UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (or the UNCRC) has been added into law in Scotland under new legislation called the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024.

Once implemented (in July 2024), public bodies will not be allowed to act in a way that is incompatible with the UNCRC requirements, including certain functions which are 'contracted out' to other providers. Otherwise, action could be taken against them.

The UNCRC states that every child has rights "without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status".

The UNCRC covers all children and all areas of a child's life – this could be civil, political, social or cultural rights – and no one right is more important than another. Some examples include the right to relax and play and the right to be heard.

What does this mean for me as a supplier?

Meeting children's rights under the UNCRC will be especially relevant, for example, in a procurement to provide a direct service to children such as early learning, childcare and health services. However, there may be other services for which children will be an end user (alongside others) such as transportation, or services provided in public buildings.

Public sector buyers may add UNCRC requirements to their specification for a tender or a quote when relevant and proportionate to do so. But it is your responsibility to ensure that relevant activities for a public sector contract comply with UNCRC otherwise action could be taken against both the buyer and you, the supplier.

As part of the bidding process a buyer may ask you for information on how you meet children's rights.

Further information on children's rights is available from the Scottish Government website, including non-statutory guidance.

For any UNCRC implementation enquiries you may have please email: UNCRCIncorporation@gov.scot