



Young People's Rights Review

Jack Dudgeon MSYP - Climate Change

Hi all, I'm Jack Dudgeon MSYP and I represent the constituency of Eastwood.

Getting straight into things, climate change is an issue which affects us all across Scotland, something I know only too well having convened SYP's Transport, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee for the past year. In fact, just last week we carried out a consultation workshop on climate change, which was led by the Scottish Government.

Many constituents have gotten in touch with me over my term to inform me of their concerns regarding climate change, and the effect this might have on their daily lives - suffice to say that the young people I represent are very worried for their future.

These concerns were echoed in the hundreds of Pre-SYP65 survey responses by young people across Scotland. The tragedy of this is that climate change is not an isolated policy area, and the effects it has on people, on individuals, are far from containable to the environment alone. Climate change will, if left unmitigated, impact children and young people's rights in virtually every area, and this is a prime example of the interdependency of young people's rights.

Air pollution in our cities as a result of uncontrolled carbon emissions has a direct and provable impact on the health of our young people, violating several rights, including the fundamental right to health.

Furthermore, young people reported to me that they aren't being educated to a satisfactory degree about the impacts and dangers of climate change - thus, their right to education is not being fulfilled.

And further, Article 12 of the UNCRC guarantees young people the right to be consulted in all matters affecting them. While we've seen and we appreciate the efforts towards this during the Year of Young People, we've yet to see if our views will be meaningfully listened to, and will actually influence policy. This obligation to listen to young people is *guiding, not binding* - but we still hope it will be met.

Climate scientists estimate that we can continue at our current rate of carbon emissions for a maximum of five years before irreversible damage is done, and it is young people who will have to live with the consequences of this for the longest amount of time.

My constituents are concerned that, not for the first time, their future is being robbed from them by an older generation who are unwilling to take sufficiently ambitious action on today's most important issues.

I'd like to commend the recent publication of the Scottish Government's Climate Change Plan, which sets out how Scotland will reduce its emissions between now and 2032, in line with the Scottish Climate Act of 2009; and I also think it's fantastic that Scotland beat the rest of the UK with 68% of its energy needs being met by renewable energy.

However, the Children and Young People's Rights Action Plan should include concrete actions committing to ensuring that young people are fully and meaningfully consulted in any decisions affecting them regarding climate change. Better yet, make this obligation *binding, and not guiding*, through incorporation of the UNCRC.

Furthermore, as per the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's recommendation to the UK in 2016, paragraph 73, human rights education in schools should be made mandatory, and it should highlight the links between climate change and human rights.

Young people are the ones who will be living with the consequences of climate change for the longest time - we need to take substantive action now for the sake of the next generation, and more often than not, it's young people who have the answers as to what we can do.