



Scotland's Commissioner  
for Children & Young People

**PE1319/UU**

Chris Hynd  
Public Petitions Committee Assistant  
Room T3.40  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

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**Petition 1319 - Improving Youth Football in Scotland  
Comment from Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People**

I welcome any initiative that encourages young people to become involved in sport, and it would appear from the evidence provided on 20/05/14 that some improvements have been made.

However, I continue to have concerns (as expressed in my evidence to the Committee in 2010) about the issues identified in relation to the SFA Youth Initiative. In particular, I remain concerned about current practice, which restricts young players' freedom, allowing clubs to keep 15 year olds who have registered for a year in an arrangement which binds them for up to a further two years, without any say in the decision and in some cases, stops young people playing altogether. Young people are entering into restrictive arrangements which involve decisions made in the clubs' best interests, whereas all decisions should be made in the young person's best interests.

I believe it would be of benefit to review the current registration process from a rights perspective, making the best interests of children and young people the focus of this initiative.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require further information.

Yours sincerely,

**Tam Baillie**  
**Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People**