



RRSA IN SCOTLAND 2022-2025

PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL AUTHORITIES

unicef 
UNITED KINGDOM



**RIGHTS
RESPECTING
SCHOOLS**

CONTENTS

- [Introduction - 3](#)
- [RRSA in Scotland - 4](#)
- [Key Roles in our Local Authority - 5](#)
- [A Strategic Partnership between UNICEF UK - and Local Authorities - 6](#)
- [The Role of the LA Sponsor - 7](#)
- [The Role of the Strategic Lead - 8 and 9](#)
- [Case Studies from Local Authorities - 10 to 15](#)

All images ©Unicef UK/Dawe



UNICEF and Children's Rights

For 75 years, the **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)** has been working tirelessly for child rights and for the wellbeing of every child. Whoever they are. Wherever they live. UNICEF has been an unstoppable force for change in the lives of children around the world.

In the UK, the **UK Committee for UNICEF (UNICEF UK)** works with the hospitals where children are born, the schools where children learn and grow, and the services that shape their lives, to make sure that every child can enjoy their rights.

In 1989, governments worldwide promised all children the same rights by adopting the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**. We protect and promote the rights of all children to an education, to be healthy, to a childhood, to be treated fairly and be heard and fulfil their potential. They apply equally to every child, regardless of who they are, or where they are from.

INTRODUCTION

The UNICEF UK Rights Respecting School Award (RRSA) is based on principles of equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination and participation.

The RRSA seeks to put the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child at the heart of a school's ethos and culture to improve wellbeing and develop every child's talent and ability.

Since May 2022, the Scottish government has supported UNICEF UK's Rights Respecting Schools Award with the aim of offering the RRSA to every state school in Scotland.

Through this partnership a grant is being offered to schools to fund them registering for the Award, access training, support, and accreditations until March 2025. This partnership is removing the financial barrier for schools wishing to pursue the RRSA and make children's rights a reality.

In 2020 Scotland took the decision to incorporate children's rights into domestic law, meaning public authorities must act in a way that is aligned with the UNCRC. The intent behind the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill is, within devolved competence, to deliver a proactive culture of everyday accountability for children's rights across public services in Scotland.

The Bill would require all Scotland's public authorities to take proactive steps to ensure the protection of children's rights in their decision-making and service delivery and make it unlawful for public authorities, including the Scottish Government, to act incompatibly with the UNCRC requirements as set out in the Bill. Children, young people and their representatives would have a new ability to use the courts to enforce their rights.

Facilitating schools within a local authority to take part in the Award provides an established framework to comply with incorporation and offer a child rights-based approach to whole-school improvement. More on the impact of the Award, including our latest Impact Report can be found here:

[**unicef.uk/RRSA_Impact_Report**](https://unicef.uk/RRSA_Impact_Report)

This guide outlines a framework for managing RRSA within a local authority, with support from UNICEF UK. Every local authority will have their own approach, so included in this guide are case studies from authorities that are already running RRSA.

We hope with this guide we can empower local authorities to see that delivering child rights education is possible with some adjustment to staff roles at various levels and the setting up of new processes and networks. And that now, while funding is available, is a fantastic moment to commit to this work.

RRSA IN SCOTLAND

Children's rights have been part of policy and practice in Scotland for many years, underpinning Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) and included in guidance such as the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) Professional Standards. The forthcoming incorporation of the UNCRC will be a further significant milestone. This context has ensured that Scotland has long been receptive to the work of placing children's rights within educational practice. In 2022 there were 1,484 Scottish schools registered, approximately 62%¹ of the total number of schools in Scotland.

In May 2022, the Scottish Government announced funding for UNICEF UK to offer the Rights Respecting Schools Award to all state primary and secondary schools in Scotland. The grant from the Scottish Government will allow schools to register for the Award and access all training, accreditations and support until March 2025. This will remove financial barriers and give any school interested in becoming Rights Respecting the opportunity to do so, creating a lasting impact for children in Scotland.

This funding represents an excellent opportunity to grow engagement with child rights education and experience tells us that this will be most successful when done in partnership with Local Authorities.

Prior to the funding announcement, RRSA had formal Service Level Agreements with 23 of Scotland's 32 Local Authorities (72%), which saw them provide some strategic oversight of the process in their areas and varying degrees of practical support, as well as financing the participation of their schools at a reduced tariff.

Recognising the fixed-term nature of the funding, UNICEF UK now hope to build on these partnerships to create a legacy for child rights education and to plan strategically beyond the end of the three years, working towards greater self-sufficiency and sustainability for children rights education.



