

Children in Scotland

every child - every childhood

1 December 2011

Sandra Jack
Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Dear Ms Jack,

Same Sex Marriage

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Scottish Government's consultation on same sex marriage.

Opinions within the children's sector vary, as they do across Scottish society as a whole. Accordingly, as the national agency for the children's sector, we cannot offer a view on behalf of our membership on the general issue of same sex marriage.

However, Children in Scotland and our diverse, nationwide membership do care deeply about the impact of legislation upon the lives and life chances of children. We are not aware of robust evidence proving that the outcomes for children vary significantly from the general population if they are brought up within a same sex relationship, or that adults in same sex partnerships differ in terms of parenting ability.

We would, however, urge that children's rights are safeguarded – and that any next steps in moving this potential legislation forward include gathering valid, relevant evidence and undertaking a child impact assessment, e.g. in respect of divorce or separation issues in same sex marriages.

Please contact me if you would like any more information.

Yours sincerely,

MARION MACLEOD
Senior Policy & Parliamentary Officer

Children in Scotland is the national umbrella agency for organisations and professionals working with and for children, young people and their families. It exists to identify and promote the interests of children and their families and to ensure that policies and services and other provisions are of the highest possible quality and are able to meet the needs of a diverse society. Children in Scotland represents more than 400 members, including most of Scottish local authorities, all major voluntary, statutory and private children's agencies, professional organisations, as well as many other smaller community groups and children's services. It is linked with similar agencies in other parts of the UK and Europe.

The work of Children in Scotland encompasses extensive information, policy, research and practice development programmes. The agency works closely with MSPs, the Scottish Government, local authorities and practitioners. It also services groups such as the Cross Party Parliamentary Group on Children and Young People (with YouthLink Scotland). In addition, Children in Scotland hosts Enquire - the national advice service for additional support for learning, and Resolve: ASL, Scotland's largest independent education mediation service.