

# Children's engagement with the Scottish Parliament to be expanded

Children from across Scotland have joined the Presiding Officer to sign a joint commitment to increase their involvement in the work of the Scottish Parliament.

The commitment is a working in partnership agreement between the Scottish Parliament and the Children's Parliament. It will help develop children's knowledge and understanding of the workings of the Scottish Parliament and support them to build the skills and confidence to inform and influence legislation.

Members of the Children's Parliament (MCPs), including Eva and Millar from Fife, Cara, Lewis and Evie from East Lothian, Waldah and Michael from Clackmannanshire, Arden from Edinburgh and Rida from Aberdeen were invited to the Scottish Parliament to sign the agreement and to hear more about the work of the Parliament.

Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament, the Rt Hon. Alison Johnstone MSP, said:

"This agreement has been written with children, for children. This commitment signals our aim to ensure that children in Scotland know that they have a voice in their Parliament.

"MSPs and Parliament staff work extensively with schools, in Holyrood, in local communities and online to engage with children about the work of the Scottish Parliament. This agreement will help us to do even more. Children in Scotland should be treated as valued and equal citizens with a voice in issues that affect and impact them."

Arden, an MCP from Edinburgh who attended the event, said:

“Younger children are just bursting with creative ideas and solutions. They are just waiting to be given an opportunity where they can be listened to. It’s just about giving them the space, time and support.”

Director of the Children’s Parliament, Cathy McCulloch, said:

“Having MCPs sign the partnership agreement with the Presiding Officer sets us on a path to new awareness and understanding of children’s human rights throughout the Parliament. This is another sign that Scotland takes children seriously and is committed to realising their rights to be healthy, happy and safe.”

The agreement will see information provided to help MSPs and Scottish Parliament staff increase their understanding of children’s human rights – in line with the UNCRC – and commit to ensuring Parliamentary processes create a safe and friendly environment for children to participate with dignity and respect.