1. Note: The RRSA registration figure includes a small number of standalone early years establishments and non-typical education settings, but the total figure used is schools only. Data correct as of 9th August 2022.

KEY ROLES IN YOUR LA



RRSA Sponsor

Influencing at senior level



Strategic Lead

Day-to-day management
of RRSA in LA



Assessors

Ad-hoc delivery of
accreditations

A STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN UNICEF UK AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES

A new Strategic Partnership between your Local Authority (LA) and UNICEF UK (UUK) involves taking part in the following:

The Local Authority (LA) commits to:

1. Identifying a named senior individual who will act as a 'Sponsor'³ for RRSA within the LA.
2. Identifying a named 'Strategic Lead'⁴ who will promote and coordinate RRSA within the LA, being the day-to-day contact for the relevant UUK RRSA Professional Adviser. UUK recommends considering how to ensure sustainability and continuity in this role, as far as is possible.
3. Working with UUK to develop internal capacity to undertake Bronze, Silver and Gold accreditations, building a sustainable future for RRSA in the LA area.
4. Be accountable to UUK for all Rights Respecting Schools work.

UNICEF UK (UUK) commits to:

1. Identifying a named Professional Adviser who will oversee RRSA progress, promote school engagement, and provide advice and guidance as needed. The Professional Adviser will be the primary point of contact for the LAs named Sponsor and Strategic Lead, providing email and telephone support and managing school data.
2. Extend free access to our suite of training⁵ to key LA staff, including the Strategic Lead.
3. Hold termly Strategic Leads meetings to consult and update LA leads about RRSA developments.
4. Operate a programme of training and support for LA colleagues to develop capacity as RRSA Assessors.
5. Carry out Bronze, Silver and Gold accreditations within the LA, until the LA is able to do so independently. When LA Assessors begin undertaking assessments, UUK will provide quality assurance.

It is our expectation that the agreement will run from the moment of signing until the end of school session 2024-25.



³ An outline role description for the RRSA Sponsor is included as Appendix A

⁴ An outline role description for the Strategic Lead is included as Appendix B

⁵ Details of training available at unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/training-and-support/

THE ROLE OF THE RRSA SPONSOR

The RRSA Sponsor should be a senior figure within the Local Authority, able to influence strategic decision-making and ensure that a Rights Respecting approach is embedded in the vision for education. They are likely to have very little involvement in the operational aspect of the partnership. Their role may involve:

- Ensuring RRSA is included within strategic planning and is linked to relevant agendas and initiatives.
- Raising awareness amongst senior colleagues of the progress of RRSA in the authority, sharing the benefits of the approach and highlighting the successes of local schools.
- Encouraging schools and other audiences to see the benefits of engagement in RRSA.
- Securing the resources necessary for the delivery of RRSA in the area, including continuity of the Strategic Lead role.
- Representing the LA at celebration events or incoming UUK visits, as appropriate.



THE ROLE OF THE STRATEGIC LEAD

The Strategic Lead will take day-to-day responsibility for the progress of RRSA in their area. This role involves more 'hands on' work to deliver RRSA within the LA, and can include the following areas.

Promotion, liaison and management of the RRSA:

- Raising awareness of RRSA, encouraging registrations and take up of training.
- Supporting schools on their journey by facilitating networking and training.
- Celebrating successes and achievements.
- Helping schools and other audiences to see the relevance of RRSA to the principles and outcomes of Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) and Curriculum for Excellence (CfE).
- Maintaining annual contact with schools to encourage progress.
- Liaise with the UUK team to ensure information about schools is up to date – new registrations and changes of school personnel, attendance at training etc.
- Promotion of regional and national training opportunities.
- Attend and contribute to termly RRSA Scottish Strategic Leads meetings and, where appropriate, collaborate with other Strategic Leads locally to improve consistency, strengthen, and develop the Award.
- Keep up to date with any RRSA developments.
- Contribute to UK, Scottish and local priorities in support of RRSA.
- Provide timely and effective communication to local assessors and schools.

Where additional agreements are made with UNICEF UK, such as training for schools, support visits, central assessor training the Strategic Lead will coordinate the arrangements required, unless an alternative provision is specified.

