DIVERSE MINDS
LEARNING & LEISURE CIC

FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

My voice matters

Getting your thoughts across and finding someone who will listen

You can have something important to say and still find it hard to explain. You can use this guide to choose how to share it, who to ask and what you want to happen next.

Please let me finish.

Can we write it down?

For home, school, clubs or somewhere else you spend time.
Use the parts that help. You can leave any question blank.

WAYS TO COMMUNICATE

You can choose how to share

You have a right to have your views taken seriously when decisions affect you. Speaking out loud is one way to share them. [1,2]

Write it down

A few words, a list or a longer note. You can ask someone to read it for you.

Show or point

Use a picture, drawing, symbol, signing or a communication aid that works for you.

Use a message

Ask if you can send a text or voice note. Check who will receive it.

Ask for time

You can say that you need longer to think, or want to come back to a question.

Choose the setting

Ask for a quieter place, fewer people or someone you trust beside you.

Take a small start

You can begin with: Something is difficult and I need help explaining it.

Ask about privacy before you share

Who will see this? When would you need to tell someone else to help keep me safe?

GETTING HEARD

If the first person does not listen

Your concern still matters

Being interrupted, misunderstood or told not to worry can be upsetting. You do not have to explain perfectly or be completely calm before your concern deserves attention.

Try another trusted adult

You could ask a parent, carer, teacher, youth worker or another safe adult to help. Tell them what you already tried and what is still happening. If one person cannot help, ask who else can. [3]

Words you can make your own

I do not think I have explained this fully yet.
This is still happening and I need help.
Please tell me what you will do next and when we can check in.

Ask what happens next

An adult may not be able to do exactly what you ask. They should still take your views seriously. Ask them to explain their decision, what help is possible and how you can raise a concern again. [1,2]

If you feel unsafe, seek help from a safe adult straight away. In an emergency where someone is in immediate danger, call 999. You do not need to finish this booklet first.

THINKING ABOUT WHAT MATTERS

Different parts of my life

In Scotland, SHANARRI is a way adults can think with you about wellbeing. These prompts use its eight areas. Choose any that feel useful; there is no score or right answer. [4]

Safe	Where do I feel safe? Where do I need help?
Healthy	What helps me feel physically and emotionally well?
Achieving	What do I enjoy learning or getting better at?
Nurtured	Who cares for me and helps when things are difficult?
Active	How would I like to play, move or spend free time?
Respected	When are my views heard and taken seriously?
Responsible	What choices can I take part in, with the help I need?
Included	Where do I feel welcome? What gets in the way?

Being responsible includes having guidance and support. You are not responsible for sorting out every problem or making adults listen on your own.

MY PAGE

What I want someone to know

Write, draw or ask someone to record your words. Decide what you want to share. You can use a separate sheet if you need more space.

What matters to me

Something I enjoy, care about or want people to understand.

What feels difficult

What happened, or what I would like to be different.

The help I would like

What might make it easier? It is okay if I am not sure yet.

Our next step

Person helping: _____

What they will do: _____

We will check in on: _____

I want to share this with: _____

Ask the adult to explain who needs to see it and why. You can change your views or ask for a different way to communicate later.

FOR ADULTS AND FURTHER READING

Make room for the young person

Listening needs a response

Ask how the young person wants to communicate. Let them finish, check what you understood and explain what can happen next. Agree who will act and when you will follow up. Keep their own words separate from your interpretation. [1,2,3]

A young person's perspective

Young people contributing to Scotland's Inclusion Ambassadors work ask adults to avoid assumptions and see them as individuals. This guide follows that approach without requiring a diagnosis. [2]

Sources

1. Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland

Participation and the right to be heard.

Read the source

2. Reach: having your say at school

Young people's rights and Inclusion Ambassadors' views.

Read the source

3. Reach: support for learning

Asking for help and what to do when support is not working.

Read the source

4. Scottish Government: wellbeing indicators

SHANARRI within Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC).

Read the source

Checked 29 October 2026. This is an original conversation resource aligned with SHANARRI, not an official Scottish Government form, a wellbeing score or a diagnostic assessment.