

Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) for the Rural & Islands Housing Action Plan

October 2023

CRWIA Stage 2 – Assessment of Impact and Compatibility

1. What evidence have you used to inform your assessment? What does it tell you about the impact on children's rights? (Guidance Section 2.2)

There was extensive engagement undertaken with remote, rural and island communities to inform both the development of Housing to 2040, Scotland's long term housing strategy which was published in March 2021, as well as the National Islands Plan, providing a strong policy platform to support further implementation activities. Ministers have agreed that a full public consultation on the Rural and Islands Housing Action Plan (the Action Plan) is not required and therefore we do not intend to formally consult on the plan but instead have undertaken specific targeted engagement to support its development.

An informal series of engagements has been carried out with stakeholders across remote, rural and island areas. Discussions have also taken place with relevant internal SG colleagues whose work intersects.

Our engagement involved a series of Microsoft Teams meetings with key stakeholders including local authorities, registered social landlords, SG agencies, tenant groups, and organisations including Rural Youth Project and the Young Islanders Network, amongst others.

2. Evidence from stakeholders/Policy Colleagues (Guidance Section 2.2)

The aim of the policy is to support the delivery of affordable housing in remote, rural and island areas of Scotland. Whilst children and young people may benefit from the increased provision of affordable homes they are not materially involved in the process of delivering these homes which is what the Action Plan is most likely to focus on.

Through the informal engagement we connected with youth groups to hear specific issues raised including Rural Youth Project and the Young Islanders Network.

3. Evidence from children and young people (Guidance Section 2.2)

Through the informal engagement we connected with youth groups mentioned above to hear specific issues raised. No evidence was gathered from children.

Through our engagement, expense was the biggest barrier for young people accessing housing. Lack of affordable housing in rural communities, particularly islands, leads to young people leaving the community. The unique and diverse nature of rural and island housing markets require local solutions.

Analysis of the evidence

Using evidence detailed above, please answer the following questions on how this relevant proposal will impact children.

4. How have the findings outlined in questions 1-3 influenced the development of the relevant proposal? (Guidance Section 2.2)

The aim of the Action Plan is to support the delivery of affordable housing in remote, rural and island areas of Scotland. Whilst children and young people will benefit from any increased provision of affordable homes they are not materially involved in the process of delivering these homes which is what the Action Plan is most likely to focus on.

As the statutory housing and planning authority for their area, local authorities are responsible for assessing housing need and demand and setting out how the requirement for housing will be met through their Local Housing Strategies (LHS) and Strategic Housing Investment Plans (SHIPs).

LHS guidance on statutory requirements – including those relating to the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 – are being fulfilled, and how local policies including local Child Poverty Action Reports support a range of Scottish Government targets.

SHIP guidance asks local authorities to align findings of their Child Poverty Action Reports with strategic housing priorities.

The Scottish Government supports the delivery of these priorities with resources allocated through Affordable Housing Supply Programme. A needs-based allocation method, agreed with COSLA, takes into account the four indicators of affordability, deprivation, rurality and homelessness.

The feedback from the engagement with young people, amongst others, was important in ensuring that the actions in the Action Plan allow for flexibility and a localised approach. The feedback we heard in the engagement was that each island and each rural community have their own distinct housing needs. As such, flexibility is imperative as it allows for greater sustainability within each community.

The specific impacts on children and young people may become clearer through implementation of the Action Plan. Therefore the Scottish Government is committed to ensuring that all related future policy and the development of the Action Plan is assessed through the CRWIA on an on-going basis.

5. Assessing for compatibility against the UNCRC requirements (Guidance Section 2.2)

UNCRC Articles

What impact does/will your relevant proposal have on children's rights

Positive Impact

Article 3 Best interests of the child
Article 23 Children with a disability
Article 27 Adequate standard of living
Article 31 Leisure, play and culture