Build capacity within the LA to assess independently by recruiting and training assessors:

- Undertake appropriate training to become an RRSA Assessor.
- Establish a LA based team of assessors to build capacity and ensure sustainability for RRSA assessment.
- Lead on the strategic recruitment of assessors for the LA using RRSA Assessor recruitment and selection process, job description and assessor guidelines.
- Provide or facilitate training (including shadowing as part of training process) for RRSA assessors in the LA.
- Ensure LA assessors are authorised by UNICEF UK.
- Monitor work of LA assessors:
 1. Ensure a fair and balanced deployment of assessors over time.
 2. Collaborate with UUK RRSA Team in the quality assurance of assessors and the assessment process, in line with the SLA.

THE ROLE OF THE STRATEGIC LEAD

The accreditation process:

Over time, and with appropriate training and guidance, the LA Strategic Lead for RRSA will manage the RRSA accreditation process ensuring that any work carried out in the LA is undertaken only by those authorised by UNICEF UK.

Bronze: Rights Committed

- Respond to applications, scrutinise evidence provided and award schools Bronze, informing UNICEF UK and feeding back to school.

- Where the LA Lead decides the school has not met the requirements for Bronze, appropriate feedback and guidance should be offered to the school.

Silver: Rights Aware

- Receive Silver accreditation requests.

- Request school documentation, the 'School Evaluation: Silver form' and the PPT evidence.

- Scrutinise paperwork for assessment readiness. (When the school is not ready, indicate areas for development to the school and suggest actions.)

- Identify an RRSA-accredited assessor and put school in touch with assessor to arrange date. Consider whether the visit provides a shadowing opportunity for other assessors, including those who may not have experience of this phase.

- Inform the regional Professional Adviser, so the accreditation date and assessors are recorded on the tracker.

- Receive and quality-assure Silver accreditation reports written by the assessor – liaising with assessor if modifications are required.

- Send report and evaluation forms to the regional Professional Adviser for quality assurance, who will then request certificate, logo and banner.

- Send congratulatory email and report to school, copying in the regional Professional Adviser.

Gold: Rights Respecting

Initially:

- Receive Gold accreditation requests.

- Request school documentation: the 'School Evaluation: Gold form' and the PPT evidence.

- As far as possible, evaluate readiness for assessment and alert UNICEF UK RRSA team to initiate next steps.

Work towards:

- Receive Gold accreditation requests.

- Request school documentation, the 'School Evaluation: Gold form' and the PPT evidence.

- Scrutinise paperwork for assessment readiness. (When the school is not ready, indicate areas for development to school and suggest actions.)

- Identify an RRSA-accredited assessor and put school in touch with assessor to arrange date. Consider whether the visit provides a shadowing opportunity for other assessors, including those who may not have experience of this phase.

- Inform the regional Professional Adviser, so the accreditation date and assessors are recorded on the tracker.

- Receive and quality-assure Gold accreditation report written by the assessor – liaising with assessor if modifications are required.

- Send report and evaluation forms to regional Professional Adviser who will then submit to the Accreditation and Standards Committee (ASC).

- Liaise with the regional Professional Adviser to ensure ASC approval, then send congratulatory email and report to school, copying in the regional Professional Adviser.

- The RRSA team will arrange for a certificate, logo and banner to be sent to the school.

CASE STUDY: SOUTH AYRSHIRE

SOUTH AYRSHIRE: A PARTNERSHIP TO DELIVER CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Rights Respecting Schools has been a priority for nine years.

The implementation of children's rights has been incorporated in both authority and school improvement planning. Delivering this work has been the remit of the Quality Improvement Manager, working alongside a steering group who meet once every term.

"Children's rights are the responsibility of all services therefore membership of the steering group includes wider partners and incorporates both child protection and youth strategy leads."

The Strategic Leads for South Ayrshire attend national meetings and share information at directorate, cluster and school level. The Strategic Leads sits on local authority groups to support with the inclusion of children's rights in improvement planning. The Strategic Leads also have the responsibility of sharing improvement and school information at local and national meetings, and forums. In conjunction with the steering group, they identify key priorities for children's rights.

The Steering Group meet every two weeks to discuss key priorities. These currently include planning support to schools in relation to accreditation, monitor and tracking progress through the levels of the Award, sharing practice across clusters and SWIEC, creating and delivering learning sessions for staff, agreeing assessment visits, support with Silver assessments and working with partners to create a pupil voice and participation policy for SAC.

CASE STUDY: EDINBURGH

EDINBURGH: RIGHTS ARE INTRINSIC TO THE WORK ALREADY HAPPENING

The role of RRSA Strategic Lead for The City of Edinburgh Council, sits within the Directorate for Education and Children's Services under Schools & Lifelong Learning.

