

CHS Public Board Meeting June 25 2024

Tue 25 June 2024, 10:00 - 12:00

Thistle House

Agenda

10:00 - 10:00 1. Declarations of Interest

0 min

Verbal Katharina Kasper

To consider any declarations of interests with regard to agenda items

 1. Board Agenda June 2024.pdf (1 pages)

10:00 - 10:00 2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

0 min

Paper Katharina Kasper

To approve minutes of the previous meeting on 26th March 2024

 2. CHS-2425-01 Board Minute March 26 2024 Draft.pdf (12 pages)

10:00 - 10:00 3. Matters Arising

0 min

Verbal Katharina Kasper

Seek assurance that actions from previous meeting have been progressed

10:00 - 10:00 4. Action Log

0 min

Paper Katharina Kasper

To monitor progress against actions due and agree action where required

 4. CHS-2425-02 Board Action Log June 2024.pdf (1 pages)

10:00 - 10:00 5. Chair Update

0 min

Verbal Katharina Kasper

For information and discussion

10:00 - 10:00 6. National Convener/CEO Update

0 min

Paper Elliot Jackson

For consideration and discussion

 6. CHS-2425-03 NC update June 24.pdf (5 pages)

10:00 - 10:00 7. Financial Forecast Outturn & Capital Spending 2024/25

0 min

Paper Klaus Berchtenbreiter

For consideration and approval

 7. CHS-2425-04 Finance Report P12 2024 updated.pdf (4 pages)

10:00 - 10:00 **8. Q1 Performance Report & Data Summary**

0 min

Paper Rachel Kavish Wheatley

For consideration and approval

 8. CHS-2425-05 Q1 Performance Report 202425 Board Cover Paper.pdf (2 pages)


10:00 - 10:00 **9. Children's Participation and Rights Strategy**

0 min

Paper Carol Wassell

For consideration and approval

 9. CHS-2425-06 Children's Participation and Rights Strategy Cover Paper 04062024.pdf (3 pages)

 9a. CHS -2425-06 Children's Participation and Rights Strategy 2024_draft.pdf (18 pages)

 9b. CHS-2425-06 Participation Implementation Plan Overview Draft.pdf (1 pages)

10:00 - 10:00 **10. Board Improvement Plan**

0 min

Paper Rachel Kavish Wheatley

For consideration and approval

 10. CHS -2425-07 Board assessment & improvement plan 2425.pdf (5 pages)

10:00 - 10:00 **11. Governance Statement**

0 min

Paper Ross Mackenzie

 11. CHS-2425-08 Annual Accounts and Governance Statement 23-24.pdf (6 pages)

10:00 - 10:00 **12. ARC**

0 min

For consideration and approval

12.1. Chair Update

Verbal Sean Austin

12.2. ARC Annual Report

Paper Sean Austin

For noting and approval

 12a. CHS-2425-09 ARC Annual Report 2324 v1.pdf (10 pages)

12.3. ARC Improvement Plan

Paper Sean Austin

For noting and approval

 12b. CHS-2425-10 ARC Improvement Plan 2425.pdf (3 pages)


10:00 - 10:00 13. PaCC

0 min

For consideration and approval

13.1. Chair Update


Verbal *Jo Derrick*

 13a. CHS-2425-11 PaCC Annual Report 2324.pdf (3 pages)

13.2. PaCC Annual Report

Paper *Jo Derrick*


For noting and approval

 13a. CHS-2425-11 PaCC Annual Report 2324.pdf (3 pages)

13.3. PaCC Improvement Plan

Paper *Jo Derrick*

For noting and approval

 13b. CHS-2425-12 PaCC Improvement Plan 2425.pdf (3 pages)

10:00 - 10:00 14. AOB

0 min

BOARD MEETING AGENDA

1st Meeting 2024/25
25th June 2024

The Board will meet 10:00 – 12:00 at Thistle House & virtually via Teams.

Item	Topic	Lead Person	Paper Number	Purpose
1.	Declarations of interests	Chair	Verbal	To consider any declarations of interests regarding agenda items
2.	Minutes of previous meeting	Chair	CHS-2425-01	To approve the minutes of the previous meeting on
3.	Matters arising	Chair	Verbal	Seek assurance that actions from the previous meeting have been progressed
4.	Action log	Chair	CHS-2425-02	To monitor progress against actions due and agree action where required
5.	Chair Update	Chair	Verbal	For information and discussion
6.	National Convener/ CEO update	EJ	CHS-2425-03	For consideration and discussion
7.	Financial Forecast Outturn & Capital Spending 2024/25	KB	CHS-2425-04	For consideration and approval
8.	Q1 Performance Report & Data Summary	RKW	CHS-2425-05	For consideration and approval
9.	Childrens Participation and Rights Strategy	CW	CHS-2425-06	For consideration and approval
10.	Board Improvement Plan	RKW	CHS-2425-07	For consideration and approval
11.	Governance Statement	RM	CHS-2425-08	For consideration and approval
12.	ARC: - ARC Annual Report - ARC Improvement Plan	SA	CHS-2425-09 CHS-2425-10	For consideration and approval
13.	PaCC: - PaCC Annual Report - PaCC Improvement Plan	JD	CHS-2425-11 CHS-2425-12	For information and approval
14.	AOB	Chair	Verbal	

Minutes of the Board Meeting of 26th March 2024

The meeting started at 10:00 at Thistle House / virtually

Present:

Katharina Kasper (KK)	Chair
Henry Robson (HR)	Depute Chair/Board Member
Jo Derrick (JD)	PaCC Chair/Board Member (virtual attendance)
Sean Austin (SA)	ARMC Chair/Board Member

Also present:

Andrew Watson	Director for Children and Families, SG (virtual) Agenda item 7 only
Craig Milne (CM)	Senior Policy Manager, Children’s Hearings Team SG (virtual) Agenda item 7 only
Elliot Jackson (EJ)	National Convener/Chief Executive (NC/CEO), CHS
Lynne Harrison	Director of Tribunal Delivery, CHS
Carol Wassell (CW)	Director of Positive Outcomes, CHS
Jessica MacDonald (JM)	Director of Business & Finance, CHS
Joanne O’Leary (JOL)	Director of People & Culture, CHS
Ross Mackenzie (RM)	Finance Manager, CHS/SCRA shared services - items 7 & 8 only
Klaus Berchtenbreiter	Finance Manager, CHS - agenda items 7 & 8 only
Gemma Conley-Smith	Communication & Engagement Manager, CHS – Agenda item 12
Rachel Kavish Wheatley (RKW)	Business Operations and Governance Manager, CHS - Agenda item 9 (minute taker)

Apologies:

Beth-Anne Logan	Board Member
Katie Docherty	Board Member
Barbara Neil (BN)	Board Member
Nick Rougvie (NR)	Children’s Hearings Sponsor Team Lead, SG

Items	Actions / owner	Time-scales
1 Declaration of interests		
The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed any apologies. There were no declarations of interest to note.		
2 Minutes of previous meeting		
The Board approved the minutes of its meeting on 30 th January 2024		
3 Matters arising		
No Matters arising were noted.		
4 Action log		
The Chair noted the following in relation to the action log:		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All actions are either on the agenda, or due later in the year. • The Board agree action 22/23-89 should be closed rather than classed as superseded. <p>Board decision:</p> <p>1. To note the updates to the action log as above.</p>		
<p>5 Chair update</p>		
<p>The Chair updated the Board on the following;</p> <p>The Chair noted that since the last meeting in January 2024 there have been a number of updates, of which the Board are mostly aware.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair noted the Boards development session earlier this week to discuss the budget position. • The Chair updated the Board on attendance at the CHS all staff event, sharing the energy and excitement in the room on the day in terms of the future focus. She shared information on the Board, its diversity, and quality with the National team. <p>Board Decision:</p> <p>1. To Note the update from the Chair.</p>		
<p>6 National Convener/Chief Executive update</p>		
<p>The NC/CEO spoke to the paper shared;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Convener report offers us the opportunity to provide key updates to the Board, and to reserve formal papers for where approval is needed. <p><u>Hearings for Children (HfC)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two meetings of the Childrens Hearing Redesign Board have been held, with a planned third meeting to agree priorities. • A Town Hall meeting was held and attended by around 400 members of our community, given the opportunity to ask questions in real time around the HfC. • Members of SLT are visiting a number of AST’s allowing for PM recognition as well as discussion on the ongoing work around HfC. <p><u>Tribunal Support model</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation is on time and on budget for delivery in May. Thanks are given to all involved with the programme. • Cohort 1 have written their first 100 day plan and held their regional AST governance meetings, setting a positive example for the following cohorts. • The Board will attend a dinner on the 9th of May to thank our outgoing Area Conveners. • A paper is anticipated on lessons learned from the first cohort and will come to the Board to note. 		

	<p><u>Care and Justice</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bill is now in its 3rd stage. Our community are keen to keep older children out of the adult system however there is some trepidation on what this will mean for Panel Members going forward. • The Chair and I met with the Minister, Nathalie Don, and expressed our concerns around recruitment and our ability to recruit the number of volunteers required to satisfy the predicted increase in hearing for The Care and Justice (Scotland) Bill, when it comes into effect. <p>Board Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board welcomed the update. • The Board questioned if there was any merit or benefit in taking a different approach to recruitment to meet the demands and needs of older children in relation to the Bill. While this is a worthwhile approach to explore, currently we require a general increase in numbers. The Board are looking forward to their development session on the Care and Justice Bill as they recognise the challenge and concern around unconscious bias and stigma which may come with welcoming older young people into the system. • CW noted that in May we will launch two modules for C&J, with input from CYCJ, which addresses this bias potential and the needs of older young people for our panel community. • The Board felt SLT should consider creating a case study on the delivery of TSM in order to share and raise the profile of CHS and our work, particularly at conferences. The Board noted the role of the Board should be noted within the change architecture as well. <p>Board Decision:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Board noted the update. 		
7	Budget 2024/2025		
	<p>The Board were joined by Andrew Watson, Director for Children and Families, Scottish Government for this discussion</p> <p>KB & EJ updated the Board on the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EJ noted the paper submitted has been prepared for the Board to set out the funding position for CHS. • The Board are aware we have a funding gap of 41% between the flat cash award and our budgetary needs. • The position this year is slightly different to last, where we do not currently have confirmation of our Grant in Aid (GiA) or a letter of comfort from the Director assuring the Board of support to manage ongoing pressures in year. • Andrew Watson, Director for Children and Families, is in attendance to today regarding the budget and next steps, as well as to offer assurances to the Board. <p>Andrew Watson spoke to the Board on the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge the Board are in a challenging position with regards to the budget and approving it. The purpose of joining the meeting today is to offer assurances 		

<p>on how SG will work with CHS throughout the year. SG will provide a funding letter shortly, however the process is slightly delayed compared to previous years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We do not see the budget issue in isolation, SG want to foster a partnership approach with CHS. We would like to look at changes to the funding proposition in year, as in previous year, through budget review. • Understand the Chair and EJ had a meeting with the Minister, Nathalie Don, and we are aligned on the partnering approach, with the management of funding pressures as a number 1 priority for our NDPB, including CHS. • The Deputy First Minister has confirmed that we will be open minded about how we manage budgets and finance, including suggesting changes to legislation or approaches which may offer support. <p>Board discussion with AW:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KK thanked AW for the assurances given, and the positivity of a partnering approach. Understand there is a delay this year, however clarity was sought around CHS GiA vs. its pressures, asking if there was scope to address the GiA number and aligning it more to CHS’s budgetary needs. While managing pressures in year has worked in the past there is a cost managing this in year, year on year, in terms of resources, time and effort. AW acknowledged that managing pressures in year is not an ideal approach, which is why we are keen to work this year to change the position for the following years. A multi-year approach would be preferred however this is difficult to achieve in the current cycle of annual budgeting, this may be possible during the next spending review year. We remain committed to reviewing GiA. • The Board noted the strong statements of support for the children’s hearing system SG have made which therefore makes it all the more disappointing we are not addressing the GiA issue this year. With support for change and improvement being endorsed by SG, it seem contradictory in terms of the treatment of our budget. The impact on funding for CHS goes beyond the actual organisation, it has an impact on the children and families of Scotland. AW recognised the points raised above, and these are made to Ministers on behalf of CHS. The budget does not change our strong policy commitment however we are all being asked to challenge ourselves on budget efficiencies. I understand CHS have already done some work on this and we feel we are in a good position to support this on CHS’s behalf to Ministers. • SA, Chair of CHS Audit and Risk Committee noted being particularly vexed by the position the Board are in from a governance perspective, being asked to approve a budget without budget confirmation or a letter of comfort to support pressures beyond GiA. We are currently not meeting the ongoing concern principle in terms of being asked to sign off a budget that does not meet the operating costs. This position puts us at risk in term so of our ability to deliver our statutory responsibilities. Can AW provide more concrete assurance to the Board. AW recognised the position the Board are in, but noted that SG & CHS have worked together closely in previous years to successfully manage similar budgetary positions and we should have collective confidence in this relationship and past support given. Between the Minister and Directorate, we are in agreement this is a top priority and are dedicated to being in a better position by the end of the 1st quarter of 24/25. We will take the views of the Board and their concerns and build them into the letter of comfort, which should be with the Board shortly. 		
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board noted the need to recognise the human impact in addition to the financial issues, this budget processed creates uncertainty for our people brings additional challenges. • The Board asked for a meeting with Andrew Watson and Minister Nathalie Don in the Autumn where an update position could be shared and discussed. AW was supportive of this invitation. • KK summarised that while the Board trusts our SG colleagues, but much of the frustrations being expressed are around good governance and our responsibility to deliver it. We are very supportive of a multiyear budget approach however the Board would appreciate the commitment to look at a more sustainable model. AW noted the letter of comfort is close to hand and reiterated the commitment to reach a more stable position in Q1 of 2024/25. <p>Board Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board discussed the current forecast outturn and the position this places us in given the budget discussion with AW. • KB noted to the Board that we will go into April with 100k of reserves and our GiA draw down, which will both cover our staffing costs for April, but could leave us in a position where we would run out of cash Mid-May. The GiA draw down is based on the assumption we will have an approved budget. We cannot be sure we will have the GiA April draw down granted if the budget is not approved. • The Board noted the position it finds itself in, as well as the reputational risk to SG if the funding did not come through, which does offer some level of assurance when coupled with the budget support offered in previous years. We are still in a difficult position from a governance perspective in approving the budget. • The Board questioned if they could put aside the decision today, and take the decision post receiving the letter of comfort, if the Standing Orders allow. There was concern raised by this approach, and the timelines. • The Board agreed to take the assurances given by AW in good faith, and to write to AW stating they will approve the budget in principle subject to its addressing the concerns of the Board, confirming the agreement to address the ongoing budget needs in Q1, and to have a meeting with AW and the Minister in the autumn. • The Board agreed to approve the budget in principle and subject to timely receipt of the letter of comfort. <p>Board Decision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board approved the budget in principle, pending receipt of a letter of comfort which addressed their concerns, and to write to AW confirming this. • To progress a meeting with AW and the Minister with the Board in the Autumn. 	<p>EJ</p>	<p>Sept 24</p>
<p>8 2023/24 Forecast Outturn</p>		
<p>KB spoke to the paper shared;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other than the underspend increasing by 50k, the numbers have not changed significantly since the last forecast seen by the Board in January. • In line with our commitment to Scottish Government, we have created efficiencies to deliver on our underspend of around 1M. 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This position has given us the opportunity to draw down this underspend, in agreement with SG, and provide cash for accruals to cover expenses and delayed end of year invoices. We have a commitment from SG to draw down our first GiA in April. <p>Board Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board discussed the forecast outturn in line with the budget discussion above. <p>Board Decision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board approved the finance outturn report. 		
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9	Q4 Performance Report & Data Summary
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	<p>RKW spoke to the Q4 performance report shared;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Q4 performance report is presented to the Board for oversight and assurance. The Board are asked to approve the Q4 report and the changes/retiming or milestones as indicated. The cover note highlights areas of work required substantial resource and effort, which are not fully reflected in the performance report, namely our Organisational Transformational Change Programme and the implementation of the Tribunal Delivery Model. Both of these successfully delivered projects touched on every aspect of our organisation and the work undertaken to deliver them cannot be understated. In addition to the review of these two major projects and the milestones completed during the quarter, the Board are asked to approve the retiming's and re-scoping's as indicated in the report, namely: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The delays to the full role out of trauma training to staff, which will be implemented in Q1; The completion of all area plans; And those activities around the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Bill which are delayed due to the stage 2 Parliamentary process. The Board will note the KPI's which have not be fully achieved, which are aligned to the milestones already addressed, or detailed further in our data summary. The Board are asked to note the following highlights from the data summary; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The increase in the % of recommended trainees from the recruitment campaign which was 85.2% this year compared to 83.5% LY. Retention rates are higher than last year, with 83.7% over last years 80.2%. Chairs number remain a concern, which is being carefully monitored. <p>Board Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board returned to a previous conversation from earlier in the year around the concern that there are children that should be in the hearing system that are not, and will they be coming through and create an increase in hearings. While there is no data to suggest this is the case, the Board remain concerned there is a cohort of children that should/may be coming into the system. EJ noted that he will remain cognisant of this concern when meeting with partners and stakeholders across the sector. 		
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board noted the achievement of successfully delivering 54 of the 62 planned milestones. This represents a significant achievement given the level of change experienced by CHS in 23/24. <p>Board Decision:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Board approved the Q4 performance report and the re-timings and de/re-scoping's as detailed. 		
<p>10 & 11</p>	<p>Business and Corporate Parenting Plan Approvals</p>		
	<p>JMac spoke to the papers shared;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 2024-27 Corporate Plan and Strategic Outlook will inform our business plans and activities for the following three years and is presented to the Board for approval ahead of submission for Ministerial approval. The work captures the input from the Board strategy and development session as well as the overall ambition and focus for CHS over the next three years. The 2024-25 Business and Corporate Parenting Plan accompanies our new Corporate Plan for 2024-27 and is aligned to our three strategic priorities as agreed. It is presented for Board approval ahead of ministerial noting. The Board will note there are yet some design aspects to be completed ahead of publication. <p>Board Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board asked for clarity around the partnership statement with SCRA. SLT clarified that this was agreed with SCRA to be included in both organisations plans. The Board suggested it may be worth drawing out the dependency of partnership working within the forward. The Board agreed the three themes support our narrative and direction of our work. The Board noted the child friendly version noted, and asked if accessibility would be addressed for this report, as well as ongoing published reports. This will indeed be the case and addressed within the Communication Strategy. <p>Board Decision:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Board approved both the Strategic Outlook and Business and Corporate Parenting Plans 		
<p>12</p>	<p>CHS Communication Strategy</p>		
	<p>EJ & GCS spoke to the paper shared;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CHS Communication Strategy is presented for Board approval and to inform the Board on our approach and direction of travel. It aims to convey our strategic approach at a high level rather than to be an operational plan. It is designed to underpin the overall strategic outlook and business plans for the next three years. Year one (current) is crucial as it forms the basis of the subsequent years' strategy for opportunity, growth, and data informed decision making. The work that's currently underway in our team, on top of the business as usual, is making strides in this direction. Projects like the brand guidelines and message house, the company- 		

