

**PE1369/F**

**Local Government and Third Sector Directorate**

Local Government Division

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Mr Fergus Cochrane  
Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee  
The Scottish Parliament  
TG.01  
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4 August 2011

Dear Mr Cochrane

**PETITION PE1369**

I refer to the above petition, presented by Jodie McCoy on behalf of South Ayrshire Youth Forum calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to require local authorities, under the "Power to Advance Wellbeing" provisions (Part Three) of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, to undertake impact assessments when considering the provision of local leisure and cultural facilities. I replied to the initial questions posed in the petition on 19 November and to her subsequent questions on 27 January 2011. I now set out the Scottish Government's reply to South Ayrshire Youth Forum's additional questions considered by the Petitions Committee on 22 February 2011.

**How many local authorities, community planning partners or other organisations have used VOiCE, developed for the Scottish Government by SCDC, on consulting and engaging with young people since the system was introduced in 2008?**

When VOiCE was introduced in 2008 every local authority and community planning partnership was given a free copy of the software. As the software was initially developed on Microsoft Access and therefore stored on internal servers we have no way of knowing how this version of VOiCE is being used by Local Authorities or CPPs in Scotland.

To overcome this, the Scottish Government commissioned the current web based version in November 2010. Since then 500 users have registered on VOiCE from health, local authorities, planning, regeneration agencies, private

and community and voluntary sector organisations. There are 269 engagements projects on the tool of which 105 specifically identify Children and Young People as one of their community stakeholders. Of these engagements, 14 specifically relate to young people as the main focus of the engagement in their title.

**What information do you have on the use by local authorities of children's rights impact assessments as developed by SCCYP? Is the use of such promoted or encouraged in any way?**

The Scottish Government does not hold any information regarding the use of children's rights impact assessments by local authorities. However under a new public sector equality duty, introduced on 5 April 2011 as part of the Equality Act 2010, local authorities have a general duty of 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. Scottish public authorities are at present not subject to any specific duties arising from the Act. However, the Scottish Government expects to undertake further consultation and to make Regulations to impose new specific duties later in the year.

As you may be aware, you can keep up-to-date with new Scottish Government consultations through the seConsult newsletter. More information on how to register for the newsletter can be obtained through the attached link:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Consultations/Current>

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely

Carrol Herbertson