Negative Impact

No negative impacts

Neutral Impact

Article 1 Definition of the child
Article 2 Non-discrimination
Article 4 Implementation of the Convention
Article 5 Parental guidance and a child's evolving capacities
Article 6 Life, survival and development
Article 7 Birth registration, name, nationality, care
Article 8 Protection and preservation of identity
Article 9 Separation from parents
Article 10 Family reunification
Article 11 Abduction and non-return of children
Article 12 Respect for the views of the child
Article 13 Freedom of expression
Article 14 Freedom of thought, belief and religion
Article 15 Freedom of association
Article 16 Right to privacy
Article 17 Access to information from the media
Article 18 Parental responsibilities and state assistance
Article 19 Protection from violence, abuse and neglect
Article 20 Children unable to live with their family
Article 21 Adoption
Article 22 Refugee children
Article 24 Health and health services
Article 25 Review of treatment in care
Article 26 Social security
Article 28 Right to education
Article 29 Goals of education
Article 30 Children from minority or indigenous groups
Article 32 Child labour
Article 33 Drug abuse
Article 34 Sexual exploitation
Article 35 Abduction, sale and trafficking
Article 36 Other forms of exploitation
Article 37 Inhumane treatment and detention
Article 38 War and armed conflicts
Article 39 Recovery from trauma and reintegration
Article 40 Juvenile justice
Article 41 Respect for higher national standards

Article 42 Knowledge of rights

First optional protocol

Article 4

Article 5

Article 6

Article 7

Second Optional Protocol

Article 1

Article 2

Article 3

Article 4

Article 6

Article 7

Article 8

Article 9

Article 10

Article 11

6. Impact on children and young people (Guidance Section 2.2)

This policy indirectly affects children. It is aimed at increasing the provision of affordable homes in remote, rural and islands areas.

The Action Plan will have a positive impact on children’s rights. As the aim of the policy is to support delivery of affordable homes in remote, rural and island areas, increased numbers of suitable available affordable housing for families is likely to improve the lives of children in those areas.

This policy may directly positively affect young people who wish to remain in their remote, rural or island communities but may be unable to at present due to lack of available affordable housing.

Increasing affordable housing choices may also benefit young people who wish to remain in their remote, rural or island communities but may be unable to at present due to lack of available affordable housing.

7. Negative Impact/Incompatibility (Guidance Section 2.2)

Are there any potential concerns about compatibility with the UNCRC requirements? Please explain these here.

No negative impacts have been identified – therefore there are no concerns about compatibility with the UNCRC requirements.

8. Options for modification or mitigation of negative impact or incompatibility (Guidance Section 2.2)

Please summarise mitigation actions taken in the below table:

Mitigation table

Issue or risk Identified per article/ Optional Protocol	Action Taken/ To Be Taken	Date action to be taken or was taken

9. Positive impact: Giving better or further effect to children’s rights in Scotland (Guidance Section 2.2)

As the statutory housing and planning authorities, Local Authorities play a key role in the implementation of housing and planning policy locally. The Action Plan aims to better co-ordinate existing practices and funding already available to help Local Authorities to meet local housing needs.

Ensuring families have suitable accommodation, free from overcrowding, gives children a safe space to fulfil the right wellbeing indicators. Affordable and secure housing removes a significant barrier for parents who can then focus on accessing employment or training opportunities.

Based on the UNCRC Concluding Observations, the Action Plan will positively affect the implementation of the UNCRC in Scotland as follows:

Article 3 (best interests of the child) –

While the Action Plan will not have a direct impact on children, it will have an indirect, positive impact on their best interests as there will be more affordable housing options in remote, rural and island communities. This will positively impact on children’s wellbeing as they will have access to safe, healthy and nurturing environments.

The Action Plan may have a direct positive impact on young people who wish to stay in their remote, rural and island communities. By increasing the availability of affordable housing in these areas, young people can be retained in these areas to work rather than moving to urban areas, which is currently a concern in remote, rural and island communities.

Article 23 (children with a disability) –

As the statutory local housing provider, Local Authorities have a duty to assess the housing needs of their communities, including adults and children with disabilities. We already work closely with both public and private sector housing providers to ensure the needs and choices of disabled people are met. The Action Plan, in supporting the delivery of affordable housing, will strengthen this work indirectly,

while other areas of housing and planning directly work on improving the lives of adults and children with a disability.

The Local Housing Strategy requires local authorities to demonstrate how statutory requirements – including those relating to the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 – are being fulfilled, and how local policies including local Child Poverty Action Reports support a range of Scottish Government targets.