<p>wide planner and extra in-house resource and collateral for the recruitment campaign are underway and working well.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We now have the largest communication team we have ever had at CHS, as well as the largest national team at CHS. The communication team is establishing well, and this strategy will be supported by an operational implementation plan. • There is an operational plan in development aligned to the strategy, with KPI's set. <p>Board Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board felt the strategy articulated the ambition, vision and direction well, and they particularly appreciated the communication table included. The Board were pleased to support the communication strategy and act as spokespeople for CHS. • The Board felt it was important to raise public awareness and clarity on who and what CHS is, and are pleased to see this in the strategy. • The Board commented that there is much talk of 'doing' however feel there should be more reference to how we will listen to our stakeholders. The essence of good communication is good listening and this should be reflected more overtly in the strategy by detailing how we will ask for and gather feedback, and how we will adapt our approaches to our audiences requirements and preferences. • The Board would like to see more overt reference to accessibility and ensuring all forms of our communications are accessible as standards to those with different abilities. • The Board noted on P1 the mission with words underneath and felt this should be better represented on the page with the clear mission statement more prominent rather than diluted with key words presented as they are. • The Board noted it may be helpful for a paper to sit alongside this strategy (covering note or appendix) that addresses how we get to this strategy and its development. Where was the need and was it the same for all stakeholders? The strategy talks about the need to do more but does not identify why that is, and for who. How has this need been identified and is it equal across all stakeholders? Understanding and identifying this will be important in terms of implementation to direct where resource will be spent and communications focused most. • This strategy should help us understand our future direction, what we will focus on and what we will need to let go to focus our energies elsewhere. • The Board asked how we will know the impact and what will the measure be? How will we know this strategy was successful. This should be identified. • Where there is a reference to 'the work' we need to be clear on what that means, and able to answer that confidently, particularly around trauma informed work. There is a need to ensure we co-produce work. <p>Board Decision:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Board approved the communication strategy, pending the incorporation of the feedback given. 		
<p>13</p>	<p>People and Culture Committee (PaCC) Chair update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PaCC Chair update & Workplan 	

PaCC Chair Update

JD updated the Board on the following;

- The PaCC last met on 20th of March 2024.
- The Committee welcomed an update from Jo O’Leary and members of the People and Culture team on the activities currently ongoing, such as the recent successful all team event, the work on retention and recognition, wellbeing, workforce planning, and leadership skills development. The Committee were particularly pleased to hear the improvement work around wellbeing and equality and diversity.
- The Committee received an update on the implementation of the approved pay policy, which represented a substantial amount of work for the team.
- The Committee approved the Gender Pay gap Report for publication, complimenting this substantial piece of work from the People and Culture team. The report highlights a decrease in our gender pay gap and will be published on the CHS website shortly, and shared with the Board.
- The Committee reviewed potential ways of assuring itself on the effectiveness the Whistle Blowing policy, as requested by the Audit and Risk Committee, and this will come back to the ARMC as an update. Y
- The Committee will follow up with a development session around the People Strategy in April.
- The Committee approved the Equalities outcome report as well, noting the following highlights, and ask the Board for final approval.

PaCC Equalities Outcome Report

JD updated the Board on the following;

- This will be the last report in this format with a new report to be developed aligned to our Corporate and People Strategies.
- The data shows colleagues caring responsibilities and disabilities identified have increased. There has also been an increase in the organisation of those who identify as being care experienced within our staff body, as well as those from the LGBTQ community.
- The Board are asked to formally approve the Equalities Outcome report for publication on CHS website.

PaCC Terms of Reference & Self-Assessment

JD updated the Board on the following;

- The PaCC Terms of Reference (ToR) and self-assessment were both approved at the February meeting. The Committee noted that a fuller Board and Committee assessment with improvement would come to the June Board, and this may well bring needed changes to the ToR. that the ToR is likely to return for approval in May as part of a wider piece of work to improve board and committee efficiency.
- The Board are asked to formally approve both the Self-assessment and PaCC ToR.

Board discussion:

- The Board thanked the Chair and Committee for their contribution.
- The Board asked if we are making reasonable adjustments for those who identify as having additional needs or disabilities. JOL noted that the improvements we have

	<p>made at induction have allowed us to address this quickly at the start of service, as well as building ongoing support and check ins.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board noted it would be useful in future iterations of the Equality report to compare our statistical information to that of the wider Scottish population to understand our position better. <p>Board decision:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Board noted the Chair update. The Board approved the Equality and Diversity Report 2022-2024. The Board approved the People & Culture Committee ToR and Self-Assessment. 		
<p>14</p>	<p>Audit and Risk Committee (ARMC) Chair update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ARMC Chair update and Workplan 		
	<p><u>ARMC Chair Update</u></p> <p>SA updated the Board on the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Committee last met in February of 2024. The Committee heard from external audit, noting the annual audit timetable for the 23/24 audit, as well as the details and scope. The Committee heard from internal auditors and looked at the Internal Audit Progress report, the Clerking Audit Report, and the Independent Report Writers Audit Report, as well as the Audit Annual Plan for 2024/25. The Clerking audit was more of an advisory audit, offering supportive and helpful recommendations. The Independent Report Writer function audit was thorough and offered assurances, with three recommendations for improvement, which were accepted by management and the Committee. The annual audit plan for 24/25 will look at CHS's Core Financial Processes, the Stage Gate Process which is the CHS approach to the Governance and Implementation of Change projects, and Cyber Security and resilience at CHS. The Committee reviewed the strategic risk register, the feedback and complaints quarterly report, and the information governance quarterly report. The Committee approved the following reports which have come to the Board for final approval. <p><u>Financial Regulations & Accounting Policies</u></p> <p>SA updated the Board on the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The financial regulations were approved by the Committee with minimal changes in relation to the shared service agreement between SCRA and CHS. The Accounting policies were approved by the Committee with only one substantive changes are in relation to the treatment of the leasing standards which is being removed, and the approach to pension assets. The Board are asked to formally approve the CHS Fraud Prevention Policy. <p><u>Fraud Prevention Policy</u></p> <p>SA updated the Board on the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This policy and its minimal changes were approved by the Committee. The Committee approved the proposed changes to titles and agreed that the policy should be shared and communicated to the wider staff team. The 		

<p>Committee recommended that staff should confirm in writing they have read and understood the policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board are asked to formally approve the CHS Fraud Prevention Policy. <p><u>ToR & Self-assessment</u></p> <p>SA updated the Board on the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ARMC Terms of Reference and self-assessment were both approved at the February meeting. The Committee noted that a fuller Board and Committee assessment with improvement would come to the June Board, and this may well bring needed changes to the ToR. that the ToR is likely to return for approval in May as part of a wider piece of work to improve board and committee efficiency. • The Board are asked to formally approve both the Self-assessment and ARMC ToR. <p>Board discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board thanked the Chair and Committee for their contribution. <p>Board decision:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Board noted the ARMC Chair update. 2. The Board approved the Financial Regulations & Accounting Policies. 3. The Board approved the Fraud Prevention Policy. 4. The Board approved the Audit & Risk Committee ToR and Self-Assessment. 		
<p>15 Capacity Project Update</p>		
<p>LH updated spoke to the papers shared;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The paper has been submitted to provide Board assurance that we are taking our capacity improvement measures into a fulsome programme that will be managed through our change board and architecture. • Critical areas are around rota management, recruitment, retention, and recognition. We are also looking at learning in different ways, including our approach to pre-service training. • We are working with partners, such as SCRA, around meeting capacity needs through rota management in terms of matching our PM availability to the hearing schedule, ensuring we are maximising our communities availability. • Early wins are coming through with the significant impact of our Wellbeing Coordinators and the support they are able to offer PM's before and after difficult hearings, which ultimately improves our retention by offering more support to PM's. • Collectively these improvements are anticipated to provide us with marginal gains however the large capacity and recruitment issues will remain a challenge. <p>Board Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board welcomed the update and the critical work it represents to improve our capacity. They noted the positive of having capacity managed as its own programme of work. • The Board were assured by the report, and the measures being put in place to address efficiencies and felt provided CHS with the right scope of work to 		

<p>support further developments which may come from our work with the Children’s Hearing Redesign Board.</p> <p>Board Decision:</p> <p>1. The Board noted the report and were in support of the approach to support capacity improvements.</p>		
<p>16 Digital Annual Report</p>		
<p>JMac updated spoke to the papers shared;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CHS Digital Annual Report is submitted for noting by the Board to provide an update and assurance around the breadth and scope of the work, particularly considering the level of spend associated with the department. • The report highlights that the overall spend on the digital programme within CHS has been in line with our original budget of £351k. • The Tribunal Support Model (TSM) programme and Complaints Commission audit findings have been satisfied to date. <p>Board Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board felt the report was reassuring and comprehensive. They were pleased to see the progress and planned programme of work. They were particularly impressed by the user centric approach to development and improvement. • The Board would like to see a broader technical strategy that encompasses this operational work and approach. <p>Board Decision:</p> <p>1. The Board noted the update.</p>		
<p>17 AOB</p>		
<p>No points for AOB were raised.</p>		



BOARD ACTION LOG – JUNE 2024

Agenda Item:4
Paper Number: CHS-2425-02

A/A	Action	Initiated	Target date	Owner	Progress Update	Status	Comments
22/23-38	To consider including the PPM in a Board development session.	Nov-22	Sept-23 Jun-24	SB	with a session on the quality strategy and framework	On agenda	Covered in the June Board development session
23/24-5	To bring to the Board a report on the stage gates and implementation of the Tribunal Support Model and approach to change.	Nov-23	June-24 Sept-24	CG		Not yet due	Agreed to defer this report to Sept 24 Board
23/24-6	To hold a development session for the Board on the Care and Justice Bill in terms of the forecasted numbers and what it means for us in terms of training and skills PM's need.	Nov-23	March-24 Nov-24	CW		Not yet due	In line with timescales for the Bill, this actions target date has been moved
23/24-7	To bring financial papers to the ARMC ahead of approval at the Board.	Nov-23	Mar-24	KB		Closed	To be reviewed in line with Board and Committee improvement plans for 24/25
23/24-8	To include and the monitor the median average length of service in data summary when our new cohort join.	Mar-24	Dec-24	EG		Not yet due	
23/24-9	To progress a meeting with AW and the Minister with the Board in the Autumn.	Mar-24	Dec-24	EJ		Completed	
23/24-10	For the organisation who will design the People Panel to engage with the Board as well.	May-24	Aug-24	CW		Not yet due	



National Convener / Chief Executive Update

Agenda Item: 6 CHS-2425-03

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report captures a range of organisational activity between the last Board meeting in January 2024 to now. It provides bite sized updates that can be expanded upon during the Board meeting.

2. Language in the Hearing Room

- 2.1 CHS has been leading an exciting bit of work with young people from Our Hearings Our Voice to improve the use of language in hearings. The launch event on the 22 May in Centre for Contemporary Arts showcased the [animation](#) made with the young people and the [language guide](#) for Panel Members. The work although led by CHS, has been a collaboration with SCRA and the partners of the Language Leaders Group that is part of the Children Hearings Improvement Partnership. The purpose of the work is to change to improve the culture of the language used by supporting Panel Members to adopt the core principles of Personalised, Involved, Balanced and Non-stigmatizing. The guide and animation has received significant positive attention across the sector, and was embedded into phase one of the Children (Care and Justice) Bill training launched on the 29 May following the successful Town Hall event. Phase two will involve the creating of a resource back for regional teams to use at local events, a standalone training module for Panel Members and embedding language into our overarching quality strategy.

