



Calls to Action: Summary Report

Children's Parliament and Scotland's Climate  
Assembly

March 2021

## Children's Parliament and Scotland's Climate Assembly

Climate change is a human rights issue. Any plan, solution or action to tackle climate change in Scotland must respond to the needs, and rights, of everyone living here, and this means listening to the diversity of views and lived experiences of Scotland's citizens. This includes children who have the right to have their views heard and taken seriously as outlined in [Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (UNCRC).

As Scotland's Climate Assembly members are aged 16+, the secretariat invited Children's Parliament to support the participation and engagement of younger children across Scotland, to ensure their views, experiences and ideas are part of the discussions and calls to action going forward. To capture the diversity of children's views and experiences, and to echo the process of the Assembly, Children's Parliament is working with 100 children across Scotland from 10 schools. The children are a mixed gender, income and ethnicity group representing both urban and rural communities.

Tackling climate change has been a key issue for children since the inception of Children's Parliament, 25 years ago. Children's Parliament was, in fact, created in response to a recommendation from children aged 10 who participated in a community development project in Craigmillar, Edinburgh in 1996 called 'Eco-City'. In this project, the children developed a model of their vision for their community that reflected their concerns about pollution, energy and water conservation, waste, infrastructure and biodiversity. One of the key recommendations the children made was to create a 'children's parliament' where children could share their views and ideas on their lives in Scotland. You can watch a short film about the children's work [here](#).

12 years later in 2008, Members of the Children's Parliament were invited to take part in the 'Children's Climate Change Project'. This project engaged children in the global debate on climate change and the national debate on the Scottish Climate Change Bill which was being developed by Scottish Government at the time. Children from Fife, Western Isles, North Edinburgh and South Ayrshire created a 6-panel mural depicting their findings which was presented at the 2008 Festival of Politics and also at an EU Green Week event 'Climate Change - Act and Adapt' in June 2009 in Brussels. A film of the project can be found [here](#).

It has been another 12 years since this work and a climate emergency has since been declared in Scotland. While children, like adults, do not necessarily share the same views, opinions and ideas, the children

who have participated in this programme unanimously recognise the impacts of climate change in Scotland and the urgency needed to develop and implement solutions for the planet, and their own immediate and future lives, as well as those of the generations to come.

## The Investigation

"I feel really excited and proud [to be involved in the Climate Assembly] because I get to share my and others' opinions to help make a difference in Scotland." Member of Children's Parliament age 11, Fife

Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, the Children's Parliament investigation for Scotland's Climate Assembly has been facilitated digitally and remotely. We took a hope-based, solution-focused approach underpinned by a commitment to upholding and further realising children's human rights, with the support of climate anxiety experts, to ensure children felt valued, supported and empowered in this process.

## Interactive, Digital Surveys

100 Members of Children's Parliament (MCPs) from 10 schools across Scotland completed interactive, digital surveys in October 2020, January 2021 and February 2021. Each survey was complemented by activities using materials designed and provided by Children's Parliament.

- Survey 1 findings can be viewed [here](#).
- Survey 2 findings can be viewed [here](#).
- Survey 3 findings can be viewed [here](#).

## The Investigators

Children's Parliament also worked with 12 children from 4 of the 10 participating schools to analyse the findings from their peers gathered in the surveys and to further explore the themes discussed by the Assembly Members through creative, participatory activities. Children's Parliament worked in partnership with the Secretariat, climate evidence leads and experts from outwith the Climate Assembly process to ensure the children received age-appropriate information and evidence aligning with the themes explored by the Assembly members. Mirroring the Climate Assembly format, the Children's Parliament team encouraged and supported the children to guide their

investigation and further explore themes and ideas of particular interest to them.

**Investigator Missions:** Each month, the children were sent fun, creative activities in the post to prepare in advance of the calls. You can see what was included in the investigators' monthly 'mission' packs at the bottom of the webpage [here](#).

**Online Calls:** The 12 MCP Investigators initially met twice a month on an online video call facilitated by the Children's Parliament team. In January 2021, this became a weekly session. In October and November, the Investigators learned about climate change, its relationship with human rights and fairness, and explored the impact of climate change globally, and in their own communities in Scotland. In December and January, the children met with climate experts to learn about the evidence being presented to the Assembly Members for the following themes: Diet, Lifestyle, Travel, Land and Sea Use, Work and Learning.

**Films:** To communicate the children's journey, findings and key messages to the Assembly Members, the Children's Parliament team worked with the children to create a series of short films to be shown at the Climate Assembly weekends.

