

Consultation response



Draft Culture (Scotland) Bill Consultation ends 30 March 2007

1.0 Introduction

Children in Scotland welcomes the draft Culture (Scotland) Bill and its aims to increase participation in the arts and cultural activities in Scotland. As outlined in the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child¹ every child and young person has the right to participate in the arts and in cultural activity. According to *Being Young in Scotland 2005*, only 20% of boys and 28% of girls aged of 15 - 16 attend cultural facilities at least every couple of months.² Providing cultural entitlements should help to increase participation in cultural activities. However, we believe that there are some important issues to consider in order to ensure that the Bill is likely to achieve its intended results.

For the proposals to have real impact on the numbers of children and young people taking part in cultural activities, it will be crucial that local authorities **meaningfully involve children and young people in the development of cultural entitlements**. The Bill must emphasise the importance of this involvement, as well as the importance of providing entitlements for the early years, if it is to have a long-term positive impact. Children in Scotland would like there to be **greater clarity within the Bill about what the entitlements actually mean** and more emphasis on the extensive range of cultural activities to which all children and young people will have effective access. Furthermore, more consideration about how local authorities will fund and implement these entitlements, especially in relation to **how they can meet the needs of a diverse range of groups, including rural communities and children and young people with additional support needs**.

2.0 Cultural entitlements

Children in Scotland is pleased that the Bill will require local authorities to develop cultural entitlements in their area. The Bill is deliberately non-specific regarding the type of entitlement that local authorities must develop to allow flexibility for entitlements to accurately reflect the needs and desires of local areas. However, as well as more clarity regarding the *nature* of entitlements, we think that the proposals on entitlements need to be stronger.

For example, we encourage the Scottish Executive to explore the idea of providing entitlements specifically for children and young people. Consideration also should be given to developing entitlements for whole classes (and not just to individual children and young people), and for the development of cultural vouchers, as mentioned in Cultural Commission's report.³ It is important that local authorities are encouraged to provide cultural entitlements to children and young people from (and within) diverse situations -- including pre-school providers, schools and school age childcare services, youth clubs, and residential care, as well as theatres and museums. Cultural activities can be provided in the classroom through singing, painting, reading, and playing music, as well as through visiting museums and galleries.

¹ Article 31, *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* www.unhcr.ch/html/menu3/b/k2crc.htm

² *Being Young in Scotland 2005: Young People's Participation in Youth Work, Arts, Culture and Sport*, Scottish Executive 2005

³ *Cultural Commission Final Report*, Scottish Executive 2005

When entitlements do mean visits to cultural facilities, the Scottish Executive should explore how systems such as the Young Scot card could aid children and young people, individually and in groups, to end up with truly effective access to cultural experiences, activities and events.

3.0 Involvement of children and young people in developing cultural entitlements

Children in Scotland is pleased that the guidance advises local authorities to give particular thought to engaging young people in developing cultural entitlements. However, we believe that this principle of participation needs to be explicitly stated in the Bill itself, including that involvement should continue *throughout* the development and implementation processes. Similarly, the Bill should make it clear that involvement should not be restricted to young people, as even pre-school children can be engaged meaningfully in this process. Children and young people are more likely to use entitlements if they feel that they have been involved in their shaping them.

As well as being involved in the development of entitlements, children and young people should have the right to choose the specific cultural activities in which they participate. According to *Being Young in Scotland 2005*, children and young people identified cultural activities, such as going to the theatre (17% of 11 - 16 year olds and 32% of 17 - 25 year olds), playing a musical instrument (13% of 11 - 16 year olds and 25% of 17 - 25 year olds) or visiting a gallery (11% of 11 - 16 year olds and 24% of 17 - 25 year olds) as cultural experiences in which they would like to be *more* involved.

Schools, in particular, will have to ensure that they provide a variety of cultural activities so that all pupils can participate in something they enjoy, and not just be limited to a very truncated selection of less-than-appealing possibilities. It will also be important when publishing information about what entitlements are available, to ensure that the information reaches children and young people. Distributing the information to schools and young clubs will help to ensure children and young people know about their cultural rights.