3. Capacity Programme

- 3.1 The Capacity Programme seeks to ensure that CHS has adequate capacity within its volunteer community to fulfil the statutory duties directly related to Childrens Hearings. From a partnership perspective, a key element of our capacity is the scheduling of children's hearings by SCRA. In order to develop our understanding and consider future action, we held a scheduling workshop across CHS and SCRA in May. The workshop explored areas such as the planning of hearings, how we can avoid unnecessary cancellations and deferrals of a child's hearing, the role of the chair and the format of hearings including hybrid and virtual hearings. Over twenty staff across CHS and SCRA came together to start to explore these issues and the Change and Innovation team are currently collating all the contributions before we met to decide on the next steps. We anticipate creating projects that contribute to increasing capacity at CHS.

4. Scottish Government Consultation

4.1 In anticipation of the Scottish Government publishing their public consultation on those areas of the Hearings for Children recommendations what would require legislative change, CHS are planning for the gathering and collations of the CHS response. This will take 5 strands:

4.1.1 We are in the process of tendering for a social research company who will write a survey based on the published consultation. The survey will seek views about those areas of the consultation that will most impact on CHS, and any other areas of importance to us. This will be sent the whole volunteer community to complete.

4.1.2 At the time of completion of the survey volunteers will be able to put themselves forward to be selected to be part of a People's Panel that will be representative of Scottish society. Successful applicants will be invited to participate in a weekend that will be shaped by the responses to the survey, and enable a deeper, nuanced discussion about identified priorities, created, and facilitated by the successful winner of the tender.

4.1.3 Working with the Practice and Standards team, the external provider will produce and deliver engagement with the National Team and the Board and write a final response (or responses) to Government that sets out the CHS position from a National Convener/Board point of view, as well as from a volunteer point of view.

4.1.4 We will be working with the Scottish Government to support their plan to engage in national consultation events although the detail of this is still to emerge.

4.1.5 We will ensure that the volunteer community are aware that they are also entitled to respond to the SG consultation as private citizens.

4.2 The time scales for the consultation are still to be clarified, having been impacted by a number of factors, not least the announcement of the General Election. We are planning on a working assumption of publication at the end of July, and that it will last 3 months.

5. CHS Redesign Group

5.1 The work of the Hearings Redesign Group is gaining traction with both Social Work Scotland and COSLA endorsing the Hearings For Children Report. The next meeting of the group is scheduled for Monday 24 June 2024 where we will be discussing the key multi-agency priorities.

6. Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Bill

- 6.1 The Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Bill was passed by the Scottish Parliament on 25 April 2024, and received Royal Assent on 4 June 2024, making it the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024. Whilst the Bill was initially supported by all parties, it did not receive support from the Conservatives or Labour during the final vote. In the end, the Bill passed through the Scottish Parliament with 71 for, 49 against.
- 6.2 There were several Stage 3 amendments accepted by the Scottish Parliament, including placing a duty on Panel Members to have regard to potential trauma of children in hearings, victim information sharing provisions and establishing a single point of contact for victims. During the final debate in Parliament, various amendments were suggested that would introduce punitive elements to the Children's Hearings System. Such amendments were rejected, and it was heartening to see a number of Members of Parliament expressing their understanding of the ethos of the hearings system and their support for the welfare-based, non-punitive approach that we have in Scotland.
- 6.3 One of CHS's quarterly 'Town Hall' events was held on 28th May to discuss the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024 and the impact it will have on Panel Members. The event was chaired by Claire Gibson, Senior Change Manager and Ross Pitbladdo, a Panel Member in the Central region. Stephen Bermingham, Practice and Standards Manager and Kirsty Nelson, Practice and Policy Advisor answered both pre-submitted and live questions in relation to the legislation. Feedback from the event showed that over 93% of participants were satisfied, very satisfied, or extremely satisfied with the event. Many participants suggested the event could be longer and more detailed, or that other supplementary sessions could be arranged. Overall, the community appeared to be reassured by the event and appreciated the involvement of Panel Members, the conversational style as well as the expert input.

7. Pre-Service Training 2024

- 7.1 CHS Learning Academy successfully trained and supported the appointment of 338 new Panel Members in April 2024. We retained 89.7% of those who commenced training, and 85% of recommended applicants. The main reasons given for withdrawal were work commitments and family priorities. All Learning Academy employees have completed training in and adopted a trauma-informed approach which is believed to have had a positive impact on retention. Extensions and the provision of alternative and supplementary learning sessions further supported the retention of individuals who may otherwise have not progressed.

7.2 Trainee Demographics:

- 7.2.1 Gender: 82.5% Female, 17% Male, <1% Prefer Not to Say/Other
- 7.2.2 Care Experienced: 2% self-declared as care experienced, a reduction from 2023 at 4%.
- 7.2.3 Average age of trainees was 48 years old, and increase from 47 years old in 2023, however this remains lower than the average age of the Panel Member community, which was 54 years old as of March 2024.
- 7.2.4 Additional learning support: 8% of trainees self-declared additional learning support needs.

PRE-SERVICE EVALUATION SCORES				
SATISFACTION OF OUTCOMES MET	2024	2023	2022	2021
Day 1	97.32%	99.81%	98.50%	98.34%
Day 2	99.32%	99.40%	98.66%	97.83%
Day 3	99.22%	98.50%	99.00%	97.25%
Day 4	99.63%	98.14%	98.40%	96.75%
Day 5	99.05%	98.76%		
COURSE TOTAL	98.91%	98.92%	98.64%	97.54%

7.3 Areas for Improvement:

- 7.4 Delayed delivery of Chromebooks negatively impacted trainees’ ability to access and complete preparatory work within required timeframes. We have partnered with the recruitment team and the logistics company to mitigate against this in future and will also ensure clear messaging to new recruits that personal IT equipment can be used if preferred/required.
- 7.5 In-person and digital welcome sessions were hosted by The Learning Academy in collaboration with Area Support Teams, which provided opportunities for trainees to receive tech support, raise queries and discuss necessary adjustments. However, moving forward it is felt that in addition to this Tribunal Delivery Managers, Wellbeing Coordinators, & Partnership Coordinators should be present and introduced at regional events and that CHS’s organisational structure should be incorporated into training materials.
- 7.6 Allocation of trainee observations of hearings was inconsistent and area dependent, negatively impacting on training and trainees’ wellbeing. Moving forward closer alignment with the rota team and Wellbeing Coordinators will be necessary and clear scheduling and support processes and protocols will be agreed.
- 7.7 Trainees noted the amount of preparatory knowledge and learning expected was overwhelming. Consequently, The Learning Academy will work in partnership with the CHS Learning Team to look at strategies to address these pressures, including a review of learning programme content and structure.

8. Awards and Recognition

- 8.1 I am delighted to report that Brian McCann from Aberdeenshire has been recognised with an MBE award for service to Children and to the Children’s Hearings System in Scotland. Brian has significant service to children and families across Aberdeenshire over a number of years having been a Panel Member, Area Convener and is currently a Panel Practice Adviser in Aberdeenshire. Our congratulations and thanks to him for his dedication to infants, children, and young people in his community.
- 8.2 We also have a number of our CHS volunteers from across Scotland attending the King’s Royal Garden Party at Holyrood Palace on the 2nd of July 2024. Attendees are nominated through the Lord Lieutenants across Scotland for their contribution and impact locally. I look forward to providing more details at the next Board on the event and attendance. We have everything crossed that they get good weather on the day!
- 8.3 Gavin Simpson, Area Convener Fife, was recently recognised with a special recognition award for services to children by the Lord Provost in Fife. Gavin was delighted to receive this honour and spoke passionately at the recognition evening about volunteering with CHS and the vital Panel Members play in supporting infants, children, and young people.

Elliot Jackson
National Convener and Chief Executive Officer
June 2024



Finance Report

Agenda Item: 7
CHS-2425-04

23/24 P12 interim update
24/25 P1/P2 update
24/25 Draft Capital Spending Plan

Accountable Officer: Director of Business and Finance
Report author: Finance Manager
Recommendation: To note and feedback
Resources implications: Within available resources

Impact Assessment Duties	Required	Completed
Equalities Impact Assessment	No	
Children's Rights Impact Assessment	No	
Data Protection Impact Assessment	No	
Islands Impact Assessment	No	

1 23/24 P12 interim update

The published revenue grant in aid (GiA) allocation for CHS for 23/24 is £4,629k, with an acknowledgement from Scottish Government (SG) that CHS is carrying an additional ongoing £3,483k pressure. A formal letter of agreement from SG to meet these pressures has now been received, which needs further clarification before it can be fully accepted.

2 2023/24 Forecast and Year to Date

Report as at 31 March 2024

	Actual YTD Period 11	Variance YTD Period 11	2023/24 Annual Budget	2023/24 Forecast	2023/24 Forecast Variance	2023/24 Forecast Variance
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	%
Staff	3,435	-467	2,997	2,874	-123	-4.1
Board	47	-15	62	66	4	+6.5
Training, travel and subsistence	232	-114	112	117	5	+4.6
Lease Obligation	0	-13	51	51	0	+0.0
Property	99	21	77	82	5	+6.5
Other Operating Costs	106	57	49	81	32	+65.3
ICT Costs	1,054	243	772	780	8	+1.1
Corporate Costs	240	-121	156	241	85	+54.6
Panel and AST Expenses	233	-462	500	290	-211	-42.1
Panel and AST Training	1,093	-38	1,131	1,143	12	+1.1
Support for hearings	140	-35	175	198	23	+13.1
Volunteer recruitment	185	-201	234	298	64	+27.4
PVGs	22	22	80	40	-40	-50.0
AST Devolved Funding	18	-48	66	55	-11	-16.7
Total	6,904	-1,171	6,462	6,316	-146	-2.3
Tribunal Support Model (TSM)			1,244	813	-431	
Child Care & Justice Bill (CCJB)			406	106	-301	
			8,112	7,235	-877	-10.8

There are currently no substantial changes to report since the P11 update. The P12 figures have been signed off by Jessica and submitted to the sponsor team. **These Figures are the current 'snapshot', as the final annual accounts have not yet been finalised.**

Board members are asked to note this interim position, its associated risks, and the approach in the ongoing management of the projected budget movements.

3 24/25 P1 & p2 update

It is still too early in the new fiscal year to issue a meaningful forecast. The reason for this is again the missing year end postings, as already stated under point 2. The official monitoring cycle with SG will not start until P3 has closed.

The finance team will over the next weeks start to invite all budget holders and the directors to monitoring meetings and agree the principles of submissions and timelines before the official monitoring is required. We will aim to have a first spending overview ready for SLT after P3 has closed.

5 24/25 Draft Capital Spending Plan

For the financial year 24/25 a capital spend of £529k has been budgeted and the spend has been broken down in the table below. It is important to know that this was done on a BAU basis.

Acknowledging the current capacity challenges and a drive for running 2 recruitment campaigns a year it is understood by CHS, that additional funding to support significant increases in volunteer numbers will need to be met via seeking additional funding.

Year 24/25

Cap/Rev	Ledger	Theme	Type	Planned Cost	Comments
CAP	608Z	Develop PowerApps - Website	Development, Build & Configuration	£50,000.00	50k has been set aside for the rebuild of the website in Power Pages on CHS Tenancy planned in for October start
		Joint Investment Work - CHS CSAS Support	Development, Build & Configuration	£140,000.00	CSAS 1 Quarters costing projections (3 x sprints) / Focus on the Recruitment Campaign and changes to the form & access
		Joint Investment Work - Hearing Information Pack	Development, Build & Configuration	£140,000.00	CSAS 2 Quarters costing projections (3 x sprints) / Focus on the HIP improvement work with CSAS (Rasteredge Deprecation)
		Joint Investment Work - Recruitment Campaign	Development, Build & Configuration	£140,000.00	CSAS 3 Quarter costing projections (3 x sprints) / Focus on Non Joint Investment Work including CRM and CSAS integration work
		Non-Strategy Organization Run Costs	Development, Build & Configuration	£12,000.00	12k c/f for Itrent from 23/24 for Development not taken place / Confirmation from Finance/People&Resources that this project should be c/f
		Process Improvement - CRM	Development, Build & Configuration	£30,000.00	30k has been put aside for implementation fo Customer Services Dynamics to expedite TSM needs and also bolster the current Digital team in ways of working with this going forward.
604A		Chromebook Management & Review	Chromebooks	£12,750.00	Based on a BAU approach
		SCOTS Device Management	Laptops - SCOTS	£4,000.00	Additional 10 devices for New Starts & Stock
ZZZZ		Non-Strategy Organization Run Costs	Office WiFi	£250.00	Ongoing Wifi Costs for Thistle House
CAP Total				£529,000.00	

Total Budget: £529,000.00



Quarter 1 2024/5 Performance Report

Agenda Item: 8
CHS-2425-05

Accountable Director	Director of Business & Finance
Report author(s)	Business Support & Governance Manager, Data & Performance Analyst
Recommendation	For Considerations and Discussion
Resources implications	Within available resources

Impact Assessment Duties	Required	Completed
Equalities Impact Assessment	No	
Children’s Rights Impact Assessment	No	
Data Protection Impact Assessment	No	
Islands Impact Assessment	No	

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This paper includes the Quarter 1 Performance Report, 2024-25 and covering note highlighting completion, retiming, and any delays to milestones.
- 1.2 The Performance Report is designed to allow the Board, on a quarterly basis, to monitor the delivery of the objectives in CHS’ Business Plan and scrutinise the overall performance of the organisation.
- 1.3 Accompanying the report is a data summary page for Board oversight of quarterly operational data and performance.
- 1.4 In-year changes to the objectives published in the Business Plan are managed and documented through the quarterly performance monitoring process. Specifically:
 - In-year retiming of individual milestones are subject to decision by SMT.
 - In-year retiming of objectives are subject to decision by SMT (but are marked ‘Amber’ to highlight this in the report).
 - Removal of objectives (referred to as ‘de-scoping’) from the plan are subject to Board decision-making. These are marked ‘Red’ in the report.

2. Performance during Quarter 1

- 2.1 Within the 2024-25 CHS Business and Corporate Parenting plan there were 3 milestones due for completion by the end of Q1. The activities that have been completed during the quarter include:

- Delivery of our codesigned and revised Participation & Children's Rights strategy with care experienced young people aligned to the accepted recommendations from the Hearings for Children Report and upcoming changes to legislation;
- Produced an implementation plan for the above strategy which reflects our strategic approach to participation and increases the involvement of children and young people in operational and strategic decision making at CHS;
- Revising our Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment tools in line with new statutory guidance remains on track for completion by end of the quarter.

2.2 Milestones scheduled for completion Q2-Q4 are all on track with updates on progress included within the report.

2.3 No milestones have been retimed in Q1.

3. Data Summary

The quarterly data summary details key capacity and operational data from the last quarter alongside changes since the previous quarter.

4. Board Actions:

- 4.1 The Board are asked to note the content of report and make any comments.
- 4.2 The Board are asked to provide any feedback on the content or layout of the report.