- The first film, capturing the children's initial reflections on participating in the Climate Assembly and understanding of climate change more broadly, was shown on the weekend of the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> November 2020 and can be watched [here](#).
- The second film, capturing the children's views and experiences of the impact of climate change in Scotland, was shown on the weekend of the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> December 2020 and can be watched [here](#).
- The third film, capturing the children's views on the Climate Assembly thematic areas, was shown during the weekend of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> February 2021 and can be watched [here](#).
- The children's final film, which will include their final recommendations or 'calls to action' to be considered by the Climate Assembly members will be shown during the weekend of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

## Calls to Action

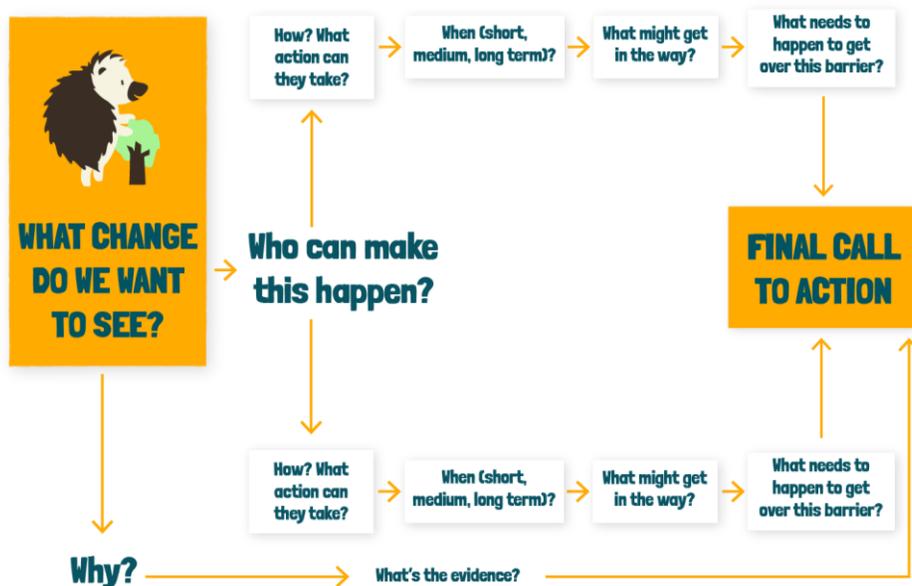
At the end of January, all Members of Children's Parliament were given the opportunity to participate in a second digital survey which invited the children to share their views on what changes Scotland should make to tackle the climate emergency.

As the majority of children were learning from home due to the national lockdown measures in place, the accompanying workshop ([accessible here](#)) was designed to be accessible for children to use independently at home with the support of parents and carers, and/or with their peer group with the support of school staff. Like the Climate Assembly adults, all participating children were presented with a summary of the evidence around possible solutions for Scotland to take forward. This was complimented by creative activities, supporting the children to reflect on the key issues, the possible solutions, and potential challenges and barriers to their implementation. It also encouraged the children to share their own ideas and solutions to be considered.

The results of the second survey can be viewed [here](#).

Gathering all the views and ideas shared by the wider group of children in the second survey, the 12 Investigators worked to create a series of calls to action for each theme. In the third, and final, survey, the Investigators' Calls to Action were put to a vote with the wider group of children to identify the top 3 children feel most strongly about, as highlighted in the following pages.

The result of the third survey can be viewed [here](#).



## Diet

What *diet* changes should Scotland make to tackle the climate emergency? What needs to happen to help everyone make these changes?

**1 Teach children and adults about environmentally-friendly diets and reducing food waste.**

**2 Make and sell more food locally in Scotland.** Support environmentally-friendly small businesses, organic farmers and butchers. Choose to stock foods from Scotland over foods from abroad.

**3 Label all food and everyday items with where they are made and their impact on the environment.**

**Make fresh, organic food cheaper.** Make junk, processed and imported food more expensive.

Make more plant-based, animal-free options available in schools, nurseries and places where people work.

Launch a national plant-based diet week to raise awareness.

"Well, I get my food from the shops but personally I don't know where the food comes from. I don't think people are bothered to read all the ingredients and where it's come from. I think it should be bolder on the packaging to know where it actually was from." Member of Children's Parliament, age 12, West Lothian

## Land + Sea Use

How should Scotland change how it *uses its land and sea* to tackle the climate emergency? What needs to happen to make these changes?

**1 Protect wildlife and native species.** This would involve a ban on hunting animals and making sure no new homes are built in places where there are habitats.

**2 Create a national tree planting day in Scotland.** Everyone would plant a tree, every year.

**3 Allow only sustainable ways of farming, fishing and crofting.** This would include using natural fertilisers and reducing the numbers of animals being farmed or fished.