The current post holder is employed as a Development Officer. Their primary role is to work with schools and community settings to access support and training within the scope of Health and Wellbeing.

"Linking this work to health and wellbeing has provided a platform to demonstrate that rights are not an 'add on' but intrinsic to the work already happening in schools and engaged staff in looking for more opportunities to evidence work around rights."

Typical duties as Strategic Lead include contact to schools for guidance and support around signing up and getting started, signing off Bronze Award submissions, pre-accreditation visits either in person or virtually and accreditation visits at both Silver and Gold including accompanying report writing.

They also provide links between schools to promote ambassadorial opportunities, share wider training information linked to organisations like ScotDEC, monitor uptake of RRSA across all schools and report to Senior Council Leadership on progress at each Award level. There is also a capacity-building for more assessors in the authority and offering shadow visits on accreditations while maintaining contact with UNICEF UK's RRSA Senior Professional Advisor and the promotion of opportunities from UNICEF UK such as initiatives like OutRight or Soccer Aid and sharing communications, such as the regular RRSA newsletter.

The Strategic Lead for Edinburgh also recently contributed to a working group looking at promoting UNCRC to all colleagues across the city who are working with children and young people. A document is being developed to provide information and guidance on understanding the role of duty bearer and the UNCRC in response to the incorporation of the convention into Scots law.

CASE STUDY: HIGHLAND

HIGHLAND: BUILDING CAPACITY AS NUMBERS GROW

The promotion of RRSA in Highland has been taken forward by a Collaborative Lead Officer and a small steering group who operate on behalf of UNICEF UK to support the 120 schools now participating in the Rights Respecting Schools Award. Our aim is to build further capacity as our number of schools taking part grows so to this end three further members have joined and are undertaking training.

The strategic lead attends national Strategic Leads Meetings and disseminates information from national (Scottish and UK) meetings via direct correspondence with schools, at the Steering group meetings and through a Highland Twitter page. Part of the role is to highlight and share good practice across Highland as well as to bring this to future national meetings. Awareness of child rights is promoted through RRSA as well as links to GIRFEC, GTCs Standards and the Children and Young People's Act. This is also done through our Educational Psychology team and in partnership with Highland One World.

"The purpose of the steering group is to offer support to schools, monitor and track progress through the levels of the Award, share practice, and arrange CPD, and agree assessment visits. There is regular support from, and correspondence with, our Professional Advisor at UNICEF UK."

Training to become an assessor involves attending UNICEF UK training, shadowing assessment visits with qualified assessors, undertaking an assessment visit with support and then leading assessment visits once fully trained. Throughout this process there is continued support from our UNICEF UK Professional Advisor who is always 'on hand' to answer questions and help in any way. Training on children's rights is offered through our Educational Psychology team and Highland One World. One-to-one meetings with the Collaborative Lead Officer are offered to all schools as they progress on their RRSA journey.

CASE STUDY: FALKIRK

FALKIRK : A UNIQUE APPROACH

Schools across Falkirk Council have been involved in Rights Respecting Schools for over a decade. Over that time a unique supportive approach has been developed amongst teaching professionals with significant experience in delivering the Award. Funding from the Scottish Government over the next three years has enabled those with significant RRS experience to support and encourage others to get on board.

"For Falkirk Council, children and young people's voices, participation, involvement and leadership is at the heart of our decision-making and school and service improvement, and is supported by Rights Respecting Schools Award."

The Falkirk Approach:

1. A Strategic Leads team was established to provide support.
2. With the coming of the introduction of the UNCRC into domestic law, Rights Respecting Schools provides a format that can be used to support evidence of meeting children's rights in school. This legal move has encouraged others to participate. As each school now has a UNCRC link, many are joining that role with a RRS lead making it more manageable and streamlined for the schools and providing leadership opportunities for staff. To ensure we knew how to provide the best support, we audited where the schools were on their journey.
3. After the audit, we sent emails to the schools offering support depending on what stage they were at on their journey. This encouraged more to come on board and others to re-engage with the Award.
4. Given more schools were coming on board, we reached out to those who had already achieved Gold to see if any teachers were interested in joining us as Strategic Leads and Assessors. The reason for this is three-fold: firstly, we believe it is essential to have teachers on board who have experience of achieving the Gold Award. It enables the support to move from the theoretical to the practical. Secondly, it provides a leadership opportunity for teachers who are already embedded in children's rights. Thirdly, as more schools get involved we need help to support and assess.
5. Our final step, for now, is to offer targeted support sessions, depending on RRS level, across different days and times to reach as many schools as possible. This, combined with the Teams page, which all new school leads are added to, will enable local networking and grassroots input from the very people who are working with Falkirk's Children and Young People.