4.0 Education

Children in Scotland's new report *Arts for all?*⁴ highlights that, in many other European countries, culture is an integral part of the curriculum. We believe that to increase participation in meaningful cultural activities, 'culture' must be embedded into education from early childhood on – in part, by becoming an integral part of the Curriculum for Excellence.⁵ Participation in cultural activity can have positive effects on children's development and educational attainment. More time needs to be made available in school for pupils to experience sports, arts and creativity and for different subjects to work together on cultural projects. Opportunities to be creative and imaginative at school may have positive effects on pupils in danger of disengagement by providing them with stimulating experiences.

4.1 Place-based learning

Children in Scotland's recent publication, *Arts for all?* explains the concept of 'place-based learning'; that is, learning in which the curriculum is linked to the local environment and arts projects make use of that environment. When place-based learning occurs, children develop a deeper understanding of their particular community through an explicit focus on the art, books, buildings, history and music from (or inspired by) the local area. Learning to appreciate culture in this way is especially important for children living in remote, rural or small areas, as it imparts a sense of self-respect and self-confidence about who they and the places in which they are growing up. This, in turn, encourages young people to stay in (or return to) their local community. One key to developing cultural activities through place-based learning is to recruit, train and enlist professional self-employed artists who can use their specialised skills to work effectively with children and young people. Children in Scotland has a new project promoting this work.

⁴ *Arts for all? Developing cultural entitlements for children in rural Scotland*, Children in Scotland 2007 (To order your copy visit http://www.childreninScotland.org.uk/html/hom_public.htm)

⁵ *A Curriculum for Excellence*, Scottish Executive 2004

4.2 Arts workforce in schools

Children in Scotland believes that arts outreach workers could play a significant role in delivering cultural entitlements for children and young people. It will be important for local authorities to consider how to make the best use of these workers. One of the central conclusions of Children in Scotland's conference "Arts for all? Meeting the needs of the whole child in rural areas" (March 2006) was that self-employed artists in rural communities must be valued if cultural activities for children living in these areas are to be effective. Funding and training could be provided for resident artists, arts workers and self-employed artists to deliver programmes for children and young people. These programmes could involve art, music, drama, photography, or song, and could be provided in a variety of settings for children and young people of all ages. We believe that arts training should be built into both the initial education and professional development of people working with children and young people and that the development of a Scottish pedagogue qualification for staff working in pre-school and school age childcare settings, residential care and alongside teachers in schools would offer a valuable means for strengthening the arts and culture within services.

4.3 Children with additional support needs

Local authorities will have to ensure, and the Bill will have to make this duty explicit, that children and young people with additional support needs have effective access to the benefits of cultural entitlements. How to provide inclusive services and activities is a matter best sorted out locally, but and it would be helpful for the Scottish Executive to offer advice, support and examples of best practice. Play and music therapy and the use of visiting, self-employed artists and art therapists will be effective in providing cultural activities to children with additional support needs. Training in play therapy, such as the practice development course that Children in Scotland provides, would be particularly useful for culture-related staff members in schools and other settings who work with children having additional support needs.

4.4 Early years

Play is an essential part of every child's development. The Bill and accompanying guidance should note the role of free (unstructured) play, as well as more formal activities in providing cultural activities. There are a variety of ways in which cultural entitlements can be made meaningful for young children through sharing of song, movement, colour and story, and these activities can take place within services, the community, families, and in nature (indeed, wherever young children can be found). The focus must be on who and what can enable children to take part in such activities, what improvements need to be made in initial education of those working with young children, and what support is offered to families. Children in Scotland welcomes initiatives such as Bookstart as a means of introducing culture to children at an early age. Accordingly, we urge the Scottish Executive to invest in Bookstart and other national schemes that will progress cultural competence. We also encourage local authorities to develop cultural entitlements of their own and to be creative in their thinking and activities.

5.0 Rural areas

We believe that the guidance should be clear on the obligation to be responsive to the specific needs and circumstances of rural communities in the area of cultural entitlements. Local authorities need to consider the reality of rurality when developing cultural entitlements for children and young people. In particular, transport issues and the costs associated with accessing cultural facilities and activities are key barriers for rural children and youth. Local authorities containing rural areas will have to be flexible when developing entitlements and look at using facilities such as mobile arts buses or developing projects such as the Dealbh Mor⁶ project on Skye (through which a bus was hired to take children around the island to draw the landscape). As a supplement to place-based learning, cultural entitlements should include trips to national

⁶ For more information see *Arts for all? Developing cultural entitlements for children in rural Scotland*, Children in Scotland 2007

arts facilities in cities. Local authorities will have to improve how they link-up with exhibitions, collections or plays produced by national organisations, and how they can make best use of organisations (such as the National Museums of Scotland) by taking part in their outreach projects.

