

Dear political parties and candidates

Families right to Support

We are writing to you as the leaders of organisations that work with Scotland's children and families urging you to commit to a radical expansion and enhancement of the support available to families to ensure they get the support needed to recover from the pandemic.

Supporting families involves working alongside them to build on their strengths and develop the tools, strategies, and skills needed to create a safe and loving family environment. Family support should be available when, where and for as long as each family needs it.

Unfortunately, due to the impact of the pandemic and the resulting lockdowns, many families have told us they are under immense stress and strain, including being placed into poverty or at the risk of being pulled further into poverty. For some families they need support for the first time. This additional demand for help and support has placed great strain on Scotland's current family support infrastructure and resources.

Covid-19 has accelerated the underlying structural crisis in family support provision. Too often our organisations have witnessed families not receiving the support they need and want.

Ironically spending that could be part of an integrated approach to supporting families has often been diluted into a fractured siloed system both at a national and local level. This lack of joined-up approach has seen many families not having the support and resilience to weather the current crisis.

However, we believe that the pandemic and this election can now act as a catalyst for change.

Scotland must rise and meet the true scale of the challenge. We are calling for a root and branch transformation of how we support and invest in children and families. Scotland needs to shift spending to enable every child and every family to build resilience and thrive.

We therefore ask that you enter into a new relationship with Scotland's families to ensure:

- All families have a right to family support, as with other public services free at the point of need.
- A bold funding commitment is given to match the scale of this ambition.
- There is a fundamental redesign of existing structures and services, with the views and voices of families and young people at the heart of this redesign.
- Family support services are not a 'one-size-fits all' but tailored to what individual families want and need.

We know that every family, and their circumstances, is different. Likewise, the support offered to families should reflect the diverse needs of each family located within each community. What is universal, however, is all family relationships have a major influence on a child's life. Thus, in Scotland, family support must be a universal right so all family members can fulfil their potential. Families must be able to access the support they want and need and be able to choose from a range of providers.

We call on you to join with us to agree the vision and commitment to deliver the transformative change our communities need to meet the challenge of Covid recovery.

We urge you to enter into a new relationship with Scotland's families to build trust, empathy, and openness, to fund and develop mutual learning and support services which will create resilient families.

We look forward to working with you on this cause.

Yours for the families and young people of Scotland

List of signatories

Aberlour

Action for Children

Barnardo's Scotland

Capability Scotland

CHAS - Children's Hospices Across Scotland

Children in Scotland: Children's Sector Strategic Forum

Children 1st

Cosgrove Care

CrossReach

Early Years Scotland

EVOC Children, Young People and Families Network

Fife Gingerbread

Fife Voluntary Action

GCVS

Glasgow Third Sector City Wide Forum

Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (The Alliance)

Home-Start Scotland

Includem

NSPCC

Parenting Across Scotland

Partners in Advocacy

Play Scotland

Quarriers

Sense Scotland

Sight Scotland

The Action Group

Third Sector Interface (TSI) Children's Services Network

Ypeople

#FamiliesHaveARightToSupport