As Strategic Leads we are there to support our colleagues. We attend the National Network Meetings and disseminate the information to our schools. The Teams page has proven invaluable as it is our main tool of communication, where we organise training and meets, and where our schools can engage in discussion and the sharing of good practice. Links are made between the national requirements of the UNCRC, GIRFEC, GTCS Professional Standards, and HIGIOS4.

CASE STUDY: PERTH AND KINROSS

PERTH AND KINROSS: A SUPPORTIVE FRAMEWORK CREATING HIGH ENGAGEMENT

In Perth and Kinross Council the Rights Respecting Schools Award is coordinated and led by the locally based Children's Rights Officer (CRO) who is the RRS Strategic Lead. Rights Respecting Schools provides a framework for embedding rights-based practice in learning settings and is used to engage schools explicitly with the UNCRC.

"The approach taken in Perth and Kinross, with support from school leaders and education services, has led to 80% of schools being actively engaged in Rights Respecting Schools."

The CRO has dedicated time to carry out their Strategic Lead duties which include processing Bronze Awards, conducting Silver assessments and writing assessment reports, attending Strategic Lead meetings and addressing queries and offering support to schools. To help Perth and Kinross schools make more progress the CRO and UNICEF UK have trained two headteachers to carry out Silver assessments.

With our local authority we have developed a short training session, called Collaborative Conversation, to help school navigate the Award and develop action plans. The session is held twice a year. Different sessions are delivered for schools at each Award level and provides a space for participants to share practice and ask questions.

To further support schools with RRSA an information officer has produced a SharePoint site which contains links to the UNICEF UK paperwork, rights-based learning materials and other relevant documents.

The CRO now sits on a Learner Participation working group. Four of the group members have current and long-standing experience in leading schools towards Rights Respecting status. This group will help to form the strategy for meaningful participation of all learners in many elements of their school life across Perth and Kinross Council.

Perth and Kinross Council encourages all schools to participate in RRSA with an aspiration that many more schools will engage with the programme over the next three years.

CASE STUDY: GLASGOW

GLASGOW: UPHOLDING CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN EDUCATION AND BEYOND

The UNCRC provides a rights-based framework to uphold the rights of all children and take their views into account in decisions that affect them including policy, practice and budget making decisions. To fully embed children's rights into the core of planning and service delivery requires leadership and a coordinated approach across services and partners and a commitment to meaningful empowerment and participation of children and young people.

The UNCRC is central to the key national and local policy drivers underpinning Glasgow's Education Services. These include Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), Curriculum for Excellence and Glasgow's Towards a Nurturing City. These rights are embedded in policy and practice across the policy landscape providing a means for children's rights to be realised.

The Glasgow City Council (GCC) Education Services Children's Rights Strategy Group has developed a three-year action plan using a four-pillar model including Belonging and Relationships, Learning, Equity and Equality, Agency. This model has been developed using feedback from young people. Each stage of the action plan development will be a collaboration with young people and practitioners.

The three-year plan ensures staff and young people are aware of UNCRC through several initiatives including the CLPL, Glasgow Schools Forums for Primary, BGE and Senior Phase events, Rights Respecting Schools Award. The Glasgow Children's Rights Framework develops a meaningful participation model for young people and staff. GCC regularly consults with children and young people through the Glasgow Schools Forum and have launched UNCRC support and guidance citywide to embed children's right throughout all areas.

In July 2021 the Rights Respecting Schools Award in Glasgow had 35 schools on the RRSA journey. The appointment of a Lead Officer for Children Rights and Participation in Glasgow Education Services, in July 2021 allowed GCC to continue awareness raising and support for schools by sharing good practice through CLPL sessions online and in schools.

"Scottish Government announcement of financial support for all primary and secondary schools to achieve the Rights Respecting Schools Award has allowed Glasgow City Council to amend their plans to support the demand from schools."

GCC has identified four members of staff to be trained as RRSA Assessors by UNICEF UK; these include a lead officer, and three deputy headteachers – one primary, two secondary. We have organised support group sessions for all schools, led by the Lead Officer, RRSA Assessors and staff from Gold or Silver RRSA schools. Our Unicef UK Rights Respecting Schools Professional Adviser works very closely with Education Services and has been highly supportive.