whether directly or indirectly, are entitled to have a voice and platform from which to fight for their rights.

PEOPLE NEED TO FEEL AS IF SOMEONE CARES ABOUT THEM AND LOVES THEM,

Article 12 in Scotland delivered two *UNCRC Concluding Observations* workshops with the *Glasgow Association of Mental Health [GAMH] Young Carers Project*. 12 young people participated in these workshops, accompanied by *GAMH* workers, in addition to those attending *Article 12 in Scotland's Concluding Observations Seminar*. The young people prioritised the key findings from previous *UNCRC* workshops delivered by *Article 12 in Scotland*, and they found **all** the issues highlighted are still relevant to them today [most of which have been addressed by the *Committee* as a result of the *Alternatives Reports of Article 12 in Scotland*, and others]. Participants found it difficult in some cases to give more weight to one issue over another, emphasising the fact that all rights are important to their wellbeing, and were emphatic in their view that their **primary rights to participation, protection, survival and development** are unequivocally not being met.

Additionally, participants wanted to highlight the following points:

- Ensure laws and policies are reviewed on mental health, with the best interests and views of young people being taken into account, particularly in relation to mental health treatment;
- Children below the age of 16 should not be hospitalised or given treatment without consent;
- Significant improvements need to be made to services so that children can be treated closer to home and not treated in facilities designed for adults;
- Immediately stop the placement of children and young people with mental health needs in adult psychiatric wards or police stations, while ensuring the provision of age appropriate mental health services and facilities.



GA

Professionals must listen
to us and not treat us all
the same. Don't

Professionals must listen to us and not treat us all the same. Don't assume you know what is
best for me or what I am able to achieve.

Crayola

board

"Get a job"
Would it there was
more available
for school leavers.



Mental health
help needs
to be so
much better

There's no problem
with our housing"
Name 1 street in
Glasgow City Centre
alone with no homeless
people. House them don't
move them along.

So much money
but how much
is really going into
your country?

Young Carers
is severely
under-funded.

THE GOVERNMENT GIVETH AND THE GOVERNMENT TAKETH AWAY

NHS is
in dire need
of help

Your people are
struggling to
live

Food banks
are on the
rise... Again.

No one
minimum
can live on
wage.



Don't give people human
rights if you're just
going to take them
away again

Benefits
need
increased.

There's houses
being built almost
everyday yet NONE
are available?

"There's not enough money
to raise benefits"
But there's £11 billion to
look for Midge McCann, r
Or more to go to war w
Russia..."

KEY ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS IDENTIFIED BY PARTICIPANTS

NB: See Article 12 in Scotland’s 2018 report *I Witness: The Concluding Observations* for the full views, opinions and recommendations of all the young people who participated in our research processes, with regards to the *Concluding Observations* published in 2016 and the issues which *they feel* continue to impact upon their lives, and those of their families, friends and communities.

The accompanying footnotes link the key issues and recommendations to the relevant *UNCRC* Articles.

Participation: the rights that allow young people to take part in wider society and have a say in the matters that affect both themselves, and their community⁴.

Young people affected by parental mental ill-health deserve to be actively involved, valued, and to be able to have a say in the services and support that affects both the lives of themselves and their families. Many young people feel that assumptions are made without fully understanding their home life, their role within the family and the challenges that this brings.

Participants stated:

“We need to be involved in decision making in our communities; we could be involved in planning to create safe spaces and activities we are interested in – this would also decrease vandalism”; “We need increased funding for projects like GAMH”; “We need increased help with work placements”; “We must be at the centre of what is being planned – our voices must be heard so that any support offered is relevant to us”; “We need to be taken into account and listened to when support and services are being put into place in our home situation”; “Professionals must listen to us and not treat us all the same – don’t assume you know what is best for me or what I am able to achieve”; “There must be awareness-raising so that others acknowledge the range of skills young people have”; “We need more support with home life and child-care responsibilities”; “We need more places and activities for young people over 12 to go and socialise safely”.

WE NEED TO PROMOTE INCLUSION,

⁴ **Article 2:** The *Convention* applies to all young people under 18 years of age whatever their race, religion, abilities, whatever they think or say, whatever family they come from; **Article 3:** All organisations that work with or for young people should work towards what is best for each child or young person; **Article 4:** Governments should work to make these rights available to all young people; **Article 6:** All young people have the right to life. Governments should insure that young people survive and develop healthily; **Article 12:** Young people have the right to say what they think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account; **Article 42:** The Government should tell all adults and young people about the *Convention*; **Article 44:** Governments have to submit their first report to *The Committee on the Rights of the Child* within two years of signing up to the *Convention* and on a five yearly basis after that. Government reports have to explain how they are making sure that all young people get their rights, and if they are not, why they are not.