Children's Participation and Rights Strategy

Agenda Item: 9
Paper Number: CHS-2425-06

Accountable Officer: Carol Wassell, Director of Positive Outcomes
Report author: Stephen Bermingham and Angela Phillips, Practice and Standards
Recommendation: To review and approve
Resources implications: The participation team and commitment across the directorates
Approval(s) sought: Strategy and implementation plan

Impact Assessment Duties	Required	Completed
Equalities Impact Assessment	Yes	In Progress
Children's Rights Impact Assessment	Yes	In Progress
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Yes	No
Islands Impact Assessment	Yes	No

1. Purpose

For the Board to approve the strategy and implementation.

2. Background

During 2023 as part of the expansion of Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS) a strategic participation review was carried out. This presented an opportunity to take stock. To emphasise the commitment to participation at CHS, one of our key strategic priorities was to publish this Children's Participation and Rights Strategy as an update to the Children's Rights and Inclusion Strategy, published in 2020 that underwent a 'light touch' review in June 2023 when the portfolio of work came under the remit of the learning function.

3. Summary/Review

This strategy reinforces how engaging with those with lived experience will ensure that CHS maximises our commitment of being 'well informed and influential'.

This Strategy will ensure: Respect, Inclusion, Empowerment and Accountability in a redesigned Children's Hearings System:

- Respect - Promote CHS vision and values and our commitment to upholding children's rights, improving outcomes and their experiences of children's hearings.
- Inclusion - Ensure CHS's approach to participation stays fluid and in the best interest of those with lived experience. This will include listening and responding to those with lived experience and embedding their views in all aspects of work at CHS.

- Empowerment - Provide a platform for those with lived experience to create and influence lasting change.
- Accountability - Demonstrate our investment in this area of work by being bold, ambitious and taking full responsibility for making sure that we fulfil the commitments we are making to those with lived experience.

4. Benefits

There is an opportunity for CHS to be sector leaders in involving children and young people. Involving children and young people will improve the services CHS provides and lead to improved outcomes for the children and families that we serve. This strategy represents a step-change in how we involve children in the work of CHS.

Using a variety of approaches, including working with young people already involved in the work of CHS we were keen to meet and engage with those with lived experience where they felt most safe to share their ideas. By carefully considering the spaces that those with lived experience feel comfortable and by building relationships with the adults who support them, we were able to arrange to meet with external groups, such as champion boards, a secure care service and Our Hearings Our Voice (OHOV) to run co-design sessions with children and young people with lived experience.

5. Risks

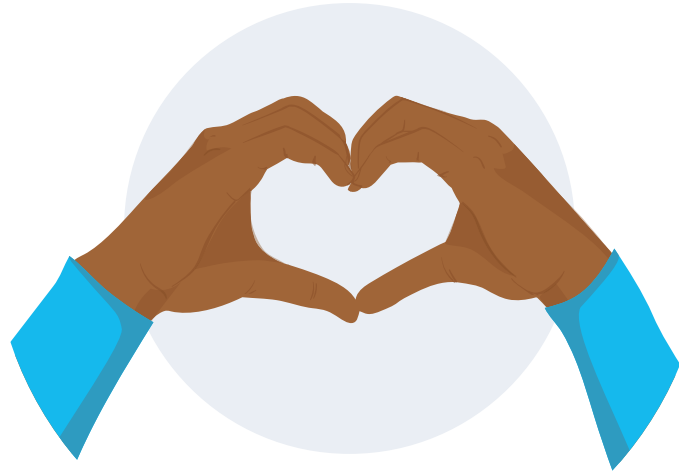
The risks of not adequately involving children and young people in the work of CHS are mitigated by the areas of work identified in this strategy and implementation plan. By working with young people to co-design this strategy and implementation plan we have been able to hear directly from them what our focus areas should be and how we can take this forward with them. Internally the creation of the Strategic Participation Group will ensure cohesion between directorates and the opportunity to begin developing this work regionally.

For the implementation plan to be effective, participation work must remain fluid to ensure that those with lived experience can continue to shape and adapt the work as it evolves. We must also be mindful of the time it takes to build relationships with those with lived experience and the organisations supporting them. An area of focus over the coming year will be gaining a better understanding of the needs and methods for involving very young children in our work. Regular points of reflection will be included to ensure we can refocus if required.

6. Recommendations

- To review and approve the strategy.
- To approve further engagement with young people based on the areas of work identified in the strategy.
- To acknowledge the co-production process of the development of this strategy.
- To acknowledge that the approach to participation must remain agile and fluid to reflect feedback and reforms within the system.

- To note the implementation plan based on the areas of work previously approved in the strategic participation review.



Children's Participation and Rights Strategy

Respect, Inclusion, Empowerment and Accountability

Foreword

Written by Beth-Anne Logan

The last few years have been a whirlwind. Incredible strides have been made to advance children's rights and participation in Scotland.

We have made bold and brave statements of intent. Scotland, but more specifically, Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS) wants to be an organisation where children are treated as children. Where they are respected, included, where they feel empowered and where we, as custodians of the system are held accountable.

Is this strategy bold and brave? Yes.

Is it enactments of fundamental human rights? Absolutely.

Language is something so incredibly powerful and the four aims have been carefully selected.

This is more than a statement of intent.

This is a strategy owned by the hearings experienced community FOR the hearings experienced community.

This strategy emphasises the commitment made by CHS to listen bravely and act with empathy, respect and compassion. It highlights our leadership intent in this area and acts a mandate to ensure that we, at CHS, do all we can to protect, promote and uphold your rights.

I am grateful to colleagues across the organisation for the development of this strategy.

I am humbled and inspired, as ever to those hearings experienced people who contributed to this strategy.

Onwards now, to enacting and implementing our vision of a redesigned children's hearing system - it won't be easy. But, together we will ensure that you, and your voice is firmly at the heart of not only your hearing, but the work of CHS going forward - we got this!



Beth-Anne Logan

Board Member

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Strategy Aims

What will the strategy do?

During 2023 as part of the expansion of Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS) a strategic participation review was carried out. This presented an opportunity to take stock. We put in place steps on how to better involve infants, children and young people with lived experience of the Children's Hearings System (thereafter known as those with lived experience) to co-design and work with us to refocus, invest in and improve the way in which we involve those with lived experience in the work of CHS.

This strategy reinforces our purpose at CHS to ensure our hearings make child-centred decisions which respect and protect children's rights and support them to thrive. The strategy will ensure: **Respect, Inclusion, Empowerment** and **Accountability** in a redesigned Children's Hearings System:

- **Respect** - Promote CHS vision and values and our commitment to upholding children's rights, improving outcomes and their experiences of children's hearings.
- **Inclusion** - Ensure CHS's approach to participation stays fluid and in the best interest of those with lived experience. This will include listening and responding to those with lived experience and embedding their views in all aspects of work at CHS.

- **Empowerment** - Provide a platform for those with lived experience to create and influence lasting change.
- **Accountability** - Demonstrate our investment in this area of work by being bold, ambitious and taking full responsibility for making sure that we fulfil the commitments we are making to those with lived experience.



Methodology

How did we write the strategy?

Using a variety of approaches, including working with young people already involved in the work of CHS we were keen to meet and engage with those with lived experience where they felt most safe to share their ideas. By carefully considering the spaces that those with lived experience feel comfortable and by building relationships with the adults who support them, we were able to arrange to meet with external groups, including a Champs Board, the Good Shepherd Centre and Our Hearings Our Voice (OHOV) to run co-design sessions with children and young people with lived experience.

During these co-design sessions we used the key focus areas (as mapped out in the strategic participation review) as a conversation starting point to enable those with lived experience to design ideas on how the work should be taken forward.

Once ideas from all sessions had been gathered, they were thematically reviewed, and key themes were identified. After drafting we went back and held review sessions with the same co-design groups of children and young people to gather feedback on the proposed next steps based on their ideas. As part of this feedback loop changes could be made based on the feedback from the review sessions prior to this final draft.

Some of the valuable insight provided during these co-design sessions have been included as quotes throughout this strategy

to give voice and provide a true representation of the co-design partners views and what they want us at CHS to do next. We also consulted with our full CHS staff team to develop ideas for us to work more meaningfully with those with lived experience. It is important to emphasise that as duty bearers, adults must show leadership and accountability for involving children and young people in a meaningful way.

After feedback from young people the 'Delivering the Aims' section of the strategy has been written using plain language and has adopted the four Language Leaders Principles: Personalised, Balanced, Non-stigmatising and Involved.

We also received feedback on the co-design process from the young people and the adults supporting them, a few quotes are included below:

'The young people were very pleased that they have been taken seriously and that their views are being heard and acted on. They liked the statements by the other young people and staff, and particularly liked how we responded to each quote as this made him feel they had been listened to.' (Good Shepherd Centre)

'I love how the quotes from different young people are clearly informing the strategy.' (OHOV)

Delivering The Aims

How are we going to do this?

The four aims of this strategy are: **Respect, Inclusion, Empowerment and Accountability**. CHS will put the views of those with lived experience front and centre and use them when structuring and influencing our work.



Respect

To ensure we continue to Respect those with lived experience, We will:

"know our rights and respect us accordingly" – Ash (OHOV Board Member)

- Fully resource the participation team. We will do this by hiring a Lived Experience Advisor to make sure that any participation work is driven by lived experience.

"Help me understand what is said in my hearing and what is written in my hearing papers, so that I don't need to use a dictionary" – Z (Good Shepherd Centre)

- Work in partnership with Language Leaders on ways to change culture on the use of language in the hearing room. This will also include regularly reviewing the Hearing Room Language Pack which was developed to support Panel Members.

"Advocacy services, social work, CHS, SCRA and voluntary organisations, like CHAMPS Boards, they are important to us" – R (Champs Board).

- Create a network of partner organisations who are important to those with lived experience. These partnerships will create chances for people who have lived experience to develop new skills and influence our work.

"I feel more valued when I get paid for my time and ideas" – F (Good Shepherd Centre)

- Use the Scottish Government guidance to set pay. This will inform the pay for those with lived experience who work with us on projects. CHS values people with lived experience, we will value their time by paying them fairly.

"It would be great to know what OHOV are focused on and how we can collaborate on what's important to them" – (CHS staff)

- When working with Our Hearings Our Voice, we will respect their 40 calls to action. We will collaborate with them as an equal partner.



Inclusion

To ensure Inclusion of those with lived experience, We will:

"Just actively listen and find a route for the individual young person to be heard and make a difference. Help us find our voice" – R (Champs Board)

- Give maximum support to our national and regional teams so they can build relationships with people who have lived experience across Scotland. To achieve this, we will make sure that all CHS staff continue to work in a way that is trauma informed. We will also introduce a mentoring scheme for those with lived experience, to allow them to be supported to learn new skills. We will also consider those with a quieter voice through an equality lens to ensure they felt able to participate.

"A lot of young people have experience of the system and should be included as they can ask the right questions" – J (Champs Board)

- We will co-design guidance with those with lived experience. It will explain how to involve them in recruiting Panel Members and CHS staff.



"Would also be good for CHS to share projects they are working on with us and any ideas that are generated from the Ideas Clinic. Let young people decide if they need to be involved as adults may not think they need our ideas but maybe we think they do" – Andrew (OHOV Board Member)

- Spread participation opportunities across CHS. We will do this by setting up a strategic group to coordinate our work with those with lived experience. We will also create an 'Ideas Clinic' to share ideas and good practice. This way, we will streamline our communication.

We will improve it within our organisation and with external partners who support those with lived experience.

"We would tell someone we trust and have a close relationship with about our hearing, that's who CHS need to speak to" – Andrew (OHOV Board Member)

- Create connections between the CHS participation team and feedback and complaints team. We will build relationships with those who have lived experience and with the adults supporting them. CHS will find ways for those attending hearings to give feedback in a way that suits them. We will also look to find ways for those with lived experience to shape this work. They will be involved in improving our complaints and feedback.

Empowerment

To ensure Empowerment for those with lived experience, We will:

"Ask the young person their opinion, give the young person a nice safe space. Give the young person at panels a wider voice" – X (Champs Board)

- Recruit an 'Expert by Experience' group. The group will be led by the participation team. It will provide a safe space for those with lived experience to feel empowered. The group will drive the importance of lived experience voice within CHS and wider. This includes creating a younger voice group for children of all ages, including babies and infants, to influence decision making.

"The Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act changed how Panels ask the views of children. We need to work out how CHS and SCRA can get children's views in the way children want" – (CHS staff)

- Work in partnership with the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA). We will also build relationships with groups that help young people. The goal is to find ways for those with lived experience to have their voice heard at their hearing in a way that works for them.

"We deserve a spotlight, would be good for us to be able to let everyone know what matters to us" – Dylan (OHOV Board Member)

Create space for those with lived experience, including groups such as OHOV, to be more involved in shaping our work. We must ensure that everyone at CHS experiences firsthand the power of the voice of those with lived experience. This will highlight our duty as corporate parents. We must keep the lives of infants, children, young people, and families at the heart of all we do.



"Don't challenge children, challenge opinion" – G (CB)

- Continue to follow our influencing strategy. We will empower those with lived experience to use their voice for positive change. This will include responding to the Hearings for Children

Report Recommendations and relevant Scottish Government consultations. We will also create a platform for those with lived experience to speak up so they can influence decision makers about what matters to them.

Accountability

How will children and young people know we have done what we said we would?

During the co-design sessions, one strong theme came from those with lived experience. It was accountability.

When we asked **“What do you think CHS need to do in the future to include those with lived experience in our work and protect their rights? “**

They replied:

“We just want adults to make a difference, be active and do what they say they are going to do” – R (LB)

“For a young person to be able to come into a hearing feeling that all the people are there for them, make them feel supported and cared for. From the receptionist to the Chair of the panel, the young people should feel they can talk to them and that they have their best interests at heart. They need to feel that it's not a place they are going to go into and everyone is going to judge them and their family”– Achilles (OHOV Board Member)

“It doesn't really matter who implements things – it's more important that it's been done, and young people know about it” – Amy (OHOV staff)

It became clear what matters to those with lived experience. They want adults to listen and do what they say they will. Then, they want to be told about it.

Accountability is important to CHS. We are accountable for our approach to participation and for upholding children's rights. We will regularly report our progress on this strategy to the CHS Board. We will also take part in an evaluation of this strategy from an external organisation.

At CHS we have committed to an ambitious program of participation work. It involves people with lived experience of the hearings system. They will drive improvements in our practices and standards. We will also include their voices across all areas of our work.

We will provide a clear feedback loop for those with lived experience to regularly tell us what they think. We will collaborate closely with partners. Internally, we will ensure the Expert by Experience group has a voice and influence across all CHS areas.



Background

Why have we written the strategy?

To emphasise the commitment to participation at CHS, one of our key strategic priorities is to publish this Children’s Participation and Rights Strategy as an update to the Children’s Rights and Inclusion Strategy, published in 2020. By co-designing this strategy with those with lived experience it cements our commitment to ensuring that those with lived experience are meaningfully engaged with and remain at the heart of everything CHS do.

This strategy reinforces how engaging with those with lived experience will ensure that CHS maximises our commitment of being ‘well informed and influential’ as well as building on the five foundations of The Promise and ensures that children and young people are meaningfully listened to and properly responded to. As outlined in the CHS influencing strategy, it is the experience of those with lived experience that provides the most credible voice to make change in a system that is going through significant improvements and reform.

