

National Youth Conference 2021



Connecting the dots: social, environmental and climate justice here and now

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Environmental Rights Centre for Scotland www.ercs.scot

@ERCScot

Overview

- Environmental injustice in Scotland
- The human right to a healthy environment
- Discussion – connecting the dots
- ERCS free advice service

Our vision is of a Scotland where every person's right to live in a healthy environment is fully realised...

Learning for sustainability....

- Youth social action
 - Environmental action
- Political literacy
 - Tools to challenge environmental decisions
- Climate Change
 - Intergenerational and global climate justice



Scotland's 'substantive' environmental problem... Places and people

- Air, water & noise pollution
- Proximity to derelict land
- Environmental quality
- Access to greenspace & nature
- Health & wellbeing
- Children, elderly, people with health problems
- Vulnerability to severe weather events

Distributional environmental injustice

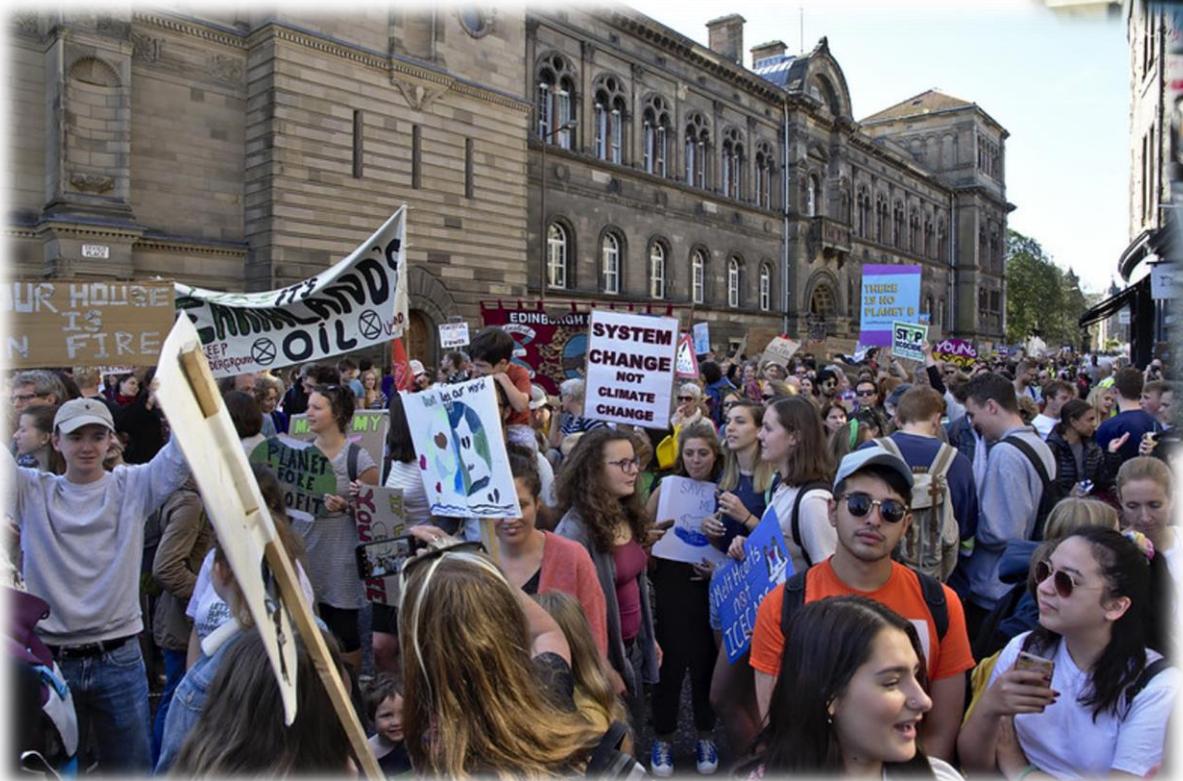
Children's rights to a healthy environment (UNCRC)

- **Life:** Art 6
- **Health:** Art 24
- **Education & recreation:** Art 29 & Art 31



Key concerns for children and young people

- Air pollution



- Climate Change

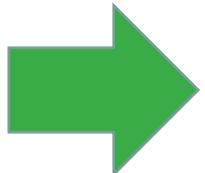
Access to greenspace and nature

- Free outdoor un/structured play is essential for health and wellbeing – but in decline.
- Barriers to access to play and leisure are worse in deprived areas.



Access to 'procedures' for decision-making... Holding public bodies to account

- !! Marginalised groups + socio-economic disadvantage
- !! Participation in local decision-making
- !! Awareness of rights
- !! Access to legal remedy – 'prohibitively expensive'



- !! Poor enforcement of planning and nature conservation law
- !! No credible threat of legal challenge
- !! Environment & nature destruction
- !! Climate emergency

Procedural environmental injustice

The human right to a healthy environment

Substantive

The right to clean air, safe climate, access to safe water and adequate sanitation, healthy and sustainably produced food, non-toxic environments in which to live, work, study and play, and healthy biodiversity and ecosystems

Not yet part of Scots law

Procedural

- 1. Access to information*
- 2. Public participation*
- 3. Access to justice and effective remedies*

Not fully implemented in Scots law

Discussion...

- What are the environmental justice concerns in your work?

- Greenspace, outdoor play, pollution, landfill, climate change, waste, recycling?

- Young people exercising their rights?



ERCS Free legal advice – your rights for health and justice

<https://www.ercs.scot/get-advice/>

- Individuals, community groups and organisations to exercise existing rights
- Environmental law: land-use planning, climate change, pollution control, environmental health, nature conservation...
- Concerns – unwanted development, road building, greenspace, pollution?



Get free advice: <https://www.ercs.scot/get-advice/>

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A close-up photograph of a squirrel with reddish-brown fur and a bushy tail, perched on a dark, textured branch of a tree. The background is blurred, showing more of the tree's canopy.

Thank you!