**Protect wild spaces, coastlines and ancient woods.** This would involve creating special sea defences to protect the coastline, cleaning up beaches and rivers, and stopping cutting down trees.

**Create more woodlands and peatlands.** This would involve helping people who own land to use their land to do this.

**Make community gardens and allotments for everyone.** This would involve teaching children and adults about growing their own food, and using schools for giving out saplings, seeds and tools. Have a special day in Scotland where everyone works in their gardens to grow food.

**Create more nature parks and stop green spaces from being built on.** In towns and cities, create green, traffic-free areas for children and adults to play.

**Create more wind farms and solar panels** so all energy in Scotland is renewable.

**"We need to just stop cutting down trees."** Member of Children's Parliament, age 10, Clackmannanshire

## Lifestyle

What *lifestyle* changes should Scotland make to tackle the climate emergency? What should be done to help people make these changes?

**1 Make sure new houses are built to be environmentally-friendly.** This would involve making them energy efficient.

**2 Create sharing libraries in communities** for toys, clothes, food, tools, books...and more!

**3 Ban plastic packaging and single-use plastic** (especially cutlery, bottles and plastic bags).

Give money and help to people who struggle to heat their homes.

**Make environmentally-friendly things in shops cheaper and easier for people to choose.** This would involve making sure shops promote and display environmentally friendly options instead of non-environmentally friendly options.

**Make using only smokeless fuel a law in Scotland.**

**Help people understand what they can do to tackle climate change.** This would involve having adverts on TV and social media about creating less waste, buying less things, buying local products, travelling less to different countries, and saving energy.

**Improve recycling in Scotland.** This would include having more recycling points, even for things like clothes and toys, and having better, fun instructions for everyone to follow.

**Make businesses pay for their waste and impact on the environment.**

**Make items that are not good for the environment a higher price.** Use this money to help make environmentally-friendly items cheaper.

"Sometimes it's really hard to have a less carbon footprint because all the shops are importing stuff to make more money. They think it's just up to them to make money but it's actually not because they are killing the planet doing that. So, I think it's up to the government and the shopkeepers to reduce plastic and reduce the food

miles and all should try their hardest to  
do that.” Member of Children’s Parliament, age 10, Highlands

## Travel

How should Scotland change how we *travel by land and air* to tackle the climate emergency? What needs to happen to help everyone make these changes?

**1 Lower price of electric cars and have a renting scheme until people have saved up enough money to buy them.**

**2 Make travelling to school in environmentally friendly ways easier and cheaper.** This would involve S'Cool buses (pedal-powered school buses), cycle/walking buses, and more, safer cycle routes across Scotland.

**3 Encourage cycling by making more, safer cycle paths and lanes, and making public bikes available in villages, towns and cities.**

**Make lots of electric car, scooter and bike charging points available for people to use.**

**Make public transport more environmentally-friendly.** This would involve making it easier and cheaper for children and adults, and making buses and trains electric or hydrogen-powered.

**Ban diesel and petrol cars from being made and sold in Scotland.** Instead, we can help make electric cars in Scotland. Fun fact - one of the first electric cars was built in Scotland in the 1800s!

**Create better railways to link up people in rural areas.**

**Make prices for flying higher.**

"Cars and planes emit high levels of greenhouse gases. We should swap to electric cars but they are too expensive to buy for many people right now." Member of Children's Parliament, age 11, Western Isles

## Work and Learning

How should Scotland change how we *learn and work* to tackle the climate emergency? What skills and knowledge do children need to learn to build a better, greener Scotland and have greener jobs in the future?

**1 Create more jobs for looking after all our nature.** This would involve helping people without jobs learn skills to have green jobs.

**2 Help children and adults learn green skills that will help tackle the climate emergency like:**

- How to grow food and compost
- How to recycle properly
- How to repair and mend things
- How to have a climate friendly diet
- How to plant trees and protect wildlife

**3 Make sure children and young people have information about the climate emergency in Scotland.** This is so they know what's going on, how to get involved, or how to get help if they are worried.

**Help schools to be environmentally-friendly.** Schools can be places for planting trees.

**Shorten work and school hours.** This is so people can have more time to do things like grow their own food, plant trees and repair things at home or in their area.

**Involve children in decisions being made about tackling the climate emergency.** This could be in school, in communities or at a national level - like the Climate Assembly!

**Make sure all children and adults learn about climate change.** This would involve hearing from experts in climate change.

**Make sure people are paid fairly to help with bills.**

**Teach children and young people about what 'green' jobs and qualifications they could get when they're older.** In schools, introduce children to different green jobs, and degrees at university which are designed to tackle climate change.