There has never been a more exciting time to refresh our approach to participation and children’s rights than now. The parliamentary approval of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 provides added momentum to involving children in the work of CHS. This strategy builds on this moment of change to make sure that CHS is at the forefront of this landmark Act.



Building on the CHS six ‘pillars of inclusion’, the strategic participation review mapped out key focus areas that were taken forward into co-design sessions with those with lived experience to allow us to really understand what our next steps should be. The focus being on what those with lived experience are telling us and what we need to do to ensure their views are elevated and influence decision making across CHS and the wider sector.

Participation Vision

Why is the voice of lived experience important to our work at CHS?

Who better to shape the work of CHS and to make changes than those with lived experience who have experienced the hearings system first hand.

Those with lived experience are experts in their own lives and can act as agents of change, and central to the ambition at CHS is the role of participation as a way of improving outcomes with them.

At CHS, we know that those with lived experience of the hearings system have a strong desire to be heard and have their voice influence the systems that have had a direct impact on their lives. People that have been in the care system have insights about what went well, what must be better and how to bring about lasting change.

Building on previous work at CHS, the voice of lived experience will support an ambitious programme of participatory work involving those with lived experience of the hearings system to drive forward improvements in practices and standards across the organisation.

The four 'General Principles' of the UNCRC, and specifically Article 12, will direct our approach to participation. It states:

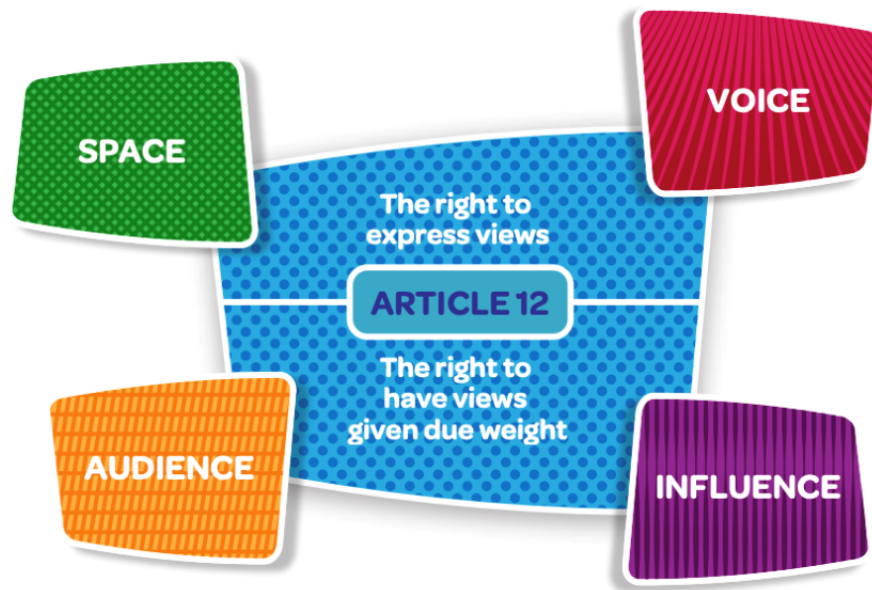
12:1 Countries bound by the Convention shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

12:2 For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.

This approach will reinforce our ongoing commitment as outlined in Standard 1 of the National Standards for the Children's Panel to make sure that everything we do is in the best interests of children and young people.

An equality lens will be adopted in the planning and delivery of any participation work to ensure that everyone with lived experience can be included in our work. This will also make sure that those with a quieter voice can be heard.

By adopting the four principles of the Lundy Model of Participation, CHS will provide space for children's views, enable their voice, and ensure they have both an audience and influence.



This model is a way of conceptualising Article 12 of the UNCRC. The four elements have a rational chronological order:

Space: Children must be given safe, inclusive opportunities to form and express their view.

Voice: Children must be facilitated to express their view.

Audience: The view must be listened to.

Influence: The view must be acted upon, as appropriate.

There is a strong and well-established leadership commitment to participation at CHS, and amid the Promise reform agenda alongside changes to the structure of CHS, now is an exciting time to further embed the voice of lived experience in all areas of our work.

Children's Rights Vision

Why are children's rights important to our work at CHS?

Our vision is for all infants, children, young people and their families to be safe, loved, and supported to realise their full potential.

To achieve this, we recognise the invaluable and unique contribution that those with lived experience can bring when considering how children's rights affect policy, practice and decisions about how CHS best uses its resources.

The evolving ambition set out in the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011, which has the promotion of children's rights as an underpinning principle, is further reinforced in the National Standards for the Children's Panel (2012) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Act) 2024. This presents an opportunity for CHS to reflect on ways we could do more to ensure children's rights are at the forefront of everything we do.

By continuing to implement the four general principles of the UNCRC, CHS will continue to realise children's rights and exceed any legal requirements to do so. It is the most important part of our organisation's culture and the reason why people choose to work and volunteer with us.

Below graphic being worked on - TBC

1. Non-discrimination (Article 2)
2. Best interest of the child (Article 3)
3. Right to life survival and development (Article 6)
4. Right to be heard (Article 12)

CHS believes that:

The duty to respect the rights of children should be fully incorporated within Scotland.

Children must be made aware of their rights.

There must be accountability for any breaches of these rights with appropriate routes to remedy.

Our Children's Participation and Rights Strategy will empower those with lived experience to have their voice heard and we will ensure their views are respected and included in work of the [Children's Hearings Redesign Board](#) and the future reforms.

Listening to and acting on the views of those with lived experience and ensuring those with duties under this new Act are held to account is key to making these positive steps a reality. The vision of CHS is reflected in the '[Hearings for Children: Hearing System Working Group's Redesign Report](#)' which makes it clear that "the most crucial aspect" of a redesigned Children's Hearings System is the voice of people with lived experience.

What drives us?

How do we do this?

Sarah – I quite like the idea of a graphic here with limited text – something like the one in the people strategy. Can we chat to how best to present this part? Most have these have already been mentioned so I think it may just need a graphics page.

This strategy has been co-designed with young people in response to several CHS and wider legislative changes within the sector:

Children’s Hearings Scotland Strategic Outlook 2024-2027
Children’s Hearings Scotland Business and Corporate Parenting Plan 2024-2025

- We will ensure our Children’s Participation and Rights Strategy upholds the rights of children and young people and will create opportunities for the voice of lived experience to be respected, included, and acted on.

Hearings for Children report: recommendations

- Our Children’s Participation and Rights Strategy will empower those with lived experience to have their voice heard and we will ensure their views are respected and included in work of the Children’s Hearings Redesign Board.

The Promise

- The Children’s Participation and Rights Strategy will build on the five foundations of The Promise and ensure that children and young people are meaningfully listened to and properly responded to.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024

Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Bill

Implementation Plan

How do we know we have done this?

Our Children's Participation and Rights Strategy sets out the strategic direction for working with those with lived experience.

For the implementation plan to be effective, participation work must remain fluid to ensure that those people with lived experience can continue to shape and adapt the work as it evolves. We must also be mindful of the time it takes to build relationships with those with lived experience and the organisations supporting them. Regular points of reflection will be included to ensure we can refocus if required.

CHS is committed to being accountable for children's rights and participation, therefore, progress on this strategy including reflections and input from those with lived experience will be reported to the CHS Board. All work will be regularly reviewed, with input from the Expert by Experience Group, to see what we are doing well, and what could be even better.

Furthermore, to make sure we deliver on the implementation plan we will undertake an independent evaluation of this work, designed, informed, and influenced by the children and young people that CHS work with.

Will have a graphic replicating the 4 aims with the main implementation objectives listed below – will send on once finalised.

Respect – Embed language leaders principles, Build relationships with organisations and adults who support young people, Strengthen internal and external partnerships, Work in ways that respect those with lived experience (Lundy Model), Value time by paying fairly.

Inclusion – Lived Experience Advisor, Lived Experience Recruiters, Internal Strategic Group, Regional teams to met with young people in their regions.

Empowerment – Work with OHOV as an equal partner, Expert by Experience Group, Younger Voices Group, Focus on voice of babies and infants, Explore feedback loops that work for those with lived experience, Full Internal and External Comms Plan.

Accountability – Create an evidence-based approach for respecting rights, Ensure continuous reflection, review and feedback to make sure we stay on the right track, Commit to an external evaluation.



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Goal as identified in the strategic participation review	Strategy aim	Next Steps
1. Fully Resource the Participation Team	Include	Lived Experience Advisor in post. Expert by Experience group.
2. Create alignment between Participation and the Feedback and Complaints Team in the newly established Practice and Standards Team	Empower	Review online portal and meet regular with feedback and complaints to monitor trends and consider remedy. Build relationships with partners to explore feedback mechanisms that work for YP. Identify opportunities for YP to shape the complaints and feedback process.
3. Embed Participation in CHS core working	Include	Form strategic internal group. Create 'Idea's Clinic' for all CHS staff to attend. Link with regional teams – share good practice – identify opportunities for YP. Comms plan to share good news stories and participation work. This will include updates for partners and creation of CHS case study recording template.
4. Involve young people in recruitment	Include	YP to shape scenarios and questions for Panel Member recruitment across all regions and offer Lived Experience Recruitment opportunities in all regions. YP to work with CHS on recruitment guide for CHS national recruitment.
5. Create development opportunities for young people with lived experience	Respect	Strengthen external partnerships for cross organisational working with the Expert by Experience group and other YP. Consider mentoring and scholarship options for YP to access at CHS.
6. Create a Participation partners network	Respect	Build a participation network nationally and regionally with organisations that matter to YP. Provide support and opportunities for participation work.
7. Increase opportunities for children and young people's online participation	Include	Build on practice and policy bank to create online engagement options. Ensure YP are involved in shaping this work and in the design of the portal.
8. Establish participation groups for children and young people	Empower	Recruit Expert by Experience group and look to create a younger voices forum (including focus on infant voice). Apply SG remuneration guidance to work carried out by YP.
9. Work closer with OHOV as an equal partner	Empower	Implement the OHOV Menti results from the staff team day. Respect their workstream and send regular feedback on what we are working on. Have regular comms – takeover days and work shadowing. Get to know CHS.
10. Ensure all CHS staff working with children and young people continue to work with a trauma informed lens	Respect	Embed the CHS Child and Adult Protection Policy. Ensure all projects with participation has a clear trained project lead. Continue to embed the work of Language Leaders.
11. Any participation work undergoes quality assurance and evaluation	Accountable	Evidence based approach to ensuring rights are respected. Continuous review of this plan as well as an external evaluation at a later date.

Board self-assessment and objective setting 24/25

Agenda Item:10
 Paper Number CHS-2425-07

Accountable Officer: Director of Business and Finance
Report author: Business Operations & Governance Manager
Resources implications: Within available
Recommendation: To discuss
Approval(s) sought: To discuss and approve for implementation

Required **Completed**

Impact Assessment Duties

Equalities Impact Assessment	No
Children's Rights Impact Assessment	No
Data Protection Impact Assessment	No
Islands Impact Assessment	No

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 In 2022 the Board agreed a policy and process for Board appraisals and a Board improvement plan. Part of the Board improvement plan included the provision of an annual meeting of the Board without the executive team in order to:
- align Board objectives;
 - provide the Chair with the views of the Board ahead of annual reviews of performance; and
 - For the Board to review their own effectiveness using the current survey tool discursively with minutes taken and an annual improvement plan created from the discussion.
- 1.2 The Board agreed to continue to use the National Audit Office's standard questionnaire as an additional means of self-assessment, as well as their own survey tool. This is attached at appendix C.
- 1.3 The Board met In February 2024 to carry out their self-assessment, the assessment of the Chair, and their annual improvement objectives.

2. Board self-assessment and reflection

- 2.1 Attached at appendix A are the themes and reflections from the Board development session held on the February, 2024. The improvements suggested have been pulled into an action plan at appendix B.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 The Board are asked to note the content of this report and to approve:
- 3.1.1 The Board improvement action plan
- 3.1.2 The Board self-assessment questionnaire and reflections

4. Appendices

- A. Themes and reflections – Board self-assessment 2024
 B. Board Improvement Action plan 2024/25
 C. Board standard assessment questionnaire



Appendix A

Themes and reflections – Board self-assessment 2024

1. Reflections on Executive/Board effectiveness

1.1 Board/Subcommittee meetings

The Board discussed the meeting organisation, preparations, and reports, and if they provided the information and context the Board required to enable effective discussions and informed decisions. The Board reflected the following:

- The Board have noticed improvement in report length and conciseness. Reports contain helpful executive summaries at the start and sufficient information to inform discussion and decisions. The Board noted a clear intention to further improve communication of the ask.
- The Board feel comfortable interrogating papers at Board and sub-committee meetings and that papers are well presented by their authors/business owners. This has built confidence for the Board in the CHS national Team and Senior Leadership Team's (SLT) ability to deliver.
- The Board felt that its work plans and governance calendar were well organised and thorough in terms of governance and statutory requirements.
- Generally, the Board feel well supported by SLT in terms of information sharing and communication. They feel well prepared ahead of meetings and well informed by the reports and the Executive team.

The Board noted the following areas for improvement:

- The Board felt that some papers are repetitive and urged authors to streamline and focus papers even further, where possible.
- The Board noted a need for papers to relate back to the strategic risk register – noting the need for the strategic objective and related strategic risks to be highlighted within the report and how the work being reported on or proposed would progress our strategic objectives and/or mitigate our strategic risks.
- It was recommended that the Board implement a 'consent agenda' approach where papers that are for noting or information sharing rather than approval, do not need to be discussed. This would allow for the transparent Board oversight and awareness of key workstreams without the need to comment at board meetings, unless required.
- The Board noted improvements could be made to the action log by ensuring actions are noted as 'on track' or any potential delays are highlighted earlier on.

1.2 Executive team and relationships

The Board discussed the meeting environment and their comfort in challenging the management team, when required, and what could be put in place to enable more 360 degree feedback between the executive/non executives. The Board also discussed the executive team and what could be done to provide additional support during the coming year. The Board reflected the following:

- The Board complimented the Senior Leadership Team and their directorate teams, noting the high level of skill and management acumen.
- The Board feel they have an open and honest relationship with the SLT, that they are transparent and consistently provide updates and proactively approach the Board directly when as required.

- The Board feel the re-structure and organisational design work has gone well and provided CHS and the SLT with the teams and skills they need. The Board feel assured CHS has the right skills in the right place.

The Board noted the following areas for improvement:

- The Board expressed concern over workloads of the SLT and their teams, noting the recent movement to some action deadlines and concern this may indicate increases to workloads that are unsustainable. The Board encourage the SLT to discuss this openly with the Board.
- While the Board commented on the positive open relationship they enjoy with the SLT, they would like a similar reflection exercise to be carried out by the SLT to provide the Board with feedback and any actions that could be put in place by the Board to better support the executive and organisation as a whole.
- The Board felt it would be a useful exercises to carry out a skills matrix linked to our anticipated business needs to inform leadership and skills development going forward.