PARTICIPATION: YOUNG PEOPLE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

- Young people must be listened to and involved in decision making processes at all levels, in order to ensure the support that is so crucial to their lives and development, is relevant to their needs and the needs of their families;
- Information regarding services and support must be straightforward and accessible; young people want to take control of finding the best fit for themselves and their families;
- An increase in projects such as *GAMH*, the support offered by such organisations is invaluable;
- Increased help and support with work placements;
- Young people want to be treated as individuals;
- More support with home life and child-care responsibilities;
- An increase in the places and activities available in which young people can safely socialise;
- The *UNCRC* to be taught in schools to all students and staff.

PROTECTION: THE RIGHT TO HAVE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FREE FROM ALL SORTS OF ABUSE⁵

Young people have the right to be respected as individuals; many young people feel that they lack the choice, space and time to be themselves. Young people are subject to bullying, discrimination, judgement and harassment, leaving them open to all types of abuse, crime, negative stereotyping and fear.

WE NEED ACCESS TO MORE INCLUSIVE SERVICES THAT EVERYONE CAN ACCESS

⁵ **Article 2:** The *Convention* applies to all young people under 18 years of age whatever their race, religion, abilities, whatever they think or say, whatever family they come from; **Article 3:** All organisations that work with or for young people should work towards what is best for each child or young person; **Article 6:** All young people have the right to life. Governments should insure that young people survive and develop healthily; **Article 7:** All young people have the right to a legally registered name, the right to a nationality and the right to know and, as far as possible, be cared for by their parents; **Article 8:** Governments should respect young people's rights to a name, a nationality and family ties; **Article 12:** Young people have the right to say what they think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account; **Article 13:** Young people have the right to get and share information as long as the information is not damaging to them or others; **Article 14:** Young people have the right to think and believe what they want and to practice their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Adults should guide young people on these matters; **Article 15:** Young people have the right to meet together and to join organisations, as long as this does not stop other people from enjoying their rights; **Article 16:** Young people have the right to privacy. The law should protect them from attacks against their way of life, their good name, their families and their homes; **Article 17:** Young people have the right to reliable information from the mass media. Television, radio and newspapers should provide information that young people can understand and should not promote materials that could harm young people; **Article 19:** Governments should ensure that young people are properly cared for and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents or anyone else who looks after them; **Article 24:** Young people have the right to good quality health care and to clean water, nutritious food and a clean environment so that they will stay healthy. Rich countries should help poorer countries to achieve this; **Article 28:** Young people have a right to an education. Discipline in schools should respect a young person's dignity. Primary education should be free. Wealthy countries should help poorer countries achieve this; **Article 34:** The Government should protect young people from sexual abuse; **Article 37:** Young people who break the law should not be treated cruelly. They should not be put in prison with adults and should be able to keep in contact with their families; **Article 39:** Young people who have been neglected or abused should receive special help to restore their self-respect.

Participants stated:

“There should be national campaigns to challenge negative stereotypes of young people – especially in the media”; “We need more peer education to help others understand what it is like to be a young person affected by parental mental ill-health”; “We need increased respite care offered to us so that we can socialise and do the things other young people do”; “Governments must be more transparent and use less jargon to allow us to understand what – if anything – they are doing to make positive changes”; “The public need to be educated on what we do and the issues we face”; “The government must be responsible for providing additional support and information to young people and families experiencing mental ill-health issues”.

Protection: young people’s recommendations:

- Young people want to see more national campaigns to tackle negative stereotypes and raise awareness of who they are and how they are affected by parental mental ill-health;
- Increased peer education in school: young people in this situation want to inform others of their realities;
- Better respite care provisions in order to have the time to do all the things ‘regular’ young people do in order to develop and have fun;
- The government should be more transparent and use less jargon to make policy more accessible;
- The government should provide increased additional support and information to young people and families experiencing mental ill-health.

**INVEST IN MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES,
PEOPLE ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN MONEY**

SURVIVAL: HAVING YOUR BASIC NEEDS MET⁶

Young people have the right to feel secure and protected; access to safe, appropriate housing, tailored support for themselves and their families, essential health-care – both mental and physical, clued-up educational staff and respite care is paramount.

Participants stated:

“We need appropriate accommodation”; “People who need support should get it”; “We need increased, rather than decreased, benefits”.

⁵ **Article 6:** All young people have the right to life. Governments should insure that young people survive and develop healthily; **Article 18:** Both parents share responsibility for raising their children and should always consider what is best for their children; **Article 23:** Young people who have any kind of disability should have special care and support so they can live full and independent lives; **Article 24:** Young people have the right to good quality health care and to clean water, nutritious food and a clean environment so that they will stay healthy. Rich countries should help poorer countries to achieve this; **Article 26:** The Government should provide extra money for young people from families in need; **Article 27:** Young people have a right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and mental needs. Governments should help families who cannot afford to provide this; **Article 33:** The Government should provide ways of protecting young people from dangerous drugs.

Survival: young people's recommendations:

- Mental health provisions must be at the forefront of reform and service reviews;
- Accessible support for those who need it;
- Appropriate and flexible education;
- Increased, rather than decreased, benefits.