**Help children to play, learn and have hobbies outside.** This is so when children grow up, they go outside more often and want to look after our nature.

**Speak and listen to all the people who grow, make, produce and sell things in Scotland.** This is to understand what help they need to make their businesses better for the environment.

## Taking us Seriously

"Children need to hear back from adults making decisions since they have a right to know what is happening." Member of Children's Parliament, age 13, Edinburgh

This method of involving children in a citizens' assembly is a world-first. As Scotland prepares to make children's human rights part of Scots Law in March 2021, this is a unique and hugely significant demonstration of children's right to participate in decision-making processes.

Children's Parliament, the Secretariat and Evidence leads, and Assembly Members all have a role to play: from ensuring children have, and are supported to understand, age-appropriate information about climate change (in line with their rights to information and education), to supporting and safeguarding children throughout the process (in line with their rights to protection), and to actively listening and responding to their views and ideas (in line with their rights to participate). As adults, we all hold responsibilities to recognise children as rights-holders, and to ensure children's views and ideas are given due weight and taken seriously in this process.

In the third survey, the children were invited to share their views and ideas on the next part of this process, including how they would like to receive information from the Assembly Members, and duty-bearers in due course, in response to their participation.

Most children emphasised the importance of hearing back from the Assembly Members, acknowledging their right to be informed about how their participation has been considered and to what extent it has been taken seriously, and on board. Here are some of the children's reflections on why it's important that children hear back from adults making decisions:

"To know what's happening and if the decisions can actually be done."

Member of Children's Parliament, age 11, Western Isles

"So we know have been listened to." Member of Children's Parliament, age 10, Perth & Kinross

"It is important to hear back from adults making decisions because then we know what is happening and our ideas are being listened to." Member of Children's Parliament, age 11, Fife

"So then they get to know what the adults think about their ideas." Member of Children's Parliament, age 11, Perth & Kinross

In one of the online calls, the 12 Investigators came up with some ideas for how adults can tell all Members of Children's Parliament about how they have listened to their views, and acted on them. These were put to a vote, with 'an animation' and 'film clip from the adults' being the most popular.

- 1 An animation
- 2 A film clip from the adults
- 3 A slideshow
- 4 A letter from the adults
- 5 A comic strip
- 6 A book

The children also shared their top tips for adults giving feedback to children. Here are some of their ideas. More ideas can be found in the survey three findings [here](#).

"Give them essential information and make it straight forward." Member of Children's Parliament, age 13, Edinburgh

"Don't over word things just say what needs to be said but not in a mean way" Member of Children's Parliament, age 10, Highlands

"Keeping the information short and simple language children will understand."

Member of Children's Parliament, age 12, West Lothian

"Make it SIMPLE to read and if there's a hard word, EXPLAIN it and SHORTEN the sentences." Member of Children's Parliament, age 11, Highlands

"Adults should keep positive." Member of Children's Parliament, age 13, Edinburgh

"Honesty." Member of Children's Parliament, age 12, Orkney

"Colour and pictures and not long sentences." Member of Children's Parliament, age 13, Edinburgh

"Be kind if their ideas are not going to be used." Member of Children's Parliament, age 11, Perth & Kinross

"Spark some fun into it." Member of Children's Parliament, age 10, Western Isles

## Next Steps

In March, between Weekend 6 and 7, the 12 Investigators will have the opportunity to meet with Assembly Members to discuss their Calls to Action. A final report capturing the full findings of the Children's Parliament's Investigation for Scotland's Climate Assembly will be made available in due course.

## About Children's Parliament

Established in 1996, Children's Parliament is Scotland's centre of excellence for children's participation and engagement. Our mission is to inspire greater awareness and understanding of the power of children's human rights and to support implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) across Scotland.

Through our children's human rights-based, creative practice, we provide younger children up to 14 years of age from diverse backgrounds across Scotland with opportunities to share their experiences, thoughts and feelings so that they can influence positive change in their lives at home, in school and in the community. We use creative, participatory methods to support children to meaningfully engage in decision-making processes, as outlined in Article 12 of the UNCRC.

This year is Scotland's Year of Childhood, a year-long celebration of childhood hosted by Children's Parliament. During the year we are exploring childhood through the lens of children's human rights, creating opportunities to share rights-based practice in an atmosphere of optimism and confidence. You can find out more and how to get involved [here](#).

## Contact

For more information about Children's Parliament and the Climate Assembly work, Katie Reid, Project Lead can be reached on:  
katie@childrensparliament.org.uk