2. Reflections on the Board/Subcommittee own effectiveness

2.1 Board priorities

The Board discussed how their time is spent, and if the Board and its committees are prioritising the right areas of work to support the organisation. The Board reflected the following:

- The Board feel they have become more strategically pro-active and that planning is more robust. They feel the data reports and information now shared is supporting this, though there is room for further development around data.
- The Board feel they should be more visible and available to the CHS community and would like to attend more practical events and sessions, not only celebrations.

The Board noted the following areas for improvement:

- The Board would like CHS to be more forward in asking them to attend events to raise visibility – not just at celebratory engagements but at training sessions and local meetings too. The Board feel this would help them to increase their profile and potentially strengthen local authority partnerships and relationships if the Board could be invited to local partnership meetings.
- The Board would like to be more actively part of CHS's influencing and communications strategies to improve our public profile.
- The Board would like to become more proactive by setting process measures and input measures to support quality improvements and drive decision making and focus.

2.2 Board Balance

The Board examined if it had the right balance of skills it needed, and what if any were missing. The Board reflected the following:

- The Board feel they have the right mix of member which offers a wide scope of perspectives and a cohesive balance of skills and experience.
- They feel they have a good understanding of the political landscape and where and how they might influence.
- While there is currently a good balance within the Board, there is a need to look forward and succession plan for those Board members whose terms will soon be ending.

The Board noted the following areas for improvement:

- With two Board members reaching tenure in 2025, the Board felt succession planning and Board member recruitment was a key priority. There was agreement by the Board that maintaining diversity of lived experience and perspectives was essential when recruiting. They noted it may be beneficial in the coming years to have a member with civil service and/or communications experience to further expand the Boards skill set.

3. Reflections on the Chair's effectiveness

The Board met without the Chair to reflect on their relationship with the Chair and the Chairs performance.

3.1 The Board reflected the following:

- The Board feel the Chair is well aligned with the organisation and understands the needs of the children and families it serves. They noted the Chairs passion and drive, as well as willingness to have difficult conversations when required.
- They feel the Chair is a good facilitator who does not dictate and gives all the opportunity to express their views and opinions openly.
- The Board feel comfortable within the Committee/Board environment to be able to express their views and opinions openly.
- The Board feel well supported by the Chair both within, and out with the Board meeting environment.

3.2 The Board noted the following areas for improvement:

- The Board valued the time they had to reflect on their own priorities, objectives, and performance.
- The Board would like to continue to prioritise making meetings easier for all to attend in person and suggest holding meetings in a mix of locations that suit all Board members, particularly development sessions.

4. Additional improvement objectives

- The Board felt the Committee Chair updates where beneficial and should remain, with papers that are for noting or awareness by the Board shared under that agenda item, with discussion by exception.
- The Board agreed that papers/reports revolving around strategy or finance should be brought to the Board for approval, though the development work should happen in the appropriate Committees. Below the strategy/finance threshold reports/papers can be signed off at Committee level and shared with the Board as the Committee Chair/accountable officer advises. If shared with the Board they should be on the agenda for noting with discussion by exception.
- The Board agreed all Committee notes should be shared on Admin control for the full Board to see within 10 working days (2 weeks) of the committee meeting, and the Board notified by email that the notes are available to view.

Appendix B

Board Improvement Action plan 2024/25

Action	Owner	Deadline
Reports - Adjust report templates with a table to identify the strategic objectives the work supports or advances and/or the strategic risks it mitigates or falls under.	Governance officer	Sept Board meeting – and ongoing
Reports – papers/reports revolving around strategy or finance should be brought to the Board for approval. Below the strategy/finance threshold reports/papers can be signed off at Committee and shared for noting.	Governance officer	Sept Board meeting - then ongoing
Action log – Include update for all lines of the action log indicating if actions are “on track” to be completed by the deadline or at risk of needing an extension – ensure this is carried out at every review and not only when actions are due.	Governance officer	Sept Board meeting - then ongoing
Agenda - Implement a ‘consent agenda’ approach where papers that are for noting or information sharing rather than approval, do not need to be discussed.	Governance officer	Sept Board meeting - then ongoing
Discussion at meetings – Papers shared for awareness or noting are to be discussed only by exception at the Board meeting.	Board Chair	Sept Board meeting - then ongoing
Committee - notes should be shared on Admin control for the full Board to see within 10 working days and the Board notified by email that the notes are available to view.	Governance officer	Sept Board meeting - then ongoing
SMT to provide feedback to the Board using a start/stop/continue format	Director of Business & Finance	Sept 2024
To carry out a CHS skills matrix linked to our anticipated business needs to inform leadership and skills development going forward.	Director of People & Culture	November 2024
The Board to be included in influencing and engagements plans (area events/training sessions/etc) regularly and at all levels.	Board/Comms	Through end 2025



CHS Annual Accounts & Governance Statement 2023/24

Agenda Item: 11
Paper number CHS-2425-08

Accountable Officer: Director of Business & Finance
Report author: Business Operations and Governance Manager, Finance Manager (SCRA shared services)
Resources implications: Within available
Recommendation: To note the key dates in the preparation of CHS’s 2023/24 financial statements and review the Accountable Officer’s draft Governance Statement for inclusion in the 2023/24 Annual Accounts.
Approval(s) sought:

Impact Assessment Duties	Required	Completed
Equalities Impact Assessment	NA	
Children’s Rights Impact Assessment	NA	
Data Protection Impact Assessment	NA	
Islands Impact Assessment	NA	

1. Introduction and background

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Board of the key steps in the preparation of the 2023/24 Annual Accounts and opportunity to review the draft Governance Statement for inclusion in the 2023/24 Annual Accounts. The Accounting Policies were approved at the February ARMC and the March Board meetings.

2. Key steps in the preparation of the Annual Accounts

- 2.1 The Finance team is currently ensuring that spend is accurately recorded in the ledger, including accruals, prepayments, and year-end accounting adjustments such as movements in pension liabilities. This is to ensure as accurate a position as possible is presented in the financial statements of the year to, and position at, 31 March 2024.
- 2.2 Performance and Accountability Reports are being finalised and reviewed by the Finance Team and the Depute Chief Executive.
- 2.3 CHS’s external auditors, Audit Scotland, have carried out their interim audit visit and discussed their findings with the Finance Team.
- 2.4 Audit Scotland will conduct their external audit fieldwork between 19 June 2024 to 26 July 2024. The draft accounts will be reviewed at the August Audit and Risk Committee, following which the Accounts are formally signed at the Board’s September meeting before being laid before the Scottish Parliament at the end of October.

3. Governance Statement

- 3.1 The 2023/24 FReM sets out a requirement for inclusion of a 'Governance Statement' in the Annual Accounts. The FReM indicates that guidance on the content of the statement is provided for specific jurisdictions governed by the 'Relevant Authorities'. In CHS's case, the Relevant Authority is the Scottish Government, and guidance is set out in the Scottish Public Finance Manual (SPFM) which indicates that there is no set format for a governance statement, but identifies certain essential features.
- 3.2 A governance statement, for which the Accountable Officer has personal responsibility, is a key feature of the organisation's annual report and accounts. It should cover the accounting period and the period up to the date of signature and provide the reader with a clear understanding of the organisation's internal control structure and its management of resources. The statement should be informed by work undertaken throughout the period to gain assurance about performance and risk management, providing an insight into the organisation's risk profile and its responses to identified and emerging risks.
- 3.3 The draft 2023/24 Governance Statement is attached at Appendix 1. The Scottish Government's Certificates of Assurance process, referenced in the Governance Statement, is now under way. The checklist has been completed.
- 3.4 CHS's external auditors will review the Governance Statement for its consistency with evidence collected in the course of auditing the financial statements.

4. Recommendations

The committee is asked to:

- 4.1 note the key dates in the preparation of CHS's 2023/24 financial statements
- 4.2 review the Accountable Officer's draft Governance Statement for inclusion in the 2023/24 Annual Accounts.



CHS 2023/24 Governance Statement

Governance Statement

1. Scope of Responsibility

- 1.1 As Accountable Officer, I have responsibility for maintaining a sound system of internal control that supports the achievement of CHS' policies, aims and objectives, as set by Scottish Ministers, whilst safeguarding the public funds and assets for which I am personally responsible, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to me in the Memorandum to Accountable Officers for Other Public Bodies.

2. Governance framework

- 2.1 CHS' governance framework accords with generally accepted best practice principles and guidance from Scottish Ministers in the Scottish Public Finance Manual and has been in place for the financial year ended 31 March 2024 and up to the date of the approval of the annual report and accounts.
- 2.2 CHS has a Board which meets at least every three months to consider the overall strategic direction of CHS within the policy, planning and resources framework determined by the Scottish Ministers. The Board seeks assurance that corporate objectives are being progressed through the delivery of agreed targets in the business plans and corporate plan on performance, implementation of strategic projects, effective use of resources and management of strategic risks.
- 2.3 The Board Committee structure comprises a People and Culture Committee and an Audit and Risk Management Committee. Each Committee has developed its terms of reference which are documented, approved and reviewed on an annual basis.
- 2.4 The People and Culture Committee was known as the Remuneration and Appointments Committee until June 2023. The committee meets a minimum of three times per year and its responsibilities include:
- approving and reviewing procedures/policies for CHS staff and applicable procedures/policies for CHS community members, including employment policies
 - reviewing the objectives of senior staff annually
 - approving the annual pay remit for submission to Scottish Government
 - approving the recruitment process for the National Convener/Chief Executive
 - considering/approving reports on People and Recognition, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, Learning and Development and Staff and Community Wellbeing
 - approving any Employment Tribunal settlements
- 2.5 The Chair of the People and Culture Committee briefs the Board following each meeting and the latter receives an annual report on the performance of the Committee.
- 2.6 The Audit and Risk Management Committee meets quarterly and reviews the adequacy of the arrangements for ensuring sound internal control arrangements and provides the Board and Accountable Officer with advice and assurance with regard to the arrangements for:

- financial control and reporting;
- risk management;
- Information Governance;
- legal and regulatory compliance;
- Digital Programme.

- 2.7 The Chair of the Audit and Risk Management Committee briefs the Board following each meeting and the Board receives an annual report on the performance of the Committee.
- 2.8 CHS has an internal audit service provided under contract by BDO, which operates to standards defined in the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. During 2023/24 Internal Audit undertook three reviews: clerking, the independent report writer function and Panel Practice Advisors' function/quality assurance. The Committee scrutinises all internal audit reports and the actions taken by managers in response to audit recommendations.
- 2.9 In the internal auditor's opinion, the risk management activities and controls in the areas which they examined were found to be suitably designed to achieve the specific risk management, control and governance arrangements. Based on their verification reviews and sample testing, the risk management, control and governance arrangements were operating with sufficient effectiveness to provide reasonable, but not absolute assurance that the related risk management, control and governance objectives were achieved for the period under review.

3. Operation of the Board

- 3.1 The Board met five times during 2023/24, held five Board development sessions for training opportunities and discussion, and two Strategy sessions to support ongoing work within the organisation and with the Hearing System Working Group. In addition, the Board held joint development sessions with SCRA Board and OHOV Board in 2023/24.
- 3.2 Key issues for the Board in 23/24 included:
- Implementation of the Tribunal Support Model
 - Implementation of CHS's Organisational Change Programme
 - Planning for Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024
 - Planning for the implementation of reforms in line with the accepted recommendations from the Hearings for Children Report
 - Approving quarterly performance reports
 - Reviewing and approving the Board Standing Orders and Self-Assessments
 - Scrutiny of ongoing work to improve capacity
 - Approving the Budget for 2023/24
 - Approving the Business and Corporate Parenting Plans for 2023/24
 - Approving the Annual Accounts and Impact Report
 - Reviewing Learning Academy progress
 - Volunteer Recruitment
 - Equalities and Outcome reporting
 - Approving the accounting policies to be used for the preparation of CHS' statement of accounts for 2023/24
- 3.3 Strategic and operational finance support is provided through a shared services arrangement with SCRA and CHS has a dedicated HR/OD Lead. SCRA's Head of Finance &

Resources provides strategic finance advice to the CHS Board and Committee meetings and other meetings as appropriate.

4. Assessment of corporate governance arrangements

4.1 As Accountable Officer, I have reviewed the effectiveness of corporate governance arrangements. My review is informed by:

- the executive managers within CHS who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework, including the organisation's Senior Information Risk Officer
- the work of the internal auditors who submit to the Audit and Risk Management Committee
- regular reports which include the Head of Internal Audit's independent and objective opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of CHS' system of internal control together with any recommendations for improvement
- comments made by the external auditors in their management letter and other reports

4.2 Internal control systems around risk management, business planning, major investment, project management, financial management, fraud, procurement, human resources, equality and diversity, information management, health & safety and compliance are assessed annually as part of the Scottish Government Certificates of Assurance process. The National Convener completed this assessment for 2023/24 and no major control gaps were identified.

5. Assessment of procurement activities

5.1 As Accountable Officer, I have reviewed the effectiveness of procurement activities and arrangements. CHS is committed to fair process and best value resourcing and therefore in sourcing suppliers utilises SG procurement frameworks where possible and utilises shared service expertise from the SG procurement team through their Procurement Lite service. CHS has put in place a series of procurement KPI's to help demonstrate the contribution of procurement approaches to the efficient, effective and economical running of the organisation.

5.2 CHS reports on the effective contract management CHS Learning Academy by monitoring the contract meetings held, the financial management of the contract, and the KPI's delivered. CHS also reports against procurement activity for its annual recruitment campaigns as well as any contracts awarded above £5,000, contracts awarded using the SG framework above £20,000, and the number of contracts awarded using the 'quick quotes' approach.

5.3 In 2023/24 the following procurement activities took place which were awarded either via Quick Quotes, through the SG framework, and other procurement exercises.

- Procurement activities awarded with a value between £5,000 - £20,000 included the following services: campaign evaluation services, internal and external auditing, legal services, IT, wellbeing support, website design, and business services.
- Procurement activities awarded with a value above £20,000 which included the following services: Human Resource Support and Consultancy, IT licensing, IT equipment, media services for the recruitment campaign, Development of an Executive Learning and Development Programme, and the provision of the CHS Learning Academy.

6. Key issues and risks

- 6.1 A framework for identifying, measuring, controlling and monitoring strategic risks has been in place throughout the financial year during which time the senior team and the Audit and Risk Committee reviewed the approved Risk Management Policy. A regular review of the Operational and Strategic Risk Registers is undertaken by the Senior Management Team and the Strategic Risk Register is reported to the Audit and Risk Management Committee on a quarterly basis. Strategic and operational risk management is embedded in CHS' corporate and business planning processes and performance management arrangements.

7. Digital Programme

- 7.1 The main focus of activity throughout 2023/24 has been continued functional improvements to our CSAS platform across several areas including Rota, Observations and Recruitment, and development work to support the implementation of the new Tribunal Support Model. Joint Change Control Board and Control Assurance Boards are in place with SCRA to support the governance and implementation of improvements or changes to the digital platform.
- 7.2 The CHS Digital Strategy continues to be implemented alongside significant work to align CSAS and management information to our new structure and the incorporation of a nationally delivered rota management and allocation service.
- 7.3 We continue to support Panel Members to participate in virtual children's hearings through training and provision of devices to support virtual activity including provision to all new trainees in year.