**PEOPLE
SHOULD NOT
BE LABELLED**

DEVELOPMENT: WHAT YOU NEED TO GROW AND DEVELOP AS A HUMAN BEING⁷

Young people can feel frustrated that their abilities and myriad roles are not understood; that professionals often do not value, involve or consider them in the decisions which affect their daily lives. Furthermore, the young person affected by family mental ill-health can often be overlooked. These young people, like any other young person, need freedom, privacy and support. It is vital that these children and young people have the opportunity to associate, play and access a good standard of sensitive and flexible education in order to develop and reach their full potential.

Participants stated:

“We need to have a say in everything about our education”; “We need better support in school – they need to listen to our needs and hopes”; “We need peer education in schools to help others understand the roles and responsibilities some young people have, this would help get rid of stereotypes and stop harassment at school”; “We need peer training for teachers and other professionals delivered by young people, in order to help them identify the young people that may not come forward themselves”; “More support with caring duties and child-care responsibilities”; “There must be awareness-raising so others acknowledge the range of skills young people have”.

Development: young people's recommendations:

- Young people want a say in how their education is delivered, and to see an increase in school support;
- More awareness-raising concerning the issues faced by these young people would increase understanding about the roles and responsibilities that come with parental mental ill-health; this would help stop bullying and lessen discrimination;
- Peer-led training for teachers would help to identify any young people that may be ‘hidden’ [or unwilling to come forward], ensuring that all young people get the support to which they are entitled;
- An increase in support and better respite care provisions.

⁷ **Article 28:** Young people have a right to an education. Discipline in schools should respect a young person's dignity. Primary education should be free. Wealthy countries should help poorer countries achieve this; **Article 29:** Education should develop each young person's personality and talents to the full. It should encourage young people to respect their parents, their own and other cultures; **Article 30:** Young people have a right to learn and use the language and customs of their families, whether or not these are shared by the majority of the people in the country in which they live; **Article 31:** All young people have a right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of activities.

Furthermore, participants felt that the following recommendations/concerns were particularly important to them, and wanted *Article 12 in Scotland* to highlight these:

- Young people need more readily accessible information on what services/support are available to them. They would like to take control and find out this information for themselves, rather than have organisations seek them out - as this means they can only access the specific services/support that the organisation offers;
- Schools must value the incredible skill sets of young people in this situation; this would help to empower them and give them the opportunity to share their experiences. There should be systems set in place to allow for peer support;
- Schools should “*encourage not force*” these young people;
- Schools could facilitate meetings for the parents of young people in this situation, where the issues that they, and their children, face could be discussed;
- The teaching of rights in schools is still patchy; a strong emphasis on the *UNCRC* must be implemented for both students and staff;
- Young people in this situation are often hidden; there should be an emphasis on finding these young people;
- Increased resources and more ‘joined-up thinking’ is required.

MORE MONEY FOR MENTAL HEALTH CARE

Young people experience a wide-ranging set of issues; the huge differences between the roles of young person and young person caring for someone with a mental health problem can be extremely difficult to navigate. Recognising the responsibilities and issues faced by these young people is key in allowing them to move forward. Helping young people to play a more active part in designing the support and services that they and their families receive is imperative to their well-being. National campaigns and peer-led awareness-raising will also help tackle the stigma and bullying faced by these young people living in Scotland today.

The young people in this situation have spoken; the issues they face are commonplace amongst their peers and communities. Their message is simple: their rights to participation, protection, development and survival are not being upheld. These are basic, essential rights to which everyone is entitled; rights we are unequivocally failing to ensure are met for these stigmatised young people.

Article 12 in Scotland believes that governments, professionals, practitioners and wider society all have a role to play in building an environment that respects, values and validates the contributions of **all** Scotland’s children and young people.

NO CHILD CHOOSES TO BE LOOKED AFTER AWAY FROM HOME/ MENTALLY ILL/DISABLED – DON’T LABEL US

**KEEP UP
THE PRESSURE
TO IMPLEMENT
THE RECOMMENDATIONS
FROM THE
CONCLUDING
OBSERVATIONS**

CONTACT US!

Many young people are not aware of their rights as set out by the *United Nations Convention for the Rights of the Child*. If young people are unaware of what their rights are, then how can they be sure that they are getting the support and opportunities that they are entitled to?

Have your say, and get in touch!



Moorpark Court, Pavilion 3A
11 Dava St
Govan
Glasgow
G51 2JA

Tel: 0141 425 4850

Twitter: @glayoungcarers
Email: r.ali@gamh.org.uk
www.gamh.org.uk



Regional Offices:

Article 12 in Scotland
Unit 15 – Flexspace
Whitehouse Road
Springkerse
Stirling
FK7 7SP

Article 12 in Scotland
C/O GREC
41 Union Street
Aberdeen
AB11 5BN

Twitter: @Article12
Email: respond@article12.org
www.article12.org

USE MAINSTREAM MEDIA FOR POSITIVE STORIES