



Hi, I'm Jane Miller and I work at The Health and Social Care Alliance, Scotland. And I'm going to talk about the [Rights Right Now project](#), which I was seconded to work on last year. And so my name is Jane Miller. I work at the Alliance. Last year, I was seconded to work with Together on the Rights Right Now project. Rights Right Now was a project that was looking at UNCRC implementation, and how to make sure that children and young people were meaningfully involved in that process. So it was a national group of children and young people, there were 14 of them aged between 10 and 17. They came from different organisations. So we had Children in Scotland, Aberlour, Carers Trust Scotland, Scottish Commission for Learning Disability, Scottish Youth Parliament, and Who Cares? Scotland who all supported the young people to participate. They were working with the UNCRC strategic implementation boards, which is a board made up of key strategic decision makers looking at implementation. So they were represented from justice, education, health, and the children's sector. And they were all looking at how implementation needs to take place in Scotland. It was really important actually, if we're talking about UNCRC implementation that children are being listened to inherit as part of that process. So the project was a pilot project. And it took place between August last year to March. And it really was looking at learning about how to take strategic participation and how to make it work. And really, it's about the learning of the model and what worked best and what actually was a bit of a challenge. So one of the biggest things about the project and the learning was about how do you create a safe space for adults and children and young people to come together? So rather than having this UNCRC implementation board, where children go along to the board, how do we create a completely different space, which is a shared space? And it's really important as part of those spaces that it's a safe space? And I think that's something that we've kind of talked about today about how does it feel safe, and the children, young people we worked with, they expressed how important it was for them to feel safe to participate, in those sorts of conversations and with adults. So at the very beginning of the process, we developed a group agreement, we thought about what does it feel like to be in a safe space, all of our sessions took place online because of COVID. So that was a bit of an additional challenge to some things we thought about the way that you carry out your conversations, not using jargon, thinking about who's in the room having different ways of participating, doing things creatively, even things like the resources and information we sent out. So for some young people, they needed to be in a green background, because that was accessible. Thinking about the age range. So we had children that were 10, and we had children that were 17. So how do we make sure everyone

feels included, also that there were support workers to make sure that young people have got people who have trusting and established relationships with that they can speak to before a session or go through information, and the after session, if there's anything that comes up for them. As part of those sessions, members of the UNCRC strategic implementation board came along, and members of the Empowering Children and Young People team in Scottish Government. And it was really, as I said, important for a safe space, but also that they could feel that they were able to talk to decision makers. So some young people said, actually, it was really important to do things together. So we did create some activities as part of our discussions. And we also talked a lot about foods. So I think one of the biggest things are learning I think we all know is food and how important it is. And it's difficult when you're online, and you can't, you can't actually have food and eat food together. So we did a lot of icebreakers around foods, one of the biggest ones was around you know, what you have in your chips, and Edinburgh / Glasgow divide came up around salt and sauce, salt and vinegar. I have to say salt and vinegar for me. So doing things like that actually helped relax adults and children together. But what I should say is that some of the adults that I'm sure they would say themselves, they were coming up with their own comfort zones, to come into those spaces and to do things, and to actually do things differently. So maybe even changing the way that they would participate or speak or even dress, even on those calls is something that was really important.

What I should say, in terms of learning is that some of the young people said that in previous kinds of engagement that they had with decision makers, they'd sometimes felt like they were being interrogated, or that they were, I think "grilling mode" is up there - that some of the decision makers would maybe question their experiences and make them feel quite uncomfortable. So one of the things as well that came up was around the ratio of adults to children and young people. Some young people also said that they've maybe been at an event and they'd been the only young person and there had been lots of adult decision makers. And then that's when they just felt completely uncomfortable and intimidated. So we were really conscious throughout the session to try and limit the adult numbers that were coming. But it was difficult because you need support workers there, as well. So it's a bit of a balancing act. That was the key learning point for us. And themes. So throughout the sessions, we were talking about strategic governance, which is quite dry. So we were thinking about how do you actually just take that away and take it back from children and people are what's important to them and start from obsession. So these are the sorts of issues that came up for children and young people: climate change, exam pressures, equality and equity. How do we take these issues that are important to children and young people and actually explore them through the lens of governance and UNCRC implementation? And it's really important, because when you're talking about implementation, you're talking about your rights awareness, you're talking about training, you're talking about accountability, you're talking about how do you redress things? How can you use that and take it from a position that children and young people understand and their everyday life experiences and the things that are important to them. So that's something that was a kind of key learning point for us from the projects. Some key recommendations. So as part of the project, they did some work to inform a national rights awareness campaign, they also did some work to inform the child rights action plan. And they also did some work looking at developing a survey to find out what children and young people's experiences of their rights and their awareness of their rights. But as I said, the project was really a pilot, to think about what the strategic governance and participation, what does that look like together? So some of the recommendations that came out were to create a shared vision. So what are adults' expectations of a

project of work children and young people's? And how can we make sure at the very beginning, we're all on the same page about that, because I think that's something that's really important to establish together. Relationships have come up in all of the presentations and actually having enough time to do some of those fun bonding activities, where you're just getting to know each other, where you're feeling relaxed, creating that safe space, because the project is obviously thinking about how can children and young people hold adult decision makers to account? But actually, how do you create a safe space to begin with, from when children and people can then start to have more of those braver conversations and feel comfortable and be in the position to do those things? Provide training and children's rights governance? So what does children's rights governance look like for all of the adults? So for the support workers, for the people in the strategic implementation board for children and young people? Do we all have the same understanding of what governance is? Governance is quite clunky term. What does that actually mean? And what does that mean? What's that feel like on a day to day level? Rewarding and remunerating. So it's really important that children and young people are acknowledged for their experience. So we worked with the partner organisations to look at how could we reward young people, and it was either through cash payments, direct payments, or through vouchers, whatever was most appropriate for the context that we were working in. Creating safe and supportive spaces. So making sure that children and young people feel relaxed, that they feel comfortable, that they are able to participate in the way that they would like or if they don't want to participate, that's fine as well. Being child led. So back to those issues that we talked about: climate change, stigma, how do you make sure that's coming from a point of view where children young people feel that they're setting the agenda rather than adults? Clear communication and feedback. So we always made sure we provided feedback loops about what we shared, what information we shared with the wider strategic implementation boards. But actually, what's the next step? How's that information being actioned? That was one really key quote from young people was, you know, people come and they hear our views. And they say, that's cool. That was great to hear your views. And thank you for sharing, but they don't know what's happening next. And they feel sometimes that it can make them feel disengaged. They don't want to take part because they don't know what's going to happen. So how can we make sure that we revisit the information that was shared? How do we revisit that feedback loop continually, not just a one off process? Resourcing appropriately. So how to make sure that there's enough staffing to resource participation? Is there enough resources to support any creative outputs that people want to do? And is there enough time as well, I think that's really important. Is there enough time allocated for staff to do that? And then the last point is around, children and young people having busy lives. I think that's also come up in another presentation, is that we sometimes think that children and young people will want to do everything, but actually, they might want to pick and choose what they want to do. They've got a lot on some young people we worked with had all these exams coming up. So making sure that there's space for things to be child led, but in a way that doesn't put too much pressure on the young people. And that was really important. So you can read the report for Rights Right Now. So there's the adult report with the recommendations and the learning. And then there's also one for showed young people with their key recommendations about what works best for them.

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