8. Personal data related incidents

- 8.1 During 2023/24, CHS had 35 information security incidents recorded and investigated, including near misses. 1 of the 35 data protection occurrences was self-reported to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). The Majority of incidents related to central processes, systems access and performance issues. These themes are reflective of our organisational re-structure and our move to more centralised processes. There were no occurrences classified as a vulnerability.
- 8.2 Mitigating measures are in place to reduce the likelihood of data breaches and include compulsory training for all panel and AST members, Clerks, CHS National Team and Board members. Observed trends in breaches lead to the introduction of new or updated mitigations when necessary.

9. Conclusion

As Accountable Officer, I am satisfied that CHS has effective corporate governance arrangements in place.

Elliot Jackson
National Convener
June 2024



Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2024

Agenda Item: 11

Paper number: CHS-2425-09

Accountable Officer:	Director of Business and Finance
Report author:	Business Operations and Governance Manager
Resources implications:	Within available resources
Recommendation:	To approve
Approval(s) sought:	To approve

Impact Assessment Duties	Required	Completed
Equalities Impact Assessment	No	
Children's Rights Impact Assessment	No	
Data Protection Impact Assessment	No	
Islands Impact Assessment	No	

1. Background

1.1 The report covers the work of the Audit and Risk Management Committee (ARMC) from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

1.2 The ARMC meets quarterly and is responsible for providing the Board and Accountable Officer with advice and assurance about the arrangements for:

- financial control and reporting
- risk management.
- corporate and information governance
- legal and regulatory compliance

1.3 The Committee scrutinises all audit reports and actions taken by managers in response to audit recommendations.

2. Overview

2.1 The Audit and Risk committee met on four occasions during the reporting year: 16 May 2023, 22 August 2023, 21 November 2023 and 28 February 2024.

2.2 Members of the committee who served during the reporting period were:

- Sean Austin (Chair 21 Sept 2022 – present)
- Barbara Neil
- Henry Robson

2.3 Attendance

Members' attendance at committee meetings was as follows:

	16 May 2023	22 Aug. 2023	21 Nov. 2023	28 Feb. 2024	Attendance
Henry Robson	√	√	√	√	4/4 100%
Barbara Neil	√	Apologies	√	Apologies	2/4 50%
Sean Austin	√	√	√	√	4/4 100%
Katharina Kasper (Chair of the Board)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Beth Anne Logan (Board member)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Jo Derrick (Board member)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Katie Docherty (Board member)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Over the course of these meetings I confirm the Audit and Risk Management Committee met its Terms of Reference during 2023/24.

3. Audit and Risk Management Committee Meetings

3.1 The ARMC meetings are attended by the National Convener/ Chief Executive (NC/CEO), who is also the Accountable Officer, and the Deputy Chief Executive. The Head of Finance and Resources (shared services CHS/SCRA), the Finance Manager, the Director of Business and Finance, and the Business Operations and Governance Manager also attend the meetings. Internal Auditors (BDO) and the External Auditors (Audit Scotland) attended all meetings.

3.2 A programme of work was agreed for the ARMC and allocated over the four meetings during the year. The ARMC discussed 55 items of business during the year.

3.3 Standard agenda items at each meeting are:

- ⌘ Register of Interests
- ⌘ Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising.
- ⌘ Action Log
- ⌘ A report summarising any significant changes to the organisation's Strategic Risk Register
- ⌘ Internal Audit Reports summarising :
 - work performed (and a comparison with work planned)
 - key issues emerging from Audit work
 - management response to audit recommendations
 - any changes to the Annual Plan
- ⌘ Information Governance Practice and Compliance reports
- ⌘ Feedback and Complaints report
- ⌘ External Audit and auditors general update reports

4. Review of 2022/23 Annual Accounts

4.1 The 2022/23 Annual Accounts including the Governance Statement were reviewed and approved and the Committee recommended the signing of the Accounts to the Board and the Accountable Officer. The 2022/23 Annual Accounts received an unqualified opinion from the External Auditors.

5. Strategic Risk Register

5.1 Changes in the strategic risk register were reviewed at each meeting and the Risk Management Policy was reviewed and approved at the May 2022 meeting, with its next review scheduled for the May 2024 meeting.

5.2 A framework for identifying, measuring, controlling and monitoring strategic risks was in place throughout the financial year. Operational responsibility for risk management sits with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) where risk management (strategic and operational) is a standard item on SLT meeting agendas.

5.3 Risk management is embedded in CHS' planning management processes. At the strategic level, corporate and business strategies are aligned to the risk management process; at the operational level, SLT reviews the Operational and Strategic Risk Registers and follows a similar process of risk review/interrogation.

5.4 The Committee routinely interrogates key strategic risks to test the robustness of CHS' risk management processes and the assurances provided through this executive process. The Board of CHS has an oversight role and receives a quarterly update from the ARMC Chair at Board meetings.

5.5 The key strategic risks identified and monitored during 2023/24 included: Inability to fulfil ambitions due to lack of budgetary support via Grant in Aid; Lack of quality assurance and consistency of practice; Failure to contribute to positive outcomes by not creating a future focused learning and development strategy; Systems failure due to poor cyber resilience, Inability to implement agreed reform due to digital system constraints; Inability to fulfil statutory duties due to over reliance on volunteers; Senior change skills and oversight of organisational change; Capacity of Panel Members; An inability to operationalise the coming reform and legislative agenda; The current reform agenda losing political support; Loss of credibility and influence in the sector; and a failure to adequately engage and support its workforce during period of significant change.

6. Information Governance

Under IG, the ARMC focused its work on;

- Monitoring of data breaches and subsequent actions; and
- Monitoring of compliance with statutory guidance on FOISA/SAR activity.

7. Feedback and Complaints

Under feedback and complaints, the ARMC focused its work on;

- Monitoring of compliance with CHS and SPSO policy around complaint handling; and
- Understanding trends and actions from feedback and complaints.

8. Internal Audit

- 8.1 The annual Internal Audit Plan 2023/24 was presented to the Committee by BDO in May of 2023 and approved.

The following internal audits were carried out during 2023/24:

- Clerking Services: September 2023
- Independent Report Writer Function: January 2024
- PPA Function and Quality Assurance: February 2024

- 8.2 The audit of Clerking Services was approached as an advisory audit to inform changes to the function in line with the implementation of the CHS Tribunal Delivery Model. AS such, there were no assurances given, only recommendations. The audit looked at areas of best practice and identified any training or approaches to be addressed as part of the Clerking service and transition to the Tribunal Support Model. Recommendations were accepted by management and the Committee.

- 8.3 The audit of the Independent Report Writer Function offered a substantial level of assurance around design and control with moderate assurance around operational effectiveness. The audit found that CHS has sound processes in place around communicating the expectations of the Independent Report Writers, communicating with writers to ensure reports are on track for timely delivery, and reporting on performance of the function.

Areas of good practice notwithstanding, there were three recommendations made by the auditors, one with medium significance and two with low significance. The first recommendation focused on the recruitment process. The two lower recommendations were around the introduction of a clearer process for evaluating writer performance which incorporates review of reports and feedback from panel members. There is more analysis needed around re-appointment and this has been accepted and agreed by management with progress in train on assessment of reports.

- 8.4 The audit of PPA's and Quality Assurance was carried out to provide advice and support to CHS in creating a quality assurance framework. The audit looked at the current function and identified a number of risks and recommendations to support the development of the service and framework.

Identified Risks:

- Roles and responsibilities in relation to quality may not be fully and clearly defined within CHS
- Lack of a clear quality and assurance framework with agreed standards and oversight and reporting mechanism
- There may not be effective feedback channels in place between Panel Members and the function, and good practice and learning may not be shared
- The quality team may not be collating, analysing and evaluating information to understand and improve quality within CHS, particularly in relation to learning
- The current volunteer model may affect CHS's ability to implement improvement

Recommendations centred on addressing the risk as noted above, as well as additional improvement measures which should be incorporated into the design of the framework,

and wider aims for CHS. Examples of these are:

- Clearly identifying roles and responsibilities at all levels
- Progress work around data sharing with SCRA
- Provide more oversight via regular monitoring reporting of agreed KPI's
- Advice on how to structure the quality strategy and framework
- Implementing mechanisms for sharing good practice and learning

Management accepted the recommendations, with many of the areas already addressed as part of the 24/25 business plan.

9. External Audit (EA)

- 9.1 The committee endorsed the accounting policies to be adopted by CHS for the preparation of its statement of accounts for 2023/24 and recommended minor changes to the polices (mainly in line with title and role changes in line with the organisational restructure) to the Board and the Accountable Officer. The Board of CHS approved the accounting policies at its meeting on 26th March 2024.
- 9.2 The Committee reviewed the outline annual audit plan and strategy in relation to the 2023/24 Accounts at their meeting in February of 2024. The Director of Business and Finance, the Finance Manager, and the Accountable Officer/CEO were comfortable with the high level timetable for financial statements and reporting deadlines for the August CHS Audit committee meeting.

10. Terms of Reference (ToR)

- 10.1 The Committee reviewed its ToR (see Appendix A) in February 2024. The Board of CHS approved the ToR in March 2024.

11. Strategic issues to be examined during 2024/25

- 11.1 The 2024/25 internal audit plan was reviewed and approved at the February 28th 2024 meeting. The internal audit will cover the Core Financial Process, The CHS Stage Gate Process – Governance and Implementation of Change, and CHS's Cybersecurity and Resilience.
- 11.2 The Committee anticipates focusing its energies on the key strategic risks facing the organisation over the next year. I would highlight the following areas of challenge:
1. The ongoing challenges to our capacity and ability to recruit and retain Panel Members in order to fulfil our statutory duties;
 2. Not maximising opportunities to improve outcomes and hearing experiences through a lack of appropriate training, practice and policy, engagement, quality control and quality assurance;
 3. The affect of uncertainty around the future tribunal model, particularly in relation to the approach to learning;
 4. The ongoing risk to CHS's cyber security and resilience; and
 5. The ability to access and harness data for quality improvement.
- 11.3 The external auditors will complete their review of the 2023/24 annual accounts in June 2024 and the audited accounts will be presented to the ARMC in August 2024 and to the Board in September 2024.

12. Support to the Committee

On behalf of the Committee, I would like to record our thanks to the CHS Leadership Team the Internal Auditors, BDO, and the External Auditors, Audit Scotland, for their contribution and support throughout the year. I would like to record our thanks to Rachel Kavish Wheatley for the continued governance support provided to the Chair and the Committee.

As Chair, I would also like to thank my fellow Committee members for their insights and contributions past, present, and future.

Sean Austin
ARMC Chair
May 2024

ARMC Terms of Reference

1. Constitution

1.1 The Board hereby resolves to establish a committee of the Board to be known as the Audit and Risk Management Committee (ARMC).

2. Membership

2.1 The ARMC comprises a minimum of three non-executive members appointed by the Board, not including the Chair of the Board.

2.2 The Board appoints one of its members to serve as the chair of the committee. Details of the current members, including the committee Chair, are shown in Appendix 1.

2.3 All members are appointed for the length of their current Board appointment which may be extended in line with any Board re-appointments. All re-appointments must be approved by the Board.

2.4 The ARMC may co-opt independent members who are not members of the Board for a period of time (not exceeding a year) to provide specialist skills, knowledge, and experience subject to budgets agreed by the Board.

2.5 The Committee may appoint a substitute drawn from the membership of the Board of CHS, with the exception of the CHS Board Chair, in line with the requirements at 2.1.

2.6 A committee substitute may participate at a committee meeting in place of a member.

2.7 When a committee substitute attends a meeting (or other committee activity), he or she assumes the full rights of an ordinary member of the committee. In particular, the substitute can vote and is entitled to receive all committee papers.

3. Authority

3.1 The ARMC is authorised by the Board to review and approve any activity within its terms of reference.

4. Meetings and Quorum

4.1 The ARMC meets at least four times a year. The Chair of the committee may convene additional meetings as he/she deems necessary. Meetings may be held virtually if required.

4.2 The Chair of the Board may also ask the ARMC to convene further meetings to discuss particular issues on which he/she seeks the Audit and Risk Management committee's advice.

- 4.3 A minimum of two members of the ARMC must be present for the meetings to be deemed quorate. In the absence of the Chairperson, one of the other non-executive members will assume that role for the duration of the meeting. To ensure that the meeting is quorate, committee substitute(s) may be required to attend.
- 4.4 The National Convener/Chief Executive Officer, Depute Chief Executive, the Director of Finance are required to attend each meeting.
- 4.5 The Audit and Risk Management committee may ask any other officials to attend in order to assist with discussions and offer expertise on a particular matter.
- 4.6 The CHS Governance team will provide the ARMC with secretarial support services.
- 4.7 The agenda and meeting papers are issued to members at least seven calendar days prior to the meeting, unless agreed otherwise.
- 4.8 The CHS Governance team minutes the proceedings and resolutions of all committee meetings including the names of those present and in attendance.
- 4.9 Minutes of every committee meeting are circulated to the committee for approval and approved minutes referred to the Board for noting as soon as practical.
- 4.10 The internal and external auditors attend all meetings.
- 4.11 The ARMC may ask any or all of those who normally attend, but who are not members, to withdraw in order to facilitate open and frank discussion of particular matters.
- 4.12 An Action Log is maintained to monitor progress on key issues raised at meetings.
5. Reporting
- 5.1 The Chair of the committee reports back to the Board, verbally or in writing, after each meeting. The committee takes directions from the Board on general or specific actions.
- 5.2 The ARMC provides an Annual Report, timed to support preparation of the Governance Statement, summarising its conclusions from the work it has done during the year.
6. Responsibilities
- The Audit Committee advises the Board and the Accountable Officer on:
- 6.1 The strategic processes for risk control and governance;

- 6.2 Corporate and information governance arrangements;
 - 6.3 The accounting policies, the approval of the Unsigned Annual Report and Accounts following completion of the audit and Management's Letter of Representation to the external auditors;
 - 6.4 The planned activity and results of both Internal and External Audit;
 - 6.5 The adequacy of management response to issues identified by audit activity, including external audit's report to those charged with governance;
 - 6.6 The annual and longer term operating plans for internal audit and the resourcing of the internal audit to deliver these plans;
 - 6.7 Monitoring the implementation of approved recommendations;
 - 6.8 The external audit reports and, where appropriate, reports to the Board of any issues from the external audit of CHS, and any matter that the external auditors bring to the attention of the committee;
 - 6.9 The adequacy of the arrangements for the management of CHS' compliance with legislation and regulation focusing on: data security, freedom of information, health and safety and equality;
 - 6.10 Fraud and Corruption prevention policy, Whistleblowing policy, and arrangements for special investigations.
-
7. Information Requirements
 - 7.1 Agree a work programme at the start of each financial year for the year ahead.
 - 7.2 For each meeting the ARMC is normally provided with:
 - 7.3 A report on performance relating to risk management, including a summary of any key changes to the risk register;
 - 7.4 Information Governance reports;
 - 7.5 A report from Internal Audit detailing, as appropriate: audit performed;
 - 7.6 key issues emerging from internal audit work;
 - 7.7 management responses to audit recommendations;
 - 7.8 the current internal audit plan including proposed changes;
 - 7.9 any issues affecting the delivery of internal audit objectives;
 - 7.10 progress on the implementation of agreed recommendations.
-
8. As and when appropriate, the Committee:
 - 8.1 Annually reviews its Terms of Reference. Proposals for amendment to the terms are submitted to the Board for formal approval.
 - 8.2 Annually reviews its own effectiveness.
 - 8.3 Considers the Draft Annual Report and Accounts prior to submission to the Board and reviews the compliance check list and draft Governance Statement.
 - 8.4 Reviews any changes to accounting policies.
 - 8.5 Reviews the Management's letter of Representation.
 - 8.6 Reviews the effectiveness of CHS' financial and other control systems.
 - 8.7 Monitors CHS' arrangements to secure Value for Money, whether these are made via internal or external audit or other means.