Strategic Housing Investment Plan guidance requires Local Authorities to align findings of their Child Poverty Action Reports with strategic housing priorities.

We are working with Local Authorities to set realistic targets for new wheelchair accessible housing across all housing tenures – the work of the Action Plan will encourage this.

Article 27 (adequate standard of living) –

The Action Plan builds upon Housing to 2040 which recognises that affordable housing helps to tackle child poverty, with cost of living, including housing costs being a key driver of child poverty. By ensuring access to affordable housing in remote, rural and island areas, the plan will also help to prohibit the prolonged placement of children in temporary accommodation and reduce the risk of homelessness, guaranteeing stable access to adequate housing which meets quality standards.

Additionally, the CRWIA for Housing to 2040 highlighted reducing fuel poverty as a key aim. Given that fuel poverty is more prevalent in remote, rural and island areas, the plan will likely reduce fuel poverty in these areas by increasing opportunities to develop adequate, energy efficient housing.

In addition, Local Authorities as the statutory local housing authority are also required to ensure that the housing requirements of children and young people are fully considered in the local implementation of housing policy, activity and service delivery as well as the impacts.

Article 31 (leisure, play and culture) –

Building upon Housing to 2040, warm, healthy, safe and non-overcrowded homes and positive neighbourhoods play an important role in improving children's and young people's health and wellbeing, providing a healthy start and contributing to their social and physical development. Good homes with room for children to play, learn and study can contribute to educational attainment, according to CAD analysis from 2010. By supporting the delivery of affordable housing in remote, rural and island areas, the Action Plan will guarantee children's right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities.

10. Impact on Wellbeing: does or will the relevant proposal contribute to the wellbeing of children and young people in Scotland? (Guidance Section 2.2)

Please answer yes or no to all of the wellbeing indicators that are relevant to your proposal.

Safe - Growing up in an environment where a child or young person feels secure, nurtured, listened to and enabled to develop to their full potential. This includes freedom from abuse or neglect. **Yes**

Healthy - Having the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health, access to suitable healthcare, and support in learning to make healthy and safe choices. **Yes**

Achieving - Being supported and guided in learning and in the development of skills, confidence and self-esteem, at home, in school and in the community. **No**

Nurtured - Growing, developing and being cared for in an environment which provides the physical and emotional security, compassion and warmth necessary for healthy growth and to develop resilience and a positive identity. **Yes**

Active - Having opportunities to take part in activities such as play, recreation and sport, which contribute to healthy growth and development, at home, in school and in the community. **Yes**

Respected - Being involved in and having their voices heard in decisions that affect their life, with support where appropriate. **No**

Responsible - Having opportunities and encouragement to play active and responsible roles at home, in school and in the community, and where necessary, having appropriate guidance and supervision. **Yes**

Included - Having help to overcome inequalities and being accepted as part of their family, school and community. **Yes**

Post Assessment Review and sign-off

11. Communicating impact to children and young people (Guidance Section 2.2)

The impact that the Action Plan will have on the rights of children will not be directly communicated to them. The rights of young people will be communicated to representative youth organisations through wider engagement on the delivery of the Action Plan.

A child-friendly or accessible CRWIA will not be published as the Action Plan will likely have indirect impacts on the rights and wellbeing of children and young people.

12. Planning for the review of impact on child rights (Stage 3) (Guidance Section 2.2)

Information on who is benefitting from the Affordable Housing Supply Programme is currently monitored through a range of data available, including Scottish Household Survey data on the characteristics of social rented households over time.

In addition, Local Authorities are required to ensure that their Local Housing Strategies demonstrate how their statutory requirements under the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 are being aligned with housing priorities and outcomes.

Stage 3 will be completed at an appropriate time after the publication of the Action Plan, to be agreed as part of the implementation and delivery phase of the Plan.

13. Compatibility sign off statement (Guidance Section 2.2)

This relevant proposal has been assessed against the UNCRC requirements and has been found to be compatible.

Policy Lead Signature & Date of Sign Off: Craig Stevenson 07/09/23

Deputy Director Signature & Date of Sign Off:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joe Brown', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Joe Brown, 07/09/23



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