6.0 Access to culture

Of course, access to cultural facilities is not solely an issue for rural areas. Transport and cost issues can be problematic for all children and young people. Therefore, local authorities need to find ways of ensuring that cultural facilities can be accessed easily and safely by public transport.

Children in Scotland welcomes the recent introduction of the concessionary travel scheme for young people aged 16 - 18 years old, but we would urge that local authorities ensure local transport services are available regularly to cultural facilities in their area *at the right times and days*. Free entry to cultural facilities will also be essential to ensure that children and young people from poorer families can utilise the entitlements. The Children in Scotland publication, *A picture in your head*⁷, highlights that one of the barriers some children had experienced to accessing the arts such as museums, galleries and events, was that their parents had not taken them. This often involved the issue of costs, but it also highlights the need to encourage and assist parents to understand the value of culture, and to be part of the solution here.

7.0 Funding and resources

Children in Scotland would like for the Bill and the accompanying guidance to be more explicit about the resource implications of, and the resources to be made available for, delivering on the promise of cultural entitlements to all children and young people in Scotland. There are a host of resource issues that flow from the comments already made in this response, but there is not enough information in the Bill or guidance about how (and by whom) these issues will be resolved. Just to cite one obvious example, rural local authorities will need to factor in significant transport costs for some cultural activities, as the cost of a school trip from a rural area will be more expensive for one in an urban area. The costs of employing people to deliver cultural activities, such as visiting arts workers, and the cost of training and retraining, also must be taken into account. The point simply is that without adequate resources (human and financial) the idea of cultural entitlements will have a hard time living up to its considerable promise.

8.0 Other organisations

The guidance must be clear that many different kinds of organisations could and should play a vital part in providing cultural entitlements, and that local authorities will have to work together with them successfully. For example, the National Trust can provide access to buildings and, like the National Museums of Scotland, it, too, can provide education programmes. However, making good use of these resources for children and young people will not happen automatically or without careful planning and coordination.

9.0 Training

Children in Scotland suggests that arts training be built into both the initial education and professional development of staff working with children and young people. We encourage serious consideration to be given to the possibility of developing a 'Scottish pedagogue' qualification to enable the workforce to deliver arts activities across early years, alongside teachers in schools, youth work, and residential care. The Scottish Qualifications Authority, following extensive development by Children in Scotland, YouthLink and the Scottish Arts Council, is launching a new professional qualification for artists working with children and young people.

⁷ A picture in your head: Children and the arts: a study of the perceptions and participation of children aged 5 - 12, Dr Birgit Jentsch, Children in Scotland

10.0 Links to other policies

Children in Scotland would like to see more information on how this Bill will link with other policies. Involvement in culture and the development of cultural activities can have indirect impacts on anti-social behaviour, youth justice and social inclusion. It can address the lack of 'things to do' as identified in the Scottish Commissioner for Children and Young People's priority consultation with children and young people. Consideration should be given to how the Bill fits with other agendas such as equalities, NEET, and initiatives aimed at those young people disengaged from school.

According to *Being Young in Scotland 2005* the unemployed, NEETs and those living in the most deprived neighbourhoods are least likely to attend arts and cultural facilities. The Scottish Executive should encourage local authorities to think about how engaging with cultural activities could help to re-engage those young people with education and society and to how best to develop and deliver cultural entitlements for them.

To discuss any of the points raised in this response please contact Sheona Lawson on slawson@childreninScotland.org.uk or 0131 222 2412.

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Children in Scotland is Scotland's national 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, 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 over 450 members, including 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 the European Union.

The work of Children in Scotland encompasses extensive information, policy, research and practice development programmes. The agency works closely with MSPs, the Scottish Executive, local authorities and practitioners. It services a number of groups such as: the Cross Party Parliamentary Group on Children and Young People; the National Children's Voluntary Forum; the National Early Years Forum, the Rural Advisory Group and the Additional Support Needs Network. Children in Scotland hosts Enquire, the national advice service for additional support for learning.