



PRESS RELEASE
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Reviewing the Children (Scotland) Act a decade on

Ten years ago, the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 was described as the most radical shake up of childcare policy law for 25 years.

A major national conference (on Friday, 9 September), will gather together key figures who were involved in shaping the legislation in 1995 and who are working to promote children's rights and interests today. This tenth anniversary review will consider how far we have come and question whether the Act remains relevant and meaningful for children in Scotland in 2005.

Speakers include Kathleen Marshall, then a child law consultant who advised ministers in 1995 that the Act should establish a commissioner for children - and today is Scotland's first commissioner for children and young people.

She said: "I think we need to make the paper rights a reality by developing and embedding true participation by children and young people. Good things are happening around the country on this, we just need to learn from each other.

"I also think we need to pay more attention to the relevance of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Its' basic principles were embedded in the 1995 Act, but in a hesitant and incomplete way. When the Bill was going through Parliament I questioned if we had explored in sufficient detail the complexities of the representation of the views and interests of children."

Other speakers include Alison Cleland, a senior lecturer at Strathclyde University, who will consider child welfare and protection, Lord James Douglas-Hamilton, education spokesperson for the Scottish Conservatives, who in 1995 was the Westminster MP with responsibility for children's legislation, and Lexy Plumtree, a solicitor and legal consultant who will consider issues relating to adoption,

Notes for editors

- *Children (Scotland) Act 1995: a tenth anniversary review* will be held at the Edinburgh Hilton Airport Hotel on Friday, 9 September.

- **Children in Scotland** is the national agency for voluntary, statutory and professional organisations and individuals working with children and their families in Scotland. It exists to identify and promote the interests of children and their families and to ensure that relevant policies, services and provisions are of the best possible quality and able to meet the needs of a diverse society.
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