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8.8 Monitors the effectiveness of Internal and External Audit, reviews the Internal Audit Annual Report and the ISA 260 from External Audit.

8.9 Alerts the Board and, where necessary, Scottish Ministers to factors which might affect the ability of CHS to carry out its statutory functions and achieve its strategic objectives.

Appendix 1 - Membership of the Audit and Risk Management Committee

Name	Term	
	1 st Appointment	2 nd Appointment
Sean Austin ARMC Chair	06/21-06/25	
Henry Robson	08/17-08/20	08/20-02/25
Barbara Neil	05/19-05/22	05/22 – 01/25



Audit and Risk Committee Improvement Plan 2024/25

Agenda Item: 11
Paper Number: CHS-2425-10

Accountable Officer: Director of Business and Finance
Report author: Business Operations & Governance Manager
Resources implications: Within available
Recommendation: To discuss
Approval(s) sought: To discuss and approve for implementation

	Required	Completed
Impact Assessment Duties		
Equalities Impact Assessment	No	
Children’s Rights Impact Assessment	No	
Data Protection Impact Assessment	No	
Islands Impact Assessment	No	

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 In February of 2024 the Audit and Risk Management Committee reviewed their performance via the National Audit Office’s standard questionnaire as an additional means of self-assessment. In addition to this, they carried out a more improvement based development session. The session focused on:
- Improve the Committee efficiency and performance;
 - Improve the overall governance oversight of the Committee and its functions; and
 - Provide the Committee with more assurance around programme management.
- 1.2 The Committee agreed to review a proposed improvement plan in line with wider Board improvements at the start of the financial year.

2. Committee efficiency and performance

- 2.1 The following were discussed by the Committee and are recommendations for improving the performance and efficiency of the Committee:
- Rename the Committee the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) as the Committee is not responsible for the management of audit and risk, but its strategic oversight.
 - All actions within the action log should be updated ahead of every meeting indicating if actions are “on track” to be completed by the deadline or at risk of needing an extension.
 - Implement a ‘consent agenda’ approach where papers that are for noting or information sharing rather than approval, do not need to be discussed. Papers shared for awareness or noting are to be discussed only by exception at the meeting.
 - In line with the wider Board improvement plan, adjust report templates to include a table which can be used to easily identify the strategic objectives the work supports or advances and/or the strategic risks it mitigates or falls under.

- In line with the wider Board improvement plan, papers/reports revolving around strategy or finance can be reviewed within Committee but should be brought to the Board for approval.
- Committee notes should be shared on Admin control for the full Board to see within 10 working days and the Board notified by email that the notes are available to view. In order to enable this, Governance officers will be required to send the notes to the Committee Chair for approval within 5 working days of the meeting.

3. Governance oversight

- 3.1 The following were discussed by the Committee and are recommendations for improving the Committees oversight of governance functions across the organisation:
- To provide the Committee with more assurance on the progress and performance of the CHS Change Programmes, a standing agenda item should be added to the ARC agenda for PMO and Change. This responsibility for the functions oversight by the Committee should be reflected in the Committee ToR.
 - In order to improve efficiency and provide greater assurance to the ARC, a more comprehensive but unified governance and compliance report should be developed incorporating; Risk & Business Continuity, Information Governance & Data Protection, Complaints, Health and Safety, and Fraud & Financial Management.
 - To provide the ARC with more detailed information on areas of interest or concern, the option for the Chair to request a 'deep dive into a specific area of work should be enabled.
 - In order to provide more cohesion between the Committee and the Board, the Governance Officer should look to better align the Board and ARC meetings.

4. Recommendation

The Board are asked to note and approve the proposed improvement action plan at appendix A.

Appendix A



ARC Improvement Action plan 2024/25

Action	Owner	Deadline
Reports - Adjust report templates with a table to identify the strategic objectives the work supports or advances and/or the strategic risks it mitigates or falls under.	Governance officer	August 2024
Reports – papers/reports revolving around strategy or finance should be brought to the Board for approval. Below the strategy/finance threshold reports/papers can be signed off at Committee and shared for noting.	Governance officer	August 2024
Action log – Include update for all lines of the action log indicating if actions are “on track” to be completed by the deadline or at risk of needing an extension – ensure this is carried out at every review and not only when actions are due.	Governance officer	August 2024
Agenda - Implement a ‘consent agenda’ approach where papers that are for noting or information sharing rather than approval, do not need to be discussed.	Governance officer	August 2024
Discussion at meetings – Papers shared for awareness or noting are to be discussed only by exception at the ARC meeting.	Board Chair	August 2024
Committee - notes should be shared on Admin control for the full Board to see within 10 working days and the Board notified by email that the notes are available to view.	Governance officer	August 2024
Add PMO and Change as a standing agenda item and reflect responsibility for the functions oversight in the Committee ToR.	Governance officer	August 2024
Develop a unified governance and compliance report should be developed incorporating; Risk & Business Continuity, Information Governance & Data Protection, Complaints, Health and Safety, and Fraud & Financial Management.	Business Operations and Governance Officer	January 2024
Look to better align the Board and ARC meetings.	Business Operations and Governance Officer	January 2024



People and Culture Committee Annual Report 2023-24

Agenda Item: 12

Paper number: CHS-2425-11

Accountable Officer: Director of People and Culture
Report author: Business Operations and Governance Manager
Resources implications: NA
Approval(s) sought: To approve

Impact Assessment Duties	Required	Completed
Equalities Impact Assessment	NA	
Children's Rights Impact Assessment	NA	
Data Protection Impact Assessment	NA	
Islands Impact Assessment	NA	

1. Background

- 1.1 This report covers the work of the People and Culture Committee (PACC) from 1st April 2023 to 31 March 2024.
- 1.2 The PACC is responsible for assisting the CHS Board to deliver its responsibilities for effective staff performance management, recruitment, remuneration and appointment in accordance with its Terms of Reference.

2. Overview

- 2.1 The committee met on four occasions during the year: 27th June '23; 19th September 23'; 19th December '23; and 20th March 24'.
- 2.2 Meetings were held in private to discuss confidential internal policies and staffing matters.
- 2.3 The Committee reviewed its Work Plan in December 23' and its Terms of Reference in March 24'.
- 2.4 Members of the committee who served during the year were:
 - Jo Derrick, Chair
 - Beth Anne Logan, deputy Chair
 - Katie Docherty

2.5 Attendance

Members' attendance at committee meetings was as follows:

	27 June 2023	19 September 23	29 December 2023	20 March 2024	Attendance
Jo Derrick	√	√	√	√	100%
Beth Anne Logan	-	√	√	√	75%
Katie Docherty	√	-	√	√	75%
Katharina Kasper					NA

Over the course of these meetings I confirm the Committee met its Terms of Reference during 2023/24.

3. People and Culture Committee Meetings

3.1 PACC meetings were attended by the National Convener/ Chief Executive (NC/CEO), who is also the Accountable Officer, and the Depute Chief Executive. The Head of Strategy, Development and DCE, the Human Resources and Organisational Development Lead, and the Business Operations and Governance Lead also attend the meetings. At least one of the Co-chairs of the Team Forum attend all meetings.

3.2 A programme of work was agreed for the PACC through their work plan and allocated over the four meetings during the year. The PACC discussed 29 items of business during the year including:

- In June of 2023, a review of the Committee's TOR was carried out which included renaming the Committee from the Remuneration and Appointment Committee to the People and Culture Committee, and the nomination of a Depute Chair;
- The NC/CEO 6 month review, annual appraisal, and objectives were reviewed and approved;
- A 2 year Staff Pay Policy, and CEO pay recommendations were considered and approved;
- A minor change to static pension contributions was reviewed and approved;
- An update to Fair Work First report was considered and approved;
- A Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Implementation Plan 23/24 was considered and approved;
- The Equality Outcomes report 2022-2024 was considered and approved;
- The Annual Report on outcomes of staff appraisals was reviewed;
- The People Strategy & CHS Cultural Evolution Update was considered and approach approved;
- Regular progress reports on the implementation of the People Strategy, organisational change programme, and EDI were considered and discussed;
- HR policies were reviewed and approved as follows: Whistle Blowing Policy, and the Staff Code of Conduct.
- The biennial Gender Pay Gap Report 2022 – 2024 was reviewed and approved for publication;
- The Committee reviewed its own effectiveness;

- The Committee welcomed the continued engagement with the Team Forum who attended every meeting.

3.3 Standard agenda items at each meeting are:

- Register of Interests;
- Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising;
- Action Log;
- Chair update;
- People Strategy and Planning update;
- Policy review as required;
- Team Forum update.

4. Support to the Committee

On behalf of the Committee I would like to record our thanks to CHS Management, the National Team, and the Team Forum for their contribution and support throughout the year.

Jo Derrick
PACC Chair

June 2024



People and Culture Committee Annual Report 2023-24

Agenda Item: 12

Paper number: CHS-2425-11

Accountable Officer: Director of People and Culture
Report author: Business Operations and Governance Manager
Resources implications: NA
Approval(s) sought: To approve

Impact Assessment Duties	Required	Completed
Equalities Impact Assessment	NA	
Children's Rights Impact Assessment	NA	
Data Protection Impact Assessment	NA	
Islands Impact Assessment	NA	

1. Background

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Beth Anne Logan	-	√	√	√	75%
Katie Docherty	√	-	√	√	75%
Katharina Kasper					NA

Over the course of these meetings I confirm the Committee met its Terms of Reference during 2023/24.

3. People and Culture Committee Meetings

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- The NC/CEO 6 month review, annual appraisal, and objectives were reviewed and approved;
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- An update to Fair Work First report was considered and approved;
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- The Equality Outcomes report 2022-2024 was considered and approved;
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- Regular progress reports on the implementation of the People Strategy, organisational change programme, and EDI were considered and discussed;
- HR policies were reviewed and approved as follows: Whistle Blowing Policy, and the Staff Code of Conduct.
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- Action Log;
- Chair update;
- People Strategy and Planning update;
- Policy review as required;
- Team Forum update.

4. Support to the Committee

On behalf of the Committee I would like to record our thanks to CHS Management, the National Team, and the Team Forum for their contribution and support throughout the year.

Jo Derrick
PACC Chair

June 2024



People and Culture Committee Improvement Plan 2024/25

Agenda Item: 12
Paper Number: CHS-2425-12

Accountable Officer: Director of People and Culture
Report author: Business Operations & Governance Manager
Resources implications: Within available
Recommendation: To note
Approval(s) sought: To note and approve for implementation

	Required	Completed
Impact Assessment Duties		
Equalities Impact Assessment	No	
Children’s Rights Impact Assessment	No	
Data Protection Impact Assessment	No	
Islands Impact Assessment	No	

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 In March of 2024 the People and Culture Committee reviewed their performance via a questionnaire based on the National Audit Office’s template. In addition to this, in February 2024 the Board met as a whole to assess their performance during an improvement based development session. The session focused on:
- Improving the Board and Committees efficiency and performance; and
 - Improving the overall governance oversight of the Board and Committees and its functions.
- 1.2 The Board agreed it would create Board and Committee improvement plans to be reviewed and actioned at the start of the financial year.

2. Additions to the Committee’s remit

- 2.1 Following the organisational re-structure, the following work streams have been identified as appropriate for PaCC oversight to provide insight to Directors and more efficiency for the Board:
- Learning, including the annual Prospectus, CHSLA report, and any monitoring f performance against the learning strategy and implementation plans;
 - Participation, including any updates to the workstreams within the Childrens Rights and Participation Strategy;
 - Recognition and Reward of both paid staff and volunteer; and
 - Wellbeing, including any updates on the delivery of wellbeing initiatives for paid staff as well as volunteers.

3. Committee efficiency and performance

- 3.1 The following areas have been identified to improve the performance and efficiency of the Committee:

- All actions within the action log should be updated ahead of every meeting indicating if actions are “on track” to be completed by the deadline or at risk of needing an extension.
- Implementing a ‘consent agenda’ approach where papers that are for noting or information sharing rather than approval, do not need to be discussed. Papers shared for awareness or noting are to be discussed only by exception at the meeting.
- In line with the wider Board improvement plan, adjust report templates to include a table which can be used to easily identify the strategic objectives the work supports or advances and/or the strategic risks it mitigates or falls under.
- In line with the wider Board improvement plan, papers/reports revolving around strategy or finance can be reviewed within Committee but should be brought to the Board for approval.
- Committee notes should be shared on Admin control for the full Board to see within 10 working days and the Board notified by email that the notes are available to view. In order to enable this, Governance officers will be required to send the notes to the Committee Chair for approval within 5 working days of the meeting.

4. Governance oversight

- 4.1 The following were discussed by the Committee and are recommendations for improving the Committees oversight of governance functions across the organisation:
- In line with the addition of Learning to the remit of the Committee, a standing agenda item should be available to update the Committee on the delivery of the Learning Strategy;
 - For any updates to Recognition and Reward, and Wellbeing approaches to be incorporated into a streamlined People Update report.

5. Recommendation

The Board are asked to note and approve the proposed improvement action plan at appendix A.

Appendix A



PaCC Improvement Action plan 2024/25

Action	Owner	Deadline
The Committee TOR should be adjusted (pending Board approval) to include Committee oversight of: -Learning, including the annual Prospectus, CHSLA report, and any monitoring of performance against the learning strategy and implementation plans; -Participation, including any updates to the workstreams within the Childrens Participation & Rights Strategy; -Recognition and Reward of both paid staff and volunteer; and -Wellbeing, including any updates on the delivery of wellbeing initiatives for paid staff as well as volunteers.		
Reports - Adjust report templates with a table to identify the strategic objectives the work supports or advances and/or the strategic risks it mitigates or falls under.	Governance officer	August 2024
Reports – papers/reports revolving around strategy or finance should be brought to the Board for approval. Below the strategy/finance threshold reports/papers can be signed off at Committee and shared for noting.	Governance officer	August 2024
Action log – Include update for all lines of the action log indicating if actions are “on track” to be completed by the deadline or at risk of needing an extension – ensure this is carried out at every review and not only when actions are due.	Governance officer	August 2024
Agenda - Implement a ‘consent agenda’ approach where papers that are for noting or information sharing rather than approval, do not need to be discussed.	Governance officer	August 2024
Discussion at meetings – Papers shared for awareness or noting are to be discussed only by exception at the PaCC meeting.	Board Chair	August 2024
Committee - notes should be shared on Admin control for the full Board to see within 10 working days and the Board notified by email that the notes are available to view.	Governance officer	August 2024
Add Learning a standing agenda item and reflect responsibility for the functions oversight in the Committee ToR.	Governance officer	August 2024
Develop a streamlined People update report which incorporates wellbeing, recognition and reward.	People & Culture Partners	January 2024